



SEPTEMBER 2013

rcts.org.uk

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

Alan Cooke, 60 Hayse Hill, Windsor, SL4 5SZ

Telephone: 01753 869307 ----- e-mail: liaison@rcts.org.uk

46.01 BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY You will have noticed a new address above, Vron and I have moved. This means that all the application forms and three fold leaflets are now out of date. Arrangements have been made to have our post redirected until the end of May 2014 but can you please ensure that all such forms to be included in your membership packs are neatly amended to include our new address. New forms and leaflets will be issued soon with the correct address which will cover the new membership types and ways of paying.

46.02 2013 MEMBERS WEEKEND The Members Weekend and Officers Conference will be held on Friday the 18th October to Sunday the 20th. The venue will be The Holiday Inn London Gatwick - Worth at Crawley in West Sussex.

Full details of the weekend's activities appeared in the July RO and this information is also available on the Society's website.

After the success of last year's weekend in Scotland it is hoped that this year will achieve a similar level of support this event with the number of exciting fixture that have been planned. [Although bookings have now closed Andy Davies may be able to cater for a small number of late applications.](#)

Andy's contact details are:-

Andy Davies, 34 Victory Park Road, Addlestone, KT15 2AZ

Tel: 01932 855015 or e-mail Andy at: officersconference@rcts.org.uk

Numerous train operators offer extensive discounts on train tickets if booked well in advance and conference delegates should take advantage of these discounted fares.

46.03 OFFICERS' CONFERENCE 2013 The agenda for the Officers' Conference is included as **APPENDIX A** to this newsletter. Can all secretaries please ensure that all delegates from their branch committee who are attending the conference receive a copy. Please remember to bring along copies of last year's Officers' Conference minutes.

If anyone has an item for 'Any Other Business' could you please send details in writing to the Society Chairman, W. Gordon Davies, 13 Blackthorn Close, Broughton, Chester, CH4 0PY.

Tel: 01244 520710 e-mail chairman@rcts.org.uk or myself (details above) no later than **NOON on Tuesday 15th October.**

The Branch/Officers' attendance record (**APPENDIX B**) [to Secretaries and Society Officers] should be completed and passed to myself before the conference. Could you please indicate on the return any member who is attending conference for the very first time?

You can also send your information by post, to my e-mail address or leave a telephone message. This includes any apologies. Contact details above.

Please note that apologies must be tendered prior to the Officers' Conference by **NOON on Thursday 17th October.** E-mails and my home telephone WILL NOT be accessed after that time. You may leave messages with the hotel reception on 01293 884806 in the event of a late change of plan.

46.04 SHEFFIELD BRANCH The current Chairman of the Sheffield Branch would like to clear up a misunderstanding that has developed regarding the Branch's future. Although the Branch does have some financial difficulties as a consequence of the changes in financial support for meetings these can probably be solved should the Branch not be dissolved in 2015. The principal difficulty the Branch has to deal with is the lack of members under retirement age willing to volunteer, as opposed to being 'press ganged', for committee posts. Currently the average age of Branch Committee members is post retirement age, a situation that cannot continue if the Branch is to survive for many more years. Has this problem been encountered by other Branches and if so are there any suggested workable solutions?

46.05 OBITUARIES Mike Robinson the RO Managing Editor has asked for some clarification regarding obituaries in the RO to be included in this newsletter. Only the obituaries of deceased members who are or were national figures or officers will be included in the NOTICEBOARD section. Obituaries sent in by the branches of their local members and officers will be added to the BRANCH NEWS section. Therefore could these obituaries be sent to Steve Batty, the Ed Rep responsible for branch news.

46.06 DIGITAL EQUIPMENT REGISTER The Society is able to offer insurance cover for the digital projectors held by the branches. These are expensive pieces of kit and no branch wants to have to replace it if the worst should happen. To get your projector and associated PC covered please send full details to me [details above] by the end of November so they can be added to the Society's policy by John Redgate by the end of the year. Also, can you please get in touch if you have replaced or disposed of your projector so that the register can be kept up to date.

46.07 REGIONAL MEETING EXPENSES AND BRANCH RETURNS The Society's financial year ends on 31st October. To assist with the compilation of the year-end report, it would be most helpful if branches could ensure that the branch financial and publications returns are submitted to the Assistant Treasurer Branch Finances by 14th November at the very latest please. This is necessary to allow time for the Society to compile its own VAT return to HMRC which is due at the end of November. The branch returns should include a cheque for any money due to the Society for publication sales and VAT payments.

Expenses for the Regional meetings should be submitted with the October returns. The Society will reimburse expenses for the hiring of the meeting room and for refreshments at lunchtime. Please note that the Society will reimburse expenses for two branch members to attend the meetings but only if their branch has unallocated funds of less than £1,500.

46.08 BRANCH MEETING SURVEY See Appendix C This is the final summary and conclusions of the survey of the branches carried out by the DSC during the summer. Thank you to all the branches for taking part and at the end we have clearer idea of what is going on out there as the branches are the first point of contact and thus important for new members. Although there were no great surprises there is still enough food for thought so the survey is on the agenda for the Officers' Conference.

46.09 POSSIBLE BRANCH SPEAKER For those of you who attended the AGM at Coventry in April, many will have enjoyed the presentation by David Maidment entitled 'Early Days'. David, who lives in Nantwich Cheshire, is willing to travel to branches and give one of his many presentations and also promote the Railway Children which he founded and which this society supports. If branches are reachable by train there will be little expense unless it's an evening meeting some distance from home when he might need a B&B locally or someone to put him up for the night. He is willing to talk about his 'Early Days' as at the AGM, with photos. Other talks on offer describe his commuting from Woking to Waterloo by steam in the 1950s, also with photos; his early railway career as a Stationmaster in Dorset and in a Welsh Valley and Train Planner in Cardiff; his time as Chief Operating Manager of the London Midland Region; or his time as BR's Head of Safety Policy (post Clapham) and International Railway Safety Consultant to a number of Commonwealth countries and Europe. Alternatively he can give a presentation about the Railway Children charity, and why he founded the charity with pictures and stories about the children and how the charity has supported them. David does not charge a fee but asks for a donation to the charity and does not claim expenses unless he incurs an overnight hotel or B&B charge.

