

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2019-20

Presented at the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OF THE INDIAN STEAM RAILWAY SOCIETY (ISRS) HELD ON 27th September 2020

1. Your Society was conceived by the members of the Friends of NRM in 1999 and was registered as a not-for-profit Society as the Indian Steam Railway Society on the 27th of December 1999. The Society has thus completed more than 20 years since Registration and is in the 21st year of its existence. The main objective of the Society is working with the Indian Railways for restoration and preservation of steam locomotives in India and disseminating information of the status of the "steam railways movement" world over to its members.

The objectives of the Society are recorded in the Articles of Association – Memorandum of the Society – and we are always bound by these objectives, which are mainly:

- i) To promote interest in and share the knowledge of the Indian Railways steam heritage and current developments amongst Steam Railway Enthusiasts by bringing them to a common platform.
- ii) To stimulate public affection by intelligent exposure of Steam Railway's contribution to the Nation in the past and at present
- iii) To create awareness of the excellence of the Indian Steam Railways Works and highlight the need for their preservation in the interest of science and Technology facilitating Transport and Tourism.
- iv) To organise regular meetings, debates, seminars, competitions and Quizzes for the members and the public to exchange and further disseminate information on the Steam Railways.
- v) To assist in preservation and revival of the remaining heritage of Railways run on steam in India.
- vi) To advise and if needed, assist the Government in the formation and implementation of policies relating to Indian Steam Railways.

vii) To promote Steam Heritage Tourism.

viii) To participate in fund raising activities consistent with the aims.

ix) To do all such other lawful activities as the Society considers conducive to the attainment of all or any of the above objectives.”

2. Membership

Membership of the Society is open to all individuals or organisations worldwide. The only eligibility criterion is a professed love of the steam locomotives / railways. To quote:

“Any Institution or an Individual who has a genuine and committed interest in steam railways is eligible To be a member of This Society.”

The tenures of membership offered were for one year or life membership. At some point of time this was modified and now only membership for ten year tenure is offered.

The fee structure for Indians and foreigners as individuals or organisations is mentioned on the website of our Society at indiansteamrailwaysociety.in

The membership of our society as of on date stands at 202.

- Original Life members are 121 of which 98 are Indian, and 23 from overseas.
- Tenure Members: 81 of which 78 are Indian and 3 from overseas.

16 members joined in the year 2019-20

No organisation/Institution has enrolled as a member so far.

3. Managing Committee

The Managing Committee of the Society during 2019-20 comprised of:

S. No. Post Incumbent

1. President Sh. R.S.Virdi

2. Working President Sh. Ashwani Lohani

3. Vice President Sir Mark Tully

4. Working Vice President* (vacant)

4. Secretary Sh. G. Shankar

5. Treasurer Sh. P.J.Singh

6. Editor Sh. J.L.Singh

7. Jt. Secy. – I Sh. Dileep Prakash

8. Jt. Secy. – II* Sh. S.K.Luthra

9. Member Sh. Abhimanyu Shaunik

10. Member Sh. Ravinder Gupta

11. Member Sh. Arun Mohan

12. Asst. Treasurer* Sh. Ishwar Singh

*new posts created last year

The incumbent Member (Rolling Stock) Indian Railway Board is the Chief Patron of the Society.

Presently, Shri P.C.Sharma, Member (Materials Management), Indian Railways Board, also looking after the charge of Member (Rolling Stock) is the Chief patron of the Society. He was formally requested for taking over the position on the retirement of Shri Rajesh Agrawal on 31st January 2020, and he has accepted the request.

The incumbent Director National Rail Museum New Delhi is the Patron of the Society. Shri Ashish Gundal who took over from Amit Saurashtri in early November 2019. Amit was gracious enough to continue his support to ISRS even after his departure and during the conduct of the Annual Congress.

The Managing Committee had also inducted Executive Director Heritage Railway Board Smt. Vinita Srivastava, as a Patron of the Society last year, after she very graciously accepted the offer.

4. Activity of the Society in 2019-20

1. Right from the start of the year under review we followed up on a number of steam loco activities some of which we could see done and others nearing completion. Some of these are briefly given below:

2. The Managing Committee held regular open house meetings on the second Sunday of every month, which were well attended.

3. ISRS participated in the World Heritage day celebrations at NRM on 18th April 2019 where representatives of all the heritage & steam railways attended and made contributions.

4. During the year, ISRS took up the International Institutional Membership of “The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH)” to enable wider appeal and publicity for ISRS.

