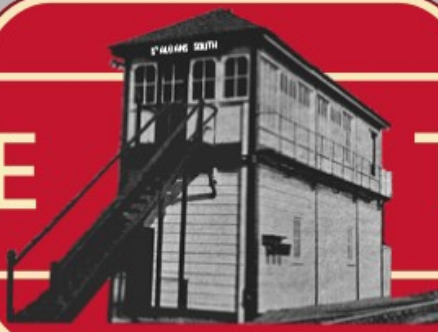


133 Years old

1892 to 2025

OUTSIDE



THE BOX

Newsletter November 2025 Issue 82

Summer unveilings

Left: Andy Savage, Chair of the Railway Heritage Trust; and Right: Judith Caruthers of the Heritage Lottery Fund unveil the new signal and bench in the Signal Box garden as recorded below by John. Below: the new bench with mosaic



Richard Kirk

Chairman's Words

A final round-up of our efforts to celebrate the UK-wide Railway 200. We didn't manage to make the New Year's Day noon Blow Off using our Blue Midland Pullman horns as the compressor wasn't working. However, we now have its replacement and the horns are as loud as ever!

We did work hard on our other offerings and, having duly completed the extension of the model railway, erected our restored GNR(Ireland) signal; updated and reprinted our Handbook; and completed the video of their operational steam reminiscences by 7 of our Members. Also, the Ex-offenders from HACRO* repaired and repainted a bench which was duly placed in the garden adorned with a Railway 200 mosaic by the St. Albans Art Group. The Signal was unveiled at Heritage Open Weekend (HOD) by Andy Savage, Chair of the Railway Heritage Trust, and likewise the bench by Judith Carruthers from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Both attended following our invite to all our original financial backers. Later, HACRO held their formal unveiling of the bench with a number of VIP guests present. Altogether a memorable year.

HOD saw just over 300 visitors, and a good income to boot. Our normal Open Afternoons have also performed quite well, even with poor weather on several occasions. As ever, a number of private visits were conducted over the summer months – mainly youth groups.

We are currently discussing the loan of some artefacts to Radlett Museum for a Railway Exhibition they are planning next year; and the Trestle Theatre Company are considering performing The Signaller at the Box - also next year. The New Year will also see the Box's periodic re-paint. Using better quality coach paint and some excellent painters we have extended these intervals to five years rather than four, and are looking at possible grants to defray the sizeable cost.

So, we remain busy, and with several new volunteers, and a number of artefacts still to restore, we look forward to a successful 2026. See you at the December Social (see below)!

*Hertfordshire Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders

John Telford



Winners of the 2008 St Albans Civic Society Award



Winners of the 2010 Invensys Rail Signalling Award (Structures)



Winners of the 2017 Mayor of St Alban's Recognition Award

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

We plan to hold the Christmas Social evening at the Signal Box on Friday 5th December from 7.30pm. All members and partners are welcome. In view of the limited space on the operating floor we may have to restrict the number of attendees. Therefore, if you would like to join in the festivities please let Richard know as soon as possible and in any case by 30 November.

Email him on: richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk

Or phone on: 07855282664

New Trustee

The Trustees are pleased to announce that Christine Wootton has agreed to become a Trustee. Chris will be well known to many members having been an active volunteer for some time. By way of an introduction Chris tells us: *'I was born in 1963 and have lived in Hertfordshire my whole life. After leaving school, I worked in local organisations and recently retired from my most recent employment as a Parish Clerk.*

I am married to Adrian, a fellow Trustee of the Signal Box. It was through his interest in volunteering at the Box that I joined the rota for providing refreshments to visitors on Open Days and developed a keen interest in preserving the box and its artefacts for the enjoyment of visitors and enthusiasts alike. Whether it is hedge cutting, mowing the lawn or restoring cast iron signs, I am happy to help out.'

Members will be asked to confirm Chris' appointment at next year's AGM

Progress at the Box

The Great Northern Railway (Ireland) lower quadrant signal has been erected and associated iron work installed. The signal was 'unveiled' by Andy Savage as part of our "Railway 200" celebrations – as detailed elsewhere in this newsletter. The signal still needs to be connected to a ground frame so that it can be operated by our visitors and signal lighting installed before restoration is complete.

The display of signal finials near to the entrance gate has been restored having collapsed a few months earlier due to the wood decaying. The opportunity was taken to repaint the finials and these will be re-installed in the coming weeks.

A railway bench and Rail 200 mosaic which had been restored and completed by HACRO members was unveiled in the garden – as detailed elsewhere in this newsletter.

A number of the railway cast iron signs around the garden, together with the platform bench have been repainted. The weather this year seems to have taken a heavy toll on all of the cast iron signs and is one area where extensive restoration will be needed next year once the weather warms again.

Restoration of the Cheshire Lines Committee (CLC) and LNER ground frames and the Midland Railway fog repeater signal has begun. All associated metal work has been removed for painting.

Restoration of the St Albans South signal box name board has begun. Unfortunately once the name board was removed from above the Box door it was found that the woodwork was in very poor condition and was not suitable for re-use. Fortunately, the original letters are restorable and are undergoing refurbishment. A replacement board has been built and is in the process of being repainted. Hopefully the new name board will be back in position by early new year.

As always gardening continues apace - thanks to all who keep on top of this.

Again, many thanks to all our volunteers for all their time and hard work, without whom we would not have such a fantastic museum. If any of our members would like to help or know someone who wishes to help, please get in touch or come along on Wednesdays from 11am.

Adrian Wootton