David's contact details are David Maidment, 32 The Broadway, Nantwich, CW5 6JH. Tel: 01270 627170 or e-mail: Maidmentrail@aol.com, **website www.davidmaidment.com**

46.10 2013 BRANCH RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE and now some good news. 2013 is turning out to be a bumper year for the recruitment of new members; as I type this on 28th September, 113 have joined the Society so far this year. This is the best in over ten years and we have a long way to go still in 2013. A major part of all this good news is down to the efforts of the branches under the 2013 Branch Recruitment Initiative. A grand total of **59** new recruits were recruited by branches under this scheme. The branch with the number of highest new recruits will be announced at the Officers Conference on the 20th of October.

46.11 2014 BRANCH RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

The success of the 2013 initiative means that the MC has agreed when setting the membership rates for 2014 that a reduced rate of **£16** will apply for new or lapsed members recruited by the branches at indoor meetings, sales stands or exhibitions and this will carry forward until 30th June 2014 to give all an opportunity to get involved for the future well being of the RCTS.

A special offer of **£16** will apply to anyone wishing to join the Society at any branch event. The period of this special recruitment campaign will be from 1st January 2014 and will continue until the 30th June 2014.

- 1) The **£16** offer applies to anyone filing in an application form at either a branch meeting or branch exhibition or sales stand and handing over their hard earned pennies at that event. Payment can be either by cash or cheque. Cheques should be made out to 'The Railway Correspondence & Travel Society'
- 2) The reduced rate will not apply to anyone taking away a Recruitment Pack and filling the application form at home and posting it in at a later date.
- 3) 'New Member' applies to anyone not currently a member of the Society but a 'New Member' can apply to a lapsed member. They may even get their old membership number back.
- 4) Any existing member who wants to renew their current membership at the reduced rate will be very politely refused as the incentive scheme is to get new people into the Society; the reduced rate is for 'New Members'.
- 5) Can the branch secretary or whoever is dealing with the paper work collate the application forms and endorse them with '2014 BRANCH RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE' then sends all the details to:- Vron Cooke, Asst. Treasurer, New Members, 60 Hayse Hill, Windsor, SL4 5SZ as soon as possible so that Vron can process the paperwork quickly for Richard Morris.

Let us hope we can recruit even more new members with this initiative in 2014 and as always 'Good Luck' with your efforts, so please all go out and get recruiting.

46.12 ROs on CD-ROM The ROs on CD-Roms are now available again to order on the website. Go to the Publications pages where they can be found listed as before but are now ordered via the publications store. They can be located here: <http://www.rcts.org.uk/shop/publications/catalogue.htm> .

46.13 2013 REGIONAL MEETINGS A summary of this year's meetings are included as **APPENDIX D**. This topic is on the agenda for discussion at the Officers' Conference. You will note under the AOB section that John Foreman and Bob Ballard have both decided to stand down as chairmen of EMNESH of the London & Home Counties groups. Thank you to both of you for your help in this role and welcome to Rodney Allen and Robert Warburton who are taking over.

46.14 SOCIETY WEBSITE Some branches now have their newsletters included on the website. Any branch wanting their newsletter to be included on the branch pages should send an electronic copy to the webmaster. Additionally branches can also add meeting reports themselves. It doesn't require great computer skills or any special software. Any branch wanting to try this should contact the webmaster. Please contact the Webmaster webmaster@rcts.org.uk for further assistance or information.

46.15 SOCIETY CLOTHING The Society clothing range will be for sale at the Members' Weekend in Crawley. The range includes polo shirts and fleeces in Large and Extra Large. Both are of high quality in navy blue with the Society logo embroidered on the front. The polo shirts are priced at £16 and the fleeces are £30. Payment can be made by cash or cheque.

Branch officers will also be able to purchase Society-branded hi-viz vests for use on Branch or Society visits only. These are available in various sizes and are £6 each.

As we gradually sell through the current ranges, it would be useful to know if there are any other items of Society clothing which you would like to be made available in the future. Please contact Sally or David Goddard either at the Members' Weekend or by email on maidenhead@rcts.org.uk with your ideas.

46.16 DONATIONS TO THE RAILWAY CHILDREN There are still a number of collecting tins available for Branches who do not yet have one. If you would like one for your Branch, please contact Sally Goddard [see **46.15** above] and one can either be sent to you or brought along to the Members' Weekend/Officers' Conference for collection.

46.17 PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH DONATIONS TO THE RAILWAY CHILDREN

The procedures detailed below are the same for donations taken via the collecting tins taken by a number of Branches and for sending the charity a donation from Branch funds in lieu of speakers' expenses.

For donations from the collecting tins, please empty the cash from the tin (remove the sticker from the top of the tin and the lid can then be prised open) and count it. Please pay this money in to your Branch bank account, then follow either payment method below. The cover sticker can sometimes be used again. If this is not possible, please contact the Railway Children office and they will be happy to send some more out to you. Money can be sent to the Railway Children via cheque or electronic bank transfer/internet payment. To send money by cheque, please send a cheque made payable to "Railway Children" to them with a covering note. I have found that by doing this, the charity always sends you an acknowledgement which is nice to show your Branch members that they are helping to make a difference.

