



Newsletter 8th Feb 2005
Issue 5

Outside the Box

St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust
www.sigbox.co.uk



Good news and bad:

- More lease problems
- Lafarge Aggregates grant awarded
- Heritage Lottery Fund grant applied for

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Current condition is not good

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust. Sadly, progress is still slower than we had ever expected. Due to lack of news, it had been difficult to produce a newsletter.

It is now nearly two years since we did the original condition survey on the signal box. Its condition has not improved by itself in those two years.

We were allowed access to the signal box in January to see how the box had fared over two winters. Not at all well!

The condition of the portacabin that we had hoped to use during the restoration had also deteriorated to the point that

it was unsafe. Network Rail decided that it was a liability and have removed it to be crushed.

However, the portaloo is still standing, so there is some relief!

Our AGM meeting will be held on 10th March 2005. All trustees, friends and supporters are invited to the County Constitutional Club, 29 Ridgmont Rd., St Albans (opposite the signal box) at 7:30pm.

This will be an opportunity to see details of the feasibility study and condition report and old photographs of the building. We will be discussing ideas to push the project forward.

Please re-lease me!

It is now nearly two years since we were promised a lease for the signal box.

It took one year to get the first 'Heads of Terms'. Unfortunately the lease was not acceptable to the Heritage Lottery Fund due to a break clause that would allow Network Rail to reclaim the property with six months notice.

It then took 8 months to get the second 'Heads of Terms'. This lease has no break clause and is acceptable to the Heritage Lottery Fund. It has now been with Network Rail solicitors since November, but we still haven't got

close to signing, as the solicitors have not been given authority to work on the lease by Network Rail.

All very frustrating as the building deteriorates further.

Highams Park Signal Box

The trustees were very pleased to meet up with members from the Highams Park Signal Box Association in January.

They are at the same stage with the lease negotiations for their signal box. We were able to exchange ideas and advice and are looking forward to maintaining links with them.

St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust is a Company limited by guarantee registered in England No. 04653488.
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The earliest photo we have found - 1930's?

Not its finest moment!

On 8th November 1977 a train travelling from Bedford to St. Pancras collided at about 40mph with the rear of an empty St. Albans to St. Pancras train which was standing at a signal.

The collision resulted in the derailment of the two leading coaches of the passenger train as well as the rear coach of the empty train. The driver, guard and two passengers in the passenger train were injured and taken to hospital.

The accident was a result of the signalman forgetting about the stationary train at the St. Albans Up Slow Starting Signal and instructing the driver of the passenger train to pass the St. Albans Inner Home signal at Danger into an already occupied section. (From HMSO report)

Museum of St Albans

Following meetings with Curator John Beckerson, the trust has been allowed access to the railway transport archives held at the museum. These will be a great help during the restoration process.

John has volunteered to be curatorial adviser to the project, and has offered interpretation advice and the use of museum photographic facilities.

We will also be taking part in joint promotions between the museum and the Trust to ensure the widest audience is informed of our existence. We hope to sponsor an exhibition in the future.

In turn, the trust will be donating photos and documents to the museum to add to their archives.



Jan 2005 - It's getting in a state!

Grant applications

Lafarge Aggregates Limited have agreed to grant **£25,000** to The St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust towards the project to restore the building and the derelict land surrounding it and open it to the public.

This funding has been made available through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme and will be administered by the environmental charity Groundwork Hertfordshire.

We are extremely grateful for this support and hope to be able to use it soon!

Our Heritage Lottery Fund application for £50,000 has been submitted and we expect to hear the result early in March.

We believe we have a good case for our community led heritage project, and once the grant is awarded we will be in a position to submit the planning and listed building consent applications.

The Architectural Heritage Fund is continuing to support the project with its project administration grants. This steady income is becoming more useful as the project gets underway.

The box in 1978. Heath and Heather building too!



Become a 'friend' of the Signal Box

We have deliberately put off asking for further subscriptions, as the project was looking a little precarious! However, now that the situation is a little clearer, please, please, renew your subscription as soon as possible as we really need your support. A minimum of £10 is all we are asking - and some letters of

support would be good too!

We're still not able to access the signal box due to safety issues, but hope to see you at the meeting at 7:30pm on 10th March at the Constitutional Club opposite the signal box.

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