



# ST ALBANS STATION - 150 YEARS



**RAILWAY MANIA**

The 1840s were the boom time for railway building. Lines into London from the North were built through Watford and Hatfield.

Here in St Albans, coach traffic had declined steeply with the opening of the Watford line. In 1838. It would be another 20 years before a connection arrived and another 30 before there would be a direct line to London.

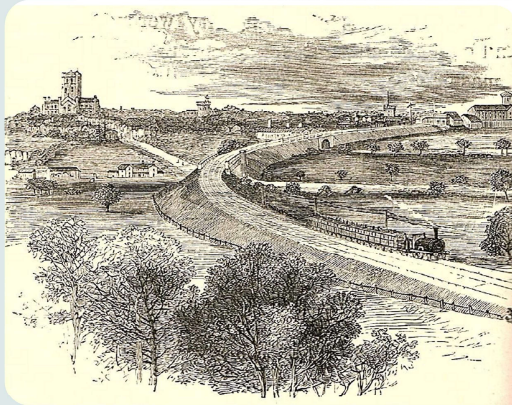


## THE MIDLAND MAIN LINE IN ST ALBANS

The new line through St Albans terminated in London at the new St Pancras station. To the North there were lines to the East Midlands, the Peak District, Lancashire and Yorkshire. Coal from the Midlands now filled the capital's hearths and Burton Ale the St Pancras undercroft. Goods and people could now move directly to and from London rather than take the East or West Coast lines through Hatfield or Watford.

The station opened with two lines, two platforms, two signal boxes, a parcel dock, goods sidings, an engine shed and maintenance yard.

The station building and South signal box were in Ridgmont Road, as were the post and parcel dock. The large rampart of earth and the new Victoria Street bridge over the railway provided access to the prison (built just before in 1867), as well as to the coal, goods and livestock sidings.



## THE LINE TO WATFORD

In the 1850s, St Albans Corporation petitioned the London and North Western Railway to build a branch from Watford to St Albans. The Abbey Station opened in 1858.

1858

## THE LINE TO HATFIELD

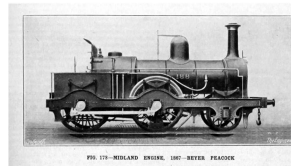
In 1862, a line linking Hatfield to St Albans opened. The terminus was at London Road, with connection through to the Abbey Station; but there was still no direct connection to London from St Albans.

1862

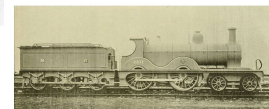
## THE LINE TO LONDON

In 1862, the Midland Railway laid out its plans to build a line from Bedford through St Albans to London. The line opened in 1868 and provided a third station in St Albans.

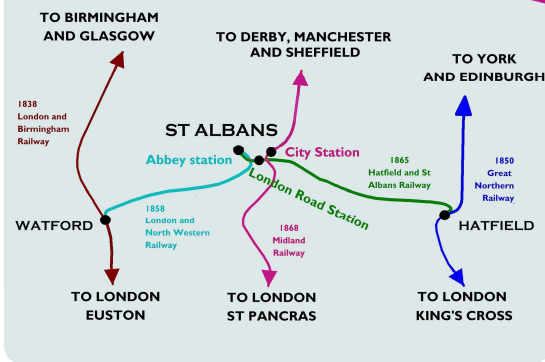
1868



Midland Railway Class 2 Locomotive c. 1893



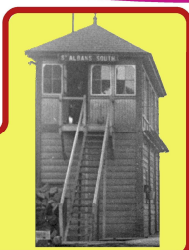
1893



## FOUR TRACK EXPANSION

The line was widened to four tracks in 1893 allowing separate lines for goods and passenger traffic. New platforms and sidings were added along with bridges south of the station.

To operate the four-track main line, a new signal box was installed in 1892. Built at Derby to a standard design, the box has been fully restored and now operates as a museum and visitor attraction.



FIND OUT MORE



USE THIS QR CODE

## BRIDGE WORKS FOR THE NEW STATION

South of the station are major bridge works. The Hatfield line had tunnelled through Thomas Telford's levelling of London Road. Now the new Midland main line would be carried over both the Hatfield line and the road. Expanded to four lines in 1893 there are now five bridges all in one spot.

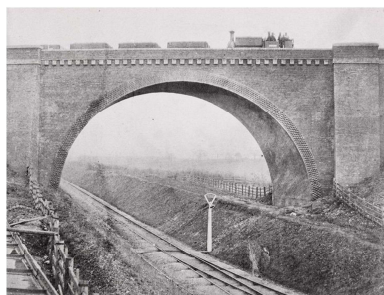
## STRONGER BRIDGES

In 1914 in response to the faster, heavier traffic on the railway, the original bridges over London Road were replaced.

