

RCTS

Railway Correspondence and Travel Society

Web Site: www.rcts.org.uk

Branch Organisation Secretary

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NEWSLETTER No 2

January 2001

First of all on behalf of the Management Committee we wish each and everyone one of you, your families, Branch Members' and Friends of the Society a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Now to the business side of matters.

Enclosed with this Newsletter: 75th Anniversary Publication's ideas.
Important Cardnet instructions and procedures.

For Branch Secretaries: Branch Fixture Programme for Bristol, and revised programmes for Hertfordshire & Ipswich Branches.

HOT OFF THE PRESS!!

60001 TO BE NAMED "THE RAILWAY OBSERVER"

A naming ceremony is planned for Friday 23rd February 2001 at EWS's Toton Depot where, at 12.00, Class 60 Number 60001 will be adorned with the plates previously displayed on 37890. Branch secretaries should have already received notification of this from Rodney Lissenden outlining the event and the controls on the day. This event is BY INVITATION ONLY and is NOT a depot visit. Rodney will need to know who from your Branch will be attending and the registration number of any vehicle being used. This event will be strictly controlled by EWS and your co-operation in adhering to the restrictions will be much appreciated.

COMMENT

This is truly a bumper issue with important announcements coming in right up to publication date.

It is always encouraging to receive constructive criticism and following my first missive a few readers commented on the size of type used. Hopefully you will not need a magnifying glass to read this "minimally enlarged" version. If you are a first time reader of a Society Newsletter then we extend a very warm welcome to you.

Thank you to those of you who have kept me up to date with your Branch information whether it be AGM Minutes, fixture changes, newsletters or just a phone call. All this is appreciated and helps me build up a comprehensive profile of your activities.

This Newsletter was posted, by second class post, on Tuesday 23rd January 2001. I would be interested to know at some stage just how long it takes to reach you!

MEMBERS' WEEKEND AND OFFICERS CONFERENCE

This year we have moved the dates by three weeks and will hold our annual get together during the weekend of Friday 26th to Sunday 28th October. This gives an extra hour of light on the first two afternoons and "an extra hour" in bed on Sunday morning. Our proposed venue is in the Manchester area with Lancashire & North West Branch as the host branch. More details will be passed to Branches once negotiations with the Hotel are completed and confirmation received.

TREASURERS REPORT

Enclosed with this Newsletter are important instructions regarding the use and administration of the Cardnet machines held by some branches. It is important that Secretaries and/ or Chairmen ensure that Committee Members, Branch Treasurers and Sales Stand volunteers are made fully aware of the procedures in place when accepting payment via this method. It should be noted that this facility is not available for Debit Cards.

John and the Management Committee would like to extend thanks to Branches for their co-operation in promptly submitting year end Branch Financial and Publication returns. As at 20th January(yesterday, as this is being typed) only one return is outstanding. This represents the highest level of returns received since John became Treasurer.

JD's note: The benchmark has been set. Please continue this support for Tony when he takes over.

New Treasurer

Please note that all financial matters should continue to be addressed to John Redgate. It is expected that Tony Skinner will take over the role some time in March and everyone will be informed once the effective change over date is agreed.

SOCIETY WEB SITE

An Information Technology (IT) sub committee has been formed to oversee the administration of the site run very ably by David Kelso. Steve Ollive and Eric Palmer have agreed to serve on this. A look at the Web Site, which is a constant source of information, shows just how much work has gone into its maintenance. The number of "visitors" to the site is very encouraging and the Branches that contribute to this should be commended. We look forward to the day when every branch has a Web Correspondent.

SOCIETY PUBLICITY

It had been hoped to produce a new poster by now, unfortunately difficulties have arisen equating cost and quality. In short, the Society demands better quality than the examples initially provided. However, Branches should have received a supply of the new Membership Pack Folders. These were available at Doncaster and should be used once old stocks have been exhausted. Don't forget though to ensure current documentation is put in the folder.

PENS AND BOOKMARKS

Society Pens and Bookmarks were distributed to Branches at Doncaster. Those not in attendance can either arrange for a supply to be sent to them, or alternatively collect them at the AGM in Exeter. For Branches already holding stocks it would be interesting to get some feedback on how the new items have been received. This will help us review our merchandising strategy in the

future. Have you any ideas for similar types of merchandise? Items such as Baseball Caps and Mouse Mats have been suggested - let us have your suggestions!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

In a few days time our "ex-members" will realise they are not getting the RO delivered any more. To combat this you should soon be receiving from Peter Davies, your Branch list of "Non Renewals". Please make every effort to personally contact these lapsed members in order to encourage them to renew their subscription. If, once contact has been made, there are views they wish to express please make a note of these and pass them to Peter. It may help us in future to recognise some of the reasons for non-renewal.