5. Like previous years the 17th National Steam Congress was organised on 23rd November 2019 at the National Rail Museum Auditorium.

a. The theme this year was “Development of Steam Heritage Tourism” and the keynote address was appropriately delivered by Mr. Michel Whitehouse, Chairman, Vintage Train Charitable Trust who have done notable work in development of Steam Tourism in the United Kingdom.

b. The other presentations were by Mr. David Mead & Mr. David Charlesworth on the position and progress of the CCMP on the DHR, and a presentation on “From Science parks to Steam Punk – Reimagining Industrial Heritage Tourism” by Ms. Moulshri Joshi of the “The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH)”.

c. Presentations were also made on behalf of North Frontier Railways by Shri G.K.Gupta, CWE giving an update on the DHR titled “Steam traction and Growth of Tourism on DHR”, and on behalf of Southern Railways by Shri S. Mukundan, Sr. DME Salem on “Heritage & Tourism Development – Efforts by Southern Railway” which included work being done on the NMR and the BG with the EIR-21 “Express” twin of Fairy Queen.

d. The highlight of the Congress, however, was the formal flagging off of the re-steaming of the “Ramgotty” locomotive which had been on a pedestal since the last 6 decades. This 1862 built loco became the 3rd oldest working Steam loco in the world after the Fairy Queen twins. The engineers and workers of the Shakurbasti and Rewari Sheds of Northern Railway, and the NRM deserve full praise for the proud achievement.

e. A presentation covering the challenges in bringing “Ramgotty” to steam was presented by Shri Manish Thapliyal, CME/IT & Amit Gupta, SrDME / Shakurbasti on behalf of Shri Arun Arora CME, Northern Railway.

f. A MOU was signed between Vintage Trains Charitable Trust & the ISRS to explore Collaboration and Twinning between VTCT and IR in respect of their Steam loco and heritage assets.

g. A large exhibition was organised in the NRM Auditorium foyer and surrounding areas, with the active support of ED/Heritage and NRM, where a large number of railway model makers, painters and other enthusiasts displayed their products and exhibits

6. The Annual steam run in conjunction with the Congress was organised from Delhi Cantt to Rewari on the 24th of November 2019, and was well attended.

7. The 2020 Calender, and the ISRS Magazine were also published and distributed during the Congress. Also a number of "Ramgotty" memorabilia (T-shirts, caps, fridge magnets, keychains and driver bandanas) were also prepared and distributed to the delegates.

8. The updated list of working BG and MG steam locomotives, and the status of the locomotives under revival is annexed to this report.

9. Other items

a. The accounts for the FY 19-20 have been audited and are presented today. Last year, accounts for 2017-18 and 2018-19 were completed and got audited.

b. Your Society has now got its PAN Card

c. While our website is enlarged and improved, with possibility of enrolling new members online, there is still a lot of work required to make it more attractive and reliable, as it often goes under breakdown.

10. Future Plans

Your Society plans to:

i) Open regional chapters of the Society with an aim of increasing the activities of the Society and the membership. However, this did not meet with much success due to our inability in getting the support of interested senior retired Railway men to lead the movement. Our efforts, however, will continue.

ii) Embark upon a membership drive, and also consolidate the List of members of the Society. This has met with some partial success. A List has been published and circulated on the website and is also being circulated today. A few new members have also joined us recently. This will be an ongoing effort.

iii) We need to improve participation of existing members in our monthly meetings.

iv) The Society also planned to organise a mid-year event apart from the Annual Congress in November. The idea of a "Hill Railways Summit" was floated. However, while this did not finally materialise, two other events were organised by the Heritage Wing of IR which our Society actively supported – a Heritage Month in February 2019 in which all Hill Railways participated and a Heritage Day on 18th April 2019.

v) The Managing Committee has been keeping close liaison with Northern Railway, with visits to Rewari Steam Shed, support their efforts in keeping the available steam locos in working fettle, as well as rebuild some more locos. Plan to create capacity for PoH of steam locos at Rewari Steam Centre itself with facility to lift the boiler and drop the wheels. Help of IR Workshops where required for specific items like wheels etc, and outsourcing of other repairs where in-house repairs are not possible shall be planned.

vi) Efforts were also made to get the website of the Society revamped. While this is still a work in progress, a lot more information and material is now available on the site. We also tried an association with Google Arts & Culture, and as a result, a lot of Steam loco and IR heritage knowledge and information is available on various links through the website.

vii) The main event of your Society has been the Annual Steam Congress. However, it does not appear possible to conduct the 18th National Congress in 2020 because of the Covid-19 situation, due to which regular meetings have not been possible, and there is uncertainty on international & national travel for the next few months. However, we have been managing to have some managing committee meetings by video conferencing, thanks to the efforts of member Ajay Singh.

In conclusion I would like to thank all Members of the Society who have taken time out to attend and participate in today's Annual General Meeting. I would also like to thank all members of the present Managing Committee of the Society who have worked to make this Annual General body Meeting happen and also those who have worked for the success of the various programmes that the Society has organised over the year. Here I would like to place on record the gratitude of the Society to Sir Mark Tully our VP, whose good offices were instrumental in organising the keynote address speakers in the last two National Congresses. Special thanks to the outgoing Director and Patron Sh. Amit Saurashtri, the incumbent Director Ashish Gundal, their Officers and staff of the NRM and Rewari steam Centre who helped with the logistics. I would specifically like to thank Sh. Ishwar Singh our Asst Treasurer who has been the main stay of our activities in every which way and hopefully will continue to be so. I cannot thank Ashwani because he is basically the inspiration behind this movement. Thank you all.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: ranjit viridi <rsviridi72@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Sep 25, 2020 at 2:17 PM

Subject: ISRS President's Report 2019-20

To: ranjit viridi <rsviridi72@gmail.com>

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