With thanks and acknowledgement to:

- Govia Thameslink Railway
- Bedford to St Albans City Community Rail Partnership
- Imperial War Museum
- St Albans Museum Service
- St Albans and Herts Architectural and Archaeological Society
- Network Rail
- CrossRail
- Members of the Signal Box Trust

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Produced by A. P. (Les) O'Leary, for the St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust, March 2019.




THE MIDLAND MAIN LINE PASSES OVER THE HATFIELD LINE



THE MIDLAND MAIN LINE PASSES OVER LONDON ROAD

# REMEMBRANCE



**IN HONOUR**

of the  
servicemen from the  
**Midland Railway Company**  
based at St Albans  
who died in the  
**Great War**  
1914 - 1918

**AT PEACE**

100  
**ARMISTICE**  
YEARS

Dedicated at  
St Albans  
Signal Box  
11th November 2018

MCMXVIII - MMXVIII

Remembered at:  
Tynce Cot  
Died: 10th February 1917  
**William Smith**  
Lt - York & Lancaster Regiment  
Carriage Washer  
16 Arthur Road

Remembered at:  
Pozieres Memorial  
Died: 8th June 1918  
**William Reynolds**  
CSM - Bedfordshire Regiment  
2nd Ganger  
Tyttenhanger Green

Buried at:  
Etaples  
Died: 11th March 1916  
**Harry Curl**  
Sgt - Bedfordshire Regiment  
Way & Works Labourer  
35 Dalton Street

Buried at:  
Gaza  
Died: 20th July 1917  
**Frederick Butcher**  
Cpl - Bedfordshire Regiment  
Way & Works Labourer  
43 Upper Culver Rd

Buried at:  
Danzig Alley  
Died: 7th January 1916  
**Edward Atkins**  
L/Cpl - Bedfordshire Regiment  
Goods Department Porter  
13 The Camp

Buried at:  
Lijssenthoek  
Died: 1st June 1917  
**Arthur Hawkes**  
Pte - Hertfordshire Regiment  
Motive Power Labourer  
6 Kimberley Road

Remembered at:  
La Ferte-sous-Jouarre  
Died: 2nd August 1914  
**Ernest Henshaw**  
Pte - Northumberland Fusiliers  
Motive Power Labourer  
13 Victoria Road

Buried at:  
St Albans  
Died: 12th December 1915  
**George Lawrence**  
Pte - Bedfordshire Regiment  
Way & Works Labourer  
38 Warwick Road

Buried at:  
Haverskerque  
Died: 15th April 1918  
**Harry Lowe**  
Pte - Bedfordshire Regiment  
Way & Works Painter  
35 Longmire Road

Buried at:  
Terlincthan  
Died: 20th October 1918  
**George Toims**  
Pte - Suffolk Regiment  
Way & Works Labourer  
97 Park Street

Buried at:  
Hagle Dump  
Died: 20th August 1918  
**Frank Warwick**  
Pte - Middlesex Regiment  
Motive Power Labourer  
Sandridge

## MEMORIALS IN ST ALBANS



St Albans is thought to be the only place in the UK where memorials to the servicemen of the Great War were not placed in the local church.

Instead, under the Abbey Parish scheme, they were mounted on homes and businesses in the parish. They were unveiled in 1920 and 1921 to commemorate more than 110 men, including nine pairs of brothers.

## WORKPLACE MEMORIALS

There are two street plaques on factories next to the station. One is for employees of Vyses' hat factory, the other for Edwin Lee's boot factory.



A plaque commemorating the servicemen of the railway based at St Albans is displayed within the restored South signal box. It was dedicated on 11th November 2018, the 100th anniversary of the armistice.

# THE GREAT WAR

## 1918



Fowler MR Class 3835 4F 0-6-0 built in 1917 by Derby Works

## 1914

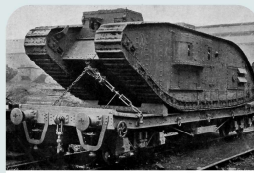
### THE MIDLAND RAILWAY AT WAR

Although many railway workers would serve in all kinds of units, the importance of their skills in the war effort was significant. The Midland Railway released some 30% of their labour force (23,000 men) to the services. Of these, some 7,000 were injured and 2,833 killed.



