

RCTS

Railway Correspondence and Travel Society

Web Site: www.rcts.org.uk

Branch Liaison Secretary

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NEWSLETTER No 9

FEBRUARY 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first Newsletter for some while, it has been a rather busy time here in Ipswich with a number of matters having to be dealt with. It is hoped this will give you an update on goings on during the past few months with news of Publications, the AGM at Folkestone, our 75th Anniversary proposals culminating with the Members' Weekend in Cheltenham at the end of October. Watch out for booking details in the Railway Observer and on our Web Site.

2. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEEKEND

Friday 11th – Sunday 13th April 2003

Go to the Society Web Site www.rcts.org.uk for booking form

The weekend, hosted this year by South East Branch will be centred at the **QUALITY HOTEL BURLINGTON Earls Avenue, Folkestone Kent**. There is ample free car parking in the roads around the hotel. The nearest Connex station is Folkestone Central approximately half a mile away. Transport from the station will be provided as necessary.

Friday 11th April

The weekend will begin on Friday evening with an illustrated presentation by Richard Jones, Community Relations Manager, Union Railways on the new Channel Tunnel Rail Link. Richard will also accompany us on a tour of the new line on Saturday morning.

Saturday 12th April

A choice of two separate visits is offered for Saturday morning.

A coach tour of the new Channel Tunnel Rail Link visiting as many sites as possible between the Swanscombe area and Dollands Moor leaving the hotel at 9.15a.m, returning in time for the AGM at 4.00p.m. The tour will be led by Richard Jones of Union Railways who will give a commentary during the day on the development of the new railway. Members will be able to purchase their lunch at a suitable location en route.

The alternative tour will be of the Kent & East Sussex Railway. A vintage coach will leave the hotel at 8.30a.m. Travelling to the workshops at Rolvenden to view the locomotive stock followed by travel by steam train (a Terrier or the P Class) over the new section of line to Bodiam. The train will return to Tenterden where the carriage and wagon workshops and the Colonel Stephens Museum will be open. Members will be able to purchase lunch at

Tenterden either at the station or a short walk away in the town. The coach will bring the party back to Folkestone in time for the AGM at 4.00p.m.

After the AGM members will have free time to peruse the sales stands and other exhibits prior to the dinner at 7.30p.m. for 8p.m. when Howard Holt, Director of Corporate Affairs, Dover Harbour Board will be our principal guest. After dinner Howard will give a short presentation on the "West Port" project which will see the reinstatement of the train ferry.

Sunday 13th April

The Sunday morning visit is to the Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. A vintage coach will leave the hotel at 9.00a.m. Travelling to New Romney where the locomotive stock will be on display outside the depot for the benefit of the photographers. The party will then travel by the 10.30a.m. service train to Dungeness back through New Romney and on to Hythe where there will be other photographic opportunities. The coach will return to the Burlington by 1p.m. for the benefit of those who have booked lunch. Members will disperse after lunch and transport will be provided to the station as necessary.

For partners not attending the AGM Folkestone offers a full range of shops within easy walking distance from the hotel. Alternatively local transport can be used to visit Dover's historic castle, take a shopping cruise across the Channel or experience the tunnel Shuttle to the Calais shopping complex.

3. 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

In connection with the Society's 75th Anniversary Celebrations options have been taken up with Pathfinder Tours for seats on two Railtours. The object being to give members around the country to at least take part in one (or both) tour(s). Preliminary information will be advised in the March RO with booking forms appearing in the April RO.

The Proposed Options are (Details to be confirmed nearer the time)

1) Towards the end of September 2003.

A tour starting in Crewe and travelling down through the Midlands and Cheltenham to Newport. Then across South Wales and up the Central Wales Line to Shrewsbury and Crewe and then looping back down to Newport (so the locos and stock would end up back in South Wales (possibly for a tour the next day). This would have diesel haulage (heritage of some description - a Peak or Deltic for example) but with steam, possibly a Black 5 and Standard 4 double heading over the Central Wales. This tour mirrors in some way the Golden Jubilee tour albeit with different traction, so would appear to be quite appropriate.

