



# Outside the Box

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

## What a transformation!



St Albans South Signal Box in 2002

From this



To this



St Albans South Signal Box in 2008

Each time that I see the box I am amazed at the progress that has been made especially in the last twelve months. It is hard now to remember exactly how awful the box looked in the days before the Trust was set up. The pictures above however give a clear indication of the transformation that has taken place whilst overleaf are similar 'then and now' pictures of the garden area. I can't wait to see the inside of the box fully painted, equipped and looking like a 1950s busy signal box.

Richard Kirk

## Chairman's words

### Building progress

And progress it most certainly is! Anyone who has happened to pass by or stand waiting for a train would have noticed our beacon of colour in the dreary grey landscape of St Albans City station. The colours supplied by the National Railway Museum are spot on – red and yellow with white windows. Having visited the model railway exhibition the other day and seen the LMS layout we can confirm that their signal box is the same colour as ours! The builders were expected to finish in November, but this time the cold snap conspired to slow things up. The stairs have been completed to the original design from the 'guide to Signal Box designs' (and I know they look a bit narrow – but they are exactly as specified!). Now there is just a day or two painting to do and the snagging list to compile and we're there. 'Practical completion' is imminent.

### Inside the box

Perhaps we should retitle the newsletter to reflect our current status! Work inside has started in earnest too. The fireproof painting is well under way (shockingly expensive stuff – hopefully we will never know if its money well spent!) and the

frame cleanup is nearing completion. The holes in the floor have been repaired and a 'butler' sink has been promised. We'll soon be able to make signalman's tea! The track diagram is under construction and the entire remaining UK stock of original track diagram indicator lamps has been secured (There are 47 – so we have a couple spare). More success has been achieved with the signal indicator lamp units. A few have been acquired on ebay but as we need 22, a different approach was needed. 3 have now been successfully manufactured from plastic resin, and now we have a mould we can make as many as we need!

### Working days

These continue to be well attended. Thanks go to all who have spent so freely of their time. Everyone should be extremely proud of their achievements, there are still lots of things to do though – so please come to the forthcoming working days which are on the second Sunday of the month and adhoc (announced on the 'open days' page of the website).

Keith Webster



Top: the reproduction lamp hut

Lower: Phil examines the frame



## Grand Opening

We are intending to have the grand opening ceremony after Easter and combine it with the AGM – this should be a big party! We have not yet settled on a date but hopefully we can make it on a Saturday in April. More news as soon as we can fit in a celebrity to do the honours!



## Car Parking Space – Unique Opportunity !

There is a car parking space available on the signal box grounds – very close (!) to St Albans train station. If you are a commuter that requires a car parking space, please contact the Trust to discuss.



## Trustees & Volunteers

The Trust is fortunate to have very active and committed Trustees. However, we are always on the lookout for 'new blood' as and when vacancies arise.

If you have spare time and are interested in becoming a trustee please contact the Trust to discuss further.



You do not have to be a trustee to be involved! We are particularly looking for somebody to organise (from start to finish) the displays that will be in the box once we open. Get in touch if you can help.



## Current events

For members who like to follow the current railway scene there is a very good weekly e-magazine that has produced over 100 issues. Go to [www.railwayherald.co.uk](http://www.railwayherald.co.uk) and have a look.

## Subs for 2008 now due

A renewal form is included with this newsletter.

This renewal form also shows the membership details the Trust holds. Please review the details and amend or add to if necessary.

As gift aid is so important to the Trust (enabling us to reclaim 28p from the Inland Revenue for each £1 you donate), we have taken the opportunity to include a gift aid declaration on the renewal form for those of you who have not as yet signed a gift aid declaration.

We are not hassling you, but please sign and date the gift aid declaration if your circumstances have changed !

Mary Webster

Membership Secretary

## Artefacts

My request in the last *Outside the Box* for memories of the box and artefacts brought some response. John Gunner has kindly offered the Trust a Midland Railway cast iron trespass sign. This will be placed in a suitable location in the garden in due course. Local resident and long time railway enthusiast Howard Green is providing us with copies of some of his photographs taken in the 1950s together with his memories of the stations and its workings.

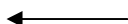
Howard recalls 'I visited St Albans South on quite a few occasions when Ernie Tuck (the Signaller) was on late shift and the Stationmaster, Mr Stephenson, was safely ensconced in his house across the road. Ernie would ask us to get him some chips and then he would show us how it all worked. I remember the smell of stale tea, the thick, brown regulation lino that not only covered the floor but also other surfaces, the tortoise stove, the gentle hissing and flicker of the gas lamp above the train register and the four different ring tones of the block bells.'

All memories, photographs and artefacts gratefully received! Please contact on 01727 860047 or [richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk)



April 2006

From this



To this



Summer 2007