Don't forget to ensure that your New Member Packs have the correct documents inserted. New Publications lists and order forms should be available shortly. Also remember that New Members must apply to Peter Davies on the form provided and not to John Edgington as has been for a number of years. A limited supply of new forms was sent out earlier this month. If you use old stock please remember to amend the contact name.

New Members

Each Branch receives a single list of new members to the Society every month. What action do you take if you see a new member allocated to your Branch? As a follow up, Branches should make direct contact with their own new members. A letter of welcome, enclosing a copy of the Branch Fixture list, would be a great start. Give them a contact name and number to call if they want to obtain information and explain how they would be made welcome at meetings. Tell them if you have a sales stand, what you sell, and what facilities you offer at meetings. In fact anything that may help the member participate in the branch activities and subsequently renew their membership each year.

BRANCH BOUNDARIES

This was discussed at our December MC meeting and whilst we expect the matter to continue to provoke discussion there are some reasonable and logical solutions. It is sensible to allocate members to branches geographically for a number of reasons. We also know that the Society Rules allow members to attend ANY Branch Meeting regardless of which Branch they are allocated to. There are no points to be gained from territorial advantages and we should at least be considering our members' best interests. Thoughts coming from regional meetings have helped considerably and as long as certain protocols are observed there should only be the need to change boundaries and allocations when a new branch is formed. If a Branch recognises that members regularly visit from other branches or where there are a number of members living close to boundaries between more than one branch then out of courtesy secretaries should communicate between themselves and discuss mailing arrangements for fixture lists. It is better that a member gets contact from two/three branches rather than just one (or even none).

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Those Branches who have yet to arrange this year's Regional Meeting are urged to get together and arrange dates as soon as possible. At our next MC meeting we will be discussing any unresolved issues from previous meetings in order to report back in the next newsletter. One of the proposals I have put forward is to introduce a structure following these meetings in that I would Chair a meeting of the Chairmen of each regional group in order to put all the issues into the melting pot. Unresolved issues could then be referred to the MC for discussion at MC meetings or put on the agenda for the Officers' Conference in the autumn. In order for this to work, ideally

groups should meet before the end of July to allow the follow up meeting to take place either during late August or early September. I appreciate that this will not be easy to organise but am sure with co-operation we can move in the right direction.

There are some obvious benefits to a structured programme. For example; One branch could gather supplies and pass these to other branches within their group. This should allow a smoother, and hopefully, a more cost effective distribution network. Library boxes could be transferred (see separate heading for this item). Any comments on this would be more than welcome.

Regional groups are also requested to agree on an "identity" for their group. A distinctive name, possibly appropriate to the regions represented, would make reporting easier and other groups would immediately be able to identify with their counterparts across the nation.

LIBRARY BOXES

Five Branches continue to support the Library by taking a library box to meetings for the benefit of members. With your help we could expand this to more Branches as there are a number of benefits to be derived. Obviously it gives members the opportunity to borrow books covering subjects they wish, whether for casual reading or research. Our Librarian is always pressed for space on the shelves so spreading our stock around branches allows more space to display otherwise stored items.

There are also opportunities for a pseudo-distribution system, the MC meets twice a year for all day meetings, there is the AGM, the Members' Weekend and the Regional Meetings. Between us all it should not be too difficult, provided sufficient notice is given, to transport boxes through these sources. If you would like to arrange for your Branch to have a box then contact Terry Silcock either by telephone (See RO), via the Web Site or by Email.

PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

NEW PUBLICATIONS - AVAILABLE NOW!!!!!!

THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

The Erewash Valley lines, Pinxton Branch, Aysworth-Ilkeston, Heanor & Stanton Branches

The GN built their own network to access the Derbyshire coalfield to compete with the Midland Railway and gain a fair share of the lucrative traffic, not only coal but also iron ore to the sprawling Stanton complex. Author Alf Henshaw uses his inside local railwayman's intimate knowledge to bring to life the complex railway operations in North Notts. His signalling knowledge is used to the full with signals, boxes and layouts featured. The Stanton complex of branches and workings is included, with the major Giltbrook and Bennerley viaducts also featured. This third book in the best selling series continues the meticulous detail of its sisters. This is the latest book in a series of four. Size 212 x 272mm, laminated cover, 155 pages, 325 illustrations(**£15.95**) Member Price with Discount Voucher from the January RO(**£13.00**) until 31st July 2001.

