

RCTS

*The Railway Correspondence
and Travel Society*

Website www.rcts.org.uk

Branch Liaison Secretary

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NEWSLETTER No 19

MARCH 2005

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first Newsletter of the year, somewhat delayed for a number of reasons, however, we feel sure that you will find this informative and subsequently react to the action points that need your attention.

Enclosed are some more **Branch Fixture Programmes**, sadly some branches have yet to submit their latest programme for circulation whilst others have submitted theirs in an unreadable format. Word attachments are fine but any other type of file should be copied to the main body of the Electronic Mail Message and not sent as an attachment.

Officers Conference minutes are enclosed for Officers, Branch Secretaries and Branch Chair and for those branch committee members who also attended at Norwich. Otherwise branches should make their own photocopies for circulation amongst their own committee members. It is also important to allow the general membership sight of these minutes (and also of this and other newsletters) by having them available at your branch meetings.

Other important information is included and described within it's own title in this Newsletter.

2. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We are fast approaching the AGM where our hosts will be Milton Keynes Branch with the event centring on the Shenley Church Inn, Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes during the weekend **15th – 17th April 2005**. For more details please refer to the Society Web Site or the supplement pages in your February 2005 Railway Observer. Both include booking forms.

3. MEMBERS' WEEKEND & OFFICERS CONFERENCE 2005

Members and Branches are asked to be patient for the announcement of dates and venue for this year's event. Our host branch **Merseyside, Chester & North Wales** are experiencing difficulties in securing a venue that is not cost prohibitive. The days when there is any reduced price accommodation during the late autumn/early winter period seem to be a thing of the past as the leisure industry promotes weekend packages throughout the year. This type of marketing does not necessarily fall within the criteria of the type of event the Society holds. MCN Branch has had to widen their search and continue to actively communicate with hotels in an effort to secure accommodation and facilities. As soon as any details are confirmed an announcement will be made to members and branches by whatever means necessary at the time.

4. SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Non Renewals

Branches should by now have received listings of their respective non-renewals from Richard Morris and should be following these up by contacting those lapsed members with the view to get them to renew, or at least, establish any reason they may wish to give for not renewing.

Please report your findings to Richard Morris.

New Members

Following receipt of this Newsletter new procedures will be implemented in respect of advising New Members to branches. The object is to speed up contact between the branch and the new member.

Vron Cooke will email a copy of the New Member's details to Branch Secretaries as soon as the application is processed. Obviously if your branch cannot be contacted by Email then the postal service will be used. Once received, a courtesy call or letter should be sent to the new member giving them a welcome message and details of the branch programme.

Would all Branches please give thought to appointing a member/committee member who would be able to receive information on behalf of the branch where the appointed Secretary is not able to receive electronic messages.

As part of the progress the Society wishes to make it is proposed to have a regular Membership column in the RO. This would include information about new members and also a source for announcing other important membership announcements.

5. SOCIETY EMAIL ADDRESS DATA BASE

The Society has compiled a Members database from the Email addresses advised by members on their Membership Renewal documents. Branches and Members are reminded that this information is held confidentially under the terms of the Data Protection Act and will only be used by specific MC Members upon authority from the Society Secretary or Branch Liaison Secretary. This will be to communicate important information to members if there is no other speedy way that information can be forwarded. Examples being; an unexpected delay in the publication of the Railway Observer (to all members on the list) or if an important and urgent change took place regarding a branch, members of that branch could be selected from the database and be informed. This would be done by the MC and not by Branch Officers.

6. SOCIETY WEB SITE

Web Co-ordinator meeting – see below.

Discussions are currently taking place with an interested party in respect of introducing **e-commerce** to the web site, this will allow members and the public to purchase society merchandise across the web site.

Web Site News – as part of the ongoing information programme to branches and members Web Site News – 3 should appear in the March RO.

