

**Railway & Canal Historical Society  
Annual Report 2018**

*The Trustees, who are also the Company Directors for the purposes of the Companies Acts, present  
their Report for the year ended 31 December 2018*

**Reference and administrative details**

<b>Charity registration number</b>	256047
<b>Company registration number</b>	922300 (England & Wales)
<b>Registered office</b>	34 Waterside Drive, Market Drayton TF9 1HU
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.rchs.org.uk">www.rchs.org.uk</a>

**Trustees**

Grahame Boyes	Michael Lewis
Gordon Biddle	Michael Messenger
Roger Brice	Ian Moss
Peter Brown [resigned 31 December 2018]	Douglas Robinson
Philip Brown	Stephen Rowson
Mike Clarke	Philip Scowcroft
Peter Cross-Rudkin	Matthew Searle
Tim Edmonds	Ray Shill [resigned 5 May 2018]
Peter Filcek [apptd 5 May 2018]	David Smith
Wendy Freer	Roger Taylor
John Gough	Andrew Wager [apptd 5 May 2018]
Bob Haskins [apptd 5 May 2018]	Graham Wild
David Joy	
Gerald Leach	

**Principal officers**

President	Grahame Boyes
Hon Secretary	Peter Brown [until 31 December then succeeded by Philip Lloyd]
Hon Treasurer	David Smith
Managing Committee Chairman	Philip Scowcroft

<b>Independent Examiner</b>	Scrutton Bland LLP, Fitzroy House, Crown Street, Ipswich IP1 3LG
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<b>Bankers</b>	CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4JQ
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<b>Investment managers</b>	CCLA Investment Management Ltd, Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 2ET
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**Structure, governance and management**

**Governing document**

The Society is a company limited by guarantee, being governed in accordance with its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 21 October 1967 (as subsequently amended). All members undertake to guarantee the liabilities to a maximum of £1 each.

**Membership**

Membership of the Society is open to anybody interested in the history of transport, on giving consent in writing and payment of the subscription.

## **Trustees**

The members of the Council are the Trustees of the Society and are Directors for the purposes of the Companies Acts.

The Council comprises the President, up to eight Vice-Presidents, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer, one representative from each Regional Group and not fewer than six nor more than twelve members elected at the Annual Meeting.

Although the election process does not guarantee it, in practice it is found that it yields a suitable balance of academic, professional and managerial expertise. New Trustees are given copies of the constitution, notes of guidance on the Society's organisation and processes, and the Charity Commission's publication 'The Essential Trustee'.

## **Management**

Policy issues are decided by the Council, subject to any decisions made at General Meetings. The Council met three times in 2018, the major topic considered being the photographic collection.

Day-to-day management is undertaken by the Managing Committee, which comprises the President, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer and four other members of the Council. This met four times during the year.

The Publications Committee deals with books and booklets published by the Society. Other ad hoc 'task and finish' committees are established when necessary.

## **Personnel**

The Society has no employees. All activities are undertaken by volunteers who are reimbursed only for necessary approved expenses.

## **Related parties**

The Society works cooperatively with other transport and historical societies including the Newcomen Society, the Archives & Artefacts Study Network, the Institute of Railway Studies and the Canal & River Trust. It is a corporate member of the Inland Waterways Association and the Association for Industrial Archaeology. The Society nominates a member to be on the Council of the Canal & River Trust.

## **Risks**

The Society is financially healthy but certain longer-term issues give concern.

The last three annual reports have been consistent in identifying certain trends

- An ageing membership profile
- Membership steady but new memberships are low
- Lack of volunteers for administrative positions in the local and national structure

There has been no discernible improvement in these features of the Society. Membership has fallen by 6% since 2013. In that year membership was 845, by 2016 it was 799, 2017, 795 and 2018, 795. Given the relative lack of new members and the profile of existing members, the decline in membership through natural causes seems likely to increase commensurate with its average age.

- The change to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation did not happen in 2018 and will not be completed in 2019 because the motions passed at the 2018 AGM require amendment.
- Improvements to the Website were completed.
- No Young Researcher Awards were made during 2018.
- There were significant problems in digitising the photographic collection.

- General Data Protection Regulation advice was agreed

## **Objective**

The Society's charitable objective is: 'To promote, encourage and co-ordinate the study of the history of railways, canals and transport.'

Currently the principal methods of achieving this objective are:

- ◆ Providing forums for discussing and furthering research into British transport history;
- ◆ Publishing quality research; and
- ◆ Organising conferences, speaker meetings and visits to places of interest.