2) During early October 2003.

A tour from Sheffield via Nottingham, down the MML to Acton and then around the Southern to either the Mid Hants or Swanage Railway (depending on which is happy to have a 13 coach train parked up on site for a few hours!) and return via outward journey. Attempts will be made to procure the use of 60001 "The Railway Observer" at some point during the journey (possibly Acton to the preserved railway and back). This would give us some mileage behind 'our' loco together with a faster heritage loco elsewhere on the national network and pot luck on the preserved line but probably steam haulage on their scheduled services.

Between them these trips have a catchment area considered to be within reasonable travelling distance of most Society Branches without the need for an overnight stay either at the beginning or end of the tour.

A desire has been expressed our desire to have 60001 involved. However, having a 60mph freight loco on high speed main passenger lines may not be practical so it is thought the likely section that could be used would be from Acton to the south where the passenger speeds are generally lower.

4. LIBRARY

The Hon Librarian, Terry Silcock will be unable to deal with any enquiries between mid March and the April AGM weekend (11-13th April) therefore anyone requiring items from the Library to be brought to the AGM must make contact with Terry before 15th March.

5. PUBLICATIONS

Two new books, *"Plymouth's Railways in the 1930's "* and *"LNWR Names" (together with a sequel to LMS names)* are now published and supplies should be obtained from Geoff Baylis, except for those Branches supplied by Terry Silcock, Bob Ballard and David Cole. Also remember that the Society Tie can be ordered at the same time.

"BR Standards Volume 2 (the 2-6-0's and 4-6-0's)" and *"Great Northern in the East Midlands No 4"* could both appear around the Easter to early May period.

Publication of *"LMS 2-6-0's "* is progressing and dependent on the speed of events relating to the manuscript and photographs being passed to the Society it is possible that this could be available at Cheltenham in October.

The Society is in the process of reviewing it's stock of unsold publications and information will be passed to Branches once a decision is made on disposal of surplus items. Remember that there are associated offers attached to purchases of new publications. This should be seen as a source of revenue and encouraged.

6. PUBLICATION LISTS AND MEMBERSHIP PACKS

Membership Application Forms, New Publications Lists and membership packs are available from Bob Ballard, 1 Henders, Stoney Stratford, Milton Keynes

7. SOCIETY WEB ACTIVITIES

Lap Top Presentation

South East Branch has proceeded with a trial culminating in a demonstration of equipment set-up at the Branch AGM ON 2nd December.

This demonstration was seen and enthusiastically welcomed by the National Chairman Rodney Lissenden.

To recap, the intention is to be able to display selected pages from the Society Website at exhibitions and other suitable events where we are looking for new membership. The display is in the form of a Power Point continuous roll over presentation. Once the monitor and laptop have been set up and switched on it will not be necessary for any further operation during the period of the exhibition.

David Kelso will provide a comprehensive set of instructions to each branch with or without the complete package.

It is planned to have the trial unit on display at the AGM in Folkestone next April for all to see.

Equipment required for this will be as follows;

14" colour monitor
Laptop computer Display stand
2 socket extension cable

Including software a budget figure to branches is estimated at £275.00

8. MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

New membership applications, these should continue to be sent to Peter Davies as on the application form and not to Richard Morris as mentioned in Newsletter No 8.

As at the end of January 563 members had not renewed their membership. Reminder letters have been sent in an effort to encourage these members to send their subscriptions as soon as possible. Branch Secretaries will also receive information about members in their Branch who have not renewed. It is hoped said Branch Secretaries will make their own contact with those who have not renewed with a view to encouraging them to do so. Members who had not renewed by February 1st would not have received a February Railway Observer. They will not receive subsequent issues until they have paid their subscription.

9. FUTURE INFORMATION

Newsletter Number 10 will be produced in time for the AGM and will have enclosed with it Agenda information for the next round of Regional Meetings, including updated information from last year's meetings. Minutes of the Officers' Conference at Bristol will also be enclosed. *(It should be noted that the Members' Weekend report will appear in the RO when space is available for it's inclusion)*

*John Day
Ipswich
18th February 2003*