



APRIL 2009

Website: www.rcts.org.uk

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

W. Gordon Davies, 13 Blackthorn Close, Broughton, Chester, CH4 0PY

Telephone: 01244 520710 ----- e-mail: liaison@rcts.org.uk

Will Branch Chairmen please take particular notice of item 32.01 relating to the change of Society Treasurer

32.01 SOCIETY TREASURER

As you will have read in the March RO Tony Skinner has decided to step down from his role as Society Treasurer. His successor is Reg Wood who will also be relinquishing his job as Publications Officer. Can all Branch Chairmen ensure that their Branch Treasurer's have completed ALL their April returns and sent them in the normal way to Tony Skinner by **FRIDAY 15th of May**. This will enable Tony to process all outstanding returns prior to Reg taking on his new role as from the 1st of June.

Reg's contact details are:-

A.R. Wood, 70 Heathfields, Downend, Bristol, BS16 6HS. Tel: 0117 302 6634.

e-mail: treasurer@rcts.org

32.02 SOCIETY SECRETARY

John Day has also decided to step down from his position as Society Secretary. Alan Cooke who has held the position in the past has now taken on this role from John following the AGM.

Alan's contact details are:-

Alan Cooke, 23 Haig Drive, Slough SL1 9HA. Tel. 01753 571257

e-mail: secretary@rcts.org.uk

32.03 CARDNET

For those branches that operate a CARDNET imprinter at sales stands and exhibitions for the receipt of payment from customers using a credit/debit cards please note that the instructions on what type of card that are acceptable has been revised.

For clarity the following ARE THE ONLY CARDS that should be accepted:

Mastercards beginning **51, 52, 53, 54 or 55**

VISA cards beginning **4** But NOT VISA Electron cards 4175, 4917, 4913, 4508 or 4844

A revised instruction sheet with the correct CARDNET operating instructions is attached as **APPENDIX A**. Please ensure that your Branch Treasurer and Sales Officer have a copy of the revised instructions which should be taken to all sales events and stand attendees should be briefed before each event commences.

32.04 BRANCH CHEQUE SIGNATURES

To ensure the smooth running of the Branch Finances it is recommended that all branches have at least three signatures mandated for the signing of branch cheques. Some branches that have only two committee members mandated to sign cheques and have experienced difficulties when for whatever reason; one of the mandated person's has not been available to sign cheques. In addition due to a decreased signatory one branch has experienced problems accessing their

account and therefore all branches must have a minimum of two signatories recognised by the bank to avoid this problem.

32.05 REGIONAL MEETINGS

The first of the 2009 Regional Meetings will be taking place in May. All Branches will soon be contacted by their Group Regional Chairmen informing them of the dates and venue and will be distributing the agenda and a copy of the 2008 Action Points Document. Every branch should make every endeavour to attend these meetings. The Society will reimburse branches with reasonable travelling costs for two branch members to attend and a lunch will be provided at each venue. If any branch has not received details from their Regional Group meeting two weeks before the meeting it is their responsibility to contact the group Chairman. Below is a list of the meetings and the MC representatives who will be attending.

EMNESH – Wednesday 6th May -- 10.30a.m. TONY SKINNER
Central Methodist Church, St. Saviour Gate, York YO1 8NQ.

NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES – Saturday 30th May. 11.00a.m. REG WOOD
Digswell Village Church Hall, Warren Way, Digswell (Welwyn North).

LONDON & SOUTH – Saturday 6th June. 11.00a.m. DAVID KELSO
The Innkeepers Lodge & Toby Inn, Redstone Hill, Redhill.

GREAT WESTERN – Saturday 20th June, 12.00noon RICHARD MORRIS
Manvers Street Baptist Chapel, Bath.

NORTH WEST & MIDLANDS – Wednesday 17th June, 12.30p.m. ALAN COOKE
The Town Crier, Station Road, Chester.

32.06 RECRUITMENT LEAFLETS

It's April already and now is the ideal time to get the Society recruitment leaflets to preserved railways, museums, libraries, tourist information centres and any other suitable location. There are 30 branches in the Society and every branch should make every endeavour to distribute them far and wide. The leaflets plus all other Society stationery can be obtained from Bob Ballard (*Contact details in the Branch Officer's Handbook*)

32.07 PUBLICATONS ---- CLEARANCE SALE

The following books are on sale at special clearance sale prices. Sale prices include postage and packaging per title and are available by ordering via the Society Website at **www.rcts.org.uk** or on the revised sales order form which are available from Bob Ballard. (*Contact details in the Branch Officer's Handbook*)

TITLE	ORIGINAL PRICE	CLEARANCE SALE PRICE (Includes P&P)
Locos of the LNWR Southern Division	£27.95	£11.50
LNWR Locomotive Name	£19.95	£9.50
Raising Steam of the LMS	£15.95	£7.50
LMS Locomotive Names	£18.95	£7.50
Great Northern Loco History Part 2	£13.95	£6.00
Great Northern Loco History Part 3A	£19.95	£7.50
Locomotives of the LNER 2B	£13.95	£4.50
Locomotives of the LNER 10A	£10.95	£3.00
Plymouth Railways in the 1930s	£12.95	£5.00
Highland Railway Locomotives Part 2	£16.95	£5.50
The Railways of Keynsham	£ 9.95	£6.50

Please advise not just Society members of this special offer but anyone who is interested in purchasing these books at these reduced prices.

32.08 OFFICERS' CONFERENCE 2008

The minutes of the Officers' Conference held at Scarborough in October 2008 have now been prepared and published. A copy of the minutes is enclosed with this newsletter. For those of you who receive electronic copies of this newsletter please note that the minutes are on another attachment to the e-mail.

