



Romsey Signal Box Project

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"THE SIGNAL"

Dear Reader

No 15 - January 1997

150th ANNIVERSARY HERE!

Plans are well in hand for the grand celebrations on Saturday 1 March to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first passenger train to traverse the line through Romsey to Salisbury (Milford). It promises to be an exciting weekend and **ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO COME AND JOIN US AT THE SIGNAL BOX** - even if only to say "hello" and see how things are progressing! But more active involvement would be encouraged...

MARATHON WEEKEND

The weekend of 1/2 March 1997 will feature another operating marathon (from 2000 on Friday 28 February to 2000 on Sunday 2 March). We will need to muster all the members we can get if this is to be a success. **A FORM IS ENCLOSED; PLEASE COMPLETE IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.** You don't need to have operated before - basic training can be given during the marathon. **If you've never had a go - NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!**

FIRST TRAIN RE-ENACTMENT

With the active co-operation of South Wales and West Railway Ltd (who run the current services through Romsey), we are also planning to re-enact the first passenger train as described in the front of "After the Rhinoceros".

We shall welcome the 10.44 service train into the station with local mayors, bunting, people in Victorian costumes, band playing, and the Abbev bells ringing. A party of local dignitaries will then travel onwards on the train to Salisbury and return to Romsey by 12.14. The Romsey & District Society are putting their weight behind the event, devoting the whole of their Spring Newsletter to the anniversary, and helping with the arrangements at the station. More details inside. **DO COME AND JOIN IN THE FUN!**

VISITOR VAN TO BE OPENED

After travelling on the special train on Saturday 1 March, the Romsey Town Mayor, Councillor Charles Mead, has kindly accepted the honour of performing the official opening of our Visitor Van, which will have a special plaque commemorating the day, and in which will be our new display boards and other artifacts. The Mayor of Test Valley Borough Council and hopefully the Chairman of Salisbury District Council will also be in attendance, and a whole list of other local dignitaries and celebrities are being invited to the two events. **DO BE THERE TO LEND YOUR SUPPORT TO THE PROJECT ON THIS SIGNIFICANT DAY!**

A PUBLICITY OPPORTUNITY NOT TO BE MISSED...

We believe the weekend's events should attract the interest of the local media, and we are confident we can get local TV, radio and press to attend at Romsey Station if not down on the Signal Box site. Anything which raises the profile of the railway through Romsey will be good for our cause. **MENTION THE WEEKEND TO YOUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES. GET THEM TO VISIT US.** And develop any contacts you have with local media!

But also get along to help us in the meantime! There is much work to be done: ALL HANDS TO THE PUMP as they say! Ring Richard Read on 0802-723266 (mobile) or myself on 01794-522979 if you have any time to spare before the end of February. Our guests will expect to be impressed: lets not disappoint them!

OTHER MATTERS***Membership Renewals***

It's that time again! A form is enclosed (except for those who jumped the gun and have already paid - thanks! your membership slips are enclosed instead).

Please renew promptly - your fees are a valuable source of income. We spent more than we earned in 1996 and need to build our funds.

Easter Weekend

We shall have another working session this Easter. A form is enclosed. Please return as soon as possible.

Sweatshirts

A few members have enquired about getting new sweatshirts. We shall need an order for more than half a dozen to make it viable. A form is enclosed: please return it with payment by the beginning of February. If there are insufficient orders, your payment will be returned rather than cashed.

Having made progress to "*Get It Fixed in '96*", we are working towards being able to "*Celebrate in '98*". In the meantime, it is essential we get some new blood into the team. The AGM gathering agreed that a high priority for 1997 must be recruitment of new active members. So - let's give ourselves a target, and "*Recruit eleven in '97*"!! (Can you think of a better rhyme?!)

See everyone sometime over the weekend 28 Feb - 2 March.

Dick Hewett

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The committee met in November and again briefly before the AGM. The agenda items revolved around plans for the 150th Anniversary and the comprehensive work programme listed in the last "Signal" and updated opposite.

At the AGM, all current committee members were re-elected (Dick Hewett, Bill Tyndall, Chris Hack, Alan Gilmour, Richard Read and Ben Pennv). Craig Philips was elected as an additional member. The meeting resolved further that, despite his reluctance, Peter Cattermole should be invited to join the committee to give his expert advice wherever appropriate. Peter has since accepted.