Money can also be sent to the Railway Children by bank transfer/internet payment from your Branch's bank account if your Treasurer has online access to the account. If you use this method, please send the Railway Children an email detailing the method, date and amount of the payment. This will enable them to reconcile their accounts and correctly allocate the donation to your donor record. The account details you will need for electronic transfers/internet payments are below:-

Bank = Royal Bank of Scotland
Bank address = 12 Pillory Street, Nantwich, CW5 5BE
Sort code = 16-26-14
Account number = 10034822
Account name = Railway Children
IBAN = GB94RBOS16261410034822
Swift/BIC code = RBOSGB2L

The contact details for the Railway Children are as follows:-

Railway Children
1 The Commons
SANDBACH
Cheshire
CW11 1EG
Telephone: 01270 757596
Email: enquiries@railwaychildren.org.uk

If you have any queries regarding Railway Children donations, please contact Sally Goddard (Secretary, Windsor & Maidenhead Branch) on 07876 663864 or maidenhead@rcts.org.uk

46.18 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & MEMBERS WEEKENDS

		DATE	BRANCH	VENUE	HOTEL
	MW	Friday 18 th October to Sunday 20 th October	John Day & his Team	Crawley	Holiday Inn
2014	AGM	Saturday 12 th April	One day Event organised by the MC	Coventry	The Welcome Centre
	MW	TBA	John Day & his Team	TBA	TBA

Further details will be published in the RO, Newsletters and on the website nearer the event.

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

Alan Cooke
Branch Liaison Secretary

28th September 2013

APPENDIX A



2013 OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

Sunday 20th October 2013 at 9.15

**Holiday Inn London Gatwick North
Crabbet Park, Turners Hill Road
Worth, Crawley, RH10 4SS**

Telephone No: 01293 884806

A G E N D A

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------------------|
| 1. | Opening of Conference by Society Chairman | Gordon Davies |
| 2. | Apologies for Absence | Alan Cooke |
| 3. | Confirmation of Year 2012 Minutes
(Previously Circulated with Newsletter 45 – April 2013) | Gordon Davies |
| 4. | Matters Arising not covered by the Agenda | Gordon Davies |
| 5. | President's Message | Hugh Gould |
| 6. | Library sub-committee | David Pick |
| 7. | Subscription Renewals and Direct Debit Payments | Steve Ollive |
| 8. | Society Finance. | Reg Wood |
| 9. | The Railway Observer | Mike Robinson |
| 10. | Website Development | David Jackman |
| 11. | Development sub-committee | Eric Palmer |
| 12. | Publicity | David Kelso |
| 13. | Publications sub-committee | Gordon Davies |
| 14. | Date & venue for 2014 Officers' Conference | John Day |
| 15. | Any other competent business (Previously Notified) | Gordon Davies |

**A Tea & Coffee break will take place approximately
half-way through the conference.**

APPENDIX B



OFFICERS' CONFERENCE CRAWLEY 2013

Branch/Officer Attendance at Officers' Conference

BRANCH LIAISON SECRETARY

Alan Cooke, 60 Hayse Hill, Windsor, SL4 5SZ

Telephone: 01753 869307----- e-mail: liaison@rcts.org.uk

The Branch/Officers' attendance record should be completed and passed to **Alan Cooke** before or at conference or send your information to his e-mail address. This includes any apologies.

Please note that apologies must be tendered prior to the Officers' Conference by **NOON on Thursday 19th October**. e-mails and my home number WILL NOT be actioned after that time, as I will not have access to those facilities. You may leave messages with the hotel reception on 01293 884806 in the event of a late change of plan.

Please indicate any member who is attending Conference for the very first time.

BRANCH.....

[illegible]



2013 Branch Meeting Survey

Background

In 2005 the Development Sub-Committee sent a questionnaire to each branch requesting information on branch meeting activities. This was in an effort to assess what we as a Society can do better and improve the way we handle a number of things at Branch Meetings.

The survey provided some very useful information however but as time goes by branches change and by now the society has opened new branches in various parts of the country which were not included in the 2005 survey.

At the last Development Sub-Committee meeting some issues were raised concerning some branches and it was thought that a survey of all branches would again be useful. The 2013 survey will give us, the Development Sub-Committee, an opportunity to get a clear understanding of the way we at branch level operate.

Format

The 2013 survey consists of nineteen questions, based on and developed from those asked in 2005. To aid collation and reporting of results, each question required a simple Yes/No or Value to be entered, with one exception. Branches were given the opportunity to add additional comments if they so wished. It was agreed at the February DSC meeting that the survey should be conducted by post, and to encourage prompt response, each survey was accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope for its return. The survey questions are attached as Appendix 1.

Timescale

Surveys were sent out to branch secretaries in the first week of March, and it was requested that the replies were returned by Friday 29 March to permit sufficient time for the results to be analysed before the next Development Sub-Committee meeting on Thursday 13 June.

Returns

It is pleasing to report that all branches have embraced the survey, and returns had been received from all branches by 02 April, when the last three were received. Happily, the results confirm a lot of what the Development Sub-Committee know, or hope, is happening in the various branches, and there are not too many surprises from the results returned.

Analysis of Returns

Working through the survey, the answers are analysed as follows:

Question 1: DO YOU CHARGE AN ENTRANCE DONATION AT THE DOOR?