Those of you who receive paper copies may also find additional copies enclosed; these are for other branch members who were in attendance at the Officers' Conference. These copies are marked with the delegate's name, could you please distribute them to the appropriate delegate.

32.09 INSURANCE

If any Branch is required to give details of the Society's public liability insurance cover, for example by the organisers of an exhibition where there will be a branch sales stand, a copy of the current insurance certificate can be obtained from Alan Cooke, Society Secretary. (*Contact details in item 32.02*)

32.10 WILLS & BEQUESTS LEAFLET (Branch Secretaries Only)

The Wills & Bequests Leaflet which was distributed to all members with their April Edition of the RO. Each Branch secretary will be issued with 10 spare copies just in case a member misplaces his original copy. Some of these spare copies will have already been distributed to Branch secretaries at the AGM weekend in Derby. However if you were not in attendance, they are included with this Newsletter. Secretary's who receive the Newsletter electronically will receive their copies by Royal Mail. I will have a small stock available if anyone needs any more.

Some members have already responded to the leaflet and the Society Secretary has received details as requested on the leaflet. It would be advantageous that when a member passes away the Branch Secretary immediately informs the Society Secretary Alan Cooke and Membership Secretary, Richard Morris of this fact in order that the database can be checked to see if that member has responded to the Society by returning the Wills & Bequests leaflet.

Alan and Richard's contact details are in the Branch Officer's Handbook.

32.11 BRANCH OFFICER' HANDBOOK

Revised sections encompassing numerous changes will be distributed with a revised CD-ROM to all branch secretaries towards the end of May.

32.12 SOCIETY RULES

Following the adoption of the new rule at the AGM on Saturday the 25th of April the wording of Rule 9 has been replaced by the following:-

No member shall use the name of the Society either to gain private advantage or to the detriment of the Society in general. Any breach of this rule will render the person concerned liable to immediate expulsion from the Society with the consequent loss of all privileges and forfeiture of subscription. The Management Committee shall be the final arbiter in any question of this rule being breached. Use of membership cards to obtain nationally negotiated benefits is not regarded as private advantage.

Please note this rule becomes effective on 25th May 2009.

32.13 FOUND AT THE AGM AT DERBY

After the dinner on Saturday evening a 'Smith's Indicator Map of London' was found on the floor as members were leaving after the formal event. If this map belong to you please call me on the number above and it will be returned to you.

32.14 THE RAILWAY OBSERVERS ON CD-ROM

Terry Silcock has produced six more ROs available for sale on CD-ROM: 1932-4, 1949-1951. A new flyer will be circulated soon including details of these. Please place copies of this at exhibitions and branch meetings. Remember to include your branch code on the form since a donation will be made to your branch funds of £1 for each CD ordered on these forms. Unfortunately because these CDs are VAT rated, it is too complicated to provide copies for direct sales by branches. Terry Silcock is looking into the possibility of getting some dummy copies for display at sales stands and exhibitions.

32.15 SOCIETY E-MAIL GROUPS

There are two e-mail groups for RCTS Members, please encourage your fellow officers and members who have Internet access to join them.

a) For Society Officers:

This is for any branch committee member, RO editors and Ed Reps and any other member who holds an official Society post ONLY. It is a free service. Terry Silcock controls this list and its membership, which currently numbers only 51 officers. It is not a busy list, but is intended to improve communications between the Management Committee, Sub Committees and Society officers also between Society Officers.

Attachments are permitted to e-mails, but keep them short as some members are still using dial up connections. The Officers' Newsletter is circulated by this method as well as by post to Branch Secretaries & Chairmen. If you and your fellow committee members join the group, it will save the branch secretary having to make so many copies of this Newsletter. If you do not have e-mail why not ask one of your fellow committee members to join this group and circulate the information on to you. There is also a files section where mutually useful files can be stored.

Terry is aware that some members with company e-mail addresses are restricted from receiving e-mails from such groups. There is a solution to this, it is possible to have your membership set to "receive no e-mails". But all e-mails can be viewed via the associated web site, once you have subscribed to the group and also registered with yahoogroups.com.

To join send an E-mail to: **RCTSOfficers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**

To be accepted you must include your Society Office/role, membership number and post code within the e-mail. If you do not want e-mails sent to you directly, please also mention this in the body of your e-mail.

b) For all RCTS Members:

There is a fairly general e-mail group for RCTS members. Its main function is as an addition to the Library services, but other topics often crop up. It does include queries and usually the answers are forthcoming. Additions to the Library's Loan collection and surplus sales stock are regularly published. There is a large files section associated with this group: Library books, magazines, working timetable catalogues in various formats. There are several other useful listings.

The files section also includes a low resolution version of the current RO, usually up to seven days earlier than the printed version. Copies remain in the files section for several months after publication. Attachments are not permitted to the e-mails. Joining procedure is very similar to that for the officers group. Send an e-mail to: **RCTSLibrary-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**

The group is exclusively for current RCTS members so please include your membership number and post code in the body of your e-mail, so that Terry can check these against the membership list. Any queries about these groups, please e-mail: **Librarian@rcts.org.uk**

32.16 SECOND HAND BOOK PRICING AND GENERATION OF SALES LISTS

Over the last 30 years the Library has generated a computer data base of over 13,000 books which are either part of the Library's extensive loan collection and or have been sold from the Library. The file also includes the marked price for sold items.

