



THE RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE AND TRAVEL SOCIETY

Charity Registration Number 1169995

ANNUAL TRUSTEES REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2024

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Trustees (at 1st June 2024):

A James Milne (Chairman)
David B Bird (Deputy Chairman)
Richard L Morris (Secretary)
A Reginald Wood (Treasurer)
Paul J Chancellor (*appointed 20th May 2024*)
David M Cross
Andrew P Davies
David P Goddard
Irene L Rabbitts
John Redgate
Michael S Robinson

Professional Advisers:

Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc
PO Box 1000
Andover
BX1 1LT

Independent Examiners

R.S. Porter & Co Ltd
Chartered Accountants (ICAEW)
The Old Dairy, Ashton Hill Farm,
Weston Road, Failand,
Bristol
BS8 3US

Solicitors

Hollingworth Bissell
Albert Buildings
49 Queen Victoria Street
London
EC4N 4SA

Insurance Brokers

Hettle Andrews Associates Ltd
Eleven Brindley Place
2 Brunswick Square
Brindley Place
Birmingham
B1 2LP

Trustee Annual Report for the Administration year to 31st December 2024

CHARITY STATUS:

Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the CIO are to advance the education of the public in the subject of historic and current railway operations, through:

- I. The publication of a regular monthly magazine, *The Railway Observer*, and its associated websites.
- II. The publication of books containing detailed historical records relating to railways, including locomotive classes, traction equipment and railway infrastructure.
- III. The formation and support of local branches of the Society with a view to providing a programme of speakers and visits, to enable the public to study and understand various aspects of the practice of historic and current railway operation.
- IV. The development and conservation of an extensive library/archival centre, to advance the public knowledge and understanding of historic and current railway practice and railway heritage.
- V. The dissemination to the public of photographic images illustrating historic railway heritage and current railway operations.

SOCIETY GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATION:

The Society became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in November 2016. This Trustee Annual Report covers activities by the Society for the Administrative year 1st January to 31st December 2024. The Financial Report and Statement of Accounts covers the Society's Financial year 1st November 2023 to 31st October 2024.

The Society continues to be governed by a Board of Trustees of 11 members, with working groups for Administration, Commercial, Finance and Strategy, each led by a Trustee and reporting to the Board. The Board of Trustees met on five occasions during the year – either in person or using Zoom video conferencing. The Society Annual General Meeting, in April, was held in hybrid format with members 'in person' in Wolverhampton and others joining by Zoom video conferencing. The Officers' Conference, held in Portsmouth in September, formed part of a Members Weekend.

During the year discussions towards closer collaboration with a fellow enthusiast Society, The Stephenson Locomotive Society, took place.

Membership: Membership of the Society as of 31st December 2024 stood at 2196, compared with 2347 at the end of December 2023. 206 members were recruited during 2023 – many new to the Society but also including some returning after a period away. The membership renewals process commenced in October with, once again, most members received their renewal invitation by email. This process reaches 80% of our members and thus significantly reduces costs, principally postal costs, of sending individual renewal invitations out by post.

Branches: The Society manages a network of 28 Branches – 25 of them spread over the length and breadth of England, two in Wales and one in Scotland. All held ‘in person’ meetings at their locations, with some using Zoom video conferencing for occasional meetings. The use of Zoom video conferencing which allows hybrid format meetings with some attendees in a meeting room and others signed in on Zoom continued with three Branches running this quite successfully. This does rely on the meeting location having a very robust Wi-fi facility, alongside necessary computer facilities and members’ knowledge of how to make hybrid work, but it can open meetings up to more attendees. It also allows the opportunity for presenters to be in a remote location. In addition to Branches holding meetings in their centre, there has been a programme of National Zoom meetings throughout the year. These are hosted in the UK but are often attended by members and guests from around the world as well, on occasion, as the presenter being located away from the UK.

Website: The Society website had a period of consolidation in 2024. It has four key areas, the main front page where guests can learn about the Society, purchase physical books and zoom tickets from the online shop along with the Members Area which contains information for members only, such as the online *Railway Observer*, RCTS News, Branch and National Officer contact details, and an online shop with discounts available for members, a Features area, and the Digital Archive which has a shop for purchasing digitised publications which are long out of print, along with digitised photographs and digitised slides etc. from the Society’s photographic collection. Members, and guests, can use PayPal as well as Debit Card or Credit Card capability for buying Society products through the website.

The massive project to digitise and catalogue all the photographs, slides and images which have been bequeathed to the Society continues. Many are not suitable for publication in the Society magazine or books, but they have a potentially enormous historical value which it is important to retain.

Library and Archive: The Library and Archive facility in Leatherhead has continued to open one day a week, either a midweek day or a Saturday, for members and the public to visit and do research or reading. The digitisation project, mentioned earlier, is based at the Library with scanning equipment, cameras and necessary computer hardware located there. The Library is housed in the former Station Master’s House at Leatherhead Station, so is very easy to access by train with services provided by South Western Railway and Southern Railway.

Publications: The Society continues to produce a high-quality magazine *The Railway Observer* for members. This is available in B5 format, printed, or downloadable as a PDF from the Society website. New publications launched in 2024 were *Observing the Railway 2023*, another picture book of photographs submitted for *The Railway Observer* magazine but not used; a second volume from the camera of the late *Michael Mensing, Railway Photographer*; a pictorial volume - *The Great Western Kings*; and an addition to the LNER ‘green’ books - *LNER Investment during the Inter-war Years*.