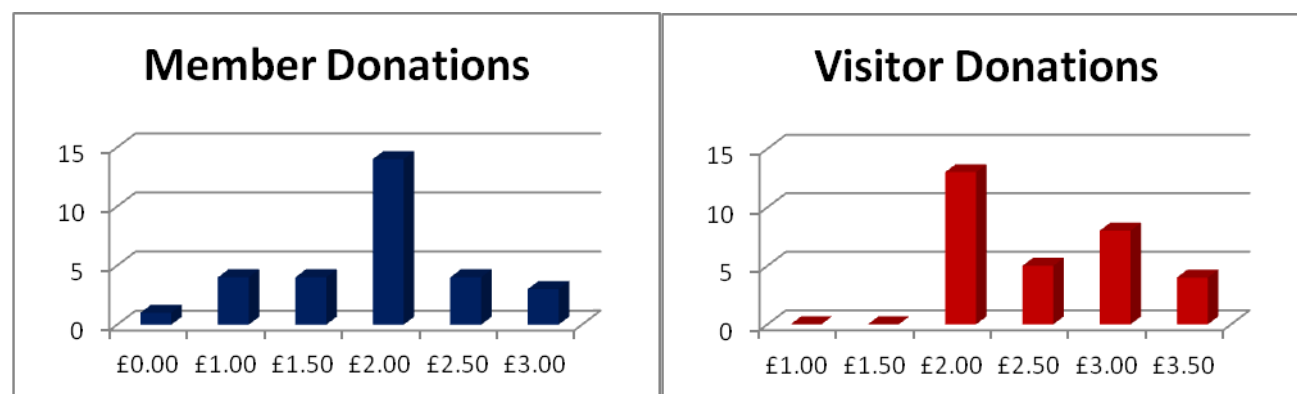
All branches replied "YES" to this question, it is worth noting at this point that three branches picked up on the wording of this and the next two questions with a comment reinforcing the fact that branches do not charge an entrance fee, instead requesting an appropriate donation.

Question 2: WHAT DO YOU CHARGE MEMBERS?

This question fielded six different responses, from Zero for one branch (MCN) to £3.00 for three branches. The most common donation requested is £2.00, requested in fourteen branches, with an overall average of £1.90.

Question 3: WHAT DO YOU CHARGE VISITORS?

There were four different responses here, ranging between £2.00 (again the most common) and £3.50 (four branches). The average rate requested is £2.55. At nine branches, the requested rate is the same as that for members, while at thirteen it is £1.00 more.



Question 4: WHAT DO YOU PAY FOR ROOM HIRE?

It was clear that a large variety of room hire rates would be found, reflecting the different premises used in terms of type, size and condition. This is confirmed in the replies received, which show that branches pay between £14 (Sussex- shared cost with the LCGB) to £75 (South East) to hire rooms for their meetings. The average room hire cost across all branches is £34.60.



These first four questions reveal that there are no regional patterns in the variance of donations requested or venue hire charges paid.

Question 5: DO YOU HOLD AFTERNOON MEETINGS?

Nine branches presently hold afternoon meetings. From information posted elsewhere, these are commonly in alternative locations to the evening meetings, in order to reach different audiences. Branches holding afternoon meetings are Croydon & South London, East Midlands, Hitchin, Ipswich, Northampton, Scottish, Sheffield, West Midlands and West Riding.

Question 6: DO YOU OFFER A 'SEASON TICKET' FACILITY?

Only Cheltenham and Thames Valley branches offer a season ticket facility. It is not known whether any other branches have considered or tried this in the past, but the advantage is twofold. Firstly, it improves cash flow (bringing in subscriptions early in each season before the meetings take place), and secondly, encourages attendance as once paid for, a member will not want their investment to go to waste.

Question 7: DO YOU HAVE A GENERAL SALES STAND AT MEETINGS?

Seventeen branches indicated that they have a general sales stand, however this outcome may have been interpreted in different ways, based on the results of questions eight and ten.

Question 8: DO YOU SELL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS?

Society Publications are a great way to promote the Society and sales are beneficial to branches as well. Twenty four branches sell our publications at their meetings, however it is surprising that those which do not include long established branches such as Northampton and West Riding. Others are Chichester, Furness, Lakes & Lune, Scottish and Sussex.

Question 9: DO YOU SELL SLIDES / PHOTOGRAPHS?

Nine branches sell slides or photographs at meetings. A number of others do so at exhibitions only. Once very popular, demand appears to have declined to just a third of branches.

Question 10: DO YOU SELL SECOND-HAND BOOKS?

Sales of secondhand books are an important way to raise branch funds, and also provide a platform for members to sell on their own unwanted titles. Twenty five branches sell books at meetings, with no sales at Lancs. & North West, Northampton, Peterborough, Scottish and Sussex.

Question 11: OTHER MERCHANDISE SOLD?

Nine branches have other items for sale, typically including DVDs, Signal Box Diagrams and maps.

Question 12: DO YOU HAVE A REFRESHMENT BREAK?

The break is an ideal opportunity for everyone to chat amongst each other over refreshment, and many connections can be made at this time. For many branches this can be the only chance, as time before and after meetings is spent setting up or clearing away. It is also a good time to generate sales for the branch. It is not surprising that a break is held at all branches, with the exception of in Scotland.

Question 13: DO YOU SERVE TEA / COFFEE / BISCUITS?

Twenty branches serve tea / coffee at their meeting break, and one branch (Sheffield) indicated "Soft drinks available". Where this is not served, the venue has bar facilities (see Q15). In some cases tea/coffee is only served at afternoon meetings.

Question 14: IS THIS INCLUDED IN YOUR ADMISSION DONATION?

At most branches Tea/ Coffee is complementary as part of the admission donation. In the four branches where this is not the case, it is provided by a third party, i.e. venue bar.

Question 15: DO YOU HAVE BAR FACILITIES AT YOUR MEETINGS?

Provision of a bar is another way to enhance the social interaction between attendees, and is available on site at fourteen meeting locations. It follows that these are all at evening meetings.

Question 16: DO YOU HAVE A DRAW / RAFFLE AT YOUR MEETINGS?