As a trial this has been offered to some branches in the form of Excel spread sheets. It has been necessary to divide it into two parts as Terry's files are limited to only 8,190 rows. There is a spare column within the spread sheet for you to enter a flag or marker. The files are sorted by author, but you can of course sort in any other sequence. Suggested procedure is that if you wish to list and price any books, you open the spread sheet, search for the author and then put a "flag" in the flag column. When you have entered all the books, sort on the flag column, and you will have a section of the spread sheet which lists all these books with a price. Print this section and you have a generated sales list or copy and paste it to where you wish. The Library uses a flag combining source initials and month, such as RR0904 for books from RR listed in April 2009.

These files will be up loaded shortly to the files section of the RCTSOfficers e-mail group and periodically updated. Its use will save you a lot of typing/writing. Any queries to Libarian@rcts.org.uk

32.17 FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & MEMBERS WEEKENDS

EVENT		DATE	BRANCH	VENUE	HOTEL
2009	MW	23 rd to 25 th of October	West Midlands	Coventry	Coventry Hill Hotel
2010	AGM		???		
	MW	22 nd – 24 th October (Proposed)	Bristol	Swindon	
2011	AGM	tba	North East	tba	
	MW		???		
2012	AGM	tba	West of England	tba	
	MW		???		

Work is now going ahead with planning the 2009 Members' Weekends in Coventry. Details will be available in the August RO and on the website nearer the event. The MC is also seeking volunteers to host events from 2010 onwards. If any branch or regional group is able to host an event please contact Alan Cooke for the AGM weekend and Gordon Davies for the Members Weekend.

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

W. Gordon Davies
Branch Liaison Secretary

28th April 2009

APPENDIX A

The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society

CARDNET INSTRUCTIONS 2008-09 (revised at 17th April 2009)

1. WHAT TO ACCEPT

We can accept any credit card and any VISA debit card.

So if the card has VISA on it then it can be accepted. If not, you need to ask whether it is a debit or credit card, and reject a non-VISA debit card. The reason that we cannot accept them is that they can only be processed electronically.

There have been a number of problems in the last year with cards that we cannot process through our paper system.

For clarity the following ARE THE ONLY CARDS that should be accepted:

- Mastercards beginning **51, 52, 53, 54** or **55**
- VISA cards beginning **4** But NOT VISA Electron cards 4175, 4917, 4913, 4508 or 4844

Full information about all card numbers is available on
en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Credit card numbers

2. HOW TO COMPLETE THE CARDNET SALES VOUCHER

The Society's CARDNET plate should be installed in the CARDNET imprinter.

The sales voucher must be completed in black ball point pen. Write on the purchaser's name, full address and preferably telephone number as well.

The voucher should then be passed through the CARDNET imprinter with the purchaser's card. **CHECK THAT THE DETAILS HAVE BEEN CLEARLY IMPRINTED BEFORE THE CUSTOMER SIGNS THE VOUCHER.** If not make hand alterations, with the agreement of the purchaser, prior to their signing.

The voucher is in four parts:

Top copy to purchaser

Second copy for banking

Third and fourth copies to Society Treasurer with banking details

CHECK THAT ALL FOUR COPIES ARE LEGIBLE

3. BANKING

A summary voucher needs to be completed. The top copy remains with the Society and the other goes to the bank. Run it through the imprinter first to put the Society's account details on.

The summary voucher and detailed vouchers for banking go together in a plastic wallet.

CARDNET items can only be banked through the Society's national bank account. This is done by handing over the plastic wallet at a Lloyds TSB branch separate to any other banking and receiving a receipt. The usual receipt form is acknowledgement on a Society national paying-in book that can be obtained from the Society Treasurer.



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Management Committee, Society and Branch Officer's
Held at the Ambassador Hotel, Scarborough
Sunday 26th October 2008 at 9.15am**

PRESENT

Management Committee

Hugh Gould, President	Reg Wood, Publications Officer
John Redgate, Chairman	David Kelso, Publicity
John Day, Secretary	Alan Cooke, Committee Member
Tony Skinner, Treasurer	Terry Silcock, Librarian
Callum Macleod, Managing Editor	Richard Morris, Membership Secretary
David Pick, Committee Member	David Jackman, Webmaster
Gordon Davies, Deputy Chairman/ Branch Liaison Secretary	

Society Officers

Ronnie McAdam, Assistant Publicity Officer
Steve Ollive, Asst Treasurer, Membership Renewals
David Cole, Photographic Archive
Bob Ballard, Exhibitions

Branches

Bristol:	Paul Udey, Roger Newman, <i>Callum Macleod</i>
Cambridge:	Not Represented
Cheltenham:	<i>Richard Morris</i>
Croydon & South London:	Peter Wilson
East Midlands:	John Hitchens, Rodney Allen, Mike Smith
Furness Lakes & Lune:	Not Represented
Hitchin:	<i>David Cole</i>
Humberside:	Peter Louth, John Foreman, Les Brackstone, Carey Vessey
Ipswich:	Eric Palmer, David Swale
Lancs & North West:	Not Represented
Merseyside, Chester & N.Wales:	Alan Donaldson, <i>Gordon Davies</i>
Milton Keynes:	<i>Bob Ballard</i>
Northampton:	John Harrison, Ron Hart, <i>David Pick</i>
North East:	Dave Tyreman, Jim Sedgwick, Malcolm Hammond, <i>Tony Skinner</i>
Peterborough:	Roger Baily
Scottish:	<i>Ronnie McAdam</i>
Sheffield:	David Munday, Les Nixon
Solent:	Ken Wilson
South East:	<i>David Kelso</i>
South Essex:	John Stone
South Wales:	Not Represented
Surrey:	Peter Bosomwoth, Irene Rabbitts, Andy Davies, Bob Ellison
Sussex:	Not Represented
Thames Valley:	John Lewis
Watford:	David Fairhurst
West of England:	Not Represented
West Midlands:	David Walker, Derek Morris, Mike Robertson
West Riding:	Malcolm Riley, John Holroyd
Windsor & Maidenhead	<i>Steve Ollive, David Goddard, Alan Cooke</i>