Finances The Society continues to be financially stable. The financial report and summary statement of accounts follows this report

On behalf of the Board of Trustees,

A. J. Milne
Chairman

R. L. Morris
Secretary

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2024

This report covers the Society's financial affairs for the year from 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.

The overall financial outcome for the year was a small surplus of £6,285 compared with a deficit of £11,662 in the previous year. This is 6% of our income and an improvement on our Forecast deficit of £5,927.

Our normal Society policy is for magazine fees for *The Railway Observer* to cover the costs of its production, printing and despatch. This was achieved in 2023/4.

Publication sales achieved £21,486 (last year £24,825). To this figure can be added the results of the first year of our new publications imaging project which has added income of £1,959. Some £13,000 has been invested in new publications and reprints this year, including new titles *The Kings*, *Mensing 2*, *Observing 2023* and *LNER Finance*. We look forward to good future sales of these new titles as their promotion campaign is launched. We reprinted 3 titles. Our excess stock provision has used market information and suggests our actions to address excess stocks are bearing fruit. Our publications activities delivered a net surplus of £10,155 compared to last year's £1,314. Publications stock is valued at the lower of cost or forecast sale value and was £20,892 (gross £29,080 less provision £8,188) at Year End. This represents 15.8 months of sales.

Our income from membership subscriptions increased 9% to £67,944 plus a contribution from the Life Fund of £2,754. Income from donations and gift aid in the Revenue Account recorded £2,765 and £1,709, being 50% of actual receipts with the balance being capitalised to cover future library and imaging costs. In addition, a major bequest from the estate of deceased member J. Worby was received. This is currently shown in our Balance Sheet.

Our largest expense is of course the RO, which cost £64,457 (2022/3 £61,920) to produce. Increasing printing costs account for the majority of the increase.

Society administration costs were reduced 11% to £17,359 (2022/3 £19,488). High inflation has increased our costs of Board of Trustees, our AGM and regional meetings, with the introduction of zoom online meetings successfully reducing costs.

Our library has benefited this year from a good sales performance and donations, for which we thank members. Our major imaging project was delayed early in the year awaiting broadband connection and we would like additional volunteers to increase our rate of scanning. We also really need a "webmaster" to lead our online development.

On the Balance Sheet our increased publications stock (net £20,892, last year £12,000) invests for our future. The largest individual provision is a creditor of £56,200 for lease and utilities and business rates on our library/archive awaiting lease finalisation. Good news is that we have negotiated a substantial charity discount on our business rates and are paid up-to-date.

In 2023/4 we continued our accounting treatment of donations and gift aid receipts. Our members were generous with donations totalling £6,335 to which Gift Aid brought in a further £3,417 with a further £5,720 in the pipeline. These were apportioned 50/50 to Income and Balance Sheet Project Funding. This year we have spent £2,405 of the funds on our major Imaging Project with a further £6,606 being allocated to our Library/Archive expenses.

A. REG WOOD FCMA CGMA MAPM FMAAT

Society Treasurer

The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society				
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 st OCTOBER 2024				
REVENUE ACCOUNT				
for the year ended 31 st October 2024				
	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Publication Sales		21496		24825
Cost of Sales		- <u>11331</u>		- <u>23511</u>
		10155		1314
Add: Other Income				
Magazine Fees	64615		58779	
Subscriptions	6083		5672	
RO Advertising	2925		2250	
Less Membership Costs	<u>-6902</u>		<u>- 7487</u>	
		66721		59214
Bank Interest	10945		1566	
Library/Archive	4361		2064	
Donations	5688		13193	
Sundry	<u>338</u>		<u>108</u>	
		<u>21332</u>		<u>16932</u>
		98208		77460
Less: Expenditure:				
<i>Railway Observer</i>	64457		61920	
Society Administration	16434		18588	
Independent Examination	925		900	
Branch Expenditure	237		251	
Library/Archive	5100		3811	
Sundry Activities	2255		998	
Depreciation	2615		10402	
- Funded from Project Donations	0		-7748	
		<u>91923</u>		<u>89122</u>
Surplus before Taxation		6285		-11662
Taxation		0		0
Surplus for the year		6285		-11662
Retained surplus brought forward		101226		112888

The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER 2024

BALANCE SHEET
as at 31st October 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
ASSETS EMPLOYED		
FIXED ASSETS	31678	25537
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stock	22760	14546
Debtors and prepayments	13258	5217
Cash and bank balances	<u>404970</u>	<u>249053</u>
	<u>440988</u>	<u>268816</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors	75114	76790
Branch Investment Funds	16126	14944
VAT	417	269
Magazine Fees and Subscriptions	<u>11820</u>	<u>10788</u>
	<u>103477</u>	<u>102791</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	337511	166025
NET ASSETS	<u>369189</u>	<u>191562</u>
FINANCED BY:		
Retained Surplus	107511	101227
Library Capital Fund	16766	19561
Amortised Donations/Gift Aid	43989	45731
Worby Bequest	178634	0
Life Membership Fund	22289	25043
	<u>369189</u>	<u>191562</u>

A.R. Wood, FCMA, CGMA, MAPM, FMAAT
Society Treasurer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

In connections with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Charities Act 2011; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (revised 2005) have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the account to be reached.

Christopher J Keates-Porter, FCA
R S Porter and Co. Limited
Chartered Accountants (ICAEW)
30 January 2025

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Weston Road, Failand,
Bristol
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