



Newsletter October 2007
Issue 11

Outside the Box

St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust
www.sigbox.co.uk



Good news:

- It's all happening
- Builders
- Painters
- Gardeners
- Members

Building Progress

Welcome to the eleventh newsletter of the Trust.

Well, its still work in progress – but with the emphasis on progress! The groundwork was completed some months ago. This has been joined by the underpinning, and the new roof (complete with Midland Railway finials). The ground floor has a new door and 100 windows have been replaced with toughened laminated glass. The ground floor has been levelled and work started on the interior walls. The decayed weatherboarding has been replaced and new plinths built. Next steps include the stairs; these will be made of hardwood which will last even longer than the ones they replace. The National Railway Museum in York has sent colour samples and a small test patch has been painted in maroon and cream. It's going to look fantastic! Painting starts this month. Interior decoration is not so easy – we'll need all the help we can get as we will be 'doing it ourselves'! The builders should be moving out at the end of November.

Check the website at www.sigbox.co.uk

This issue:

The Box	1
The Lever Frame	1
Trustees	1
Heritage Open Days	2
Garden Progress	2
Social Scene	2
Working Days	2
Items Wanted	2



*We still need some of these !
and BR block instruments*

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Lever frame

Phil and Peter have taken this on almost single-handed! Part of the frame has been stripped and rebuilt to allow replacement levers from our friends at the Midland Railway Centre, Butterley to be installed. Having the frame apart allowed a lot of cleaning to take place and a start to be made on the painting. The newly painted levers are very colourful and will be set off beautifully by the frame covers that we hope to get sand blasted and sprayed black. If anyone can help with the cleaning / painting please come along on one of the working days (second Sunday of the month).

Trustees

Trustees have overall responsibility to ensure that the objects of the charity are met. That means the restoration and use of the signal box and grounds and the best use of any funds that we raise. There are, however Trustees and members with specific responsibilities for particular areas of the Trust's work. These are:

Keith Webster – Chairman and Signal Box works;

Peter Chatfield - forward planning;

Jonathan Devereux – Treasurer;

Tony Furse - Publicity Officer;

Les O'Leary – groundworks;

Mary Webster - Membership Secretary;

Rod Woodward – artefacts.

Our Newsletter Editor is Richard Kirk.

If anyone has a particular interest that they would like to be responsible for, please let us know.



Heritage Open Days



Visitors to Heritage Open Day



The new finials in place

Once again, we were lucky with the weather when over 400 visitors came to see us in the sunshine. The operating floor wasn't open, but the model railway showing both heritage and modern signalling, the block instruments ringing from Harpenden and tours of the building were very well received. This year we had the added attraction of the steam traction engines. Many thanks to all who volunteered their services, with a special mention to those generating funds! We raised over £900 from the sales of tea and cakes and the 'interesting artefacts'. The surprise star performers were the ladybird boxes made from genuine signal box wood; over a dozen were sold! We were also able to attract a number of new members.

Garden progress

What a great space this is turning out to be! The lawn was well used for tea and cakes and just sitting about during the open weekend. The flowerbeds looked great too; especially considering we only started planting this spring. Further work has been done at the far end of the site to create additional areas for seating on open days. We now need to push forward with finishing the garden with tidying and planting. Les has some good plans for the final touches – so come and give him support on any open day (or any other days – just let us know and the gates will be opened!)

Social Scene

We all enjoyed a summer BBQ in August that allowed us to practise our marquee erecting skills just before it rained. It was good to see so many members and we hope to arrange more get togethers when we have a building we can use.



Painting the levers

Working days

The next working day will be Sunday 11th November. All Members are welcome to come along and help with any of the jobs, inside or out (weather permitting). All the volunteer effort counts towards the 'matching funds' that the Trust has to contribute to the project so you can be sure that your involvement will be warmly welcomed

Appeal for artifacts, pictures and memories

We have an accurate diagram of all of the items on the block shelf and we are getting to the stage when we will need the equipment to connect up. We especially need 2 BR plastic block instruments, Midland signal repeaters and lever lock release plungers. In fact anything that may have once graced a Midland Railway signal box. We can pay the market price, so let us know if you can help. We are also looking to build up our collection of photographs of the box and surrounding areas both historical and recent. If anyone has any that they would be willing to pass on, copy or lend to the Trust or know of family or friends with similar, please contact the Newsletter Editor. The same also applies to any relevant memories of railway operations in St Albans especially those concerning our box. Richard can be contacted on 01727 860047 or at richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk



Midland Mainline HST passes St Albans South