



CROYDON & SOUTH LONDON BRANCH NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2016

Dear Member

It is with the deepest regret that we have to begin this Newsletter reporting that, as some people will already know, our previous Branch Chairman, Geoff Lipscombe, passed away in the early morning of Tuesday 27 September. He had been unwell for some time.

Geoff was raised in Essex, at the London end of the old Great Eastern Railway, and joined the daily throng in and out of Liverpool Street pursuing his career at Lloyds Bank in the City of London. His interest in railways began very early on, and he joined the RCTS as soon as he could - lying about his age, he often said - to get his hands on the RO. Always a Great Eastern enthusiast, he was especially fond of the B17 *Sandringham* 4-6-0s. Time spent on National Service in the RAF in Bad Eilsen, (West) Germany, had a lasting influence, giving him a great liking for that country, its language and its railways. By the time our Branch was being formed, Geoff and his family were well established in Shirley, South London. He was a member of the Steering Committee set up to establish a new branch of the RCTS in the Croydon area, and at the Branch's first AGM on 3 March 2003 he was elected Chairman. He immediately immersed himself in the life of the Branch, acting as Fixtures (Indoor and Outdoor) and Exhibitions Secretary. He held all these posts until 2012 when, faced with the increasing effects of age and ill health, he decided, with much reluctance, to stand down as Exhibitions Secretary while continuing to assist on the Branch sales stand at exhibitions whenever possible, always wearing a Society tie. He organised refreshments at meetings, distributed most of the meeting posters and flyers to our publicity sites, arranged our Christmas and Summer Dinners and carried out a host of other jobs to ensure the smooth running of the Branch. He was also a generous donor of books to be sold for the benefit of the Branch. As well as the RCTS, he was a member of the Stephenson Locomotive Society and of the North Norfolk Railway. Geoff remained Chairman and Fixtures Secretary until Autumn 2014 when he and his family moved back into GER territory at Wymondham in Norfolk. He took with him the Branch's profound thanks for all that he had done for us, together with a framed limited edition print of - what else - a B17 *Sandringham* 4-6-0, to which members had most generously contributed as a parting gift and which was presented to him, at the Branch meeting on 8 September 2014, by our then Society President Hugh Gould, with whom Geoff had been acquainted for half a century. Geoff was cremated privately. Our thoughts are with his wife, Jill, son Andrew, and daughter Clare and her young family.

With Christmas fast approaching, we can announce details of the **Branch Christmas Dinner**, which will take place on Monday 5 December at 1930 hours, once again at the Porter & Sorter public house in Croydon. We hope that you can join us, and if you have a spouse, partner and/or friend you would like to bring please do so.

We will be partaking of their 2016 seasonal menu, providing a *Christmas Party with all the trimmings*. The price of the meal is £13.99 for two courses, £15.99 for three (including VAT but excluding drinks and gratuities). The enclosed form shows the choices available. If you intend to come, please complete the boxes on the form, first to show how many courses you and, if appropriate, your companion/s wish to order and then to show your choice of dish for each course. **Please fill in your personal details and return the completed form to Peter Wilson as indicated, together with a non refundable cash or cheque deposit of £5 per person, by Monday 14 November at the latest** (the date of our next meeting, so a convenient occasion to deliver them). Please make cheques payable to Peter Wilson. The balance of the cost of the meal will be payable on the night by cash or cheque.

For those who don't know, the Porter & Sorter is a couple of minutes' walk from East Croydon station, tram and bus stops, on the east side of the station in Billinton Hill (aka Station Road East), CR0 6BT, down the road and over the pedestrian crossing from the line of waiting taxis. If you need further directions please get in touch with one of us.

The Indoor Meetings Programme, also enclosed, shows you what else you can look forward to during the rest of the Branch's current meetings season.

At our next meeting, on Monday 14 November, we will welcome back David Brown with the second part of his presentation on *Southern Electric*. Many will know that David is the author of a two volume history of the subject. His first talk to us anticipated the centenary of the opening of the first section of the LSWR's suburban services electrification on 25 October 1915. The evening was so full of interest and audience participation that we ran out of time. Those who were at that meeting will not want to miss David's return visit to finish the job; and others will surely want to come and share in what promises to be another entertaining evening.

On Monday 12 December it will be our turn again to host the **Croydon Railbrains Inter-Society Competition**, at our usual meetings venue at East Croydon United Reformed Church. We are expecting teams and their supporters from the local branches of the MHRPS and the LCGB together with the Norbury Club. Do come along and support your Society's team as it builds on last year's effort when, while the second half performance improved greatly, it still only managed third place, well behind the victorious Mid-Hants and with the LCGB in second place. We can do better than that this year.

The first meeting in the New Year will take place on Monday 9 January 2017 when we look forward to extending a very warm welcome to Chris Green who will tell us *The Network SouthEast Story*. Chris launched Network SE in 1986 ("in a sea of red lamp-posts", as it says in the Programme) as Managing Director of BR's London & South East sector. His presentations to other Society branches have been widely acclaimed and we are very pleased to have been able to get him to come to Croydon. Chris will be bringing with him copies of his book *The Network SouthEast Story*, which he coauthored with Mike Vincent, for sale at £20.

A reminder that the Branch's first exhibition attendance of the season with a sales stand is now fast approaching. Brighton MRC's Model Railway Exhibition takes place at Patcham Library and Community Centre, Ladies Mile Road, Patcham, Brighton, BN1 8TA on Saturday 12 (1000 to 1700) and Sunday 13 (1000 to 1630) November. Two weeks later, on Saturday 26 November, we will be attending the Epsom & Ewell Transport Fair at Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, KT17 1UF from 1000 to 1530 hours. Then, in the New Year, on Saturday 7 January 2017, we will be back at the Chiswick Transport Collectors' Fair at Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, W4 4EJ, another one day only event from 1100 to 1500 hours. As ever, we would welcome the help and support of members at any or all of these events.

If your membership subscription is due for renewal at the end of December, you may by now have received your renewal letter from Steve Ollive, Assistant Treasurer (Renewals). Members are requested to renew, if possible, before 31 December 2016. You may wish to consider changing to Direct Debit, thereby saving £1 and the hassle of sending a cheque every year. As in previous years, members can bring their renewal forms and payments to a Branch meeting before the end of December and hand them to Peter Wilson (please don't post them to him) who will send them in a batch to Steve Ollive thereby saving you the cost of postage.

Finally, we would like to take this early opportunity to be possibly the first to wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

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