

RCTS Library – Purpose and Activities

Purpose of the Library

To support the research and general interests of the Society and its members in all aspects of railways, their history and operation in the UK and abroad – and also to serve the wider community of all those interested in railways.

To maintain a definitive collection of all publications produced by the Society from its founding in 1928, including its newsletters and magazine ('The Railway Observer').

To be a repository for the records of the activities and administration of the Society from its foundation.

Activities undertaken to achieve its purpose

1. Collecting and maintaining in good and usable condition
 - Books
 - Periodicals
 - Materials produced by railway companies and organisations related to railways (eg timetables, working instructions)
 - Notes and research material produced by RCTS members and others, past and present.
 - Files and documents in computer readable form held in various media
2. Providing indices, catalogues and other finding aids and maintaining them to assist the location of material appropriate to particular topics, including the provision of access to appropriate computerised on-line databases.
3. Arranging and storing the materials in as helpful a way as possible to promote its use.
4. Opening the library for use by Society members and others as often, and as long as, possible.
5. Operate a Scanning Centre for the purpose of digitising photographs, books, documents etc.
6. Promoting the facilities and services of the library as effectively as possible in the Society and in the wider railway enthusiast community.
7. Researching answers to enquiries on specific subjects by Society members and others.
8. Loaning materials to Society members in accordance with the policies made from time to time by the Society after considering advice from the Society Librarian and/or Archivist.

Operational matters

The maintenance of a safe and healthy environment for all who use and work in the library is paramount.

Charges may be made for some services, in particular for those who are not members of the Society.

The laws of copyright are to be properly observed in any copying of documents and other material that is undertaken at, or on behalf of, the library.

No activity associated with the library should create undue disturbance for users of the station or adjacent properties.

Tasks to be carried out

Books –

- Acquisition
- Evaluation / selection
- Allocating number / classifying
- Cataloguing
- Labelling / stamping
- Covering and other physical processing
- Shelving

Periodicals –

- Acquisition
- Storage while building up 'volumes'
- Allocating number /classifying
- Deciding details for binding – colour etc.
- Liaising with binding companies
- Preparing cover sheet for complete volumes
- Labelling / stamping / marking
- Cataloguing / listing
- Shelving

'Other' materials – Special collections

- Evaluating, selecting, filing, managing the following examples:
- Mike Page loco lists files
- Batteson Railway Acts summaries – original manuscript volumes
- Accident reports collection
- RCTS publications reference collection
- RCTS rail tour itinerary reference collection
- RCTS 'internal' archival material – minutes etc.

Digital/computer readable materials (various formats)

- Evaluation, selection, and acquisition
- Checking software requirements to use the material effectively
- Classifying, cataloguing
- Labelling and preparing for use
- Storing/shelving

Computing and IT equipment

- Choosing and installing suitable equipment
- Selecting and installing suitable software for the purposes of the library
- Managing the system so that it operates effectively and reliably
- Managing an internet connection
- Ensuring that the system remains secure against viruses etc.
- Protecting against misuse for non RCTS library related activities.

'Other' library equipment

- Acquiring, installing and managing suitable computer equipment and accessories for the operation of the services provided by the library
- Ensuring supplies of paper, toner etc. are maintained for such equipment.
- Arranging the servicing and maintenance as and when necessary.

Volunteers

- Recruiting
- Training
- Managing

Oversight and Communications with 'outstations' –

- Overseas periodicals
- Working Time Table collection
- Overseas periodical circulation

Facilities and layout

- Planning the layout and storage of material in as helpful a way as possible to assist users.
- Providing suitable signage to assist the location of material and facilities throughout the library.
- Providing suitable signage relating to safety issues, including emergency procedures and escape routes.

Administration –

- Acquisition and control of covering materials, stationery etc.
- Maintaining the catalogue and providing access by appropriate means
- Maintaining other records, lists and files
- Tidying shelves – shelving returned and used material etc.
- Preparing library rules and information sheets
- Providing information and news for RO and elsewhere
- Communicating with library helpers and potential helpers
- Allocating tasks to helpers, 'training' as necessary and monitoring 'performance'

Premises –

- Arranging maintenance and repairs
- Ensuring premises are safe for users and 'staff'
- Ensuring that heating and ventilation arrangements are adequately maintained throughout the year.

Financial -

- Administering payments for library stock, materials etc.
- Arranging payment of rent for premises
- Arranging payment for electricity and other bills

Promotion

- Arranging for promotion of the library, its services, its location and opening times to members of the Society and elsewhere.

Communicating with other libraries/librarians/similar

Draft 1 - Peter King
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