

OUTSIDE



THE BOX

Newsletter February 2016 Issue 43

Coal Club goes Down Under!

A recent visitor to the 'box purchased a Coal Club model wagon as she recognised the Brampton Road address displayed on it as an old family home. The purchase was for her cousin who subsequently contacted us from New Zealand. It appears that the family probably bought the house from Mr Evans whose name and address are on the wagon for notification of any repairs required. We were happy to provide further information and extend Signal Box hospitality to the other side of the World!

Richard Kirk

Chairman's Words

This last quarter has been a very busy time at the box with a huge influx of artefacts to be sorted, cleaned, catalogued and displayed. We started with an early supporter of the box, Kevin Stephens, who at first gave us a few railway signs and a pair of Midland seat ends as he sorted out prior to moving and ended up giving on loan, so that we can display on his behalf, a further 35 items including a magnificent pair of air horns from the Midland Blue Pullman. During the spring we hope to power these up as a super but rather noisy attraction.

Prior to Christmas we had the opportunity to put in a bid for some artefacts that were surplus to the needs of the National Railway Museum, we bid for four along with every other Heritage Railway and were lucky to be awarded a small signalling console previously used as a training aid. After the holiday Howard Green kindly drove up to York and brought back a rather different console once used to control the routes from Holborn Viaduct to Blackfriars. Sadly, because this was a great item for display, it was a mistake and the NRM have since swapped it for the one we should have had. We are very pleased to have the console which will fit very well into our displays. My thanks go to Elena Siggers and John Clarke from the NRM for their great help in this acquisition.

A visitor to the box Daniel Jackson mentioned in passing that he worked for the Signal House Group and had a lot of modern LED signals surplus to requirements and if we would like them we just had to go to Alfreton and pick them up; so we did. Modern signals are much bigger than the older signals and we only just managed to get them into a very large box van luckily with a tail lift. These have yet to be powered up but will make a magnificent display.

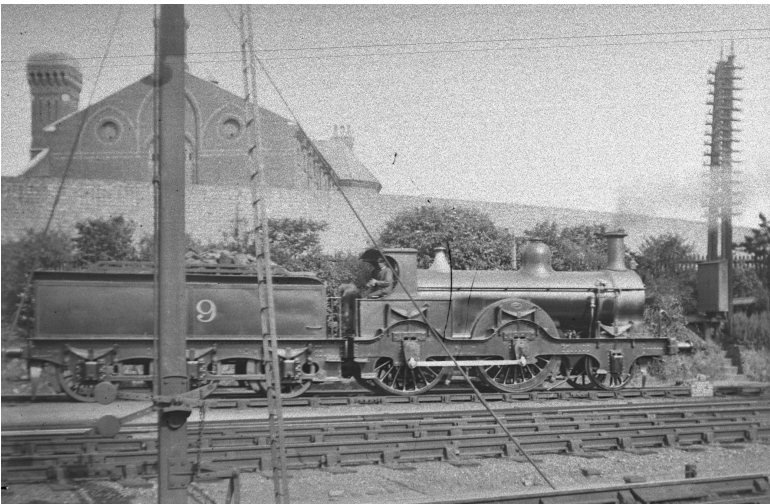
Slightly smaller but no less valuable to us was a collection of railway maps from Dave Roberts and a GNR stay post from the Hertford Branch from David Leigh. My grateful thanks go to all donors.

January had two long cold weekend open sessions which saw a good number of visitors so thanks to all who helped out.

Tony Furse

Mary & Keith wish to thank everybody for their best wishes following Mary's illness. Sorry for the group message but things remain all over the place but generally are moving in the right direction.

Newsletter produced by Richard Kirk.
Please send items for inclusion to richardnkirk@hotmail.co.uk or contact me on 01727 860047



A fascinating archive photograph from a small collection of glass negatives recently loaned to the Trust by John Callow. 3 were St Albans shots and prints of these will soon be on display in the 'Box. This one shows Midland Railway Kirtley designed 2-4-0 express locomotive No.59 from 1870 as altered in the 1880s by Johnson. The picture was taken in June 1919 opposite the Signal Box when No.59 was allocated to St Albans for hauling suburban traffic, it was withdrawn in 1922. The old prison building looms behind the engine and the inner wall.