Eighteen branches hold a raffle at their meetings. With the opportunity to win a prize, this is a good lever to attract members and visitors to come back again and again.

Question 17: DO YOU ACTIVELY RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS AT MEETINGS?

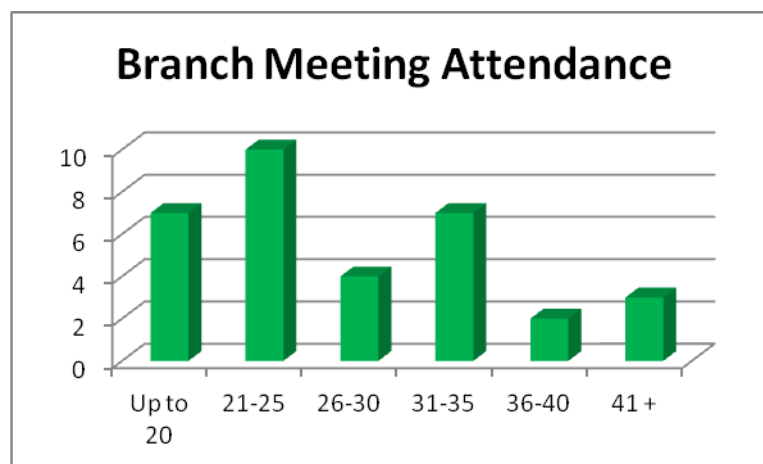
A fundamental activity to promote the growth of the Society, it is important that branches promote the benefits of membership and seek to recruit new members at their meetings. With a captive audience who are clearly interested in railways, branch meetings are an ideal opportunity to recruit new members. It is pleasing to record that twenty eight branches do actively recruit at meetings, the only two negative responses were received from Cambridge and Sussex.

Question 18: DOES YOUR VENUE HAVE GOOD CAR PARKING FACILITIES?

Regardless of whether a meeting location is near to public transport links, it is important to have car parking on or near the venue as well. The relatively low number of branches tied with the spread of the membership means some members may travel a distance to meetings, and in the evenings often means that using public transport is not possible. Twenty six branches have indicated that parking is available, the remaining four (East Midlands, North East, Sheffield and Sussex) have explained that the lack of parking is due to their location being in busy City Centres.

Question 19: AVERAGE ATTENDANCES AT MEETINGS FOR CURRENT YEAR?

Meeting attendance is one good indicator of how a branch is performing. As expected, there is a wide range of responses, from the lowest of 13 in Sussex, to 45 at Bristol and Ipswich. The average meeting attendance across all branches is 28.17. It is concerning to see branches such as Cheltenham (20), and Peterborough (18) with low figures, but likewise extremely encouraging that newer branches such as Chichester (33) and South Wales (41) are doing so well.



The average branch

So what constitutes an average branch meeting of the RCTS? The results of this survey have provided a valuable snapshot of our branch meetings as they stand in 2013 and have enabled us to understand what the branches are doing, and what you can find in a typical branch.

The first thing one would expect from a branch meeting is a warm and friendly welcome. The cliché about first impressions is true, and if we are to attract new members and retain our existing ones, then we need to get it right from the moment they walk through the door of one of our meeting venues. A smile and a few words of introduction cost nothing, and may well make the right connection that tells the visitor to the branch that they want to join the Society, or the current member that they want to renew.

As a Society member, one would be requested to make a donation of around £2.00. Visitors may be asked for a little more. This is to cover expenses and normally includes a cup of tea or coffee at the refreshment break, plus entry to a raffle. A bar is available at half of branch meeting venues. Meetings are typically held in the evening, but there are some held in the afternoon which may suit some members more. Society publications will be on display for perusal and purchase, along with a range of secondhand books donated by members. There will be information available about joining the Society, and branch officers often engage with visitors to see if they would be interested in joining. In most cases, you can park nearby if not using public transport to get to the meeting.

Conclusions

The 2013 survey has shown that each branch of the Society is different in the way it conducts its meetings and the range of facilities that are offered. This variation is good, however, and demonstrates how each branch has developed over time based on what works for them. There are clearly some branches that are performing really well, reflected in high attendances and several additional services (such as book sales) being offered. In contrast, some branches appear to be struggling, but continue to fulfil an important role in the areas in which they operate.

David Goddard
June 2013

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Branch Meeting Survey Form

Appendix 2: Additional Comments provided by branches



2013 BRANCH MEETINGS SURVEY

In an effort to assess what we as a Society can do better and improve the way we handle a number of things at Branch Level, including at Branch Meetings, we ask that you take a little time to complete this survey. This will give us, the Development Sub-Committee, an opportunity to get a clear understanding of the way we operate at branch level.

YOUR BRANCH

Please tick only *one* box where there is an option and complete other details as requested.

	YES	NO
DO YOU CHARGE AN ENTRANCE DONATION AT THE DOOR?	☐	☐
WHAT DO YOU CHARGE MEMBERS?	£	
WHAT DO YOU CHARGE VISITORS?	£	
WHAT DO YOU PAY FOR ROOM HIRE? (per meeting, excl. any VAT)	£	
DO YOU HOLD AFTERNOON MEETINGS?	☐	☐
DO YOU OFFER A 'SEASON TICKET' FACILITY?	☐	☐
DO YOU HAVE A GENERAL SALES STAND AT MEETINGS?	☐	☐
DO YOU SELL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS?	☐	☐
DO YOU SELL SLIDES / PHOTOGRAPHS?	☐	☐
DO YOU SELL SECOND-HAND BOOKS?	☐	☐
OTHER MERCHANDISE SOLD		
DO YOU HAVE A REFRESHMENT BREAK?	☐	☐
DO YOU SERVE TEA / COFFEE / BISCUITS?	☐	☐
IS THIS INCLUDED IN YOUR ADMISSION DONATION?	☐	☐
DO YOU HAVE BAR FACILITIES AT YOUR MEETINGS?	☐	☐
DO YOU HAVE A DRAW / RAFFLE AT YOUR MEETINGS?	☐	☐
DO YOU ACTIVELY RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS AT MEETINGS?	☐	☐
DOES YOUR VENUE HAVE GOOD CAR PARKING FACILITIES?	☐	☐
AVERAGE ATTENDANCES AT MEETINGS FOR CURRENT YEAR?		