Branches Not in Attendance

Cambridge:	No apologies received
Chichester:	Apologies from Rosie Jacob, Bruce Oliver, Geoff Adams
Furness, Lakes & Lune:	No apologies received
Lancs & North West:	Apologies from Ian Derrick
Sussex:	Apologies from Paul Baston, Alan Wesson, Paul Snelling

1. OPENING OF CONFERENCE

JOHN REDGATE - SOCIETY CHAIRMAN

John Redgate offered a warm welcome to all the delegates and thanked them all for attending the annual officer's conference. John (through the regional meetings minutes in 2008) acknowledged that various groups hold differing views as to the continued value of the meeting and hoped that its worth would be demonstrated at this event.

Our Chairman mentioned that the Branch Liaison Secretary would mention later on that the MC had not received volunteers to organise a Member's Weekend next year which is very disappointing considering the numbers attending this weekend. John appealed to those present that if there is a branch, which feels it could host the Members Weekend in 2009, to please let Gordon Davies or he know as soon as possible. It would be a great pity that this great tradition that has built up over the last few years was to be interrupted or ceased. The weekends with the alternative trips are getting more and more popular with the ladies and John was sure some of the delegates would receive some flack when their wives or partners find out there is no Member's weekend event next year. In the absence of a Members' weekend next year the MC will be making arrangements for an Officers Conference to be held somewhere in the Midlands for say an 11-30a.m. start and a 4-30p.m. finish on a Saturday next October.

With that in mind John was sure that all would join with him in thanking the EMNESH group for putting together a great weekend which has been supported in record numbers judging by the number of hotel days that have been booked by members and their partners.

John paid tribute to Jim Sedgewick for handling the bookings, John Foreman, David Tyreman and Malcolm Riley for all their hard work in arranging such an enjoyable weekend not forgetting the other members of the EMNESH group of Branches who have helped with the smooth running of this weekends events.

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Mike Robertson from the West Midlands Branch and David Goddard from Windsor & Maidenhead Branch who were attending conference for the first time.

Before he continued, John paid tribute to Keith Brown who had recently passed away. Keith was the Deputy Editor of the RO and did so much to ensure the RO was suitably corrected and published on time when he stepped into the breach following David Bird's decision to stand down. Therefore it is with some irony that he welcomed David Bird back as he has agreed to take on the role of Deputy Editor.

One of his greatest concerns over the time he had been Chairman had been the photographic reproduction and John thanked David Kelso and Callum MacLeod who have continued with this challenge with the support of our printers Stoate and Bishop and he now believed that they may have now cracked the problem judging by the results in the September and October RO.

As regards our loco 60001 David Kelso would be giving an update later on in his Publicity slot on the agenda.

It was unfortunate that the Society was not able to re-enact the Society's End of Steam Commemorative Railtour with Kingfisher Railtours, but once the work on the West Coast mainline has been completed this may be run sometime in the future.

Looking forward John was pleased to report to the conference that the Subscription for 2008 will increase marginally to £22 and he hoped that all Branches are actively promoting the 15 months membership to 31st December 2009 with their meeting visitors.

The Society continues to benefit from the significant contributions of the few and the support of the many and John was very grateful for the continued hard work put in by all the volunteer officers on behalf of the Society.

As ever our Chairman hoped that all would enjoy the conference and he looked forward to hearing a lively degree of comment from everyone that morning.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Society Officer:	Steve Hodge, Chairman, Development Sub-committee
Society Officer:	David Bird, Deputy Managing Editor
<u>Branches:</u>	
Bristol:	Brian Arman, David McCollum
Croydon & South London:	Geoff Lipscombe, Brian Lewis, Jeremy Harrison
Hitchin:	Stuart Little, Cyril Crawley
Humberside:	Mick Hodge,
Merseyside, Chester & N.Wales:	Richard Neale, Alan Turton, Geoff Morris
Milton Keynes:	David Gibbins
North East	Barry Burns
Peterborough:	Ken Quanborough
Scottish:	Jim Harrold, Ken Falconer, Evan Roberts
Sheffield:	P.A. Hall, Alan Lovecy
South East:	Geoff Dunster
Solent	Ted Vaughan, Mike Green
South Essex:	Jim Waite, John Bennett, Geoff Brockett
South Wales:	Noel Thompson, Stuart Warr, David Burnham
Surrey:	Alan Norris
Thames Valley	Stuart Hicks
West Midlands:	Ian Reid, Bob Barby, Peter Smith
West Riding:	Dave Beeken, John Edgington
West of England:	David Mitchell, Peter Gray, Tom Reardon
Windsor & Maidenhead	Martin Higgs

3. PRESIDENTS ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

HUGH GOULD

Our President commenced his address to conference in commenting that he had great pleasure in the fact he now had two different types of Life Membership. Hugh had received a letter from John Edgington who could unfortunately not attend conference but John sent his apologies and greetings.

Hugh reported that there had been a decline in his activities as fewer branches had asked him to attend however he had six visits in 2008 but had twelve booked for 2009.

Hugh had great pleasure in attending the Management Committee meetings as well as the AGM and the Members Weekends.

