



The Archive and Library

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with The Charity Commission. Registered number 1169995

**The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society's
Library was founded in 1935.**

**It has now grown to a collection of more than 10000
books and magazines including bound volumes and
includes much other archival material.**



**Stationmaster's House
Station Approach
Leatherhead
Surrey
KT22 7SQ**



**Opening dates and how to get
there are to be found
on our website**

www.rcts.org.uk/society/library

**Email Contact:
archive@rcts.org.uk**



The Library is also open to non-members
[Further Information Overleaf](#)

A Summary of the Collection

RCTS Publications

From its formation in 1928 the Society has published a monthly magazine – ‘The Railway Observer’ (for the first year its title was ‘Railway News’). A complete set of bound volumes is housed at the library and for most years there are several copies.

In 1935 the Society published its first book – ‘The locomotive stock of the main line companies of Great Britain as at 31st December 1934’. Since then the society has continued to produce books on railway subjects, many of which have been detailed histories of locomotives of British railway companies. Copies of all titles are kept at the library.

For many years the society organised rail tours, sometimes in partnership with other societies, and there is a very full collection of the itineraries (paper and digital copies) which were produced for these. A listing of these is available.

Books

There is a stock of upwards of 7000 volumes covering all aspects of railways, including a significant number concerned with railways overseas, some of which are in French, German or Spanish. Included in the collection are reference books, annuals, yearbooks, and largely complete collections of the series published by Oakwood Press and Middleton Press. Copies are held of the books of detailed track plans published by Quail and others, many of which cover ex Great Western and Southern Railway lines. Copies of the reports of traffic surveys carried out by various groups, including the RCTS, are held – these date mostly from the 1950s and 1960s and were usually carried out on Saturdays in summer when many extra passenger trains were run to cater for holidaymakers.

Periodicals

The library holds over 3000 bound volumes of periodicals on railway subjects and continues to receive many titles regularly.

The collection includes magazines and journals published by preservation societies and specialist groups, as well as more general titles. There is a complete set of Locomotive Magazine, Railway Magazine, Trains illustrated/Modern Railways and a considerable holding of Railway Gazette. There are volumes of magazines concerning overseas railways including those of affiliated societies in Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. Other material originates from South Africa, Canada and USA.

Accident Reports

We have a collection of reports of accidents in Great Britain published in earlier years by the Railway Department of the Board of Trade and later by the Health and Safety Executive. The reports mainly concern events in the twentieth century but there are some earlier ones and listings are available. There are also copies of some accident reports from USA.

Catalogues of material held in the library

Catalogues and lists of library materials have been maintained in various Excel spreadsheets

The library contains other bibliographies and finding aids, particularly the three volumes of the Bibliography of Railway History compiled by George Ottley and others, and these are particularly useful for identifying books on particular subjects. Many copies of subject indexes to volumes of periodicals are also held.

‘Archival’ material

In addition to published books and magazines, the society has acquired a collection of manuscripts, internal documentation and reports, mainly by donation from members. It includes notebooks of observations by various individuals from the 1930s onwards, British Railways locomotive and rolling stock records at various dates from about 1970, track plans and drawings. This is a very mixed collection and a detailed catalogue of this material is in preparation. Meanwhile all the material is accessible for browsing on the shelves.

Within this category are two particularly notable sets of documents –

- 1) The Mike Page collection of manuscripts listing locomotives built by UK and overseas locomotive builders, together with listings of locomotives owned by most railways throughout the world from the beginnings of their history. This material fills seven drawers in filing cabinets.
- 2) Detailed abstracts of Acts of Parliament relating to railways in UK compiled by the late Bill Batteson, which are contained in 55 A4 manuscript books. The contents of these books have been scanned and it is intended to make them available in digital format.

Loans

Books and bound magazines may be borrowed by members in accordance with the rules and procedures laid down by the archivist / librarian.