## **Charitable activities**

### **General**

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers and duties.

### **Publications**

*Books and booklets:* The highlight of the year was the publication of Peter Brown's *The Shropshire Union Canal – from the Mersey to the midlands and mid-Wales*, an exceptional business history by our own former Secretary, which we were proud to publish and which has sold well. It was the last book to be designed for us by Malcolm Preskett who has retired from being responsible for design of all RCHS book publications since the 1980s. Another change was the departure of Neville Birch, our Sales Officer of fourteen years, who retired through ill health. Several new titles are in the early preparation stages.

*Journal:* The customary three issues of the Journal, numbered 231–233, were produced and distributed during 2018; these represented parts 4–6 of volume 39. The total number of pages was 188.

These three issues contained 15 major articles (6 on waterways, 9 on railways) and three shorter items. The primary focus of two of these articles related to waterways or railways outside the British Isles. These passed without comment and in future suitable articles will be considered. There were also 39 pages of reviews prepared under the control of Matthew Searle as reviews editor.

Malcolm Preskett designed the covers from material supplied by the editor and PPS Print of Peterborough continued to print the Journal and to provide a satisfactory service both in terms of the quality of the finished product and in the timeliness of production and despatch.

*Bulletin:* Six issues of the Bulletin appeared during the year.

*Bibliography:* The 2016 Bibliography was published in 2018.

### **National activities**

*AGM Weekend:* The very well organised four-day 2018 AGM Weekend was held in May at Wrexham. Highlights of the outings included: a delightful canal day on Friday 04 May, walking from Plaskynaston Canal Basin to Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, a cruise across the Aqueduct and a fascinating visit to the CRT Ellesmere Depot, opened in 1806 and subsequently enlarged. Saturday 05 May, after the AGM in the Hotel, was an industrial day, visiting the Brymbo Ironworks Heritage Project. Sunday 06 May was a Llangollen canal and railway day and Monday 07 May was principally a railway day with the nice juxtaposition of a railway and a canal crossing a valley with a splendid view at Chirk.

*Clinker Memorial Lecture:* The 2018 lecture was cancelled because of difficulties with the venue.

### **Regional Group activities**

*East Midlands:* The Group held a programme of eight Friday evening lecture meetings in 2018 with an average attendance of 15. There were also six events in the outdoor programme with an average of 8 attendees.

The Group Committee met 8 times during 2018 with an average of 6 out of a possible 8 attendances

*London:* The London Group held 6 speaker-style meetings and one film show in 2018. The average attendance at meetings was 23, mostly members, during the year. There were also two talks in the autumn.

*North East:* During 2018 the North-East Group held five talks. The AGM with members contributions was cancelled due to heavy snow around York and our AGM was rearranged to the October meeting. Four walks were organised and numbers on these walks varied between 10 and 15. Canal boat trips were organised from Goole to Thorne aboard *Waterstart* and after walking from Canal Head on the Pocklington Canal to Melbourne we joined the 'New Horizons' trip boat to Gardham Lock.

*North West:* During 2018 the Group again provided a full programme of indoor meetings and outdoor events with at least one event each month. Seven indoor meetings were held with talks on various subjects and a members' miscellany following the Group's AGM. Ten walks took place with numbers averaging in the mid-thirties. The NW Group annual rail tour was in March. To publicise the Society and the NW Group, and to attract new members the Group, the committee attended with a publicity stand the Cheshire Local History Conference held at Northwich in November.

*West Midlands:* Group membership currently stands at 99 fully paid-up members. Activities during the year comprised 6 indoor meetings in Birmingham with average attendance at 14 (2 fewer than last year) 4 outdoor events, and we represented the society at the Penn History Fair and the National Model Railway exhibition in Birmingham.

### **Special Interest Groups**

*Air Transport:* During 2018 there were four issues comprising 49 papers — a running total of 44 distributions with 415 papers. Membership is now 35 and the co-ordinator acknowledges the assistance of Graham Wild.

*Early Railway:* Membership has increased to 154. In 2018 seven Occasional Papers were distributed, totalling 53 pages, together with Circulars 34 and 35. Contributions from members are most welcome, in the form of papers, queries or comments.

*Modern Transport:* This has continued to reproduce elements of British transport as well as including up to date items. Members contributions often now include links to websites or newspaper reports. A record of recent transport changes is made through this process. The close relationship between politics and the railway industry is a factor that provides an important source on government websites, elements of such data have been included in the newsletters. Membership is stable.

