

IRRS Annual Report

1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

Hon. Chairman's Report

During the year under review the Society has published the Journal and has had a successful programme of outings and lectures.

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Many thanks to the Journal Team who have produced the Journal to the usual high standard.

Also many thanks to all those who participated in the delivery of a successful programme of outings and lectures.

I again take this opportunity, on behalf of myself and the Board, to thank the membership for their loyalty and support.

Tony O'Shaughnessy (Hon. Chairman)

Hon Treasurer Report

The annual accounts show a surplus of €8,199 for the year ending 31st August 2022. This is up from €7,279 for the previous year.

Overall income at €56,791 was up by €3,054. Subscriptions were slightly down at €47,967. Donations were at a healthy €4,551 with book sales at €1,706. Meetings income held steady

Overall expenditure increased by €2,384 on the previous year. There were increases in the cost of production of the Journal and postage; Insurance and upkeep and maintenance of the premises at Heuston.

Tom Buckley
Hon. Treasurer

Hon. Secretary Report

The year contained many positive developments including greater engagement with Irish Rail especially through the distribution of the IRRS Journal to all staff electronically. More recently we enjoyed the company of Irish Rail, Translink and Transdev executives at our annual dinner underscoring the strong relationship with all of our industry stakeholders. The Ancestry.com genealogy project, covered in the Journal, was extensive and we expect to see the results during 2024. With Neil Dinnen on the team we were in a position to have an interesting railtour and visits to the National Train Control Centre. The Journal continues to evolve and we have worked hard to maintain the high standard of old while making it increasingly accessible. Our premises in Heuston remains underutilised and we will consider how best to make it more relevant for members and stakeholders again.

The Board met on eight occasions during the year.

Mark Merrigan
Hon. Secretary

Hon. Archivist's Report

The most important development in the year under review was the digitisation of the large amount of genealogical material in the archives by Ancestry.com. This will become available on the Ancestry.com website by next summer. While this is a pay website, the material will be available to members through the Archives. This was an enormous job, and we thank Rhona Murray of Ancestry.com and her team for undertaking a task which will give us far greater reach, and also ensure that our collection is duplicated in the event of any catastrophe!

The Archives will continue to be open to members and the public, and also contains very large quantities of files, especially relating to the GS&WR, MGWR and GNR(I). Some of those files have already been used as the basis of Journal Articles, and I would encourage members to do their own research.

During the year under review, sadly Paddy O'Brien passed on after a short illness. Paddy was involved with the Archives from its earliest days, as well as working with CIE on the railway records retained by the Secretary of CIE. He will be greatly missed

We currently open on Tuesday afternoons (by prior appointment) and also on Tuesday evenings when the Library is open, and the Archives sees a steady stream of visitors researching a wide range of topics. I am assisted by Herbert Richards, Peter Rigney and John Martin, but would welcome offers of assistance, and will provide training to any volunteers who would like to join

the team. Well handled, this has the potential of creating an income stream for the Society through donations and new members, as well as a new and wider awareness of our work in this regard.

CIE has appointed Kevin Forkan as Company Archivist. Kevin is a highly experienced professional in the field, both in Ireland and abroad, and I look forward to working with him in the huge task which lies ahead of him.

(Rev) Norman E Gamble BA, PhD, H.Dip.Ed

Programme Organiser's Report

TEXT

Neil Dinnen

Hon Librarian's Report

The Library was open on 37 occasions for members and researchers from September to July and the usual research facilities were provided. Attendances were poor when compared with those pre-pandemic and on most occasions were in single figures. In total there were 289 attendances by members and we had 23 visitors during the season under review giving an average attendance of just 8 per night.

The poor attendance was mainly due to the fact that those who came regularly have found alternative day time venues for their railway discussions. Nevertheless the library facility remains available for those who wish to pursue their railway interest in an academic setting..

Tim Moriarty, BA, MLS, Hon. Librarian

Hon. Editor's Report

The three regular issues of the Journal appeared during the season and contained the usual mix of historic articles and current Irish railway news. All appeared with suitably chosen illustrations as provided by the Hon. Photographic editor. In addition, our Observations and Comments section was well patronised which reflected the depth of railway knowledge existing among our readers. We included notices of recent publications and sadly obituaries. Our aim

was to include all relevant information about Society events in one place without the need for separate circulars or booking forms.

Tim Moriarty, Hon. Editor

Hon. Photographic Archivist's Report

By the time this report has been published, the total number of photos accessible to members from our archive will have surpassed over 20,000 digitised images. The most recently augmented material includes collections covering the 1950s and 60s period, in colour & b/w negative, mainly from photographers Tom Dowling, John Phillips and Chris Gammell.

We continue to receive worthy acquisitions from Ireland and Britain, the most recent being that of David Chatfield, who kindly donated his slides/negatives recording his travels in Ireland during 1954-55, as published in IRRS Journal 211 (June 2023). At the time of writing, I am preparing three further collections, with work ongoing to input data to the digitised photos, including titles, captions and keywords, prior to uploading to our photo-archive on Flickr. This work is essential for making the photos searchable online. I politely request members to exercise patience during this process and please refrain from querying material not yet available online.

Our digitised cine-films continue to remain popular on the IRRS Youtube channel, where all four previous 'Annual Film Shows' can be viewed (total of 6 hours of archive footage). I hope to feature material from the 1980s soon, once I have digitised and restored the Super-8mm films.

I wish to express thanks to my colleagues in Dublin and London, who have both kindly and diligently arranged additional donations to the Society during 2023.