Please use the other side of this sheet to make any comments, ideas or suggestions, or detail anything else you do at your branch meetings that you might think we would find of interest.

Appendix 2: Additional Comments provided by branches

- BTL Have onsite parking for speaker, disabled, book stock member etc.
- CSL At our branch AGM this year a member suggested that as we belong to a transport society we should make every effort to travel to meetings by public transport rather than by car. On a show of hands less than a quarter of those present (admittedly a low turnout) had travelled to the meeting by car. It is likely that many members and visitors who attend our meetings don't even have a car, including two of the three new members we have signed up this year. A further question in the meeting survey might be therefore, is your venue close to public transport? For CSL branch both our evening (Croydon) and afternoon (Redhill) venues are within easy walking distance of trains, buses and in the case of Croydon, trams. Perhaps in these days of concern about exercise and the environment another question might be about bicycle storage at the venue. A further question might be concerned with access to meetings venues for disabled members/visitors.
- EMD Street Parking is limited but venue is in the City Centre close to bus routes and tram.
- FLL Top notch hotel facility is used, which offers a carvery facility and accommodation.
- HSD Although we do not sell at our branch meetings, we have for the last fifteen or twenty years had a highly successful campaign at open days and model railway shows. Being one of the top two branches for the level of sales. We attend major shows at Doncaster, York, Pontefract, none of which come within the boundaries of our branch. Over the years I have been to thirty different locations selling books. Is this a society record? Reluctantly I have to inform you that we are now winding up our sales efforts due to there being no younger members in our branch to take over plus a steady trickle of our older members going to live in the big roundhouse in the sky.
- HTC The attendance at evening and afternoon meetings is about 95% a different group of enthusiasts. Can think of only two who regularly attend both meetings apart from officers and committee.
- LNW Just a question of semantics regarding entry costs. We prefer to request donations rather than charge so as to remain aloof of those vulgar types of the tax offices.
- MCN Since the 2005 survey this branch has halved its meeting venues to one (Chester). The reasons were largely to reduce the pressures on committee members at two indoor meetings a month and to save the effort of finding additional speakers and topics for meetings. As a result we have lost out on some members unable to reach Chester by train. The venue is satisfactory although there have been problems about the room being double booked due to inefficient in-house diary keeping. Meeting room charges in Chester are generally sky high and we are fortunate that our venue is still good value for money. There are some requests for afternoon indoor meetings but when the suggestion is made that others could organise them with branch backing things go quiet, however the monthly station observations can attain double figure attendances and the RCTS social contact is therefore maintained.
A £1 meeting donation proposal was met with some hostility but due to the branch benefitting from the sales of late members' ROs and books that proposal was deferred.
At one stage earlier this year there were serious thought about closing the branch down at the end of the 2013-14 indoor meetings season due to the lack of volunteers to serve on the committee and to continuing ill health on the part of some of the committee. That thought has now been averted.
- MHD We advertise the meetings of adjacent branches and other local railway Societies
We advertise and promote the society's national events
We promote the launch of new Society publications
We promote and sell society merchandise, including clothing and RO Binders
We arrange outdoor visits & days out
We embrace the Society's support of The Railway Children charity with a collecting tin at the welcome desk and by making donation when we have speakers who do not request expenses.

RCTS 2013 Branch Meeting Survey

- NEA The North East branch meets at two separate venues 30 miles apart so completed two copies of survey. We intend to move to rather better venues for the 2013-14 season at both ends which is being organised by new Chairman Tony Skinner. Tony has some new and more modern ideas for the branch which I feel are long overdue and I think we have a bright future with our new Chairman. The main reason for changing venues is cost, lack of bar and poor heating at Darlington and lack of bar and presence of oddball characters on the premises. There is no sensible parking facilities anywhere in Central Newcastle but the Metro is available.
- PBR Question the use of the word charge in q1-3. Understand that any admission charge is liable to VAT. Therefore branches were asked to ask members and visitors for donations to cover the meeting room cost and expenses. This is the policy at Peterborough. We request a minimum donation of £2 per person and with our current costs and average attendance this is enough to maintain our bank balance. We do not keep a record of individual donations.
- SOE We hold joint meetings with the Mid Hants Railway. As such we realise that occasional visitors can be MHR members and we have to be careful when talking with them. We do not want to undermine our relationship with the MHR
- SSX Please note we have joint meetings with Brighton LCGB. All income and expenses from meetings is shared and we make a small profit each year. Teas/coffees etc is dealt with by a third party (who we rent room from). They take money/provide refreshments separately from us. We only have about six regular RCTS members attend and they are the same people each meeting. Same can be said for LCGB and a few visitors.
- WEN Rather than spending funds on posting this and the return, why was it not emailed out for branches to complete. In the 21st Century Pen and ink is costly!
- WMD We are now in our second full season of afternoon meetings in Birmingham. Attendances have been lower than we hoped and expected but numbers are gradually increasing with both members and visitors. Some are also regulars at Coventry, while some now attending the afternoon meetings because they find it difficult to travel to the Coventry venue by public transport. Given the size of Birmingham and the number of members living there we expected more at these afternoon meetings. Suggested entrance donations cover the room hire charges, and some of the other meeting expenses (speakers exps etc) at both venues. Society books are on sale at branch meetings, together with secondhand books donated by members or bequeathed by deceased members. Proceeds from sales help to boost branch funds including covering meeting expenses. Funds are also boosted by donations for tea/coffee/biscuits at Birmingham meetings. We do not wish to push membership too much with visitors as we feel that actively pushing recruitment may be counterproductive with some. Instead we use a more subtle approach. Branch committee members make a point of speaking to visitors pointing out some of the benefits of membership such as the RO, discount on new society publications, visits to railway installations, a saving of £8 (8 Birmingham meetings) or £9 (9 Coventry meetings) on subscriptions as members are charged less than visitors for entrance donations etc. Society membership packs and threefold leaflets together with branch programmes are always available at branch meetings to aid recruitment. We also have heritage railway timetables and brochures and meeting programmes for other local railway societies on display at meetings. Coventry Venue - the meeting room at The Maudslay is on the first floor. Maybe we as a committee should suggest to members that it would be helpful if they helped a little more often to carry projection and sound equipment, boxes of books for sale etc up and down stairs!

