



Outside the Box

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



Good news:

- Fence is up and we have access
- Railway Heritage Trust grant extended
- Heritage Lottery Fund grant awarded

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Open Day Sunday 27th November

Welcome to the sixth newsletter of the St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust. Due to lack of news, it had been difficult to produce a newsletter, but now things are moving!

The fencing has been erected around the box. This started on 1st November and was completed on 10th.

After some slight confusion about the exact the location of the fence, and the unexpected discovery of wall foundations where the fence was due to go, the work went without a hitch.

Our thanks go to Network Rail who funded the fence and the Blyth Group Ltd. who did such a good job and liaised

well with our Project Manager.

After discussion with Network Rail's Surveyor, we have been given access to the site, pending the signing of the lease. The lawyers are still working on the detail!

OPEN DAY 27th NOVEMBER 10am-3pm

The site and the box will be open for viewing to members and friends on Sunday 27th. Access to the operating floor will be by ladder and all those wishing to visit will be advised that they do so at their own risk.

It will be an opportunity to see the enormity of the task that lies ahead!

The Lease

The lawyers are still settling the details, and the trust have seen the draft of the lease. It is exactly as we need to meet our obligations to the various funders, and will ensure that the signal box will be secure for the foreseeable future.

We hope to have signed on the dotted line by Christmas.

Signaling simulator

Our plans include the installation of a signaling simulator in the signal box that will simulate the boxes either side

of St Albans South and enable the bells to ring and the levers to be moved as though the signal box was in use. We believe this can be accomplished using computer technology linked to original equipment. We have been given two original Midland Railway Rotary block instruments, which is a great start but we also need bells, tappers and other instruments, that we can link to the computer.

We also need computer expertise in the form of an assembler programmer familiar with PIC processors, or able to interfaces PC's with bells etc. If you can help please let us know.



The signal box and grounds from the air



St Albans North - was the next one up the line



Napsbury - was the next one down the line



Another old photo has been sent to us

The Gardens

The garden area is much larger than you might have imagined, as can be seen on the aerial photograph. We intend to landscape and plant the area and open it to the public.

Does anyone have ideas for an imaginative treatment of the area? We must have some car parking spaces of course, but this will still leave a large garden area. The plot slopes down towards the railway line, and would give a prime opportunity to present a garden of some beauty to the poor commuters travelling past!

Plans of the site are available from the trust, or on St Albans planning dept. applications website.

(www.stalbans.gov.uk search for 'signal box').

North and South

The signal box to the North of St Albans South was 'St Albans North'. This box was located near the corner of Hatfield Road and Lemsford Road, opposite Clarence Park. We believe it controlled the sidings to the North of the station.

The signal Box to the South was at Napsbury. It was situated on the site of Napsbury station and the branch into the mental hospital. With the closure of the station in 1959 it became quite a remote spot for the signalmen.

If you have memories or information about any of these boxes, or St Albans South itself, please contact us and let us know.

Would you like to be the Trust's archivist? Let us know!

Grant applications

Our Heritage Lottery Fund application for £50,000 was granted in March, and we are very grateful for their support. We have not received the money yet, as we have not signed the lease.

The Railway Heritage Trust had offered us a grant that would expire in March 2006. Due to continued delays with the lease it became apparent that work would not be completed by then. They have kindly extended the grant of £35,000 for another year and we are confident of completion by that date.

We have received the final installment of project development grant from The Architectural Heritage Fund.

Become a 'friend' of the Signal Box

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 now able to access the signal box as mentioned earlier, and hope to see you at the box on the 27th between

Next Stages

The next stages of the project entail: -

1. Draw up detailed schedule of works
2. Building regulations plans and approval
3. Prepare tender documents for building works
4. Tender receipt and adjudication
5. Contractor mobilisation
6. The works!

This will take a minimum of six months, but in the meantime we will open the site to enable us to clear the garden area, etc. (Volunteers welcome!)

10am to 3pm. We will happily take subscriptions on the day if it helps!

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