As the 2016 group visits get under way, the picture above is a reminder of one of many such tours undertaken last year. The shot was taken during a visit to the 'box by pupils from Killigrew Junior School, Chiswell Green. The children later wrote letters of thanks and sent in drawings of their visit.



Winners of the 2008
St Albans Civic
Society Award



Winners of the 2010
Invensys Rail Signalling
Award (Structures)

Membership Matters

Subs for 2016 now due

A renewal form is included with this newsletter; for those of you who have paid already or pay by standing order, thank you and please ignore the form.

I do hope you will renew your membership as your support makes the Trust what it is - a friendly self-financing museum society!

If you wish to pay using online banking, or to set up a standing order, our new bank details are Metro Bank, sort code 23-05-80, account number 17746944. Please include your name as a reference so we know who it is from.

Members' 'get togethers'

Don't forget that club nights are held every Monday from 7.30pm and working parties are held every Wednesday afternoon from 2.00pm - just turn up and you will be welcomed.

And Finally

Please remember to let Rob Little know if you are going to attend the AGM on Wednesday 2nd March at St Paul's Church. 7.00pm for 7.30pm Email to signalbox44@gmail.com

Forthcoming visits

Following last year's successful visit to the Swanage Railway we have now arranged a trip around the signalling installations of the Great Central Railway. This will take place on Saturday 2nd April. Details are still to be agreed but the party will assemble on the railway at approximately 9.30am. The group is limited to 15.

Also, we have arranged a return visit to Sir William McAlpine's railway and museum at Fawley. Unfortunately their open days this year coincide with the 'box open days. As a result they have kindly allocated us two slots for 5 people each on the 8th May and 10th July. The invited contribution is £10 per head.

For further details of either visit please contact Richard Kirk

Steam past the 'box

Advance notice of the next possible sighting of a steam engine going past the 'box. On Saturday 4th June the Railway Touring Company are running a trip from Victoria to York hauled by 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. The train is due to pick up at St Albans at around 8.00am (diesel hauled back).

Signal Box cards

Apologies to Members who, following the last issue of *Outside the Box*, were expecting a selection of Trust blank cards and envelopes. Unfortunately we were unable to carry out the mailing exercise as promised. Hopefully these will be distributed shortly.



New acquisitions: far left, the water trough; near left, the array of modern signals and right, some of the enamel signs on the boundary fence.



Progress at the 'box

Winter so far has been unusually mild and, like your gardens I'm sure, Spring flowers (and even rhubarb) have been peeping through! Seeing Howard cutting the 'box lawn in December was bizarre – will we soon be cutting our grass all year round? After our professional clean-down, the garden is looking much neater – with thanks to Rod.

The quarter saw a plethora of artefacts given and loaned to the 'box – to the point where we had to take time to consider where we could put them all! Tony acknowledges the donors in his comments above. Many old advertising signs have been cleaned/rust-proofed and erected, along with 'Crossing – No Gates' puffing engine signs. New offerings downstairs include an engine-side BR aluminium logo, an illuminated BR Agency sign with clock (to be mended), and the air horns from a blue Midland Pullman – which we also hope to get working. A paraffin-lit 'end of water trough' Termination sign has also been erected by the path. So the period was largely taken up with these exercises.

We have also collected some - believe it or not – obsolete modern signals from a signalling company in Alfreton (now on temporary display) and await a Signalling Console from the NRM (watch this space). Our new, full-weekend opening in March, to coincide with the first Hertfordshire 'Big Weekend' tourist initiative (12th/13th), will see an afternoon/evening opening on the Saturday (2pm to 9pm), specifically to show off our lighted signage (increasingly seen from space!). We also hope to launch our new garden model railway over the same weekend.

The painting of the Operating floor is nearing completion, around Rob and Jim working on the simulator (there's a rumour that they've nearly finished!), and Richard on the archives. Michael will be creating a new bench seat, using two donated Midland bench ends, and at long last we have hopefully sourced some telegraph poles for a further display, so, if they arrive, we will need some labour to get them up!

Private visits for this year are starting to come in, and early January saw us hosting a committee meeting of the St. Albans Attractions Group, this was preceded by a guided tour. We also had the last weekend opening to coincide with the Model Railway Exhibition at the Alban Arena – moving to Stevenage from 2017- and Enjoy St. Albans: Residents' First Weekend, which will probably move to the Big Weekend from 2017.

Coming to see all our new additions is a must in 2016, so consult your diary NOW!

John Telford