

# OUTSIDE THE BOX



Newsletter August 2019 Issue 57

## We WILL remember them



Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> of July was a red letter day for the Signal Box with a triple header of events (see special pages 3 and 4) and the Trust was honoured to welcome Robert Voss, HM Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire as the principal guest. In addition to his official duties on that day he was shown around the garden and the box and readily took his turn at working the levers and signals. The ceremony paid due reverence to the fallen railwaymen of St Albans in the First World War and gave added significance to the memorial plaque that was produced last year. This will now remain on display in the covered panel close to the garden gate as shown in the photograph. Prior to this ceremony there was a formal unveiling of the history panel in the waiting area of Platform 1 on City station. This has been designed by Les O'Leary with input from Trust members and others and incorporates an image of our memorial panel (see page 4). Finally your Editor was called upon to sign-up the Trust as the first Station Partners of the new Community Rail Partnership. In due course we hope to be given the green light to clear and replant the small garden area on Platform 4 close to the Victoria Street over bridge – waiting for Network Rail to remove more of the buddleia! Watch this space as they say! **Richard Kirk**

## Chairman's Words

What an interesting month this has been with the launch of the book stands on the station to the unveiling of our history panel, the visit of the Lord Lieutenant and to cap it all the station rebuilding has started. The proposed new station will allow a greater flow of passengers to exit on the west side of the station thus avoiding the queues that build up on platform 4 especially during the rush hours. I should think it is every drivers nightmare to see a platform full of exiting passengers as you hurtle into the station on the down fast at 100 mph.

The weather smiled on us for our annual BBQ and it was great to have the opportunity to sit and talk with so many of you and your wives. I didn't hear of any bad after effects so hopefully my cooking is improving!

The next big event for is of course Heritage Open Weekend which this year is on Saturday the 21st and Sunday the 22nd September. On our last weekend we had over 1200 visitors so can probably expect the same this time which leads me to my usual plea. To run safely we need staff at the following locations - reception, interlocking, photo display, LNWR lever frame, garden railway, MR frame, lamps, museum, stairs and operating deck a total of 10 and although some can double up it would be good to support properly all our displays. We are open for 7 hours each day from 10 till 5 so more than 10 would give us the opportunity to takes breaks and perhaps to interact better with our visitors. If you can spare some time over the weekend that would be great, if you are not sure you know enough to pass on to the visitors don't worry we will give you some training and a crib sheet. It really is a great fun day why not come along and join in the fun

**Tony Furse**



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

## Dates for your Diary

**Heritage Open Weekend** September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, if you are able to help even for a short while this will be appreciated and hopefully you will enjoy your time, please contact Richard (see email and phone details below) and let him know your availability (and any preferences) so you can be allocated an activity on the rota.

**Open Days** other dates coming up are August 25<sup>th</sup>, September 8<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Tony Furse or any of the other Trustees if you can help on any of these occasions.

**Members' Open Day:** on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September members of the Trust are invited to join the members of the North London Society of Model Engineers at their outdoor railway site at Colney Heath. The site will be open from 12 noon until late afternoon. Some food and drink will be available for which a donation will be appreciated. For details of the location please refer to the Society's website <http://www.nlsme.co.uk/>

## Mount Fuji, Japan, Postcard

It was the 29th March 2019 and I was in the Box, all alone with a cup of coffee, as I thought, viewing the passing trains on a bright Friday. Can't recall why I was there, but I suspect it was something to do with the 'Buffet' flooring perhaps.

As I exited the Box to look through the fence with my cup of coffee, I was surprised to see two young adults slowly walking down towards me. I then approached them with the customary 'welcome' and explained that the box was not 'open', but added people are never turned away. The young lady then explained that she was on holiday from Japan, visiting her brother who lived in London who had lived in St. Albans as a boy and always wanted to see the Signal Box. It was now mid-day and I was intending to lock up and set off for home, but I thought it would be only polite, after their journey, to give them a 'quick' tour. They were very appreciative and the questions came thick and fast.

To me, this was just another couple of tourists that had struck lucky and I thought little more of it. However, there was a pleasant postscript. It was several weeks later on a Monday evening, when Keith Webster was delivering some post to our Chairman, I was told that there was a postcard addressed to Michael, with the St. Albans South Signal Box official address. It was, to my surprise (yes – another one!), a postcard from Shizuoka, Japan. A lovely picture of a Shinkansen N700A train, with Mount Fuji as a backdrop. It was signed by Moro(?) and Ray, the visitors on 29th March. It is always rewarding to receive thanks from our guests, but a postcard from Japan must be a first? Very much appreciated.

Michael Wright.