Hugh reminded all that the Society is run as a volunteer organisation and that we do not work to normal business rules and some of the volunteers are still at work and do not yet have the pleasure of retirement. So Hugh warned those attending conference not to judge and criticise their colleagues within the Society. Hugh occasionally sees traces of dichotomy between individual members. This can be a problem that all organisations have to face and all need to remind ourselves that people have different circumstances to your own. Hugh was mindful that this is a happy Society and hopes it stays that way and his comments were intended as a 'Stitch in Time', to continue the co-operation and goodwill.

The working party set up between the RCTS, LCGB, Railway Club and SLS continue to discuss various common items and a report has been presented to the various chairmen and presidents of each group. Hugh is going to keep the momentum going so as to continue the co-operation and goodwill between all these organisations.

Finally Hugh concluded by stating that he was enormously pleased to still be the Society's President and to the fact that he had been bestowed with a Honorary Life Membership and will make every effort to meet more members within the Society in the coming year and wished all well.

4. CONFIRMATION OF YEAR 2007 MINUTES and

5. MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of the 2007 Officers Conference were confirmed with no matters arising.

Gordon Davies started his report by offering his thanks once again to the Chairmen of each group for organising the meetings and for taking the minutes and to Paul Udey and Mick Hodge for taking the minutes at their respective groups and for getting them prepared to meet some very tight timescales. Gordon also extended his thanks to Ken Wilson for analysing the individual minutes as the Branch Liaison Secretary was out of the country at the time and he did not mean Wales.

He was sad to report that two branches had not been represented at the Regional Meetings this each year and that Furness, Lakes & Lune and the West Riding branches had not attended. The Regional meetings Action Points document that had been distributed to all the RM chairmen on the 23rd September for onward distribution to the branches was a ten page document which he did not intend to go through item by item and if anyone wanted to raise a point he would be willing to discuss that matter or get a colleague from the MC to reply.

Ronnie McAdam reported that the Scottish branch had not be informed of the Regional Meetings in his group and enquired as why his branch had not been invited. Gordon replied that it was down to each Regional Meeting chairman to organise each group meeting, send out the invitations and distribute the agenda and all the documentation as required but as these events had been taking place on a very regular basis he enquired as to why no one from his branch had contacted the EMNESH Chairman to enquire as to what was happening with the meeting in 2008. He would investigate as to why communications had broken down.

David Tyreman was concerned as to the proposed sales of some Society locomotive nameplates and thought that selling nameplates was like 'Selling the Family Silver' as some had been donated to the Society by various organisation at various times in the past. John Redgate replied that this was an emotive subject and that David should have written to the Chairman for the subject to be discussed under 'Any other Business'. John reported that no nameplates had been sold and selling nameplates would only be considered for funding a specific project. A major project that will surface in the next three to five years will be the Library and the MC will face some difficult decisions in the future. John stated that we have to decide if we need to move the Library and do we rent or buy suitable premises to house the Library and additional funds may be required. The SLS had made a policy decision to sell some of their nameplates for very different reasons as their membership is between 600 – 650, each member pays £25 for annual membership and they were finding it difficult to fund their organisation and the nameplates were sold to keep their organisation going. The RCTS however subsidises their membership fees from Sales and Publications. John also thought that the LCGB had also disposed of a nameplate for the same reason. John was keen to explore the impact of taxation on the sale of a nameplate as we may have to pay VAT and corporation tax and this would amount to about 30% of the sale price going to the government. The MC had decided to put the nameplate 'Sir Massey Lopes' forward for sale. John commented that some plates had either been purchased or had been donated to branches and in some cases it is difficult to get suitable custodians, the Society has two choices and that is keep or sell the plates. Tony Skinner commented that some of the nameplates have serious historical interest to the Society and the prime mover was to sell plates that did not have this factor. John informed the delegates that the sale of nameplates is a complex subject and needed to be sorted out.

David Tyreman enquired as to how many nameplates the Society owned to which John replied that the MC does not publish how many plates the Society has and where they are kept for obvious security reasons, but did read out the list of nameplates held.

7. DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**KEN WILSON**

Ken started his address with the comment that by since he had reported to conference last year, the committee has continued its work of considering means to develop the Society and making relevant recommendations to the Management Committee.

All were sorry to say goodbye to Keith Brown as the development committee representative from the RO Editorial team – and they were all even sorrier to hear of his passing, a few months later – but pleased to welcome Paul Chancellor in his place.

The committee had again met formally, three times during the year, supplemented by informal discussions and much correspondence.

Matters that we have discussed (or continue to discuss) include:

1. Updates and enhancements to the Branch Officers' Handbook,
2. Various recommendations in the report from the Futures Forum, as referred to us from the MC (discounted subscription to members of other Societies, a proposed joint publicity leaflet, mutual access to services, etc.),
3. Proposed formal terms of reference for the DSC which, having now been approved by the MC, may form a model for other committees within the Society,
4. Various suggestions to aid recruitment and retention of members, by making membership more attractive,
5. The future of the Society's Library,
6. Some matters first placed in the agendas for the Regional Meetings, to give us a feel for opinions among a wider group of members (A4-size RO, the future of this conference and its associated activities, joint/ family membership),
7. Proposed enhancements to the Society's Rules,
8. The introduction of a Legal and Executor service to deal with deceased members' collections (Ken mentioned that last year that this was far from straightforward but all can now see the first draft of an explanatory brochure that Society intends to have distributed to all members),
9. Whether the Society should make an application to the Charity Commissioners for Charitable status (that discussion was abandoned, following comments at OC last year and from the Futures Forum)'
10. Whether it could be feasible and beneficial for the Society to apply for lottery funding to help us to fulfil our role in the community (this was sidelined, pending identification of a suitable project).