7. WEB CO-ORDINATOR MEETING 19th March 2005

The second daytime Branch Web Co-ordinator meeting has been arranged by David Kelso and Gordon Davies to take place at the Hylands Hotel Coventry (a short walk from Coventry Station). The get together will commence at 11.00 hours. This is open to all branches with their Web Co-ordinator and Secretary, Chairman or other suitable branch Committee Member. Those branches that do not have a web co-ordinator have been specifically invited. It is important that all branches make an effort to attend, there is no fear to be attached to this, as the object is to allow members the opportunity to gain an appreciation of what is involved. It does not necessarily follow that you have got to physically set up your own pages but to gain an understanding of what you can do to ensure that information about your branch appears on the web site.

8. BRANCH MEETINGS

In an effort to keep to keep members advised and informed about the activities within the Society branches are asked to provide a folder or folders with as much information as possible. This should include other Branches Fixture Programmes, Officers Conference Agenda and Minutes, Regional Meeting Agendas and Minutes (all Regions) and also any local publicity that is relevant to your area. Members should also be allowed the opportunity to receive copies via your branch if they want to digest them further than just a glimpse at the meeting.

9. SOUTH EAST BRANCH SURVEY

South East branch have recently conducted a survey amongst members who attend their branch meetings. This proved valuable interest with some surprising results and comments and the process is passed to all branches for their use. **Enclosed with this Newsletter** (to Branch Chair and Secretary only) is the proforma questionnaire that each branch can adapt for their own means. The MC would also be interested to hear of the results from branches and these can be sent to John Day. Try these at a meeting that you would expect a good attendance to give it maximum exposure.

10. SOCIETY LIBRARY

Branches and members should note that Librarian Terry Silcock will not be available until the end of March to deal with any society or library related matters.

If your branch wishes to change a Library Box at the Milton Keynes AGM please advise Terry no later than 28th March 2005 in order that he can prepare the exchange Box.

11. EMAIL LIST SERVER

Officers who have joined this list (RCTSOfficers@yahoogroups.com) should remember that if they change their Email address they should first un-subscribe then subscribe again with their new address this is done by first sending a message to RCTSOfficers-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com then RCTSOfficers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

If any society or branch officer with Email connections has not joined, this is a free service exclusive to the Society and is a quick, cheap and efficient way of improving internal society communications.

12. PUBLICATIONS ORDERING PROCESS

A revised Publications ordering process was announced at the Officers' Conference to ensure that everyone at branch level is made aware of this enclosed with this Newsletter is a copy of the Procedure and an order form. (Sent to Branch Chair and Secretary only). Please ensure that your Branch Officer responsible for ordering books is made aware of the procedure and is handed copies of the documents. If any branch would like an electronic copy please contact either John Day or Reg Wood who will be pleased to send the documents **as an attachment**.

13. 2005 REGIONAL MEETINGS

Below is a list of the Regional Meetings Dates and Venues together with the MC member who will attend each meeting. Please make your respective branches and MC visiting member aware of the agenda, and all relevant information prior to the meeting.

NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES: Saturday, 7th May – 11.00a.m. for 11.15a.m.

Methodist Church Hall, Gresley Way, Digswell (300yds from Welwyn North station)
Chairman: David Cole Tel. 01462 451184
Visiting MC Member: Alan Cooke

EMNESH: Wednesday, 11th May -- 11.00a.m.

Bank Top Station Museum, Darlington
Chairman: Carey Vessey Tel. 01482 351774
Visiting MC Member: John Day

LONDON & SOUTH: Saturday, 4th June 11.00a.m.

George & Dragon, Ightham, Kent
Chairman: Paul Snelling Tel. 07761 182704
Visiting MC Member: David Kelso

NORTH WEST & MIDLANDS: Saturday, 18th June, 12.00p.m.

The Town Crier, Station Road, Chester. (Opposite Chester station)
Chairman: Gordon Davies Tel. 01244 520710
Visiting MC Member: Tony Skinner

WESSEX Saturday, 18th June, 12.00p.m.

Chairman: Callum Macleod Tel. 01249 460315
Manvers Street Baptist Chapel, Bath
Visiting MC Member: David Bird

14.. SOCIETY HEADBOARDS

The Society owns a small number of Headboards, used in recent years on Railtours and AGM/Members' Weekend events, have you, or does your branch, have one or more in your possession. If yes, could you please advise John Day what you have. Your attention to this appreciated.

John Day, Ipswich, 9th March 2005