Ciaran Cooney

Hon. Membership Secretary's Report

Current Membership

Member Class	Count
Dublin Members	213
Northern Ireland	116
Overseas	40
Ireland Provincial	312

Great Britain	339
Total	1020

51 new members since the AGM in 2023

The vibrant programme of Events in 2023 resulted in a number of new member applications.

Payments Update

The 2022-3 subscription year presented challenges due to the change in personnel in December 2022. By the end of year on the 31st of August 2023 with the help of my fellow board members things had stabilised which means that the collection of subscriptions in the current year has gone more smoothly.

Subscription Rates

At the AGM in March 2023 we simplified the Subscription Rates for the Society.

This year we propose to further simplify and harmonise rates. We also want to recognise the fact that so much of the Society's activity is now online and that members living close to the headquarters do not receive significant benefit from their location.

Current Rates and Proposal

Member Class	EUR	GBP	EUR	GBP
Dublin Members	55		50	
Northern Ireland		38		42
Overseas	55		50	
Ireland Provincial	45		50	
Great Britain		38		42

Database Restructuring

The membership database was re-structured in September. A lot of unused fields were eliminated and the database now allows us to look at payment history for a member.

Willo Roe

Munster Area

Quite a busy season was held by us in MUNSTER. We had six slide shows covering many topics from the Isle of Man to Cyril Frys Collection. In October we held our AGM and afterwards a members show. Each member got a 15 minute slot so a quite varied selection was presented. In Feb we had our Annual Dinner in The Metropole Hotel and our guest speaker was member Tom Ryan just recently retired from Irish Rail . Also our president was in attendance too.

Ken Fox

London Area

The Area delivered 7 monthly talks from Oct 2022 – April 2023 covering a wide range of Irish railway topics. As the risks associated with Covid receded, the Area attempted to deliver the talks live as well as making them available to a wider audience via Zoom. However, difficulties with our pre-Covid venue and rail strikes in SE England combined to largely thwart the live talks until the April meeting, when we held a Live + Zoom presentation in an excellent new venue – The Gallery at Alan Baxter beside Farringdon station in central London. This has since become our regular venue for live talks and is not only a very comfortable room but also extremely accessible following the opening of the Elizabeth line. Do come along if you are in London on any of the dates of our live meetings.

In November 2022, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Area (albeit 1 year late due to Covid) with a special luncheon event at the Charles Dickens pub overlooking the St Katherine Dock marina beside Tower Bridge. About 40 members enjoyed a convivial meal and afternoon. Jim Meade (CEO Irish Rail) came over from Dublin for the day as our special guest and presented an excellent update of recent developments and future plans on Irish Rail.

The Area continues its work in referencing and digitising some significant collections of Irish railway material, gifted or bequeathed to us by members living in GB, usually with a previous association with the Area. And we continue to support and fund Richard McLachlan's work in digitising drawings and other documents already in the archives, with the aim of preserving these in digital form and making them digitally accessible.

For further information about our activities, see the London Area website www.irrslondon.com

Tim Morton (Chair – London Area)

Manchester Area

The IRRS Manchester Area Branch will be 4 years old on 6th February 2024. In those four years, the presence of the Manchester Area Branch and its activities has further expanded the reach of the IRRS and has been a good way of maintaining close links between the Society and members living in the north-west of England. The Branch has also developed and consolidated links with other railway societies in the region.

2022-23 can, mostly, be reviewed very positively. We have:

- Held a programme of 7 hybrid meetings, with excellent speakers.
- Had excellent visits.
- Published three Newsletters - a unique part of our Branch offering. These mostly comprise current news covering Irish railways of all gauges, the national network, Bord na Mona, heritage lines and railway modelling.
- Made further progress on our own photographic and document archive.
- Generated sales revenue thanks to a good stock of donated books.
- Maintained Branch finances on a reasonable footing, despite pressures on costs. We end the year with a small reserve.

However, there are some issues and challenges.

The biggest challenge with meetings post-Covid 19 is that attendance is much less than it was.. Generally, we have between 10 and 18 attending in person, with between 40 and 100 plus online. Given venue hire costs and other expenses, the Branch finances are under pressure. The sales from books, mostly donated, are vital. However, with small attendance numbers (and usually the same faces!) revenue is limited.

We receive positive emails concerning the Newsletter. Given the content, it compliments the IRRS Journal. The Newsletter is mainly compiled by Andrew Waldron, thanks to a wide circle of 'correspondents' and his own research. The quality of the Newsletter could be improved by enhanced use of publishing software etc., but I cannot ask more of Andrew.

The Manchester Area Branch is the custodian of a collection of photographs we have purchased, and some original documents donated to us. The plan is to eventually offer published material and photographs to the Parent Body in Dublin. In the case of slides and photos, our aim is to digitally record and reference these before sharing them. Obviously, this can be a long process, but we will persevere.

The present Committee comprises: Ernie Godward (Secretary), Richard Ellis-Hobbs (IT and Website Officer), Danny Vaughan (Treasurer), Ted McAvoy (Committee Member) and Andrew Waldron (Programme Officer and Current News Editor). I must record my thanks to them for their combined efforts. They work together as a great team.

I am also very grateful for the superb encouragement, and support of the IRRS Board, our Hon. President, Time Morten (Chairman of the London Branch) and others.

For more information on the IRRS Manchester Area Branch, see our website at:
[tps://irrsmanchester.wordpress.com/](https://irrsmanchester.wordpress.com/)

Roy G Chapman, Chairman, IRRS Manchester Area Branch