*Pipelines and Materials Handling:* One set comprising 9 papers was distributed in 2018, bringing the cumulative number of papers to 85. Membership now 25. The co-ordinator acknowledges the assistance of Graham Wild.

*Railway Chronology:* Net membership of the group is 106 which includes 3 institutions. This increase of 4 during the year is made up of 9 new members, with 5 losses due to 2 resignations, 1 lapsed and 2 passed away. Four newsletters were produced during the year comprising a total of 62 A4 pages, with 42 copies currently distributed by post and the remainder by email.

*Railway History Research:* The group continues to enjoy an increasing membership with 69 members now receiving the Circulars and Newsletters via email. There were 16 Circulars issued through 2018 (consolidated into the usual 4 quarterly Newsletters), which covered 7 new Notes & Queries (with responses from members on a high proportion), 1 reprint, and a member's 'Work in

Progress' shared for comment. Topics covered have been wide-ranging: from burning ballast, the Paris to Rouen & Le Havre route, station clocks, railway cranes, a hammerbeam roof, right through to railway cats. The cumulative Index and an archive of the Quarterly Newsletters is available from the membership area of the website.

*Road Transport:* To the end of 2018 the Group has achieved 82 issues, two in 2018, embracing a running total of 586 Occasional Papers. Membership now 47. The co-ordinator acknowledges the assistance of Graham Wild and Brian and Angela Jones.

*Waterways History Research:* Membership of the email group increased by 5 to 76; about a further 90 received the group's transactions in paper form only. Queries were circulated, which each received between one and seven contributions. There were 5 Photograph Queries, of which four were solved satisfactorily, 2 Occasional Papers, 0 Reprints and 2 Sources Papers.

### **Other charitable activities**

*Research and the academic community:* An annual award to be named after Professor John Armstrong is to be made to the best paper, 4,000 to 6,000 words in length, submitted on a subject related to transport history by a person under the age of 30, and that the winning paper and any others deemed worthy would be published in the *Journal*.

*Research grants:* None were made during 2018.

*Register of Members' Expertise:* A survey update will be done in 2020.

*Website:* 2018 was, for the most part, a frustrating year for the website with a recurring loss of functionality. Towards the latter part of the year, the decision was made to appoint a professional adviser. The problem was eventually resolved with a change of website theme, which also enhanced the overall appearance of the site. We anticipate the relationship with the new adviser will continue with further enhancements already being planned for 2019.

### **Transport History Book of the Year Awards**

The awards presentation was held, as is now customary, during the AGM weekend at Wrexham in May.

The Railway Book of the Year was *George Carr Glyn: railwayman and banker* by David Hodgkins, published by Wolfe Press.

No canal or waterway history books made it onto the short-list this year, so the second award was in the 'other forms of transport' category. The winner was *The Edinburgh Horse Tram* by Alan Brotchie, published by Stenlake Publishing.

The Popular category winner was *A Most Deliberate Swindle* by Mick Hamer, published by Red Door Publishing.

Before an audience of over 70 members and guests, Society President Mike Clarke presented the winning authors with the Society's framed certificates and prize cheques.

The overall 2018 Transport History Book of the Year was *George Carr Glyn*, and David Hodgkins received the David St John Thomas silver trophy to hold for the year.

Publicity for this year's Awards was subsequently obtained in the Newcomen Society's newsletter *Links* and the Historical Model Railway Society's *Points*.

*Photographic collection:* The policy about the collection was discussed by the Council in March 2017 but there have been technical difficulties such that a further review is required about the future of this collection during 2019.

*Publicity & social media:* In the absence of a Publicity Officer, the Society has struggled to create much impact outside its membership. Nevertheless, several initiatives have been made to draw the attention of the Society to a wider audience. The Society has a Facebook page, maintained by Wendy Freer and Tim Edmonds, on which is posted details of branch meetings and events other items of interest, and a Twitter account. Regional Groups had stands at the National Model Railway Exhibition and two local events.

## Administration

### Changes of officers

*Hon Secretary:* Peter Brown relinquished the role after three years and was succeeded by Dr Phil Lloyd.

*Photographic Collections Curator:* Ray Shill resigned after six years looking after and enhancing the collections. His successor was Steve Martin.

### MEMBERSHIP POSITION AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

Membership has remained unchanged following the 0.5% fall last year. New memberships have increased but the number of lapses has risen once more despite vigorous reminders by email and post.

