

BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER

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Officers' Newsletter 229

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Dear All

There are a number of items in this Officers' Newsletter, some for information and some requests to read RCTS News, Officers' Newsletters and other official RCTS emails, as well as the RO, to make sure you do not miss anything important.

Email deliverability

Some of the leading email providers - including Google and Yahoo - have changed their policies regarding handling of emails from domains such as ours, rcts.org.uk. Previously, it was possible to use an email tool like Thunderbird to send emails from a personal account whilst appearing to be from an RCTS account. This is called "spoofing". In future, you must be sending from an authenticated email account. Not all email providers have adopted this policy yet, so the technique may appear to still work, but delivery to gmail accounts is unlikely to be successful.

Most RCTS accounts are forwarders only, not full mailboxes. They cannot be authenticated; therefore they cannot be used to send emails. Accounts can be converted to full accounts on request to our Digital Officer, but you will need to switch to this account when sending emails.

The RCTS online shops encountered this issue for a few days in early February. The confirmation emails were no longer being sent because the email account being used was only a forwarder. That has now been resolved successfully.

Membership Renewals - Update

Overall the migration of the Direct Debit renewals of membership has gone well with a few exceptions. The old system was being phased out so there was no option but to change how this was managed and a change to Go Cardless for direct debit was duly made. There were notifications via RCTS News and via the email with the reminder to renew towards the end of 2023 confirming the changes from the old direct debit system to the new Go Cardless direct debit. A small number of members did not notice the details in the email and rejected the Direct Debit mandate presented by Go Cardless not realising what it was for.

This misunderstanding, unfortunately, resulted in the Society being charged for rejected direct debit payments. So this is a polite request to remind your colleagues and Branch members about the change and ask them to open their official RCTS emails to make sure that they do not miss important information like this in future. Thank you for your help.

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

Society Insurance for 2024

This is a brief reminder that the Society's insurance policy has been updated as of 1 January 2024 so if you need an updated document confirming the cover, eg for Liability at Exhibitions or regarding insurance cover for Branch equipment, please ask by emailing liaison@rcts.org.uk

Authors Wanted

The Publications Committee is interested in making contact with any member who has an idea for a railway-themed book that the Society could publish. Whilst we have several members who have an interest in being authors there are not many topics that are being worked on at present.

Help can always be given to budding authors in terms of outlay, sourcing pictures and presenting the manuscript for publication. We also have a substantial Photo Archive which could be the subject of creating a book from within the collection. Then we only require a member who likes selecting, collecting images in a themed manner to create a book from the Archive's collection either by area, subject or photographer. So, if there is anybody out there who feels the creative urge to write, or just prepare captions on images they have chosen for a publication, please contact David Bird on publications@rcts.org.uk or mobile 07748 590556.

Branch Finances

There are still some Branch financial returns outstanding for the six months period to 31 October 2023, only five now but that is five too many! If you are having difficulty with your Branch financial returns PLEASE ASK FOR HELP now. This is important both for the Branch and for the Society as a whole.

It has become apparent that some Branches have low levels of funding which may be affecting their ability to provide a varied and good range of speakers because of possible expenses, eg travel/accommodation etc, that might be incurred on top of the usual cost of room hire and generally running meetings. We want you to have the best programme possible for your Branch members to help improve attendances, increase involvement, and with better attendance perhaps a greater pool of potential new committee members.

If you think this may apply to your Branch, or if you are not sure, please contact me with details so that we can discuss what you need and what information you will need to provide to back up the request. Do not leave it until you have run out of money. The only caveat is that your Branch financial submissions must be up-to-date to back up the request for additional funding. If they are not up to date yet, please still get in touch so we can resolve the problems.

You owe it to yourselves and your members to let us know if you need help but, most importantly, if we do not know you have a problem, we cannot do anything about it.

Rail 200 – Advance Warning

Rail 200 is being organized to celebrate 200 Years of Railways in the United Kingdom. Network Rail is organising an exhibition train and they would like the Society to be involved in its operation. There are three possible areas of participation:

- i) Helping with the supply of archive photographs for display on the train;
- ii) Promoting the RCTS and Society membership;
- iii) On-train non-safety-critical Stewards.

We plan to include this subject on the agenda for Regional Meetings this year looking at RCTS involvement and particularly how Branches can participate. This is a great opportunity for the RCTS as a whole, and the Branches, to gain wider recognition and new members so please bring your ideas to the Regional Meetings for discussion so that the best ones can be taken forward and put into place in good time for the celebrations.

If you would like to know more, please ask.

2023 Officers' Conference Minutes

The draft minutes will be circulated shortly in an Officers' Newsletter which will be dedicated mainly to that subject. Even if you were unable to attend Conference, I hope you will find it of interest.

Thank you for reading this Officers' Newsletter. Feedback is welcomed whether this is about the content, or subjects that you would like to have raised in future editions.

Kind regards

Irene