



Going, going, sold!



In issue 38 Tony mentioned the model railway items generously donated to the Trust. These duly came up for auction in December and generated much interest. Most of them sold for more than the auctioneer's estimate resulting in the Trust receiving just under £2,000 after costs. A most welcome addition to the funds and one that will allow us to continue to set aside the resources for both purchasing suitable artefacts that become available and ensuring that there is enough money available to meet the ongoing costs of maintaining the 'box in good order both externally and internally.

Richard Kirk

Chairman's Words

It's 1960 and with St Albans locomotive shed closed long time resident 42680 has been transferred to Bedford depot. In this great shot from Roger Barnes the engine is seen back at St Albans shunting the goods yard. St Albans North box is in the top right corner.

January is normally a very quiet month for visitor attractions like St Albans Signal Box but for us it is probably our busiest period in the year. During the second weekend the 12th and 13th we supported the Model Railway Exhibition at the Arena in St Albans by providing a stand at the exhibition and also opening the box both Saturday and Sunday. The stand was a huge success with a great deal of interest some of which filtered down to the box in spite of the pouring rain on Saturday and the freezing cold on Sunday. Two hundred visitors braved the elements and were provided with warming cups of tea, coffee and soups by an intrepid band of lady members working outside.

Having just recovered from that we opened again on the fourth weekend the 26th and 27th in support of St Albans Residents' First Weekend and what a wonderful turnout we had, with 262 visitors on Saturday and 265 on Sunday and that was only the ones we could count. I heard it said that of the 527 visitors 500 were below the age of five but I think that was a little exaggerated. On the Saturday we were honoured by a visit of the

Major of St Albans Councillor Geoff Harrison who was impressed



Mayor Geoff Harrison tries his hand at the ground frame during his recent visit to the box.

by what he saw and confessed to have been a train spotter in his youth but on the Western Region, poor chap.

The huge success of these weekends of course is very much down to the members who gave up their time to support the box. It is hard work in the cold and wet but how rewarding it is when you listen to the comments of visitors leaving having had a whole new wonderful experience. Thanks to everybody who helped.

Tony Furse

Frederick (Jim) Martin (1931 – 2014)

Jim was a resident of Ridgmont Road at the time the Trust was formed and became one of the founder Trustees. In his career with Hertfordshire Fire Service he reached the rank of Divisional Commander. After retiring he became President of the County Constitution Club and was a great supporter of the Trust. A number of members attended his funeral last month. Our condolences go to his family.



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 or contact me on 01727 860047

Membership Matters

Subs for 2015 now due

A renewal form is included with this newsletter. I aim to exclude those of you who have already paid subs but just in case please ignore the renewal if:

- * you pay by standing order
- * you have paid subs on or after 1st November 2014

I do hope you will renew your membership as your support makes the Trust what it is – a friendly self financing museum society – a rarity in these cost conscious times!

Members' Records

For some members our records do not hold:

- * an email address
- * a signed gift aid form

Forms asking for these details have been sent where pertinent and I would ask you to complete them wherever possible. The Trust reduces costs by using email rather than post and also receives money from the Government if a gift aid form has been signed.

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 me know if you are going to attend the AGM on Wednesday 4th March at St Paul's Church

My contact details are: mary.webster@btinternet.com (preferred)

01727-836131

Mary Webster

Swanage Railway visit

Our member Peter Hunt is also a member of the Swanage Railway and as previously indicated Peter has offered to arrange a visit to the railway to look at their signalling operations. The visit has now been arranged for **Saturday 6th June**. There will be an opportunity to travel on the railway and visit all the signal boxes on the line. Numbers will be limited. If you are interested in joining this visit please contact John Telford. John's email address is: jtelford@btinternet.com

Signalbox 'uniform'

Please let me know if you want to purchase a signalbox 'uniform' of a polo shirt and/or a sweatshirt.

Both are embroidered with the signal box logo. I also need to know the size you require - please refer to Engelbert Strauss for sizing details.

Price will be dependant on the number I order (items are sold at cost) but is likely to be in the region of £18 per polo shirt and £28 per sweatshirt.



The rebuilt Shunt Limit sign back in position following its spontaneous combustion.



The repainted and refurbished Ground Signal ready for operation again.



The new Burrell wagon produced for the Trust by Dapol. Available from the Signal Box at £12.00 each

Progress at the 'Box

A fairly mild winter to date has meant outside work has been maintained.

The Shunt Limit sign at the bottom of the steps decided to catch fire during one of our Open Days and Jim and Michael did a brilliant job re-soldering it together. Tony re-sprayed it – so it is now back in pristine working order.

Several items in progress in the last issue have been attended to. The ground signal on the lawn has been restored, and the blurred lenses cleaned. John Webb has done an excellent job rebuilding/repairing the trunking round the site. The new website sign is now facing the tracks, replacing the worn-out original, and a new British Rail station sign (but missing the name of the station – which we think may still be up at Luton) has also been hung on the wire fence by the tracks.

The shed has been re-preserved and the rear of the lamp hut tidied up. We hope to put a rain-proof cover over the Grade II listed items stored there - originally from the Locking Room. The Merchandising Cupboard has been re-vamped more attractively and in readiness for a new batch of wagons: a repeat order of the successful 'St. Albans Coal Club' version and a new 'Burrell and Co. (Radlett) Limited' model.

Two lipped tread plates have been added to the downstairs display and two further flat ones fixed on the steps – with only 4 more needed to complete the whole staircase.

Richard Kirk, now retired, has been working on updating and extending our archive material. Two static signal arms have been restored by Tony and we now await finding a wooden signal post to mount them on – so if anyone knows of one, please let us know.

Our two labours of love: the re-wiring upstairs (Rob L, Jim and John W) and the restoring of the finials (Michael W) continue unabated.

So progress rolls forward and the appreciation frequently expressed by visitors makes it all worthwhile.

John Telford