



CROYDON & SOUTH LONDON BRANCH NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2020

Dear Member

Welcome to the Summer Branch Newsletter. We hope very much that you are keeping safe and well and have managed to find plenty to do during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Inevitably, there has been little opportunity on the rail network for our members to travel or observe. Many members would, in any case, have decided, or been required, to stay at home during this difficult and worrying time. Pleasingly, however, preserved railways are beginning to reopen this month, albeit with pre booking, social distancing and other safety requirements in place. So there is now somewhere of interest to go, provided you can travel to the venue safely.

In the RCTS, an important step forward in recent weeks has been the renewed availability of the print version of the RO. If you usually have the RO in this form, you should have received your bumper bundle of the May, June and July issues a couple of weeks ago. If they have not yet arrived do get in touch with David Goddard, Membership Secretary, either by e-mail to membership@rcts.org.uk or telephone on 0118 988 8581. If you normally use the Society website to read or download the digital version of the RO, you will probably know that it has been there for you online and on time throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Any Society member who has not yet tried the magazine in this format and has the electronic means to do so please get in touch with Peter Wilson (contact details below) who can send you a set of notes prepared by Irene Rabbits, Branch Liaison Secretary, describing how to do so.

At Branch level, it does seem a long time since the last Newsletter from us, in March, which announced the cancellation of all our Branch meetings for the rest of the season, in common with all other branches. Our Spring afternoon meeting in Redhill on 17 March had already been cancelled. At that time we had recently enjoyed our Branch AGM evening in Croydon and were able to let you know the outcome of the election of officers at the AGM and provide reports on the other activities held during the evening. We now enclose, as promised then, the Minutes of the AGM and - for those members who receive a postal copy of this Newsletter and were not at the AGM - copies of the papers presented at the Meeting.

Since that time, led by the initiative, technical experience and enthusiasm of Jeremy Harrison, our Branch Treasurer and Web Co-ordinator, the Branch Committee agreed that we should explore the possibility of arranging virtual meetings using the online Zoom platform, initially to test whether they would be possible without too many upsets and to see whether anyone would want to join us on their computer, iPad or whatever. After a couple of trial sessions, we agreed to go ahead with two evenings of members' photographic images, on 11 May and 8 June, the success of which has led the Branch to plan and hold a programme of virtual meetings through the Summer, which will continue until we are able to resume normal indoor meetings. David Jackman, Society Webmaster, then agreed to show an evening of "*More Southern from the RCTS Photographic Archive*" on 13 July. A report on the May meeting appears in *Branch News* on page 496 of the July RO, as does a note on *RCTS Zoom On-line Meetings* by Jeremy.

A further CSL Branch online meeting has been arranged for 10 August when Phil Deaves will present "*From Platform Bench to Viaduct Maintenance: An explanation of all the things that have to be thought of (even if you didn't) before opening a new station or introducing a new train service*". Other branches have also begun to hold virtual meetings, and a report on one held by South Essex Branch also appears in *Branch News* in the July RO.

So far our online meetings have attracted an increasing virtual audience. We would welcome more attendees and would encourage you to give it a go if you can but have not so far tried it. As an attendee, all you need is access to the internet. Zoom lets you participate in virtual meetings through a computer, tablet or smart phone. You can see and hear other participants and, provided you have a web-cam and microphone, they can see and hear you. You can also view a presentation, made by one of the other participants, through the system. "Zoom - a Simple Guide to Attending Meetings" has been produced and is available by e-mail from Jeremy Harrison or by post from Peter Wilson.

For our next indoor meetings season starting this September, a PROVISIONAL Programme of what we have planned between now and December this year is enclosed. There is no doubt that the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue for at least the first part of the new season and, for this reason, the first two meetings of the new season have had to be changed from those announced at the Branch AGM, both in terms of subject and presentationally - they are now, as you can see, in the Programme as online meetings. The 14 September meeting "*Southern Steam 1899-1961: Black & White images from the LCGB Ken Nunn collection*" replaces the evening of "*Southern Steam 1897-1967: Videos from Screen Archive South East and West Sussex Record Office*" which we had planned; and the afternoon meeting on 22 September "*The Restoration of 34081 92 Squadron by Steve Lacey*" is in place of "*Southern Coaches by Mike King*" which we had arranged for our Autumn afternoon meeting in Redhill. We hope to be able to reinstate both the meetings we had originally programmed for September (and also those we were unable to hold in March at Redhill, and April and May in Croydon) on future occasions when conventional meetings are again possible.

While we hope to be able to resume conventional meetings in October (and will do so as soon as possible), that is by no means certain. Future meetings of a conventional nature will depend on when our meeting venues in Croydon and Redhill are able to reopen for group meetings such as ours and, at present, that looks unlikely before October at the earliest. We will then, of course, have to take account of the continuing safety measures required by the venues, whether members will want to come and the viability of holding meetings in those circumstances. With all this in mind, the meetings in the Programme for October to December are very much "subject to confirmation". If we cannot hold any of them as conventional meetings we will move them online with, we expect, the same subject and speaker per meeting as in the Programme.

We all live in an increasingly changing world. Without doubt, the best way to keep abreast of what is happening in the Society is electronically. We fully realise that for many members that is not an option; the printed RO is still the place where they go for their information on the RCTS, and it is really good news that the printed magazine is back - though we understand that the print version of the August issue will be arriving a little late. As we have seen in the past few months, however, much can happen in the Society between the monthly publication of issues. Changes to branch meetings can occur sometimes without much warning; and they can appear on the Society website almost overnight.

Many Society branches have, like ours, lists of their local members (and some non RCTS members) who have asked to be informed by e-mail of any changes at branch level. If you are not on the CSL Branch e-mail list and, in the light of this, wish to join and have the technical means to do so, or can make arrangements with someone to do so, please send a request including your Society membership number to Jeremy Harrison, on croydon.web@rcts.org.uk

We look forward to seeing you, hopefully, sometime in the Autumn, either virtually or in person, and, meanwhile, keep safe and well.

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