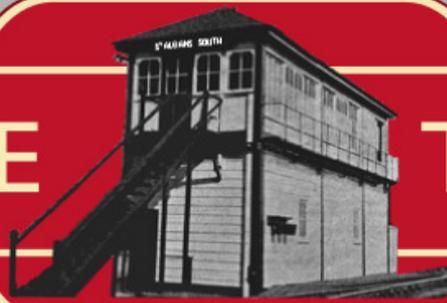


OUTSIDE



THE BOX

Newsletter February 2013 Issue 31

St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust

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Earliest - so far

This photograph has recently come to the Trust from Richard Casserley via member David Gaylard. Richard is the son of H C Casserley who was a prolific railway photographer and he looks after his father's collection of over 80,000 pictures from his home in Berkhamsted. This shot is believed to have been taken by R McLaren and may date from 1896. Richard is sceptical of this in view of the type of carriage behind the engine. He would certainly date it before 1907. In any event it is by far the earliest picture that we have seen and may have been taken when the box was less than 10 years old. There are many points of interest not least the array of enamel advertising signs on the prison retaining wall opposite the box.

Richard Kirk

Chairman's Words

We have instigated a new method of managing the Signal Box which hopefully will give you all a bigger say in the day to day operation and the way the signal box is managed in the future. On the first Monday of every other month starting in February a meeting will be held in the box starting at 8 o'clock open to all members when the projects and maintenance tasks can be discussed, jobs allocated, suggestions put forward and the manning and conduct of open days organised. If you would like to be involved by taking on a project or just prepared to help on maintenance or on open days please come along.



Roy Burrows discussing his ideas with members of the Trust at the Midland Railway Study Centre.

On the 31st January a small group of members went to Derby at the suggestion of Roy Burrows to have a look at 'The Roy Burrows Collection'. This is probably the biggest collection of Midland Railway artefacts ever gathered together under one roof and consists of some 40,000 items from early Midland tickets to solid silver dinner plates from Midland Hotels. We were made very welcome by Roy and a couple of his volunteers and it was suggested to us that we might like to display some of the collection at our signal box. Particularly we are looking at an original St Albans South signal box diagram from 1915, another Midland signal complete except for the post and a pair of single line working Tyer No 6 tablet machines as well as a host of smaller items to enhance our displays. More discussions will have to take place and an agreement drawn up with the Trustees of the collection before we will see them at St Albans but hopefully by the summer we may be able to have new displays for our visitors to see. Roy visited the box before Christmas and was very impressed by all that had been achieved and by the atmosphere we had created.

AGM is coming up in April so I hope to see you all then.

Tony Furse

Ed: full details of the Roy Burrows Collection can be found at <http://www.rfbmidlandtrust.org.uk>

Your Newsletter

This is the eighteenth 'Outside the Box' that I have produced and I am aware that during this time I have not sought members views on what you do and don't want to see in your newsletter. Now is the time to let me know. Attached or accompanying this issue is a questionnaire that I hope many of you will find time to answer and email or send back to me or drop off at the 'box'. Your views will help shape future issues. Thank you.

Richard Kirk



A small corner of the vast Roy Burrows Collection - quite mouth-watering!



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

Membership Matters

Subs for 2013 now due

A renewal form is included with this newsletter.

I aim to exclude those of you who have already paid subs but just in case please ignore the renewal if:

- you pay by standing order
- you have paid subs on or after 1st November 2012

I do hope you will renew your membership as your support makes the Trust what it is – a friendly self financing museum society – a rarity in these cost conscious times!

Volunteering on Open Days

Downstairs in the 'box we now have a model lever frame (see below). This is very popular with the children as are the bells ! What this means however is that we really need at least 3 people to man the 'box downstairs to deal with the lever frame model, bells, teas, merchandise and general chit chat.

Open Days are on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month from 2:00pm – 5:00pm (NOT the 4th Sunday in March).

Please come along and help even if it is only for a short while. Training will be given and free cups of tea - possibly even biscuits!

And Finally

I hope you all managed to make use of the cards sent out with the December newsletter. Whilst we do not solicit contributions towards the cost, thank you to those who did send in a contribution.

My contact details are: mary@sigbox.co.uk (preferred) 01727-836131

Mary Webster Membership Trustee

AGM – Wednesday 24th April 2013 at 7:30pm

The AGM will be held at the Constitutional Club (opposite the 'box) followed by light refreshments. Please let me know if you are planning to attend so I can firm up the catering numbers.

Signalbox Polo and Sweatshirts

I have some signal box embroidered polo shirts and sweatshirts (our 'uniform'!) for sale at cost price. Polo shirts are £17 and sweatshirts are £23. They are extremely high quality and last forever

Members' 'get togethers'

Just a reminder that Club nights are held every Monday from 7:30pm. Come along and chat, watch DVDs or learn how to operate the levers upstairs.

Working parties are held every Wednesday afternoon from 2:00pm - just turn up and you will be directed towards mutually agreed jobs.

Newsletter

Don't forget to complete the Newsletter questionnaire

Is the mix of signal box news and historical items balanced?

Should we include more pictures of our rapidly expanding artefact collection?

Do you want to write a guest column?

Any thoughts would be welcomed – critical or otherwise!



The restored Midland Railway sign on the sleeper wall.

Progress at the 'box

At last the snow and freezing weather have departed – hopefully for good! Needless to say it did curtail open air work for a time and the thaw confirmed that we must do something about our leaking front gutter during 2013 - as well as finishing the re-painting of the outside of the 'box. We have purchased a small brazier, which will prevent Greeters on the gate from contracting hypothermia in future!

A 'No Trespassing on the Railway' sign has been cleaned and re-painted and is now resplendent on the sleeper wall next to the running-in board. Jim Macdonald's loaned, battery-operated, signalling demonstrator is working well downstairs and excellently shows the interlocking at the rear. It is very popular with the children and we hope to put it outside when the better weather arrives.



The miniature lever frame and signals in the locking room. 6 of the levers operate the signals and demonstrate the principals of interlocking to visitors.

The work on the Midland ground frame continues. The triple dolly is now re-painted and it is hoped to connect up in the next few weeks and light it electrically. The lattice signal has been converted to a Distant and will now also be worked off the ground frame in due course.

In spite of the weather, Howard has stoically continued garden maintenance with a great deal of grass and weed removal on the path and ballast at the front of the 'box. Also on our roll of honour this time are Michael our welder-in-chief and Michael W, who has made a work bench out of the cage that came down from the NRM a while back (full of goodies), and who has patiently restored our 5 Tilley lamps.

Finally, it is good to confirm that on 29th January, as part of our 'private' visits programme, we received a group of special needs children from Watling View School in St. Albans. They really enjoyed their visit, and the teachers want to send two more classes! This is a really gratifying development in that, as well as being a growing heritage attraction; we are able to provide a valuable social amenity as well.

If the above has stimulated you to give some voluntary help, please get in touch or come down on a Wednesday afternoon – we'd be pleased to see you.

John Telford