



Members enjoying the annual summer barbecue afternoon on 27th July.

The Great Gathering

No, not the one at York (but more of that later) but the one at the Signal Box last month. On Saturday the 27th July nearly 40 members and friends gathered to enjoy the annual summer barbecue. With the promised rain holding off until after the event had finished, the afternoon was considered a resounding success. Many thanks once again to Les O'Leary who sweated away over the barbecue and to all the others who helped in the organisation. If you missed out this year then keep an eye out for next year's date and come along to join your fellow signal boxers.

Earlier in July 10 members did visit the Great Gathering of A4 Pacifics (Mallard et al) at the National Railway Museum. During this visit Tony Furse and two other members had a meeting with one of the Museum curators and were given sight of the original diagram from the Waterloo and City line 'box at Waterloo, the shelf of which we now have on display down stairs in the 'box. This diagram was on offer to us from the Museum. Unfortunately close examination revealed it to be much too big and too heavy for our display area as it is mounted on a very large piece of metal. However it will not be lost to the heritage movement as our friends at the Emsay and Bolton Abbey Railway, who alerted us to the diagram in the first place, are going to give it a home along with two ground signals that were also at Waterloo.

Richard Kirk



Above: who are these special visitors? - see over for details.

Below: members observing with interest an East Midlands HST that had stopped at the banner repeater outside the box to obtain instructions before proceeding further during signalling work.

Chairman's Words

It was good to see so many of you at the BBQ this year and weren't we lucky with the rain which didn't appear until long after we had gone. Thank you very much to those who worked so hard to make the day a success.

Along with our usual Sunday afternoon openings we continue to have a lot of group visits. These are highly successful and bring a lot of finance and good will to the trust. We recently entertained the London Explorers Club, a mixed age group who travel around London once a month and visit places of interest. When they were leaving after a good three hour visit I was approached by a lady who said she had been one of the Directors of The British Museum and wanted you all to know that she thought that the restoration of the box and its garden and the presentation of the history and working of the box by the members was at a very professional level. A great accolade to you all from a museum insider.

Heritage open weekend approaches on the 14th and 15th September, two long but interesting days. If you can spare a couple of hours to show our visitors round or make tea, man the gate or control the access to the operating level please offer your services, you won't regret it for you will meet a whole host of interesting visitors.

Our proposed new Midland signal for the garden is taking shape with the parts from the Roy Burrows Collection being restored and repainted ready to be mounted on the wooden post. Michael Wright has completed the cabinets for our Tyer No 6s so now we wait for the call from Derby Museum to say we can collect them and have them installed. Some big exciting changes in our presentation for the late summer.

Don't forget to pop in to the box on Monday evenings where you can become a signalman for the night regardless of skill or knowledge.

Tony Furse



Right: recent visitors were a group of Explorer Scouts who split their time between litter picking on the Station and a guided tour of the 'box and gardens. As the light faded they lined up for a group photograph including the members on duty.



Winners of the 2008 St Albans Civic Society Award



Winners of the 2010 Invensys Rail Signalling Award (Structures)

Newsletter produced by Richard Kirk. Please send items for inclusion to richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk or contact me on 01727 860047

Heritage Open Weekend

Once again the box will be open for the Saturday and Sunday of the Heritage Open Weekend on 14th and 15th of September. To make sure that this is once again a success for the Trust, members are asked to volunteer to help over the weekend. We need sufficient members to be present to show visitors around, answer their questions and ensure that they have an enjoyable and safe time inside the box and in the garden. If you can help even for just a few hours on one of the days please contact Mary Webster on mary@sigbox.co.uk or 01727 836131. Mary will be drawing up the rotas and will allocate you a role.

Another recent accolade

From Paul Franklin a visitor to the 'box:' A few weeks ago I had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon at the signal box with my young son. The volunteers were without exception helpful and informative and were clearly enthused with a passion for our railway heritage that they are doing so much to preserve. On leaving, to my horror, I found I had no cash for a donation so I have enclosed a cheque for £10 which I hope will be of some help with your valuable and much appreciated work. We will be back before long!

Thank you Mr Franklin.

Archive picture taken from the 'box' by Geoff Ryland sometime in 1979 showing two up trains both hauled by 'Peak' Class 45 diesels.

Signalmen Reunited

On Sunday 2nd December 1979 Steve Lake was the signalman on duty at St Albans South who operated the penultimate shift. Like many of his fellow signalmen at the south end of the Midland Main Line he was a relief man drafted in from other parts of the UK to cover the signal boxes in the last few months of their operation. Steve was from Manchester. At the end of his shift he handed over to Geoff Ryland who then had the dubious pleasure of being the last signalman to work the box handing over at the end of his shift to the engineers who began the job of dismantling the signalling equipment as West Hampstead Power Box took control of the line. Geoff had transferred in from Kidderminster. The two men had never met again until the 11th August this year when both visited the 'box' during one of our Open Days. The afternoon was full of reminiscences and other visitors to the 'box' were treated to tales of life in the 'good old days'. Steve, on the left in the picture on the front, is still a signalman working at Llandudno in North Wales whilst Geoff is retired and still living near Kidderminster.

Model presentation

When young James was set a school project he decided to make a model of his favourite building in St Albans—the signal box. After it was finished he very kindly presented it to the Trust for display alongside the real thing. With his Mum Anna he recently visited the 'box' with his 'box' and is seen on the left posing in the garden.

Progress at the 'box

Headline news is that the outside of the 'Box' has been re-painted! The South end was done by Members last year, but the subsequent poor weather delayed completing the rest. In the end it was decided to get professionals in. The result was an excellent job at a very reasonable price and, needless to say, our treasure now looks superb again!

In my last missive the weather was beginning to improve. Well in June and July it has done so with a vengeance, so much gardening and garden watering has been undertaken (from our new external tap), and many visitors have, as ever, commented favourably. Again, thanks to all those who have served on the green-fingered team.

The slabbing has now been finished, with the area between the lamp hut and 'Box' already being used for artefacts and our model signalling demo. The first of two loads of artefacts from the Roy Burrows Collection and Derby City Museums have been brought down by van and await restoration – but are already on display. Three new signs have been erected on the sleeper wall and a restored 'Switch' sign on the top mound.

The Derby artefacts include everything needed for our new home signal (to go on the lawn) and the signal post has had its cracks filled and awaits a top coat of paint. As soon as the other parts have been cleaned and painted and the metal base made, we will be able to put the signal together. It would be great if we can get it up and running by Heritage Open Weekend (14th and 15th September).

The front gate and Great Northern bench have been re-painted and the coffin carrier is in the process of being refurbished. Our site telephone system is getting closer to being operational.

So, much good work has been achieved, but with additional volunteers we could see even more being done, so: Your Signal Box needs You!

The Stop Press is that the LED banner repeater on the down fast, immediately opposite our garden, now lights up in green when the signal beyond Platform 4 - which it heralds - is also showing green. .

John Telford

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

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Three of the new signs recently erected in the garden, the two public warning notices are on the sleeper wall whilst the Switch sign is under the trees. The latter is thought to be an alternative sign for catch points.