	EMNESH	GREST WESTERN	LONDON & SOUTH	NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES	NORTH WEST& MIDLANDS	MC COMMENTS
PREVIOUS ACTION POINTS and OTHER TOPICS						
SOCIETY LIBRARY	MR reviewed library progress .The need for a library was questioned as few members use the facility. MR mentioned the valuable material stored there which is a valuable asset.	DK updated everybody on progress	DK updated everyone on progress.	Review of Library progress	ARW updated everybody on progress	
EXIBITIONS	Humberside are standing down from exhibitions. The definition of National Events was unclear. This needs to be clarified. Note: ACTION Greater use of RCTS bags should be made rather than any odd one. MR remanded everyone that banners were available.		Update on the current situation re. Credit cards.		MCN are attending the Merseyside Model Railway Club exhibition for free. But at Warley there are too many restrictions A suggestion was made that Bus Rallies are attended. Note: ACTION	
BRANCHES AND THE WEBSITE	A number of delegates considered it to be helpful if they were able to enter meeting reports and newsletter directly on to the website			Agreed that it was important that branches had up to date pages on the Society website. Peterborough was urged to get involved and send in material to the Webmaster. Note: ACTION	A request (from 2011) was that the membership renewal form includes a tick box to indicate whether a members' email address can be passed to the local Branch Secretary. Note: ACTION	

	EMNESH	GREST WESTERN	LONDON & SOUTH	NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES	NORTH WEST& MIDLANDS	MC COMMENTS
AGM & NW	Three Bridges station is some way from the hotel being used for the 2013 MW. The lack of organised transport may give rise to some criticism			RM stated that is was still planned to hold the OC every year.	The current routine of a one day AGM and the way Members' Weekends are organised was endorsed as a positive step with good attendances.	
RO	MR gave an update on the RO and appealed for more images to give a greater balance. Comments were made about trains cropped out of images and text within pictures.				The RO 1000th edition was well received with much credit to the editors and the contributors. Is there sufficient notice of outside fixtures and visits.	
BRANCH NEWS	North East Branch had a poor attendance at their afternoon meetings while Scottish had an excellent response. Sheffield viewed it as a route to survival					
NAMEPLATES	The process of displaying Society owned nameplates was commended. But issues regarding the status of those in the custodianship of the Sheffield Branch were considered to require clarification by the MC. Note: Action	An update was given on this project			WMD commented on their close relationship with the Severn Valley Railway. Suggestion were made that further nameplates could be exhibited at the GCR and the G&WR.	
MANCHSTER AREA BRANCH					No significant progress has been made.	

	EMNESH	GREST WESTERN	LONDON & SOUTH	NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES	NORTH WEST& MIDLANDS	MC COMMENTS
BRANCH BOUNDARIES			RM to be asked to produce a listing of which postcodes are allocated to each branch. Note: ACTION			
EMAIL ADDRESSES			Guidelines required on the best practice for email communication between branches and their members. This is being worked on by Alan Norris. Note: ACTION			
NATIONAL EXPOSURE OF THE RCTS,			We regularly had exchange ads in Ian Allan magazines but with the major changes that had taken place this has become more difficult.			
AMENDMENTS TO THE BRANCH OFFICERS' HANDBOOK			Surrey Branch expressed the view that the Branch Officers' Handbook was not much use due to a limited number of updates. This revealed an issue of their notification. They had a number of issues which the BOH has not answered. Jeremy Harrison said that he had identified 14 issues in which it was deficient.			

RCTS -- SUMMARY OF 2013 REGIONAL MEETINGS

	EMNESH	GREST WESTERN	LONDON & SOUTH	NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES	NORTH WEST& MIDLANDS	MC COMMENTS
BTP	Some Branches have had speakers from BTP and others encouraged to do so.		DK reported that the BTP telephone number is now included on membership cards, the Society now receives their press releases and the first of their articles has appeared in a recent RO.		It was felt that only 'tip-offs' from Class A enthusiast would be actioned and needed contact at a local level.	

	EMNESH	GREST WESTERN	LONDON & SOUTH	NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES	NORTH WEST& MIDLANDS	MC COMMENTS
NEW TOPICS						
MEMBERSHIP DIRECT DEBITS	Well received. Expected to result in lower year end renewals.	This initiative was covered but no opinion was recorded.	Presentation by DG. No comments recorded.	Presentation by RM. No comments recorded	This initiative was well received by those present. ARW also covered the issue of branch accounts and the possible need for some to be audited.	
ADOPTION OF LOCAL HERITAGE & MUSEUM SITES	Thought to be beneficial but some branches do not have many sites nearby while other have a lot. Spare RO's could be passed on.	This will vary from branch to branch and links will be easiest when members are also members of local heritage railways.	Discussion revolved around the fact that the Solent Branch having close ties with the Mid-Hants Railway were unable to display RCTS leaflets because the display racks are controlled by a third party. D35DK suggested that this could be resolved by the loan and display of an RCTS headboard or a descriptive panel.	Need to be cautious as some are controlled by commercial groups who would want to be paid for their services. Suggested that we advertise in RAILWAY HERALD.	WMD already have links with the Severn Valley Railway. This was agreed to be useful to make the society more visible at such sites for the benefit of both.	