**Left: the postcard from Japan sent to Michael. Above: the new narrow gauge quarry wagon chassis on arrival, being rubbed down and painted by John and Tony and the finished article in position on the track awaiting its bucket.**

## Progress at the 'box

This year the excess of precipitation in June has accelerated garden growth to Amazonian proportions! Les and new volunteers David and John have effected a sterling job on trimming our lawn-side hedge and Network Rail have finally cut the sizeable sycamores on their side of the boundary fence - so visitors now have a wider panorama of train movements. David Smith and Richard Kirk, plus others, have battled faithfully on in the rest of our 'estate'. Rodney has re-treated the Buffet, and power and lighting by John W and Jim is now installed, including down lights under the awning; while Michael has expertly restored the large Radlett finial, now back in position by the gate. A water-proof plastic holder has been affixed under our 'Opening Dates' sign by the main gate, dispensing 'box flyers'.

The big news this issue is that we now have a narrow gauge tipper wagon to sit on the end of our set of points. It's a Hudson Rugga Quarry Wagon, c1937 that worked in a Northamptonshire quarry for many years without attention – hence its initial rusted condition! On semi-permanent loan, Tony, Jim, and myself travelled to Flamstead to collect it. We winched it onto Jim's trailer and, on arrival at the 'box', others helped us manoeuvre it in through the entrance gate. Peter, who had just re-painted the gate, was on tenterhooks in case it was scratched – the gate that is! The wagon has now been wire brushed and painted with Hammerite metal paint and will be positioned on the rails after the bucket holders are adjusted and a short extra length of rail is sourced.

The Bedford-St. Albans Community Rail Partnership was officially launched at St. Albans Museum and Gallery, with the Trust (now Members of ACORP) as St. Albans City Station's first Partners.

Finally, I recently commented to a member of staff at the Bure Valley narrow gauge railway at Aylsham, Norfolk, that their model railway had been Tony's inspiration for our own model railway. The man asked where I came from, and it turned out that he'd both met his wife and lived in my road in St. Albans – it's a small railway world!

John Telford

Bedford >> St Albans City  
Community Rail Partnership

ThamesLink /

ST. ALBANS SOUTH SIGNAL BOX

Official Opening of the

St Albans City Station  
150<sup>th</sup> Year History Panel  
and  
St Albans Railway Staff WW1  
Memorial

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019

at 11:45 for 12 noon

In the presence of  
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

The Right Worshipful  
the Mayor of St Albans City  
and District

Invited Guests

Welcome by Tom Moran, MD of Thameslink

Right: The cover of the Order of Ceremony brochure that was produced for the celebrations on 24<sup>th</sup> July. Below – and on page 4 - are various scenes from what was a special day in the story of St Albans South Signal Box and the Trust and its members.



Left: Tom Moran, Managing Director of Thameslink & Great Northern (Govia) introduces the new station history panel before the ceremonial ribbon was cut by Trust trustee and designer Les O'Leary. Right: Les explains the contents of the panel to Robert Voss, HM Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire



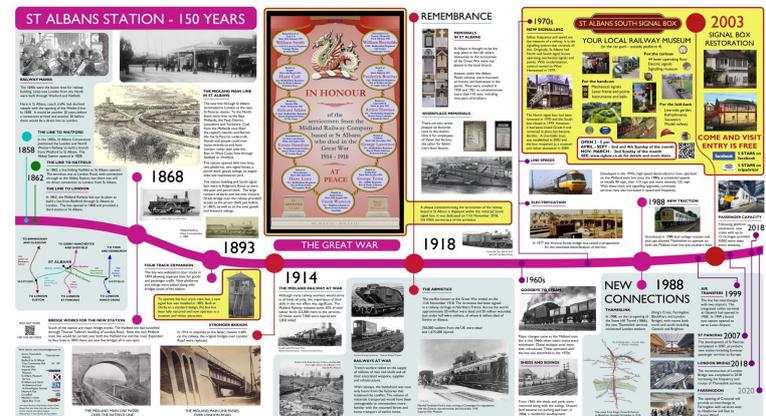
Left: Andy Buckley (ACoRP), Les O'Leary, Robert Voss, Janet Smith (Mayor of St Albans City and District) and Tom Moran pose in front of the panel after the unveiling. Right: Standard bearers from the Royal British Legion lower their standards as the Last Post is sounded by the bugler



Left: The Mayor lays a wreath in front of the Memorial panel on behalf of the Council. Right: The Lord Lieutenant bows his head after reading the Kohima Epitaph.



Left: The Lord Lieutenant and Mayor compete to show off their signalling skills. Right: The Lord Lieutenant signals a train through the section under the supervision of duty signaller John Webb.



Left: The third element of the triple header occasion was the signing-up of the Trust as the first Station Partners at St Albans City Station as part of the Bedford - St Albans Community Rail Partnership; after completing a formal agreement form the Trust was presented with a special rail ticket – and £500! – in the picture are Andy Buckley, Richard Kirk, Tom Moran and Paul Webster (ACoRP Operations Manager). Right: The 150<sup>th</sup> Year History Panel designed by Les can now be seen in the waiting area of Platform 1 of St Albans City Station.