

RCTS

Railway Correspondence and Travel Society

Web Site: www.rcts.org.uk

Branch Organisation Secretary

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NEWSLETTER No 3

23 March 2001

ENCLOSURES

To all: Officers Conference Minutes - Doncaster 2000 (*unless previously delivered by hand*)

Also minutes for other delegates where not included in above.

Proposed Agenda for Regional Meetings

Single Sheet Notice re: Mugs and Stationery

To Secretaries: Resignation Letters applicable to your Branch for information.

COMMENT

Once again a bumper issue is produced, and like No 2, copy was coming in right up to the deadline. To start the ball rolling thank you to those of you who made favourable comment about the last issue and for responding with a "delivery date". You will recall that second class post was used, and many received the Newsletter the NEXT morning. At present, Alan Cooke, our Secretary holds the record with delivery at 06.50 the next morning, just 15 hours after posting. So Second Class post will be used again but it is doubtful whether the "speed of delivery" can be maintained!

A number of issues are raised in this issue, one I would like to highlight is the Membership section where the subject on non-renewals is high profile as are some of the points raised. Your attention to that would be appreciated.

60001 NAMED "RAILWAY OBSERVER"

As pictured in the March RO, 60001 was named Railway Observer, at Toton on 23rd February. Forty members representing the Management Committee and eighteen branches attended the event. Following the naming an informal break was taken at The Post House nearby. Our thanks go to EWS for making the whole thing possible and to East Midlands Branch for setting up the hospitality afterwards. Visit our Web Site for pictures and a full report.

The wanderings of "OUR LOCO" are being recorded, along similar lines to those that 37890 ran on. If you see 60001, please notify Bob Wallen, 3 Rothbury Avenue, Trowell, Nottingham NG9 3RQ by post or Email: Bob@rwallen.freemove.co.uk. Please give as much information about 60001's train working's as possible. Thanks for your help with this one.

AGM AT EXETER

You should by now have received all the information regarding the AGM Weekend at Exeter that takes place from Friday 27th April until Sunday 29th April. Remember that ALL bookings should be sent to Tom Reardon to reach him no later than 11th April. If you have not already booked then the deadline is looming very fast. A varied and interesting programme, as advertised in the March RO insert, has been arranged and hopefully there will be something of interest for everyone. Remember, book early to avoid disappointment.

As for the AGM on Saturday 27th April the proposed "Amendments to Rules" were issued on a separate sheet enclosed with the March RO and should be brought along with you to assist you when these are discussed and voted on.

MEMBERS' WEEKEND

As earlier advised the Members' Weekend will take place from Friday 26th October until Sunday 28th October and will be based at The Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham. The Hotel has seen considerable refurbishment since we were there in 1982. Our hosts, Lancashire and North West Branch are currently putting together a programme of events for the weekend, details of which will be published as soon as they are confirmed. We have secured room rates across the board of £32.50 per person per night, including breakfast.

BRANCH FIXTURE PROGRAMMES

There is a need to update the procedures on how Branches advise their fixtures. Each Branch must send a copy of their Branch Fixtures, and any subsequent amendments to, John Richards, Ronnie McAdam (See January 2001 insert for addresses), and now additionally David Kelso. This will allow David to put your fixtures onto your Branch Page on the Society's Web Site at www.rcts.org.uk. Twenty-six copies should also be sent to me in order that I can circulate these to all Branches. However, If you wish to send these electronically, then please do so. I can copy them from file and distribute.

MEMBERSHIP

All branches should have received a list of non-renewals and should be following these up in an attempt to persuade individuals to consider re-joining. If a former member cannot be persuaded it may help the Society if reasons are noted at the time contact is made.

Whilst on the subject of "resignations" I believe this is the first time that letters are being forwarded to Secretaries. One point I think is important enough to warrant urgent attention is the fact the Society has sent renewal reminders to deceased members. I know that this is a difficult area, if we do not know of the passing of a member, then obviously correspondence will be generated. This is disturbing and upsetting for the families involved who might well have overlooked notifying the Society during their period of mourning. It is also embarrassing for the Society but sometimes unavoidable if the member does not attend meeting or communicate with other members. This plea goes out to each Branch to ask members to pass on information that they hear about such instances and then take on the responsibility of informing Peter Davies who can then update the membership list accordingly.

SOCIETY NAME BADGES

All Branch Committee members at both indoor and outdoor events must wear a Society Badge with their name on. This includes volunteers at outdoor events as well as elected officers of your branch. These are readily available from Gordon Davies on 01244 520710 or write to 13 Blackthorn Close, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PY. Every effort will be made to send badges by "return of post".