Ken extended his thanks those of who had responded to the committee's requests for information, made through Gordon's Branch Newsletters. The lists of meetings of other Railway Clubs and Societies have been collated and passed to David Pick, who currently has the pleasure of dealing with new branch development and that Ken had the task of attempting to keep the list up to date, so he would welcome any additional or updated information that could be provided. Some had kindly sent extensive comments regarding Digital Image Projection and that as all will have gathered from the recent newsletter Ken had passed on a couple of warning points, along with suggestions as to where members may obtain further advice.

Finally Ken stated that as he concluded his report he suggested that branches might like to compile individual histories, including photographs of branch activities, whilst some of the older members are still available to pass on their memories; what did the delegates think?

John Redgate congratulated the Development Committee on the work that they had done and especially to the work done by David Kelso in the design of the membership cards and to Richard Morris and Steve Ollive for getting the cards out during the renewal process.

Ronnie McAdam enquired as why the membership cards had not included Photographic ID. Richard Morris replied that cards with photographs would take far more time to process and would be more expensive to produce.

David Walker asked as to whether it was possible to have a space on the card for the member's signature and it was reported that this might be considered in the future.

8. THE RAILWAY OBSERVER

CALLUM MACLEOD

Callum MacLeod informed the delegates that there had been big changes in the editorial team with many Editorial Representatives being promoted to Editor's. He wished to express his thanks to all the editors and the team who put the RO together each month. There were still some vacancies for editorial representatives. Callum stated that Network Rail titles are used to identify territories in the RO. He requires vacancies to be filled urgently especially for Scotland and West Yorkshire. The Ed. Rep. for Scotland is 82 years old and he is the only person that sends in any reports for Scotland so Callum appealed for more Ed Reps for Scotland.

There had been much correspondence regarding reports submitted from the Ipswich Transport Society and the lack of acknowledgment for their reports in the RO. It was proposed to discuss the acknowledgement of information supplied by other societies and organisations at the next editorial conference in November. Moving on to the subject of the A4 size concept RO, Callum stated that personally he does not like the idea. The RO does not in his opinion suite an A4 size. The layout of the RO is different from commercially produced magazines and would take far more time to put together than it does at present. From the feedback received from the 2008 round of Regional Meetings, one group was in favour, one group was against and the other three groups had not decided either way.

Regarding the inclusion of outdoor fixtures in the RO, all outdoor fixtures do not have an organising branch associated with the announcement except a contact name and number.

David Cole explained to the meeting that all exhibitions were included in Branch News.

Ronnie McAdam also stated that commercial magazines would not accept any information on exhibitions that he may send them as part of branch fixtures.

David Kelso informed the meeting he receives about 100 photographs per month for inclusion in the RO. He then sends them to Callum who selects what will be published and then sends those to the printers. He has had a better response for photographs since the appeal for more photographs but he does wonder if branches have members with no camera equipment at all. He asked all those attending the conference to appeal to all members at branch meetings to send in photographs for the RO. All photographs will be considered from prints, slides and electronic images but he did state that photographs produced on Inkjet printers would be rejected. Electronic images can be sent by e-mail, disc or memory stick.

Les Nixon considered some of the photographs published in the RO to be of poor quality. David Kelso would be grateful for more input from members of the Photographic Portfolio in the future. Les Nixon stated that some of the members for the Photographic Portfolio had submitted photographs and he stated that the larger page photographs were more appealing. Callum did comment that it is not always possible to include full page photographs as space was at a premium and about 800 words are lost when full size photographs are used.

Tony Skinner reminded the delegates that extra pages in the RO for photographs does make the cost of the production of the magazine more expensive.

John Redgate stated that the work of the Photographic Portfolio was hidden and that Les Nixon and Callum should discuss the possibility of using more of the Portfolio's material off line.

Callum wanted more photographs of the current railway scene and not so much historical material.

Malcolm Hammond requested that more photographs be displayed on the website if the cost of publishing them in the RO was prohibitive.

9. PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

REG WOOD

Reg started his report by stating that there had been good news on the publication front.

Firstly he was delighted that an invitation had been extended to Richard Cook, the Managing Director of Amadeus Press to join us for dinner on the previous evening. The Society had used Amadeus for about the last twenty years and they had served the Society well.

The big news was that the 'BR Standards Part 4 the 9F's' had at long been published and would be available for sale at £24.95 with the usual discount of £2.95 for members. The book had been put together by two authors and is extensively illustrated and that is one of the reasons that the book has been such a long time coming. There have been issues regarding the quality of both the colour and black and white material. Early feedback regarding the book has been good. Branches should order their supplies via John Wood.

The next concrete evidence of the work of the Publications Committee is the reprint of the 'Shildon – Newport in Retrospect'. Although a reprint there has been some revision of this title and the reprint is a joint venture with David Tyreman. The book is printed but will not be launched until an official event at the Shildon museum on the 22nd of November where the author Ken Appleby will be present.

Reg then went on to explain what else was going on with publications. The LMS 2-6-0s will be next book to appear however there is more work to complete before the book is printed. In the BR Standards series a further book will include the series index plus any corrections to previously published material.

Work is going on with the LNWR 0-8-0s, as is work on a book on diesel hydraulics and a book entitled 'From Shedplates to Pictorials'. A book on the LMS Black 5s is about 55% completed. An author has been allocated for the Stanier/Fairburn tanks but not allocated are authors for the 'Royal Scots' and the 'Patriots' classes.

Reg appealed to the members that the Publications Committee is still seeking a volunteer to become the Modern Traction Co-ordinator and also if anyone enjoys researching and writing then the Publications Committee would like to hear from anyone who might be interested, even if that person only wanted to take on a support role. The meeting was informed that the next author's conference would be held in Crewe on 1st November.

