



Outside the Box

St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust

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Covered in plaque!

We are told by the dentist that a covering of plaque is not good for us. However when it comes to the Signal Box the opposite is true and not before time the Box has now received two plaques to be displayed recording the achievements of the Trust and its supporters. On the left is the commemorative plaque unveiled at the official opening in September. This is beautifully decorated and finished and was manufactured for the Trust by Leander Architectural of Dove Holes, near Buxton in Derbyshire. On the right is the locally prestigious award from the Civic Society.

Richard Kirk



Chairman's Words

CIVIC SOCIETY AWARD

We were very honoured that our work at the Signal box has been recognised by the Civic Society. I represented the Trust at the award ceremony along with our Architect Melanie Canaway and our Carpenter Roger Day. The Mayor presented the award with the citation that it was -

"A wonderful example of community involvement in the historic fabric of the City. This small but vital part of our Victorian railway system has been saved from dereliction by inspired voluntary effort and fund-raising, and is a shining, ongoing asset for residents and visitors alike."

I would like to thank all members and supporters of the project for their help in what has become an outstanding and truly incredible asset to St Albans.

VISITOR NUMBERS

Visitor numbers continue to surprise me, even with a couple of noticeably quiet Sundays we are far exceeding expectations.

At the end of 2008 we ran out of entrance tickets after having 1000 printed. So, in January I ordered another 2000. We have now issued nearly all of these! Looking back at the original feasibility document we suggested that visitor numbers might be as many as 100 per month in the summer, giving an annual visitor count of about 500. I'm just about to order more tickets and as most of you will know, I hate spending the Trust's money – but am really happy to in this instance! Its great that there is so much interest in the box. We have a dedicated band of volunteers but if you can help for an hour or so on our open days with greeting visitors or doing demos it would really help us all.

Keith Webster



Scenes from the official opening on September 12th with Keith making his welcoming remarks before the plaque was unveiled by Jim Cornell, Executive Director of the Railway Heritage Trust and the event was celebrated by the Trustees present.



This delightful picture was sent in by Avril Foster a visitor to the Box. It shows her parents waiting on Platform 1 at St Albans sometime in the 1950s. The bicycle shed in the background is interesting compared to today's open air cycle parking areas.



The NRM clock from St Albans on display.

The picture below was taken by Mike Davies in 1977 and shows the box in

its final form with the toilet block looking in much better shape than when the Trust took it over. The shading of the windows is interesting and was presumably to shade the signalmen from the morning sun.



Christmas Cards and Gifts

A free greetings card for your use is enclosed with this newsletter – there are many more available for you to purchase!

Also available are fridge magnets, pencils, rubbers, badges, mugs and much more.

An order form is enclosed.

Train to be a signalman

Training sessions are being planned for those who do the demos and those who would like to be trained to do demos. Dates will be circulated via email. Please phone if you are not on email but are interested so your name can be included.

St Albans Relic at NRM

John Webb spotted this clock in The Works area of the National Railway Museum. It is similar to the clock now downstairs in the Box and is a slave clock that was controlled by a master clock housed elsewhere. They were made by Gents and based on a 1907 design. This one was installed at St Albans in the old station in 1960.

All good publicity

In recent months the Trust and the Signal Box have been mentioned in a number of publications. These have included Heritage Railway, Railway Modeller, Steam Railway and Railway Magazine. Both local newspapers The Review and The Herts Advertiser covered the Official Opening and the Civic Society award. The Advertiser giving us extensive space and even a favourable editorial comment.

Members' day

We are holding a members only (+ families) open evening on Friday 4th December from 6.00pm to 9.00pm.

There will be signalling displays, mince pies, tea, coffee and souvenirs. Come and meet the Trustees and see how the restoration has progressed. Entry is free.

Please let Mary/Keith know if you are coming along so that enough food and drink is signalled in. 01727 836131

Open Days

We have decided to open to the public during the winter months so that we can build on the momentum gained from this summer. Therefore we will open from 2.00pm to 5.00pm on the 2nd Sunday of each month from December onwards. From Easter we will go back to two Sundays a month.

EXTRA WEEKEND opening will take place for:

St Albans Model Railway Exhibition, 16th and 17th January 10.00am to 4.00pm;
St Albans Residents First Weekend 30th and 31st January 10.00am to 4.00pm.

Volunteers are needed, please update the rota on the website as soon as possible.

Please remember that the 2nd Sunday in each month is also the members' working day (from 10.00am).

Trip to Romsey

Members should have received an email with dates, times and travel arrangements for the visit to Romsey Signal Box on Saturday 20th February.

Please contact Keith if you wish to go.



'Taken for a ride' Keith, Mary and Thomas relax on their way home at the end of the Heritage Open Weekend!