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THE SOCIETY AS 'FRIENDS OF THE RAILWAY'	We are already supportive of the railway industry.	Branches should invite speakers from the railway industry. There may also be opportunities to join local rail users committees. It was suggested that members are asked by way of the membership renewal form 'are you a serving railwayman' to identify useful contacts.	The South East Branch were already members of the South east Trains stake holder group. DK urged other branches to do the same thing. Solent Branch found South West Trains to be unhelpful but Surrey found the opposite. MDH were planning to contact First Great Western. A common theme was 'who to approach first?'	Suggestion that branches have more talks from their local railway operator and when visiting railway sites to communicate more with employees and managers to see what we had in common as a way of building a closer relationship. Have links from the Society website to train companies and railway bodies - and become one of the 'Friends of the Railway Magazine'	Their RO should not give an opinion on railway topics but individual members should be free to do so via the RO.	
TENURE OF BRANCH OFFICERS	Two or three year cycles are thought to be desirable but there is the problems of getting others to step forward	Ideally a Branch Committee should be a mixture of new blood and continuity but this is always easy to achieve. It was suggested that this topic is added to the OC agenda so that branches can compare their experiences. Note: ACTION	Surrey have found difficulties getting new blood to join the branch committee. A set tenure was seen as possibly desirable but not practical. South East Branch considered the best route was the direct approach to likely candidates	This was not seen as important as getting help in running a branch with those of the right calibre.	Little advantage due to the difficulty in getting volunteers at all levels.	

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SUPPORT BETWEEN BRANCHES.	Sheffield are in decline due to a number of issues. Comments were made that supporting loss making branches is not the best use of Society funds and all branches should be self-financing.	None of the branches in this group have financial problems. The Bristol Branch said that they had assisted with setting up the South Wales Branch and similar help could be offered if required to any new branch in the region.	The reported problems with the Sheffield Branch were considered to be down to attitudes within the branch . A similar attitude with the Sussex Branch Committee was seen to holding them back as well. In the South Region it was thought that advice was more in need than money but if any was provided then it should be on the proviso of the branch acting responsibly.	This became a discussion on how the branches ran their financial affairs with a comparison of entrance fees, donations and raffles. Also discussed was the amount of money that branches needed to hold to cover all their running costs. No conclusion was arrived at though.	A number of suggestions were made as to how branches could reduce their ruining costs: -- 1. use smaller cheaper venues. 2. consider ways to maximise money taken at the door. 3. invite local speakers to keep the expenses low.	
DIGITAL RO	The changes were described by MR. A majority of those present said they would take up this facility.	There was concern that this would increase the cost of the printed RO dramatically but DK suggested that this could be offset by selling more advertising.	The only comment received was that there to be way for members to be informed when the newly published RO was available or for a regular publication date each month.	The meeting suggested that the membership is surveyed to gauge the demand for a digital only version.	Difficult to manipulate compared with the printed version.	

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SKILLS REGISTER	Unenthusiastic response and little debate. Members do not like to mix work and their leisure interests.	The renewal form could be used to ask for skills that could be of benefit to the Society. But the branches should be looking out for younger members that can help out. Andrew Jenkins of TVY is proposing to set up a speakers database which could be of use to other branches.	This was agreed to be a good idea but also that branches should talk to their members. A question to this effect should be added to the membership renewal form.	The Chairman asked all present if they know of members in their branches who has skills that may be of benefit to the Society, i.e. Legal, financial, librarian etc. It was agreed that in gathering this sort of information about individual members that they need to be approached very delicately as the majority of members do not discuss their professional life when visiting the branch or out socially.	This was considered to be a good idea with possibly a start being made by asking the question on the membership renewal form. But once having received this info, concern was expressed regarding the register itself. The current informal route has a lot to commend it.	
WILL & BEQUEST FORMS				RM explained the rationale behind the forms and the way he processes them. He urged everyone who has a collection fills in a form to ensure they are dealt with in the way that they wish. The Watford Branch Chairman recounted the issues involved in dealing with the collection of a recently deceased member.	ARW encouraged all to fill in a form.	
ANY OTHER BUSINESS	John Foreman announced his intention to stand down as Chairman with Rodney Allen agreeing to take over.	A suggestion that Audio Conferencing is tried instead of physical meetings. Less cost to the branch.	On applying for Life Membership a member had been required to submit their birth certificate and had resented this. The issue was felt to be down to Steve Ollive's form.	Bob Ballard announced his intention to stand down as Chairman with Robert Warburton agreeing to take over.		

	EMNESH	GREST WESTERN	LONDON & SOUTH	NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES	NORTH WEST& MIDLANDS	MC COMMENTS
	Jim Sedgwick asked that for next year that those attending bring along information regarding the speakers their branch has used recently.	NR speakers and their contractors need to obtain permission before they can give a talk. On one occasion a speaker due to give a talk to the Thames Valley had to give an alternative one because of this.	SRY and MDH have a joint listing of secondhand books on the Society website. Other branches will be urged to follow suit with DJ being asked to set up link from the front page.			
		It was felt that RO editorials should concentrate on facts and avoid political comments.	Annual Regional meetings were considered to be most advantageous.			
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