



# Outside the Box

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

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## 2009 - another year of achievements



The ghost of Christmas Past! The Box as it looked at Christmas complete with tree and decorations but where is the signalman?

This time last year we were looking forward to the start of our public openings, an official opening ceremony and continued progress on the restoration of the Box and development of the Garden. All of these were achieved and more. Our openings have now become a regular feature of St Albans life, we have received exceptional publicity both locally and nationally and continued to accumulate interesting artefacts for display in and around the Box. At the same time members have slowly and carefully continued the task of fitting micro-switches to the lever frame to eventually increase the extent of the simulations and working signals have been established in the Garden. The new year will bring fresh challenges—more open days to be manned, keeping nature under control in the Garden, displaying more memorabilia and generally promoting the Box to the outside world. Whilst our project has moved well beyond the formative stage there still remains plenty for members to do inside and out and all are welcome to come and help on the regular working and open days.

Richard Kirk

## Chairman's Words

### 'THANK YOU'

The first thing I must say is 'Thank you'. Over the last year we welcomed over 2,000 visitors (all the tickets have been used!). This would not have been possible without help from the volunteers. 'Thank you'. Many have been manning the tea stall, or meeting and greeting, gardening, demo-ing and doing the electrical and mechanical work to enable us to use the levers. 'Thank you' again. If there is any one who has been meaning to help, but hasn't got around to it, there is always a cup of tea for you and you will be made welcome.

The recent residents weekend is a fine example of volunteers getting organised. We had around 400 visitors and although they came in waves rather than a gentle flow, I don't think anyone noticed our occasional panic!

### WHAT'S NEXT

Moving forward, we have a 'to do' list. Labelling artefacts, sorting out the sewers, improving our museum and many smaller items but all needing attention. Just turn up on the working days (second Sunday each month from 10am) or send an email. If you think there is something that needs doing, just let us know.

### ROMSEY VISIT

A visit to the restored Romsey signal box has been arranged for 20th February. We will be leaving around 10am and returning at 5pm. If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch as soon as possible.

Keith Webster



The recent snows may have caused havoc for commuters but they produced some interesting shots around the signal box as these pictures show



Winners of the 2009 St Albans Civic Society Award

Newsletter produced by Richard Kirk. Please send items for inclusion to me at [richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk) or contact me on 01727 860047



Members of St Neots Model Railway Club visiting the Box last December .

## 2010 AGM Meeting

The Trust's AGM will be held on Thursday 25th March 2010. All members are invited to the County Constitutional Club, 29 Ridgmont Rd., St Albans (opposite the signal box) at 7:30pm.

Please let us know if you wish to attend as there will be snacks available.

## Competition for mugs!!!

Are you good at designing? Just want to have a go?

We need to order more mugs and are holding a design competition. Send ideas by email or post.

Closing date is end of March 2010.

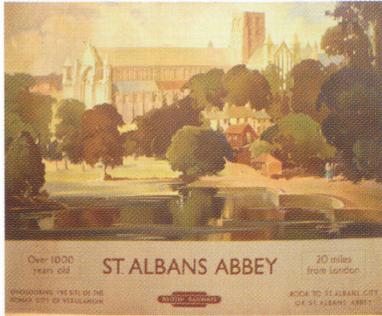
## Wanted- A Signwriter

We need to put up some professional looking signs around the signal box grounds.

Can you help?

## Calendars

We have investigated producing calendars many times and have always been put off by the cost involved. Does anyone know how we can manage it at a reasonable cost?



A copy of this 1950s Claude Buckle poster for BR (LMR) recently sold for £220.

## SUBS FOR 2010 NOW DUE!

**A renewal form is included with this Newsletter. Please complete and return - details are on the form.**

## Publicity for the Signal Box

In 'Outside the Box' Issue 16 there was a request for someone to be 'Publicity Officer' for the box. John Webb responded to this request and as a result has kept up-to-date posters about opening times on the board outside the box. He also contacted and gave posters and leaflets to other local museums and the nearer preserved railways - we received some of their leaflets in return.

Contact with Herts County Council has not only got us into the forthcoming reprint of their museums booklet but also gained us a seat on the 'Hertfordshire Museums Group'. This meets regularly and in between meetings the small Museums Development team at County Hall issue lots of information about courses, museums disposing of or looking for items and other useful things, like telephone scams museums have had tried on them! They also have an annual 'leaflet exchange day' usually in March, which will make distribution easier (and cheaper!) and will help spread knowledge of us.

We have just missed being in 'Railways Restored 2010' - the annual publication by Ian Allan - but we have been reassured we will get into the 2011 edition. The 'Steam Heritage Guide', also an annual publication will have us in this year - we scraped in two weeks before their publication deadline!

John has maintained the contact with the Chiltern Model Railway Association that was started last year, with the result that their Guide for this year's show included not only text about this year's openings, but two photos as well.



This archive picture from a faded colour slide shows a southbound diesel unit leaving Platform 1 and crossing onto the Up Fast line. The shot was taken in the 1960s before the Box received its final all over repaint in white. The disused engine shed can be seen on the left with the yard in front now being used as a car park. The shed closed in 1960 and was demolished in 1968.

## St Albans' Other Signal Boxes

### No.3 Harpenden Junction



Using the local authority boundary allows me to spread the extent of this item to locations outside St Albans. Subsequent to the line opening in 1867 there was a signal box at Harpenden station and later there were both North and South boxes. The first Harpenden Junction box was north of the pictured location and was opened in 1877 with the Hemel branch (Nicky Line) facing towards Luton. In 1888 the branch was changed to face south and in 1892 the Junction box site was relocated to the point where the branch joined the main line. This was just north of Hollybush Lane bridge just beyond milepost 25 and 1349 yards from the station box. The box (a standard Midland Railway construction) had 32 levers and lasted until 1957 when the box illustrated was opened in replacement. In addition to the branch, the box initially controlled the northern end of quadrupled track and later crossovers between the fast and slow (goods) lines and these can be seen in the film sequence shown to visitors to our box. The box illustrated was a standard BR design and had 45 levers. The branch finally closed in July 1979 and the box closed in October 1979 at the same time as Harpenden station box (2 months before St Albans South went out of service). Harpenden Junction box was demolished in early 1981.

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

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