



# Outside the Box

St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust [www.sigbox.co.uk](http://www.sigbox.co.uk)

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## We are open to the public!



This was the sign that greeted visitors to the box on Easter Sunday when the Trust held its first public open day. Although only a few people left their Easter eggs at home and came to see what we have achieved, the day was a significant milestone in the history of St Albans South Signal Box. Elsewhere you will read of our regular opening plans and the build up to our formal re-opening. In the meantime work continues on the box and in the garden to maintain the progress made so far and add more features for visitors to see and enjoy. The number of artefacts being donated or loaned continues to grow and I am always amazed on each visit to see just what has been lurking in people's garages and lofts and wonder what will be unearthed next. So if any of our members have any items of railway interest be it signalling related or not and would be interested in seeing it displayed in the Box please contact Keith or bring it along to one of the opening days.

Richard Kirk

## Chairman's Words

### GRAND OPENING

The trustees have decided to hold the formal Grand Opening of the Signal Box in September to coincide with the Heritage Open Days – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September. This will give us time to arrange a bit of a fanfare and to carry out further restoration of the Box. We are still looking for a celebrity!

Please put the dates in your diary

### BBC FILMING

The BBC training department have visited the box and wish to use it for film training. This will be for two days for which the Box will receive a fee and a couple of professionally produced films about the Box covering its history and use. This is scheduled for June. We're hoping this will plant a seed for further interest from the BBC!

### OPEN DAYS

As the formal opening of the box is some months away, the trustees have decided to open the box to the public as from now. The box will be open to the public from Easter to end of September on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month, 2:00pm – 5:00pm.

Note that the working day already held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month carries on as usual from 10am – please come if you can spare the time.

The open days rely on volunteers manning the box both upstairs (demos) and downstairs (teas and merchandise). For those of you online, details of how to access an online rota have already been communicated. For those of you who are not online, please call Keith or Mary on 01727-836131 with the dates and times you can help. Full training will be given.

Keith Webster

No apologies for taking space up with this superb photograph taken by Mike Cobley of Britannia pacific 70013 'Oliver Cromwell' steaming into St Albans past the Box on its way to Sheffield on the morning of May 9<sup>th</sup>. A truly magnificent sight following which 'Cromwell' made a spirited start from the station on the climb to Sandridge. Hopefully there will be the chance to see a re-run on July 11<sup>th</sup> when the locomotive is due again at approximately 7.15am on a railtour to York (see [www.uksteam.info/tours/trs09.htm](http://www.uksteam.info/tours/trs09.htm) for details).





First Capital Connect drivers from Bedford on their visit to the Box in March



15.05 St Pancras to Sheffield HST hurries past the Box on 15th May 1988. Photo by Geoff Edwards



The Thameslink 'candy striped' Class 319 units pass the Box

## Box Visits

A number of groups have visited the box over the last month or two. This has included the Bedford based First Capital Connect train drivers, the Young Adventurers, and the St Albans museum service. Great feedback was received from all of them. Many thanks to all who manned the box and gave them such a good experience. Other groups are scheduled to visit over the next couple of months and if you know of a group that might be interested please let John Telford know or send us an email.

## Publicity

Thanks to Steve who is re-designing the flyer and other documentation. It's looking very good!

As we are now holding Open Days we need to increase the profile of the signal box. Please let us know if you are able to take an A4 size publicity poster and/or some flyers.

We also need someone to take on the role of 'Publicity Officer'. No experience needed, just a bit of time to send things to the newspapers and take flyers to the tourist office and similar locations.

Recent publicity has included a two page illustrated article in the April issue of Hertfordshire Countryside.

## Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the AGM on 26th March can be found on the Trust's website giving full details of matters discussed.

## Waitrose 'Cheque-out'

Although the final figure is not yet known we are hoping to receive in the region of £200 from their March local charity voting. So it's a big thank you to all those members and supporters who cast their token for the Trust.

## Car Parking

We will have one space available to rent from the end of May 2009.

Please contact us if you are interested.

First come, first served !

## A Date for your Diary - Barbeque - 11<sup>th</sup> July

A BBQ will be held at the signal box on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July from 2:00pm onwards.

Food will be provided but bring your own drink.

There will be no charge but donations will be accepted most gratefully!

(Suggested donation of £5 per person).

Friends and family most welcome. Please send an email to [info@sigbox.co.uk](mailto:info@sigbox.co.uk) or ring with the number of people coming so we know the number of people to cater for.

If you have any items that can be used as **raffle prizes** please bring them along on the day.

Hope to see you there.

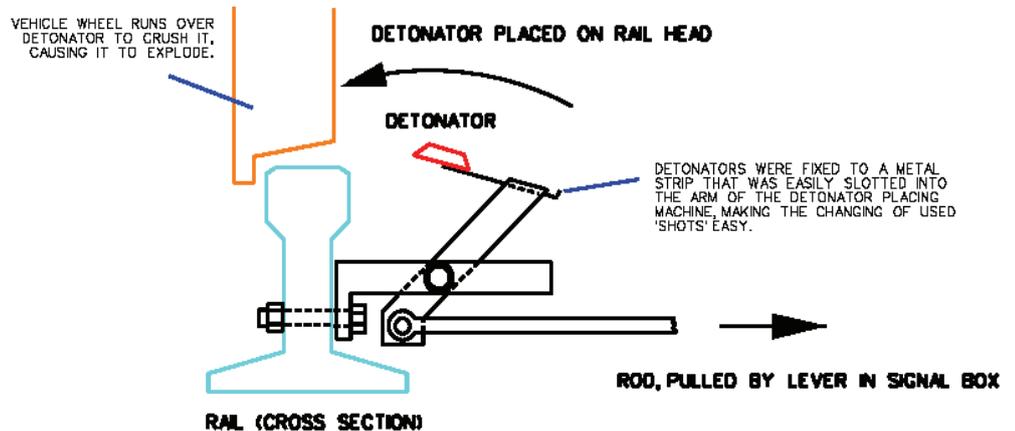
## 'Outside the Box' - your Newsletter

Below I am starting another occasional series for the Newsletter. 'St Albans' Other Signal Boxes' will continue in future issues.

If any of you have any ideas for other items you would like to see included please let me know. If any members would like to write short articles of interest, snippets of interesting information, letters to the Editor or submit photographs for publication I will be most grateful. Please contact me on [richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 01727 860047

## How it works No.1 Emergency Detonator Placer

The four black and white striped levers in the Box operated these machines, one for each of the running lines. They were located close to the Box and allowed the signalman to warn drivers in the event of an emergency. The detonators would be changed every month and in addition it was customary to have three hanging on a hook by the door of the box for instant use.



EMERGENCY DETONATOR PLACING MACHINE

Diagram courtesy of Phil Bell

St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust is a company limited by guarantee registered in England No.4653488.

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