

RCTS

Railway Correspondence and Travel Society

Web Site: www.rcts.org.uk

Branch Liaison Secretary

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NEWSLETTER No 5

October 2001

Gentlemen,

It seems an age since the Newsletter No 4 and I hope that you have all enjoyed what there was of summer. It seems that the promised Indian Summer has materialised as this month has seen some good weather to be out and about in. Well it has down here in Suffolk anyway.

This is not intended to be a lengthy missive but one to get distributed with the Members' Weekend information for the attendees and Branches. It has been a busy few weeks as the Members' Weekend takes shape, not without it's problems though, as some of you will be aware. Altrincham here we come!!!

OFFICERS CONFERENCE SUNDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2001

Unless you have already so indicated could all Branches please advise me who their representative will be. Alternatively if you will not be in attendance please advise your apology accordingly.

MEMBERS WEEKEND - 2002

At the time of writing no branch or group of branches has volunteered to take on the running of the 2002 Members' Weekend. It would be nice to have this sorted before we leave Altrincham on 28th October so if you can come up with an offer of help then contact me before Altrincham or whilst there. The matter is also an Agenda item for the BOC on the Sunday Morning.

BRANCHES

As we go to press we learn that London Branch continues to struggle and it's future will be discussed at their November Committee. On a more positive side it is expected that our newest branch at Hitchin will have their first meeting in November, we wish David Cole and his team every success as they progress into the future. The formation of a branch at Croydon is still under discussion and as the situation with London Branch unfolds it is hoped that Croydon can step in and fill the void and attract members from south of the Thames. We eagerly await information from that source.

In the last few weeks I have been fortunate enough to visit four branches in various capacities and would like to thank you for your hospitality. I have certainly learnt much about how you function and am able to compare how each branch operates taking a number of focal points into consideration. I have other branches to visit before the AGM next year so have a busy schedule ahead of me. I may even be able to fit an Ipswich meeting in sometime during the season!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2002

Our hosts for the 2002 AGM will be East Midlands Branch with the AGM taking place in Mansfield on 20th April 2002. Events for the weekend are being arranged and notification to branches will be forthcoming in the not too distant future.

STATIONERY

Please remember that you can order stationery from Bob Ballard as and when required, this also includes membership packs and the various inserts. Please ensure that your packs are up to date with the latest information and that your own branch welcome letter and fixture programme are inserted as well.

Society and Branch Officers can order name badges from Gordon Davies. Gordon will have the name tag machine at Altrincham so if you need new ones for your branch then talk to Gordon.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTFOLIO

A "vacancy" exists in one of the Photograph Portfolio boxes. If you are interested then please contact Les Nixon in the first instance. Les' address can be found in the Society Officers listing in the RO information pages that appear each month and are update every three months.

REGIONAL MEETINGS FEEDBACK

Following the September memorandum following the Regional Meetings some of the action points have been discussed and responses are related in the following text. Other action points have been put directly onto the Officers Conference Agenda [enclosed] for discussion at Altrincham.

Please find below comment on the outstanding points raised via the regional Meetings.

RAILWAY OBSERVER

Branch Fixtures - It is impossible to cover two months fixtures at a time, we do not have enough room. The current intention is to cover from 1st of say September until middle of the following month (September issue) and then in Oct to run from 1st October until middle of November and so on. This covers the early part of each month twice and therefore we should not get fixtures missed. Agreed when RO gets delivered on 7th does look odd but as a complete record looked at late it is complete.

Website - I personally cannot see any need for anymore on website other than the note on inside covers that it exists. What can we achieve by wasting a page on the site, why, what does it achieve? I will refer to my team but cannot see any change.

R.O.Content - No change is likely to the content. More content on Branches is unlikely as we record large amounts now of events and happenings. What more is required? We have been trying to increase articles and have achieved this over past two years. Still continuing but offerings are starting to dry up.

Articles - I do acknowledge authors when I receive articles. As to publication date I usually say within six months. It is very difficult to give a more accurate date.

Comment on the above points have been made by the RO Editor, David Bird.

Records Officer - This is an ongoing action point and members should look amongst themselves for a suitable volunteer who may be prepared to take on this task. We can then give thought on how they will be produced.

Press and Publicity - Questionnaire

Thoughts on the need for a questionnaire have been considered and following the plea in the September memorandum two volunteers have come forth to offer assistance in compiling and administering the process. This matter will be progressed once some ground rules have been established. Once put into place we urge you to get your Branch members to complete the questionnaire as in the past response has indicated that the effort was hardly worth while.

PUBLICITY

Press and Publicity - The Society's Publicity Officer is Steve Ollive who is responsible for supplying the railway press/technical journals and other organisations with up to date information on all Society activities. Branches are encouraged wherever possible to use local media to publicise meetings, advertising before and reporting afterwards, without first having to seek MC approval. However, articles about the Society do need to be approved first. Who does what within the branch is obviously down to the individual branches structure dependent on the allocation of tasks within the branch.

See also the RO Matters responses - Questionnaire

National List of Speakers - To achieve something on this scale would be almost a full time job as any such list would have to be kept up to date and approval to distribute sought from those listed. We would also have to comply with the powers of the data protection act. It is known that some groups of branches circulate lists within their group, branches agreeing individually to circulate their own lists could expand this. Equally, Branches receive each other's fixture lists from me as they are produced so it is not too difficult to build up a profile that would suit the needs of your branch. A quick phone call to a fellow secretary could get you all the information you need about individual speakers.

Website Display at Exhibitions - Whilst a good idea it all comes down to cost and the need to have security where expensive equipment is required. It may be that members have idea's about this they we may not have considered so the matter could be open for discussion within the appropriate Web Site slot at the officers Conference.

PRODUCTS

Work is ongoing to produce a lapel badge (they may be available at Altrincham) with Branches getting a limited supply to sell. These will be charged to each Branch at cost, with a recommended selling price. We are currently looking at sources to produce car/bag stickers and will report when satisfactory arrangements are in place.

EXHIBITIONS

It is important that Bob Ballard is advised of exhibitions in your area and whether or not your Sales team can attend. If you are not sure whether you can attend or not, whether associated with manpower or boundary then again, contact Bob. He will be able to provide you with the necessary information and support. This is a two-way thing, everyone needs to know what is going on and the more information received and collated can only do good for the Society. Society Officers attend a large number of exhibitions and when information becomes available and locations identified then officers can be approached to attend wherever possible.

ENCLOSURES

Officers Conference, Sunday 28th October 2001, Agenda

A number of you have already received some Branch Fixture lists via various communication sources. Those outstanding that are available are herewith enclosed.

Relevant Members' Weekend information for those attending.

John Day

Ipswich
18th October 2001