The management of the publications committee is going forward with more emphasis being put on producing books electronically and using IT to assist in that process

Paul Udey raised the point that the current branch publication form was out of date but he was informed that a new version would be distributed to all branches with a future Newsletter.

10. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MATTERS

JOHN REDGATE

John Redgate informed the delegates that the Society Secretary, John Day would be standing down from his post at the AGM at Derby in April 2009. John thanked John for eight years service as an MC member. To take John's place, Alan Cooke had volunteered to become Society Secretary, which leaves a vacancy for the editor's role that Alan covers for the RO. Callum MacLeod will be seeking a replacement for Alan.

Also there would be re-elections at the AGM for the following MC posts
Chairman
Secretary
Branch Liaison Secretary
Committee Member

John stated that a change to Rule 9 had been proposed by Ken Wilson and this regarded the use of the Society name in the public domain. The MC will be discussing the proposed change.

Our Chairman then went on to discuss communications within the Society and between Officers and how the avenues of communications can break down. John mentioned that earlier in the conference Ronnie McAdam had mentioned that the Scottish branch had not been invited to the regional Meetings in 2008. Communications is a two-way thing and he enquired why the branch concerned had just sat back and done nothing and he questioned why someone from the Scottish branch had not enquired with the Regional Meetings chairman as to whether the regional meeting was taking place. John also mentioned that he had received a letter from a branch on the 18th of October stating that they had not had any information on non-renewals. These lists are dispatched at the end of February and he again questioned why someone from the branch had waited until the Members Weekend to raise such a question.

Fortunately or unfortunately the use of e-mails within the Society is extensive and there was an example of an MC member getting very upset with his MC colleagues who had not acknowledged some information sent by email only to find that person had simply forgot to send the e-mail!! When Keith Brown died e-mails were circulated within the society informing members of Keith's death but one member got upset because he had not been told as the e-mail had gone in the SPAM box and on further investigation that person did not even know he had a SPAM box on his computer. John emphasised that the Society has an over reliance on e-mails and members should also use the telephone if matters are urgent or important and not send a multitude of e-mails. John reminded conference that not everyone has e-mail access 24 hours a day and he encouraged everyone to use the telephone more than they do at present and not rely on e-mail.

11. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

DAVID JACKMAN

Our Webmaster reported that it has been a year of consolidation for the website. David was pleased to report that we currently have fixtures for every branch up to the end of 2008 and that he would shortly be chasing branches for their spring 2009 events. The Society is getting around 100 people a day accessing the site. The most active branches are again Bristol and Merseyside, Chester & North Wales. Close behind, in alphabetical order, are East Midlands, Milton Keynes, Surrey, Thames Valley and West Midlands. However a worrying number only ever send the fixture list and maybe the odd meeting report. All contributions are, of course, welcome – even if it is only a photograph to update the branch home page.

The site had a couple of design changes over the year, with a selection of upcoming fixtures added to the Website home page and each branch home page. Feedback on this would be appreciated. More substantial changes are planned for 2009, with the aim to make it easier to navigate around the site.

The ability to renew membership online proved popular with over 200 members renewing for 2008 via the website. There are a steady number of new members joining via the website as well.

The webmasters always welcome member's comments, ideas and, most importantly member's contributions. Please feed them to **webmaster@rcts.org.uk** or via their branch web co-coordinator.

David informed those gathered that for some time our printer have provided an electronic copy of The Railway Observer (Adobe Acrobat .pdf file) as part of the RO production process. This looks exactly like the printed RO but with two advantages: Acrobat has a zoom function which allows the text to be enlarged, which makes it easier for those with poor eyesight to read, and also a search function. It can also be printed out - in A4 size if desired. The Management Committee debated whether to make this more widely available and has decided to conduct a trial, with the .pdf file being made available for members to download via the RCTS Library Yahoo group. This facility will be advertised in the November RO, and it is intended to review the position in the new-year. One drawback was that the PDF file is reduced in size, and consequently the electronic pictures are not as good

David is looking for feedback on this, both now and during the trial. One of the questions is how best to distribute it – whether by e-mail directly to members, to create a members' only section of the website and use that, to continue to use Yahoo Groups or something else. It must be emphasised that the aim is to supplement the printed RO and not replace it.

John Lewis remarked that you receive the RO much sooner by getting an electronic version.

Richard Morris commented that the website recruits more members than by other means.

David Cole also remarked that order come in via the Website for Photographs that are advertised on the site.

Alan Donaldson thanked David for the speed of updating the website and that the Merseyside, Chester & North Wales branch had its meeting reports added to the site on the same evening as the meeting.

David concluded his report by stating that two members had been appointed web co-ordinators, and welcomed Barry Burns and David Evans-Roberts to the team and that further software enhancements would be carried out in the coming months.

12. FINANCE UPDATE

TONY SKINNER

Tony wished to inform the delegates that he had been in discussion with David Pick and Gordon Davies regarding the role of the Treasurer within the Society. The discussions had taken place over two days and these had highlighted some of the problems and solutions to the problems encountered by the Treasurer. David and Gordon had identified that Tony was spending more and more time dealing with branch accounts and he was using his valuable time correcting errors in returns and this was quicker than sending returns and reports back to the originator. In conclusion all three had identified the need to get all the branch treasures together in a series of 'Treasurer's Forums' so everyone had a clear understanding of what was expected from the branches. It was also identified that as Society Treasurer he need assistance with some of the work. There would be three forums held with one in the north, central and south of the country and it was expected that all branches would attend. A set job description was needed for the branch treasurers and a clear understanding within branch committees of what their responsibilities are regarding branch finances.

