

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Newsletter May 2018 Issue 52



Another Milestone for the 'Box

April 8th marked another high point for St Albans South Signal Box and the Trust. During what was a wet open day we welcomed the 20,000th visitor to the Box since opening to the public began in 2008. The lucky visitor was 9 year old Ryan Frake from Nottingham. He was with his family returning from a trip to Margate. They purposely diverted via the box as a special treat for 'railway mad' Ryan. The day became more special when he was presented with his ticket showing the number 0000 as the 20,000th clicked over. Subsequent to the visit Ryan was sent a selection of signal box souvenirs together with a copy of the item about him in the Herts Ad to remind him of his day. Ryan's father Bob told us *'He hasn't stopped talking about it. It was the perfect end to his short break away.'* The family have promised to return for a further visit soon.

Last July a group of members visited the Bluebell Railway courtesy of their S & T Department. As a gesture of appreciation there was a whip round on the return journey and subsequently a donation made to the Bluebell. We were promised by our hosts that it would be used within the S & T Dept. A short while ago we were informed that the funds had helped in the manufacture of a display panel for their new mess room to monitor power supplies at each relay room and signal box. Our involvement in its production has been recognised on the face of the panel (see photo left). Another claim to fame for the 'box!

Richard Kirk



Chairman's Words

We had another successful AGM in March culminating in some fantastic photographs from Bryan Cross. I particularly liked the very early glass plate photographs of Luton Midland Road showing a wonderful set of Midland Railway telegraph poles, just like ours. I had suggested at the AGM that we would commemorate the end of the First World War by putting up a memorial to those railway men based at St Albans who failed to return; sadly this is now not possible. In its place Richard Kirk is putting together a temporary display which we be on show to our visitors within the museum. If members and visitors think the idea of a more permanent display is what they would like to see then we will revisit the decision.

We are now getting into our busy part of the year with outside displays coming up at St Albans Abbey Station, The Herts Steam Club Fair at Oaklands College and of course Heritage Open Weekend on the second weekend in September when we will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the coming of The Midland Railway to St Albans. It will of course be great to see as many members as possible at these events if not helping at least visiting. Along with the outside visits we have an ever enlarging list of visits to the box as well as going out to give talks. These are great events and give us the opportunity to show off the box and garden at a more leisurely pace and to engage with our visitors. If you or your friends and family belong to clubs or associations and would like a visit to the box or a speaker to come to you, do not hesitate to contact John Telford at info@sigbox.co.uk and he will arrange a suitable date. I look forward to meeting you during the summer.

Tony Furse



From the top: Ryan Frake with his 20,000th ticket stands with his family; the new display panel in the Bluebell Railway S & T mess room; a close up of acknowledgement of the Trust's assistance in its manufacture.

BBQ—Saturday 14th JULY

from 2.00pm onwards. Food will be provided but please bring your own drinks. A donation will be sought on the day to cover the cost of the food. Friends and family are invited but please let us know via email or phone (to Richard Kirk) how many are coming so we know how many to cater for. See you there!

SUMMER STEAM PAST THE BOX

The Railway Touring Company are due to run one of their Ealing to York specials on Saturday 30th June. In charge should be 60103 *Flying Scotsman*. Booked to call at St Albans at 8.01am (diesel return).



Winners of the 2008 St Albans Civic Society Award



Winners of the 2010 Invensys Rail Signalling Award (Structures)



Winners of the 2017 Mayor of St Alban's Recognition Award

Membership Matters

Subs for 2018 are now overdue

Please accept this notice as a thank you to all who have renewed their subs for this year.

For those of you who have yet to renew, a reminder has been sent detailing the various ways to pay.

Your support is important to the Trust and your subs plus the accompanying Gift Aid help to maintain the momentum of developments at the box.

We are more than happy (indeed prefer) for subs to be paid directly into the sigbox bank account. Details are:

Metro Bank

Sort Code: 23-05-80

Account: 17746944

Reference: Your surname, First name (important so we know who's paid!)

If you wish to set up a standing order please include the above info (particularly the reference) and a payment date of 2nd February. I would be grateful if you would let me know. Alternatively I can send you a standing order instruction form. Of course we are also happy to continue receiving cheques and cash!

Signal Box 'Uniform'

Final reminder! Some members have requested new 'uniform' polo and sweat shirts. Please let me know if there are any other members who wish to purchase either or both items.

Both are embroidered with the signal box logo.

I will need to know the size – S, M, L, XXL etc. Please refer to Engelbert Strauss website for sizing details.

Price is dependant on the size of the order (items are sold to you at cost) but is likely to be in the region of £20 per polo shirt and £30 per sweatshirt.

The quality is very good and the item will last for years.

GDPR (Data Protection Regulations)

Thank you to all who have responded to the recent email and hard copy mailing.

To those yet to respond, please do it now !

Mary Webster



NEW ADDITIONS. From the left: the new stone display; the two new lamps positioned either end of the box; the patient passengers waiting for the next train on the garden railway (Ed: note to the current franchisee – where is the yellow keep back line and are those children being properly supervised by their parents?)

Progress at the 'box

This time Breaking News - 1 must be our two beautiful restored and working, ex-Southern Station Lamps, affixed to telegraph poles and illuminating the stairs and area between the 'box and lamp-hut. Tony travelled to Bristol to collect them and their classic design really adds to the atmosphere of our whole offering. Thanks to Tony, Jim, John Webb and Peter for completing this project. Our double-track model railway has been further enhanced with Tony's new platform holding a number of passengers awaiting trains. Conundrum: which are the 'Up' and 'Down' lines?

Breaking News - 2 is the re-configured 'St. Albans South' display completed at the end of the lawn. The black concrete letters, superbly made by Rodney, sit on white chippings, with a dark surround of small slate stones. This replaces Les' original, which was made from coal and chalk stones, and which served as the inspiration for the new display.

David's sterling work in the garden, along with others, has ensured that it is looking good for the season. He also spent hours disposing of the sycamore tree trunk base (more like concrete!) on the top patio, which was a tripping hazard. Richard has produced another excellent photograph display – this time to celebrate 150 years of the Midland through St. Albans, and John W has made a replacement track diagram for the Waterloo and City Line display.

Following my mention last time that we volunteers have converted to using pottery mugs, and given its topicality at the moment, Mary has sourced compostable cups for our visitors' teas and coffees, and wherever possible our general waste is re-cycled. Additionally, we ageing volunteers will one day need to be re-cycled, so if you know of any interested younger devotees – please let us know!

John Telford