PUBLICATIONS

SPECIAL OFFER

The Publications Committee has agreed that we will offer a special promotion on the two Highland Railway Locomotive books. The current cover price is Book 1 £12-95 and Book 2 £16-95, both for a total £29-90.

We have decided to promote the set of two for an inclusive price of £20-00 at Branches and exhibitions and £23-50 by post where packing and postal costs are incurred.

Branches are asked to implement this immediately and arrange local publicity at meetings and exhibitions.

Promotion information will be included in the next Publications List, expected to be published in the early summer 2001.

Branch Publications Sales to Local Book Retailers

A number of Branches are active in this area. The advantage to the Society being of course the introduction of our books to new local markets, the advantage to the Branch being that the Branch attracts a commission of 15% of the cover price of the books sold to increase its Branch funds.

The Publications Committee is keen to expand this local sales effort as a prelude to further local initiatives in 2003.

We have found from our experiences in the East Midlands and Bristol branches with local interest books there that a plan with most members of the committee lending a hand has the most impact and is most successful if a few suggestions are carried through: -

- Use Yellow Pages or your Thomson Local Directory to find lists of booksellers, souvenir shops and tourist information centres, also libraries;
- Make sure your volunteers have stocks of the new book, the latest Publications List (this will be supplied shortly by Peter Davies) and a few of our other popular titles to take with them to the shops;
- Initially, select a sample of book retailers, large and small, to visit and introduce the Society and its books. Remember that the large book chains local managers have authority to order stocks of local interest books - eg: Waterstones Nottingham have just ordered 36 copies of the new *GNR in the East Midlands third book* together with orders for books 1 and 2, all from the local branch;
- DON'T expect the book sales member of your committee to do all this work - he can't and won't!!!!

We would imagine most of your local sales will be on a payment-on-delivery basis. Our terms to retailers are to offer 25% discount on orders up to £25 and 33.3% on higher values. Most will expect to be handed an invoice covering the sale to cover his audit trail. Should you need invoice or delivery note pads, contact Geoff Baylis on 01926 402651 (Mobile 0402 237681).

One or two might expect credit, particularly the larger shops. In this case check the address and person to whom the invoice needs to be sent, and ensure the buyer understands our terms of supply are maximum 30 days credit. ALWAYS WRITE A DELIVERY NOTE - in triplicate -, AND

ON DELIVERY BY YOUR VOLUNTEER OBTAIN A RECEIVING SIGNATURE FROM A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE SHOP'S BUYING STAFF. Pass this then to Geoff Baylis for him to invoice.

Sales are accounted for through your normal branch book sales return, and ALL SALES ATTRACT 15% BRANCH COMMISSION.

BRANCH STOCK

Branches are reminded to order stock from Geoff Baylis. Geoff would prefer to receive written orders on the appropriate Society Order Form. Please avoid phoning orders through unless it is absolutely urgent and essential. Also note there is a Publications List on our Web Site and an order form can be downloaded from there.

Feedback on the progress of sales/distribution of pens and bookmarks would be appreciated. This will allow us to monitor interest and decide on any future merchandise.

Don't forget that David Cole administers the Society's Collection of Black & White photographs and individual orders or stock for Branch Sales Stands can be ordered through him.

WEB SITE

The Society Web Site goes from strength to strength with numerous visits by web-browsers. We are gaining some new members via this medium which is very encouraging so it is in everyone's best interests to attempt to have an active Web Correspondent in each branch. Preferably one who can supply accurate and time critical information for inclusion in one of the many pages that make our site interesting and successful.

Below is an edited missive from our Webmaster David Kelso which I hope branches will digest and allow these comments to form the basis of discussion locally and at Regional Meetings.

"We now have 16 branch Web Correspondents out of a total of 25 Branches and this is a very poor reflection on the recognition by some branches of the importance of the web site to the Society's future. Unfortunately some branches that have appointed a web correspondent have then failed to provide material from their branch.

The web site continues to expand but the rate of expansion is now becoming limited by the ability of one person to develop new pages AND keep the existing pages up to date. For this reason a number of objectives including an archive of back issues of the RO and credit card payment on line have not been achieved.

Therefore not only do we need active web correspondents from the remaining branches but we also need volunteers to take over and develop/maintain specific pages and projects.

We are often asked what is needed from branches for the web site. The best answer to this question is to take a look at the web site and see what others have provided and then decide what your branch can contribute. For example, we have more than one branch that covers the West Coast main line yet we have nothing on the site about the West Coast Upgrade. The decisions of Corus are going to impact freight traffic to and from the steel industry, traffic is going to change forever in the near future. More than one branch covers the major steel plants and contributions on what to see where and when before it is too late would make good web site material.

Also we are often asked how does a branch supply material to the webmaster.

Text can be supplied as an email attachment as a rtf file or Word .doc file.

