

# OUTSIDE THE BOX



Newsletter August 2014 Issue 37

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

email: [info@sigbox.co.uk](mailto:info@sigbox.co.uk)

Tel: 01727-836131



**Elstree Museum's generously donated tunnel sign sits outside the 'box' following restoration by Trust members.**

## Tunnel vision!

Visitors now entering the locking room museum are confronted by the very large Elstree Tunnel sign immediately outside the door. This has been kindly donated to us by Elstree Museum who were unable to find space to display the sign. It has been expertly refurbished by our members and mounted on three posts to take its considerable weight. As the illustration shows this indicated to train crews and others that the tunnel was (and still is) 1058 yards long. This would have stood at one end of the slow line tunnel and thus dates from approximately the same time (1892) as our 'box' (the first tunnel built in the 1860s and now occupied by the fast lines is 1050 yards long).

On Page 2 is a lovely archive photograph sent in by a member. How many more such pictures are there out there waiting to see the light of day once again? We have been very fortunate to obtain copies of some of the photographs taken by Henry and Richard Casserley and more will be displayed during Heritage Open Days and our later Open Days. If anyone knows of any interesting local railway views that the owners would be willing to share with us please let me know (contact details below).

Our new leaflet is now available and if any members are able to distribute some to other heritage sites please get in touch with Tony or myself and we will arrange for them to be made available. The more publicity we are able to generate the more visitors we will be able to welcome to the 'box'.

Richard Kirk



**Members enjoying the summer BBQ.**

## Chairman's Words

Once again it was great to meet so many of you and your partners at the BBQ. A great thanks to the stand in chef, John Telford, who fed us so well and to all those who contributed in some way, thank you; even the weather was good.

Heritage Open Days fall this year on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of September when we open our doors and welcome usually our greatest number of visitors. Unlike past years we will not have had any support from St Albans District Council who have decided not to publish their Open Day booklet due to cut backs. As a result we will try for some local radio and newspaper publicity in the weeks before to get our name and what we are doing out to as many people as possible, so if you can help please do. Once again this year Brian Chapman is bringing his garden railway and we will have live steam from the scaled down traction engines which have been so popular in the past. Lots of new artefacts to view as well as Richard's fantastic photographic displays.

If you would like to help over the Heritage weekend please let me know so that we can use your talents to the full even if that is just chatting to visitors.

That weekend also sees the change from First Capital Connect to Govia as the franchise holder of the local services from St Albans; this should bring a new livery to our trains and perhaps the opportunity to pick some artefacts of the future as train and station displays and colours change.

We are now 4<sup>th</sup> on the Trip Adviser what to do in St Albans web site with some really great reviews singing the praises of the members so well done to you all.

Tony Furse



Winners of the 2008  
St Albans Civic  
Society Award



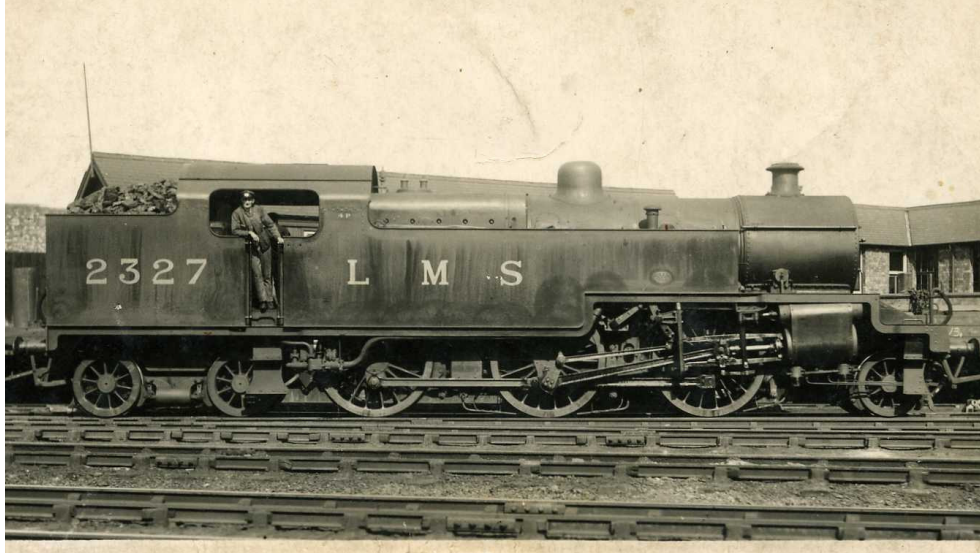
Winners of the 2010  
Invensys Rail Signalling  
Award (Structures)