Regarding the Society finances Tony reported that in 2008 sales of publications had been poor but with the publication of the BR standards Part 4 then publication sales for 2009 are expected to be good.

Tony concluded that as always there are claims forms on the table for Officers to claim their conference expenses, which are one night's accommodation, and travel costs.

13. PUBLICITY

DAVID KELSO

David stated his report by mentioning that since the release of the reprint of LNER part 11 and the launch of the RO's on CD-ROM's the Publicity Department of the RCTS has been running in low key mode eagerly awaiting the publication of BR Standards Part 4. This will be released to the general public on the 1st November and advertising copy had now been prepared and released to a number of railway periodicals due to be published in early/mid-November. Also a suitable press release has been prepared and this would be

sent out after the conference along with a number of review copies of the book. Further advertising is being organised to coincide with the publication of the review in a particular magazine.

A further advertising splurge would take place in the periodicals due out in December 2008. This will be of a more general nature in time for Christmas and will feature the BR Standards plus the reprint of Newport-Shildon book that is due about that time as well as the updated range of CD-ROM's

David also reported that in the last year all the sales and "give away" items have been updated with the new image with the exception of the Society tie on which your MC made a decision to put on hold because of the large stocks of the existing design.

The Development sub-Committee have recently made a recommendation to the MC that the words "New Image" should be dropped and replaced with "Society Image" as the present image is no longer new having been launched three years ago at the Officers' Conference in 2005.

Efforts had been going to raise the profile of the Society. One of these initiatives is the issue of a membership card and David informed all they should have received their first card. This is but a first step and negotiations are on going with various parties to introduce member benefits through the card. These negotiations will be stepped up a gear now that the cards have become a reality largely due to the efforts of Steve Ollive and Richard Morris. One immediate use of the card is that it will get members free access to the HMRS Study Centre facilities at Butterley and further information would appear in future Newsletters. The card may be modified in the future to include the 0800 number for the British Transport Police with their approval. The Development Committee is also looking to get discounts at Ian Allen shops and at railway preservation sites.

It was unfortunate that the attempt by Roger Hardingham to re-run the 1968 end of steam railtour did not succeed. The MC felt that joint participation with Kingfisher Railtours would have been a very worthwhile public relations exercise for the Society and could well have brought in a number of new members. Those members who have watched the excellent series of films recently shown on BBC4 will be left in no doubt that Danny Hopkins of 'Steam Railway' thinks there is a huge enthusiast market out there to be tapped. According to him railway enthusiasm is now an industry; there are 170 preserved steam locomotive and 6 million people travel annually on heritage steam railways. There are 19 monthly railway magazines published so there must be someone out there buying them. We only need a very small part of that market to reverse our membership decline. So how do we get it?

David was becoming more and more convinced that the real way to make it happen is by co-sponsoring national events. This might be with the big magazines, with TOCs, with railtour operators or whomever else we can latch on to. The stand selling second hand books and postcards at national events is not enough. We have proved this to ourselves time and time again.

Publicity initiated the Modern Image photographic competition the results of which members have participated in at the Members' Weekend. The objective was to find an image that could be substituted for the graphic image in the Society poster. The results will be published in the RO and on the website. Other pictures submitted may well be used for other publicity purposes. Sadly out of nearly 3000 members only 7 members took part in the competition. David commented that he thought that a camera was a standard part of a railway enthusiasts' equipment but that no longer appears to be the case as far as RCTS members are concerned or perhaps the challenge was too great. However members will have seen the entrants had used quite a bit of ingenuity to achieve some interesting images.

Regarding locomotive 60001 'The Railway Observer', which has sadly been dumped at Toton and is out of service. The MC would like to get another locomotive from another TOC named and an approach has been made to GBRf for one of their locomotives to be named but the response was that the Society would have to make a business case and GBRf wanted to know what would be the benefit to the company and to the Society. David's wry comment was that this was now on hold. However EWS may reinstate 60001 at any time, but only time will tell.

David also brought to the attention of the delegates the work done by the Development Committee on the Wills and Executor leaflet. Draft copies had been prepared. The objective was to advise members on how to advise their families on how to dispose of their railwayana collection on death. On many occasions members die and 'Dad's' collection is disposed of with photographs, slides and many valuable items going in the bin. The leaflet is in two pages and advises members of 'words' put in their wills and how families and executors can contact the Society and get assistance in the disposal of collections. There is a section where the member can advise the Society Secretary of their intentions regarding the railway items of the estate and that an indicator would be put against their membership record that the members wishes the Society to be involved. Any comments will be passed to the Development Committee.

Roger Newman enquired as to whether the leaflet indicated if items were to go to the Society or the Branch. Roger was informed that at present the leaflet indicates that item left would go to the Society.

Richard Morris wanted further information on how this information would be flagged on the database to which David stated that he needed to speak to Richard on this matter.

14. DATE AND VENUE FOR 2009 OFFICERS CONFERENCE

Gordon Davies informed everybody that he was extremely disappointed that no branch or regional group had volunteered to host the 2009 Members' Weekend and Officers' Conference. Despite appeals in the Newsletters and that the subject was on the agenda of the regional meetings agenda there had been no volunteers.

He asked whether at this last minute if there any volunteers available to host the 2009 Members Weekend but sadly nobody from the floor responded.

Ken Wilson said that this year's AGM weekend clashed with a SLS weekend function to which John Day replied that the work already done for the forthcoming AGM was too far advanced for any change of date. The event John reminded delegates was the 24th to 26th of April at the Midland Hotel at Derby.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business and the Conference closed at 12.55pm

W. Gordon Davies
Branch Liaison Secretary
10th February 2009