Pictures can be supplied as jpg files and should be scanned to a size no bigger than 70Mb. Alternatively prints or transparencies can be mailed to the webmaster for scanning. If a branch has somebody who can supply already formatted web pages in html then this is even better. If a volunteer is found who is willing to develop web pages then the Society will supply software (MS FrontPage) together with page templates."

REGIONAL MEETINGS

As we approach the time when this year's Regional Meetings should start to take place now seems an appropriate time to list which groups Branches are allocated to. As mentioned earlier, it would be beneficial for each group to come up with a name that will give it its own identity. Until this happens it will of course be necessary to continue to call them by "area". Enclosed with this Newsletter is a proposed Agenda for the Meetings. Branches should each include at least one item for discussion within their group. This need not be advised in advance to me but should be noted to the Chairman of your Group for inclusion in the final Agenda. Groups are formed as follows;

AREA	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE
ADOPTED NAME	?			LONDON AND SOUTH	NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES
Date/Venue of Next Meeting	Thu 17 th May Darlington			Sat 9 th June Ightham, Kent	Sat 9 th June Digswell, Herts
Formation of Group	Scotland	Lancashire & North West	Bristol	South Essex	Hertfordshire
	North East	Merseyside Chester & North Wales	Cheltenham	South East	Ipswich
	West Riding	West Midlands	Thames Valley	South of England	Northampton
	Humberside	Furness Lakes & Lune	Surrey	London	Peterborough
	Sheffield		West of England	Sussex	Milton Keynes
	East Midlands				

NEW BRANCHES

An action point that is on the agenda for the five Regional Meetings is, for each group, between the Branches within that group, to form at least one new branch. The Society accepts that this is a challenge, so to help any new branch get on its feet, will offer a grant of £250.00 to each new branch's fund. Discussions from Regional Meetings in the past have identified a number of areas where new Branches could be formed. For example, Swindon, Salisbury, Doncaster, South of Manchester, Hitchin, and Derby, all spring to mind. Remember the MC is there to help, not hinder, so hopefully we can all work together on this issue.

LIBRARY

Below is a list of Library dates up to mid - August 2001. Some of the latter dates, particularly Saturdays could be subject to alteration in the event of changing circumstances.

Library Address: 23 Hillingdon Road, UXBRIDGE. (RCTS, SLS, HMRS MEMBERS ONLY)

APRIL: Tuesday 10th (no TS) - Wednesday 18th - Tuesday 24th
MAY: Wednesday 2nd - Saturday 12th - , Tuesday 22nd - Wednesday 30th
JUNE: Saturday 9th -- Tuesday 19th - Wednesday 27th,
JULY: Thursday 5th - Saturday 14th - Tuesday 24th
AUGUST: Wednesday 1st - Thursday 9th

Weekday evening opening times are 1700 - 2000 only. Saturdays: 14.30- 17.00hrs. Should a deputy have to attend opening hours will not be more than those stated and may have to be curtailed to open later and close earlier.

The Librarian and RCTS accepts no liability if *force majeure* prevents opening at these times, although there has never been such an occurrence in the 21 years that the Library has operated from Uxbridge.

BRANCH LOAN BOXES

It is pleasing to report that following the request for more branches to take on a Library Box from which their members can borrow a selection of Library books. Ipswich branch has resumed having a box, and Hertfordshire is going to have a box for a trial period. The AGM at Exeter could be the opportunity for your branch to collect a box of about 30 books.

If interested please contact Terry Silcock, by post, FAX or E-mail as listed in current RO's. Please note though that Terry will not be available until after Easter.

PROJECT - NAROH

This project stands for National Archive of Railway Oral History. The aims of the project are to get long serving and career railwaymen/women, whether still employed or retired to talk about their life on the railways. The recorded end project will then be archived for future reference and an obvious historic value. The Society already has at least one member who has contributed to this. Should anyone, or any Branch that knows of any member willing to contribute to this valuable work then please contact: Callum MacLeod on 01249 460315

MEDIA RELATIONS

Your attention is drawn to Society Rule 9 which states: "No member or other person may, without consent of the Management Committee, use the name of the Society or the Railway Observer in any communication (written or verbal) to any railway, company, authority or other person, nor in any communication with the press or media, nor at any railway or other premises. Any breach of this rule will render the person concerned liable to immediate expulsion from the Society with consequent loss of all privileges and forfeiture of subscription."

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

April 28 th /29 th	AGM Weekend: Exeter
14 th May 2001	Copy Information for Newsletter 4
19 th May 2001	Publication Date for Newsletter 4
22 nd May - 8 th July	Branch Liaison Officer - Abroad(USA) Not contactable
October 26 th -28 th :	Members' Weekend - Cresta Court Hotel Altrincham