



CROYDON & SOUTH LONDON BRANCH NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2017

Dear Member

Welcome to the late Summer issue of the Branch Newsletter.

We were very saddened to hear that our former Branch Treasurer, Brian Lewis, had died during April. Brian was elected to the Branch Committee in 2004 and to the post of Treasurer in 2006. He retained both positions until he had to resign in 2010 after suffering a stroke. Until prevented by ill health, Brian played an active part in the life of the Branch from its formation. He was a regular attender at Branch evening and afternoon meetings, despite the fact that attendance at the former sometimes meant not returning to his home near Swanley until around midnight. At one evening meeting he gave an excellent slide presentation on the railways in Thailand. He often assisted at exhibitions on the Branch sales stand, to which he donated several of his own books; and frequently attended our Christmas Dinners, on at least one occasion with his wife, Waranee. He had a long time interest in model railways, with a layout in his garden shed for which he was still buying items of rolling stock just a few months ago. Brian was a home loving unassuming gentleman with a quiet sense of humour and was always good company. The Branch's condolences have been sent to Waranee and members of the family. Brian's funeral, which took place on Saturday 10 June, in the beautiful setting of St Paul's Church, Swanley Village, was attended by members of the Branch Committee.

As promised in the last Newsletter, a copy of the Minutes of the Branch Annual General Meeting held on 13 March 2017 is enclosed.

Our Summer outdoor events have now all taken place. The Summer Dinner on Monday 12 June at the *Porter and Sorter* public house offered another great opportunity for members to meet for a drink and chat over a very enjoyable meal. Following last year's concern over the future of the P&S, it is good to hear that the venue is likely to be with us for a few more years yet; and this seems to be supported by the substantial (and presumably costly) makeover of the pub by owners Marstons. The menu, too, has been changed to attract a wider clientele, while continuing to offer meals of high standard at reasonable prices.

The visit to Didcot Railway Centre on Saturday 29 July brought together a small group of six members on a very dull and cloudy day. As ever, the Centre had lots to offer in the way of both static and moving exhibits. The former included a clutch of Collett's finest 4-6-0s in the shape of a Hall, a Manor, a Castle and a King (King Edward II in blue livery), and a Hawksworth Modified Hall, all nicely cleaned and polished. Out on the demonstration lines we were treated to rides on a GWR steam railcar and trailer and on a two-coach train with beautiful art deco interiors hauled by a large prairie 2-6-2T. The one failure of the day was our inability to master the new tea/coffee machine in the Refreshment Room.

In complete contrast to the visit to Didcot, our final event of the Summer, on Monday 14 August, took place in pleasantly warm and sunny weather on the fifteen inch gauge Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. We were five members in two small groups, each making their own travel arrangements and meeting up at New Romney station. There was some disappointment that the train which took one group out of Hythe was hauled by Bo-Bo diesel-mechanical *JB Snell*, even if it was named after a stalwart of early rail preservation and long serving managing director of the RH&DR. Spirits rose at New Romney station, however, when the train we chose to take for the onward journey to Dungeness and return to Hythe arrived with steam on the front

in form of *Northern Chief* 4-6-2 in Brunswick Green and with a Bulleid whistle, built by Davy Paxman & Co in 1925. A most enjoyable day out.

Looking forward to the new season, the Branch Programme of Indoor Meetings for 2017/18 is still being finalised.

I can, however, let you have flyers (double backed) for the first two meetings of the season. As you will see, our first meeting, on Monday 11 September, is a film. In fact, it is a presentation of several short rare films made in the UK during the period 1898 to 1970. It is the first in a series of films being produced under the title *Britain on Film* by the Independent Cinema Office in collaboration with the BFI National Film & Television Archive. The official publicity describes it as follows:

"Your chance to travel back to a time when travelling by rail was comfortable, punctual and maybe even glamorous! Britain on Film:Railways is a major new collection of rare archive films charting the history of the UK's railways and bringing home the romance and heady freedoms offered by train travel as it expanded across the country in the early 20th century. Sourced from the national and regional archives and newly digitised, Britain on Film:Railways is an immensely nostalgic and evocative collection of films which document not just the glories of the railway, but also the changing social, political and economic climates of the 20th century."

If you intend to come to this show, please note that the programme contains a sequence of flashing lights which might affect audience members with photosensitive epilepsy.

During the season we will again be holding two afternoon meetings at Redhill Methodist Centre, Gloucester Road, Redhill, RH1 1BP. The first of these takes place on **Tuesday 27 September** starting at 1400 hours for which, as you will see from the other flyer, we have invited Gordon Rushton with his digital presentation *Welsh Highland Revival*. Then, on **Monday 23 October**, back at East Croydon United Reformed Church, there will be a presentation of images of *British Steam in the 21st Century*. Unfortunately, our original speaker has had to withdraw and we are seeking a suitable replacement.

Our first exhibition attendance of the coming season with a sales stand will be at the Brighton MRC's Model Railway Exhibition at Patcham Library and Community Centre, Ladies Mile Road, Patcham, Brighton, BN1 8TA, on **Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 November 2017**. For those members who have not been to this show, it is a small, friendly and enjoyable exhibition. We look forward to seeing you if you can come down to Brighton, and you will be especially welcome if you let us know that you can spend some time on the stand during the weekend.

We expect to return once again to the *Porter and Sorter* for the Branch **Christmas Dinner**. As mentioned in the last Newsletter, **Monday 4 December** is the date we have in mind, but it is too early to make a firm booking with the pub. Full details, with booking arrangements, will be included in the Autumn Newsletter, due out at the end of October, and in the meantime we urge you to pencil the date in your diary.

Finally, a further reminder that if you have been sent this Newsletter by post and would like to receive future notices about the Branch's activities in electronic form, please contact Jeremy Harrison, who manages the e-mail list as Branch Web Co-ordinator, by sending your name, membership number and e-mail address to him at croydon.web@rcts.org.uk.

With all good wishes

Peter Wilson
Branch Secretary and Exhibitions Officer
Tel.: 01737 355150
e-mail: croydon@rcts.org.uk

Chris Meredith
Branch Chairman
Tel.: 020 8660 9237
e-mail: croydonchairman@rcts.org.uk

Please visit the RCTS web site at www.rcts.org.uk