#### Total memberships at 31 December 2018: 795

Category	At End 2018	At End 2017	Change during 2018
Individual memberships	715	723	-8
Joint memberships <sup>1</sup>	60	54	6
Student memberships	6	5	1
Institute of Railway Studies <sup>2</sup>	11	9	2
Complimentary memberships <sup>3</sup>	3	4	-1
<b>Total Memberships</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>0</b>

### CHANGES DURING 2013-18

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Beginning of Year	795	799	824	825	831	845
New memberships	48	43	43	50		40
Less deceased members	-16	-14	-6	-14		-15
Less resignations	-15	-24	-36	-18		-39 <sup>4</sup>
Less lapsed	-20 <sup>5</sup>	-9	-25	-19		
Individual to Double & <i>vice versa</i>	3		-1			
End of Year	795	795	799	824	825	831

<sup>1</sup> Joint members are counted as '1' in the report, so the actual number of members is 795 + 60 = 855

<sup>2</sup> Students on the Post-Graduate Diploma Course in Railway Studies and PhD students at the Institute of Railway Studies at the University of York are offered complimentary membership to the Society.

<sup>3</sup> Member of Rails et Histoire; Railway Studies Collection, Newton Abbot

<sup>4</sup> Combined resignations and lapses

<sup>5</sup> 25 members lapsed, but 5 subsequently paid subscriptions

Notification was received during 2018 of the deaths of 16 members, these being:

Name	Town	Membership Years	Group
Mr Alan Faulkner	Colchester	59	L
Mr Neville Birch	Lincoln	53	EM
Mr Dennis Peter Broadhead	Woodhall Spa	46	EM
Dr Graham Hardy	Dewsbury	41	NE
The Hon. Sir William McAlpine	Henley-On-Thames	36	L
Mr Philip Orton	Watford	24	L
Mr Roy E. Bentley	Sutton	22	L
Mr Henry Gunston	Wantage	20	L
Mr John Selby	Leamington Spa	20	WM
Mr J.A. Collett	Redhill	9	L
Mr Alan Bird	Sutton Coldfield	7	WM
Dr Robin H. Smith	Carlisle	6	NW
Mr Dave Smallshaw	Liverpool	5	NW
Mr Brian D Haggart	Kenilworth	4	WM
Mr Fergie MacDonald	Holyhead	3	NW
Mr Louis Scales	London	1	L

### Financial review

General fund income, at £50,875 was very similar to 2017. No Legacies were received during 2018, and the Market Value of General Fund investments fell by £620, compared with an increase in value of £1,667 during 2017.

Bulletin production and distribution, Special interest group costs and work to improve the storage and availability of the photographic collection, cost nearly £4,000 more than in 2017, and we have written a further £994 off the Balance Sheet value of old publications.

The value of the General Fund, to maintain the Society's activities, fell from £16,014 at 1st January 2018 to £7,469 at the end of the year, but subscriptions received for 2019, since renewal reminders were sent out last Autumn, up to early February have been £13,339 compared with a figure of £12,500 for the same period last year.

The Conference Fund is held on behalf of our Society and three other transport history organizations. We provide booking and other administrative services, and a conference was held in York during the year. If we ceased to provide these services, the balance of the fund would be passed on to our successors.

The Publications, Legacies and Research Funds show healthy balances to support various future activities of the Society, but consideration will need to be given to encouraging an increase in General Fund income

### Plans for 2019

The most pressing issue will be that of conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It became apparent in March 2019 that the resolutions passed at the 2018 AGM would not satisfy the requirements of the Charity Commission and further work is needed to identify the correct resolutions and the process for conversion to CIO. As there is no time to prepare these for the 2019 AGM, the application to the Charity Commission will be started after the 2020 AGM.

Membership numbers and profile are the next most critical issues and the related challenges of a potential increase in the rate of decline in the membership numbers, an increase in vacancies in administrative positions and a significant impact on the stability of the organisational structure, nationally and in the local and special interest groups. It would be wise for the society to take a three to five year view of this trend and calculate the loss of revenue, vacancy in posts and sustainability of activities that results from it – while simultaneously maintaining its efforts to minimise the impact.

In order to address these and other questions, the RCHS will consider establishing a Task and Finish Group to create a 3-5 year strategy that addresses the risk factors and considers options for the future.

*The report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.*

*Approved by the Council, 23 March 2019*

..... *Hon Secretary*