Double-headed Munitions Train  
National Railway Museum / Science & Society Picture

Gunners of the Royal Garrison Artillery unloading shells from a light railway train at Brierley, 1917.  
Imperial War Museum



Gun barrel being transported - National Railway Museum

### RAILWAYS AT WAR

Trench warfare relied on the supply of millions of men and shells and all their associated weapons, supplies and infrastructure.

With railways, the battlefield was now only hours from the factories that sustained the conflict. The volume of materials transported would have been unimaginable to commanders more familiar with the mounted forces and horse transport of earlier times.

### THE ARMISTICE

The conflict known as the Great War ended on the 11th November 1918. The Armistice had been signed in a railway carriage in Northern France. Across the world approximately 20 million were dead and 20 million wounded. Just under half were civilians, of whom 6 million died of famine or disease.

750,000 soldiers from the UK were dead and 1,675,000 injured.



Marshal Ferdinand Foch's train arriving at Compiègne for negotiations with the German representatives, 6th November 1918.  
Imperial War Museum

## 1970s

### NEW SIGNALLING

Safety, frequency and speed are the measure of a railway. It is the signalling system that controls all this. Originally, St Albans had North and South signal boxes operating mechanical signals and points. With modernisation, control moved to West Hampstead in 1979.



The North signal box had been removed in 1970 and the South box closed in 1979. However, it had been Listed Grade II and remained in place but became derelict. A charitable trust was established in 2003 and the box reopened as a museum and visitor attraction in 2009.

## ST. ALBANS SOUTH SIGNAL BOX

### YOUR LOCAL RAILWAY MUSEUM

(in the car park - outside platform 4)



#### For the curious

44 lever operating floor  
Electric signals  
Signalling museum

#### For the hands-on

Mechanical signals  
Lever frame and points  
Instruments and bells



#### For the laid-back

Line-side garden  
Refreshments  
Souvenirs  
Model railway



**OPEN 2 - 5 pm**  
**APRIL - SEPT - 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month**  
**NOV - MARCH - 2nd Sunday of the month**  
**SEE: [www.sigbox.co.uk](http://www.sigbox.co.uk) for details and more dates**



## 2003

### SIGNAL BOX RESTORATION



### COME AND VISIT ENTRY IS FREE

facebook

5 STARS on  
facebook



5 STARS on  
tripadvisor

### LINE SPEEDS



Developed in the 1970s, high speed diesel-electrics have operated on the Midland main line since the 1980s at scheduled speeds of initially 90 mph, then 110 mph and more recently 125 mph. With these track and signalling upgrades, commuter services have also increased in speed and frequency.

### ELECTRIFICATION



In 1977 the Victoria Street bridge was raised in preparation for the overhead electrification of the line.

## 1988 NEW TRACTION



Introduced in 1988 dual voltage traction and pick-ups allowed Thameslink to operate on both the Midland main line and southern lines.



### PASSENGER CAPACITY

Following platform extensions, new trains with up to 12 carriages provided 9,000 more seats every weekday.

2018

## 1960s

### GOODBYE TO STEAM



Major changes came to the Midland main line in the 1960s when steam trains were withdrawn. Diesel multiple units were then introduced. These operated until the line was electrified in the 1970s.

### SHEDS AND SIDINGS



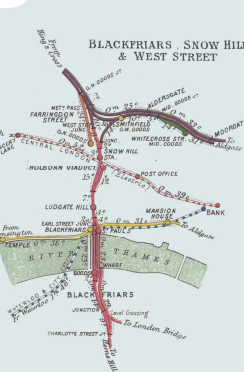
From 1965, the sheds and yards were removed along with the sidings. Unused land became car parking and later, in 2006, a residential development.

## NEW 1988 CONNECTIONS

### THAMESLINK

In 1988, on the re-opening of the Snow Hill Tunnel (1866), the new Thameslink services connected London stations

(King's Cross, Farringdon, Blackfriars and London Bridge), with routes both north and south including Gatwick and Brighton.



The route from King's Cross St Pancras to Blackfriars through Farringdon in 1914.



### AIR TRANSFERS | 1999

The line has interchanges with two airports. The integrated rail/air terminal at Gatwick had opened in 1958. In 1999 a brand new station opened to serve Luton Airport.

### ST PANCRAS 2007

The development of St Pancras, completed in 2007, provided a new station including Eurostar passenger services to Europe.

### LONDON BRIDGE 2018

The reconstruction of London Bridge was completed in 2018 increasing the frequency and routes of Thameslink services.

### FARRINGDON

2020

The opening of Crossrail will provide an interchange at Farringdon with services west to Heathrow and East to Canary Wharf.