

BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER

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Officers' Newsletter 219

6 March 2023

Dear All

There are quite a few things for this newsletter, mostly short items though, as it has been a while since the last one.

David Cole RIP

Some of you will know David Cole personally whilst others will have heard of him as a long-time member of the Society, former Society Treasurer, Chairman and more recently Vice President. He died suddenly on Friday 17 February 2023. David's funeral will be on Tuesday 21 March 2023 at 14:00 at Harwood Park Crematorium, Watton Road, Stevenage and then afterwards at the Orange Tree, Stevenage Road, Hitchin. Please let his son Richard know if you are going to attend – Richard.cole2@networkrail.co.uk. This email address is **only** to be shared as strictly necessary for those who intend to go to the funeral. Unfortunately, the sad news did not come through in time for anything other than a quick mention in the April RO. A proper obituary will be forthcoming. He will be sadly missed.

RCTS Insurance Policy

Advice that this is now available has already been provided but for those branches who need proof of insurance cover, for example at exhibitions, the To Whom It May Concern (TWIMC) letter is attached as Appendix 1. Those branches who already have a copy can safely ignore this item.

Branch Virtual and Hybrid Meetings

If your branch has virtual and/or hybrid meetings coming up, please let Jeremy Harrison know on croydon.web@rcts.org.uk so that he can include them on the reminder circulars that are sent round in advance of national virtual meetings. This is NOT compulsory but an additional way of advertising. If you would like to receive the email reminders for national and other virtual/hybrid meetings, please contact Jeremy. Alternatively, if you would like to apply direct, the link to subscribe is RCTS-National+subscribe@groups.io

There will be an update regarding the experiment on charging for accessing hybrid meetings once the trial has finished.

The information contained in this newsletter is for use of RCTS Officers and Members only and should not be communicated outside of the Society

Regional Meetings

This is a reminder to all Regional Groups to make sure that their arrangements are in place for this year's round of Regional Meetings (RM). It is important to confirm the details of date, time and place and let me know as soon as possible as I will need to arrange for a Trustee representative to be available for each one, and diaries are filling up rapidly. Please may I also have the names of who is going to chair the meeting and who will be taking minutes. This should be done in advance to avoid problems on the day and it helps me considerably in maintaining a proper record. Any queries please ask.

In addition to the regular items that have to be included on the RM Agenda (eg present, apologies, minutes of the last meeting), please let me know about other subjects that you would like to raise. This is your chance to have a relatively informal discussion with a member of the Board of Trustees and is part of the two-way feedback between branches and trustees. One question for debate has already come in but there is room for more.

Please do not forget that there are subsidies for up to two members per branch to attend RMs, and the cost of room hire and refreshments is reclaimable from central funds. Please see Treasurers' Guidance note 4 on Society Reimbursements for more details, or ask if you are not sure.

2023 Officers' Conference

First the bad news. No-one has come forward to take on the role of Members' Weekend Coordinator and no single branch or group of branches has volunteered for 2023. This means that there will be no Members' Weekend this year.

Now for the good news. It is still intended to have an Officers' Conference in 2023, if we can do so, with details to be decided - which goes hand in hand with Regional Meetings. Branch Officers from all the regions are eligible as well as all other Society Officers who are not also Branch Officers. It is a good opportunity for everyone to get together to discuss a wider range of subjects in a less formal and constrained setting than at the Society AGM.

Now the second piece of good news. Subsidies from central funds to attend RMs is covered above and subsidy is available in some circumstances for attending the Officers' Conference too. This is slightly different in that only one person per branch is eligible and it is dependent on the level of uncommitted funds available to that branch. The previous limit was uncommitted funds of less than £1500.

The figure was queried as it had not been reviewed for some years and there has been some uncertainty about what is meant by 'uncommitted' in this context. It means anything that the branch is committed to paying out which could be venue hire for the next season's meetings, exhibition stand costs where the branch has booked to attend, scheduled replacement of branch equipment, or any other essential item of branch expenditure that has already been agreed. If you are not sure what is covered, please ask.

As a result of the query, the Society Treasurer and the Trustees have agreed that the eligibility limit should be raised to uncommitted funds of £2000. So we do listen and can sometimes do what you ask.

Branch Activities and Social Media

We now have a Social Media Officer – Tim Bellenger, so for those branches who do not already use Society Media (and for those who do), please let Tim know if you would like him to include your upcoming branch meetings in his official tweets. He can be contacted on social_media@rcts.org.uk. This is another way to get information on branch activities out to the wider public and could help boost branch membership – especially younger members - at the same time. Tim can pick up some information from the RCTS website so this is another reason for keeping your branch web pages up to date. Please contact Tim for further information.

Training Videos

Please do not forget that there are some excellent training videos on the officers' section of the website. You will need to be registered as an officer to access these so please ask our Digital Officer Matthew Shaw if you need help. If you would like more detailed or advanced training or to have other subjects covered, please let me know so that we can work together with Matthew and other relevant officers to tailor training to what you need.

2023 Members' Day and Annual General Meeting

Remember to put Saturday 22 April 2023 in your diary for what will be an excellent day out. Not everyone will relish the thought of an Annual General Meeting but it is an important part of the Society's business and something that we have to do. This is where every member has the chance to ask questions of the Trustees and we will do our best to give answers. You also have the chance to vote in, or not, as you choose, those Trustees who are up for appointment. Trustees are answerable to the membership and that includes me in my present role as a Trustee and Branch Liaison Officer – my current three year stint ends next year. This part of the day will be a hybrid meeting to enable as many members as possible to join in, even if they are unable to attend in person. If you do not take part, you have no excuse to complain afterwards about the outcomes.

To make the day more interesting, there will be two great speakers. At 11.00 Fraser Pithie will give a presentation entitled "A Railway Journey" (a summary of the history of British Railways and consideration of the issues that the railway faces today and for the future), and after the AGM, at around 15.30, Professor Francis Terry will talk about the "Ise Valley Railway" (about his extensive narrow-gauge steam railway at Finedon in Northamptonshire, now relocated to the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft).

The two illustrated presentations will be well worth the effort of attending and deserve our support. Please take part on 22 April 2023 and encourage your branch members to do so as well.

Kind regards

Irene

Appendix 1

HETTLE ANDREWS

Hettle Andrews &
Associates Ltd
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To Whom It May Concern

06th January 2023

RE: The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society

We are the insurance and risk management advisor to the above and we can confirm that the following insurance arrangements are in place:

Employers Liability

Insurer:	QBE UK Limited Via Salus Risk Solutions
Policy Number:	Y128661QBE0124A/3629383
Expiry Date:	31st December 2024
Limit of Indemnity:	£10,000,000 any one event

Public/Products Liability

Insurer:	QBE UK Limited Via Salus Risk Solutions
Policy Number:	Y128661QBE0124A/3629383
Expiry Date:	31st December 2024
Limit of Indemnity:	£5,000,000 any one event and in the aggregate in respect of Products Liability
Excess:	£250 in respect of Third-Party Property Damage claims

The above is a resume of cover in force which will be subject to the terms, conditions and exceptions of the policy. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best Regards,
Grace Owens, Cert CII
Client Advisor