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



## Heritage Open Days

Once again the box will be open for the Saturday and Sunday of the Heritage Open Weekend on 13th and 14th of September. To make sure that this is once again a success for the Trust, members are asked to volunteer to help over the weekend. We need sufficient members to be present to show visitors around, answer their questions and ensure that they have an enjoyable and safe time inside the box and in the garden. If you can help even for just a few hours on one of the days please contact Tony Furse on [tfurse@btinternet.com](mailto:tfurse@btinternet.com) or Richard Kirk on [richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 01727 860047. We will be drawing up the rotas and will allocate you a role.



No apologies for taking up so much room with this archive photograph. It was sent in by member Paul Holland and shows his grandfather Thomas William Holland on the footplate of Fowler 2-6-4T 2327 in St Albans shed yard in December 1942. Thomas joined the railway as a lad and worked on steam locomotives up to his retirement. Until the mid '70s he lived on Glenferrie Road (Fleetville) next door to his brother Fred the owner of Holland's Taxis which operated from St Albans City Station.



A scene from last year's Heritage Open Days



## Progress at the 'Box

Good weather and full turnout of regulars has meant that a great deal of progress has been achieved since the last issue and Howard, Val, Percy, Les and others continue to keep the garden in order. Our thanks also to the ladies who serve refreshments during Open Days.

John Webb has moved the 3-aspect ground signal onto the lawn where foliage will no longer prevent it being seen from the 'box'. The power feed was re-routed along the sleeper wall and under the lawn. The LED light on the lawn signal – mentioned last time – has also now been powered up.

Our third MR Boundary Post has been restored by Michael Wright and erected on the lower path, in front of the wire fence. Michael is now working on our collection of finials for eventual display, including the newly received 4ft. ex-Radlett Station finial.

An area next to the gates to the parking slots has been paved, so we can park our wheelie bins. The now more visible gates have been augmented to look like level crossing gates; painted white with red discs to be added and the holder fitted to take our full size level crossing lamp. The tea 'barn' roof has had its top coat painted underneath and so the shelter is now finished. The parcel weighing scales by the shelter have been calibrated and imperial weights purchased, so the scales are now fully operational and ready to weigh children who attend. However, telling them their weight in pounds and ounces may not mean much to them!

The Elstree Tunnel sign (donated by Elstree Museum) has been painstakingly cleaned, painted and erected by Tony and Jim in front of the wall immediately outside the locking room door - it looks exceptional!

It's been good to see David Choppin back in action and he has already beautifully re-painted both our lamp posts. The recently donated, 8ft. long 'British Rail Radlett' sign in blue, has been retrieved from the Isle of Wight by Jim and hung in the 'box'; as has the MR 'Bicycles left at owner's risk' sign.

Finally, mainly thanks to Richard, we have re-designed and updated the 'box promotional flyer and had 5,000 printed. These are now displayed in the 'box and given out when we have a marketing stall at outside events. This year we've already displayed at Oaklands Steam Fair, Sandridge 900 Fete, Highfield Park Fete, and two model railway exhibitions.

Thus, it's been a good 3 months, but there are still currently 20 items on our 'To Do' list, so if you feel like a challenge (including tea/coffee and biscuits!), pop down to the 'box any Wednesday afternoon.

John Telford

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

Regd. Address: 5 Ridgmont Road, St Albans, Herts., AL1 3AG Regd Charity No.1104535 Email: [info@sigbox.co.uk](mailto:info@sigbox.co.uk) Phone: 01727 836131



The picture above shows the level crossing lamp in situ on the gates by the shed. The gates have been strengthened to take the lamp. Red semi-circles will be added soon. The upper picture shows the completed tea barn with the recently repainted Midland Railway lamp alongside.