THE BIRKENHEAD RAILWAY

(LMS & GW Joint)

Today's successful electric railway between Chester and Birkenhead is in sharp contrast to the earlier story of the line. At first passengers were the major earner, but opening of other lines at Chester and the development of Ellesmere Port brought major freight operations. The main line was quadrupled, and the dock system eventually grew to 48 miles. Author Bruce Maund brings to life the detailed and fascinating tale of the complete system, the machinations of expanding railway companies to get control and, in the end, an object lesson in how two great rivals found a

satisfactory *modus operandi* to run it with reasonable harmony for almost 90 years. Compulsory reading for all those involved in today's fragmented railways! Page size 207 x 272mm, laminated cover, 136 pages, 140 illustrations. (£14.95) Member Price with Discount Voucher from the January RO. (£12.00) until 31st July 2001.

Copies are now available from the Society's Publications Officer Geoff Baylis. If you have not already placed an order for your Branch, or not sure whether you have, then contact Geoff to secure a supply. Do not assume you will be sent supplies without first requesting them.

Don't forget the "Special Offer" Buy Western Change for only £5.00 when you buy another Society Publication.

Please ensure that this information is circulated throughout your Branch, especially to those responsible for your Sales Stand.

EAST MIDLANDS BRANCH

To celebrate 50 years of activity this years Annual Branch Dinner will be held on 24th February 2001 at The Cotswold Hotel, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. This is a new venue that offers a new menu, and a new price of £12.50. Visit the Web Site for a booking form or contact John Hitchens at East Midlands.

The Branch has arranged a visit to the Foxfield Railway on Saturday 21st May 2001. Departure will be from Nottingham Station at 11.30 with return arrival at 17.45. Whilst there participants will be informed of the railway's development plans and enjoy a journey to Dilhorne Park. There will be opportunities to photograph a short train working on Foxfield bank then, after a break at Cavershall Road station, there will be a guided tour of the sheds.

As for the Branch Dinner contact John Hitchens at 27 Oak Street, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham NG17 7HJ.

MEETING DATES

MC All day meeting: 17 February 2001
Annual General Meeting: 28 April 2001 - Exeter
Authors Conference: 6 October 2001
Members Weekend: 26-28 October 2001 - (Manchester Area)

COMING SOON

Newsletter Number 3 - Items for Newsletter 3 must be with me no later than 19th March 2001
Officers Conference Minutes
Society Handbook (It is hoped to have draft copies at the AGM)

Regards to you all.

John

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Dear Branch Secretary,

75th Anniversary Publications

At the Publications Committee meeting held on 20 January two ideas were proposed as possible publications to celebrate our 75th anniversary in 2003:

RCTS Through the Decades

This is a working title for an idea which would incorporate an introductory history of the RCTS, and then individual chapters featuring activities/themes/articles reprinted from the RO for each of the decades of our Society history 1920's-2000's.

An example of these could be 1950's Railtours, 1960's Scottish shed tours with Vic Forster, 1970's LNER Publications etc.

The intention would be to publish this as an additional RO issued free to members between **48-64** pages.

In order to progress this idea can you please discuss this at your next Branch Committee. If you feel you have a budding author in your ranks, someone who would be prepared to write one chapter covering a decade approximately 4-5 RO pages inclusive of illustrations featuring Group photographs of members / Railtours /shed visit etc. then please can you forward names to the Society Chairman Rodney Lissenden by 30 April 2001.

Locomotive Works

This is an idea which would feature chapters on the major works with details of Locomotives on Works over the decades either taken from members personal observations or from the notes published in the RO.

A number of Branches have actively undertaken regular Works visits over the years and it is suggested that to spread the task of producing this publication it should be possible for individual Branches to come up with authors for their local works. In addition there would be a need to feature illustrations from Branch visits with a preference for unpublished photographs.

An outline chapter for each Works would feature:
Brief history of Works
Visits over the decades

Once again for this Publication to get off the drawing board we seek your assistance in helping to recommend authors for each of the works. Can you please discuss at your Branch Committee and Branch Meetings and again forward details of prospective authors to Rodney Lissenden.

Whilst these are two ideas the Publications Committee would welcome any other ideas which must include suggestions as to potential authors and working titles.

Rodney is looking forward to receiving your replies by no later than 30 April

John Day
Branch Organisation Secretary