



Outside the Box

St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust

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Even on a snowy February day the box still stands out

2009 - a Year of further progress

As we start the new year, we can reflect on 2008 during which much was achieved. Completion of the interior painting, restoration of the lever frame and interlocking, obtaining and laying authentic lino on the Operating Floor and paving around the box were only a few of the highlights. With the Trust and its achievements becoming better known we are acquiring a number of signalling artefacts that will help us in the future to demonstrate to visitors various aspects of signal box operation. Some of these will be placed in the garden and, where possible, will be linked to the lever frame to allow an element of authentic operation. 2009 should see us continue to build on this progress. There is plenty still to do however before full restoration is completed and the garden area fully landscaped.

Richard Kirk

Chairman's Words

Visitors

Over the weekend of 10/11th January we welcomed 195 visitors to the box. The heating system was sorely tried but we managed to warm our visitors with signalman's tea and a 'keep the mug' offer. This was organised to coincide with the St Albans model railway exhibition and the vintage buses. This was not widely advertised so we are very happy with the number of visitors. However, next year a more concerted advertising and integrated approach to the function will be taken.

AGM

The AGM will be held on **26th March 2008** at The Constitutional Club, Ridgmont Rd. just opposite the signal box starting at 7:30pm. All members are welcome. The venue has been chosen in preference to the signal box due to space and catering arrangements. There will be a buffet and tea / coffee provided and the bar will be open for you to purchase beer etc. To ensure we have enough food please let us know if you are coming. The agenda will include a report on progress, finances, and future plans. Your input to future plans will be very useful and if you have any suggestions in advance of the AGM please let us know.

Merchandise

There are still some mugs available. We sold all of the special edition LMS wagons within a couple of months making a profit for the Trust of over £500. We are now looking for St Albans signal box related items for future fund raising. One member has started to manufacture 'cut-out' signal boxes and if anyone has any ideas or expertise with merchandise please get in touch.

Other museums and societies

The Mill Green museum at Hatfield currently has an Exhibition called 'Welwyn Hatfield in the age of steam'. You may notice our bench which came from the GNR St Albans to Hatfield branch has been loaned to them (it's 8ft long so you shouldn't miss it!). The exhibition runs from 3 February. Their number is 01707 271362 to check opening times.

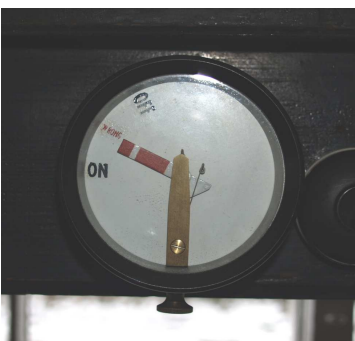
Network Rail

Further redundant signalling equipment has been kindly donated to us by Network Rail. The latest being a number of four aspect signal lights. We have promised to be careful with the sighting and I'm sure we will get some good advice from them to ensure their safe operation in the garden! We will be able to demonstrate modern signalling in full size scale.

Keith Webster



The signal post in the garden now supports a home signal.



One of the recently installed signal indicators on the block shelf



The Palatine express storms past the box bound for Manchester on a foggy November morning in 1959



Phil hard at work replacing the instruments on the block shelf.



The box seen from the top of the new car park.

The atmospheric photograph on the left that appeared in the Review newspaper last September was taken by local resident David Hawthorn. Amongst other things the picture shows our old friend the three shunting signals or 'dollies'. Howard Green has commented that at one time the signals were moved by BR to sit in between the up and down

main lines. This was to improve the sighting of the signals during shunting movements. However the Station Inspector at the time, Bert Inns, had advised against this move and was highly amused when it was hit by a train after only a week. The dolly was then returned to its original position as shown!

Trust Literature - Help Needed

We are looking for members with some expertise to help with the following:

Re-design of the Trust publicity pamphlet (A4 size double sided)

Re-issue of the Trust booklet outlining the history of the box

Of course, help with content will be provided but we are looking for a more 'professional' look and feel.

Hire and Visits to the Box

We have already had a number of successful visits to the box followed by refreshments in the Constitutional Club.

If you know of a group or school who would like to visit (refreshments optional) please let us know.

Similarly, the downstairs of the box is available for hire (good music practise room !)

Subs for 2009 now due

A renewal form is included with this newsletter.

This renewal form also shows the membership details the Trust holds. Please review the details and amend or add to if necessary and return with your subs. Thank you.

Opening Date

The box opening date is yet to be finalised but is likely to be in April this year. Details to follow.

Following the official opening the box will be open at weekends and will need manning by volunteers. Full training will be given.

Please let us know if you COULD be available along with an indication of whether it would be Saturday or Sunday, morning or afternoon, regularly or on an ad-hoc basis.

Trustees

The Trust is fortunate to have very active and committed Trustees. However, we are always on the lookout for 'new blood' as and when vacancies arise. If you have spare time and are interested in becoming a trustee please contact the Trust to discuss further.

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS..

The Trust has been selected by the St Alban's Waitrose as one of the three local charities for the month of [March](#). This means that the Trust will receive a share of £1,000 as voted for by Waitrose shoppers. So, get shopping and voting ! Thank you to the person who nominated the Trust to Waitrose.

More breaking news - we've been offered a BR standard brake van. It needs some restoration and the Trustees are considering the offer. Help will be needed to move it if we have somewhere to put it!

St Albans' Other Signal Boxes No.2 St Albans Abbey



Not a Midland Railway signal box this time but the one built by the London & North Western Railway, controlling the first station in St Albans. The Abbey station (not so called until 1924) opened on 5 May 1858 when services over the branch from Watford Junction began. The Great Northern line from Hatfield opened in 1866 and the signal box was built sometime before the end of the nineteenth century. It was built to a standard LNWR design but without any overhang at the eaves. The locking room was constructed of brick and the upper part of wood with wooden stairs. The box had 25 levers and initially controlled the whole of the branch to Watford Junction. From 1913 this was cut back to Bricket Wood when the box there was built. On the Hatfield line the section covered the whole branch except between 1890 and 1919 when there was a box at London Road Station. Passenger traffic on this line ceased in 1950 and the link between the two lines was severed altogether in 1964. Signalling on the Abbey line was rationalised in 1966 and the box was taken out of service and replaced by a ground frame. It was demolished shortly afterwards. In the Transport Treasury picture from 1955 the Hatfield line can be seen curving to the left as the Watford line goes to the right.