The next meeting will be held on 9 February, when final work to get the signal box and site ready for the March weekend will be discussed. Other items will include confirmation of the new constitution (provisional acceptance having been given by the AGM with a month's grace for receipt of comments), and ratification of the new agreement with the school (which was due for approval by the school governors during January). (See AGM report later.)

Attention will also be given to recruitment (see elsewhere in this newsletter), as study work or domestic interests continue to impinge upon existing volunteers' time. Finally an outline work programme for the Easter weekend will be considered.

WORK PROGRAMME ON THE SIGNAL BOX SITE

An updated list for everyone to work to!

Task	Responsible	Deadline
<i>Signal box structure:</i>		
Assess need for replacement windows	Peter C	2-2-97
Replace posts and stair fencing	Richard R	28-2-97
Replace stairtreads on steps to box	Chris H	28-2-97
Repair guttering, install new downpipe	Craig P	30-4-97
Repainting outside of box	Craig P	30-4-97
<i>Interior of signal box:</i>		
Document problems with 12 volt wiring	Richard R/Dick H	2-2-97
Rewire 12 volt supply - urgent repairs	Chris H	9-2-97
Contact Pres. Socs. for source of rods	Chris H	9-2-97
Complete painting of ceiling/woodwork	Richard R	28-2-97
Produce new circuit diagrams	Chris H	28-2-97
Plumb in cold water tap	Peter C	30-4-97
Organise drain from sink	Peter C/Craig P	30-4-97
Plumb in hot water boiler	Peter C	30-4-97
Supply box surround for electrics	Craig P	30-4-97
Box around relays on side shelf	Craig P	30-4-97
Board wall and add shelves downstairs	Peter C	30-4-97
Complete telephone concentrator	Chris H	30-4-97
Refurbish controllers	Bill T/Chris H	30-9-97
Hang controllers	Chris H	30-9-97
Fit remaining controller rods	Chris H	30-9-97
Complete other equipment fitments	Chris H	30-9-97
<i>Around signal box:</i>		
Remove scrap metal	Dick H	2-2-97
Organise set of point tios	Bill T	30-9-97
Organise for mains water supply	Dick H/Richard R	30-9-97

Visitor van:

New felt to be laid on van roof	Richard R/Ben P	2-2-97
Lay conduits from signal box to van	Richard R/Dick	2-2-97
Obtain mains electric armoured cable	Ben P	2-2-97
Add lights/sockets in van	Peter C	2-2-97
Complete electrics for van	Peter C	2-2-97
Add pathing to visitor van doors	Dick H/Richard R	9-2-97
New internal display boards	Dick H	28-2-97
Wire in simulator into visitor van	Chris H	30-9-97

Remainder of site:

Assess and clear items under tarpaulin	Chris H/Dick H	9-2-97
Mount canalside sign	Dick H	28-2-97
Paint further green signs	Dick H	28-2-97
Mount green signs around site	Dick H	28-2-97
Clear weeds and tidy site	Dick H	28-2-97
Spray weedkiller on new shoots	Dick H	31-3-97
Produce two further signs	Rod Hovle	30-4-97
Mount two other signs	Dick H	30-6-97

Cowley Bridge:

New plug couplers	Bill T	30-6-97
Lever frame renewal	Bill T	31-12-97

Events:

Organise March celebrations	Dick H	31-1-97
Arrange visit to Washford box	Dick H/Peter C	31-3-97

Other items:

Organise wiring of station room	Bill T	9-2-97
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150th ANNIVERSARY RE-ENACTMENT

So just WHAT is happening on Saturday 1 March, and why?

Well, let us take you back to 1 March 1847, and Romsey Station:

"There was a host of people gathered at the railway, at every vantage point many persons had collected together. At the railway station was the Mayor, and members of the Borough Council, and the Romsey Town Band. They had all attended to welcome the first passenger train to come from Bishopstoke, call at Romsey, and pass onto Milford (Salisbury). Suddenly there was an atmosphere of tension, and with the Abbey bells ringing, whistles blowing, and with lots of cheering, the train came into view from the direction of Halterworth. The band struck up the tune "See the conquering hero comes", and the train, drawn by a steam locomotive with the name "Eclipse", came to a halt at the gaily decorated station."

On Saturday 1 March 1997, exactly 150 years to the day after that scene, we shall welcome a modern train into the station in similar fashion. It may be a DMU rather than a steam locomotive, it may not be the first train of the day, and it may not be coming from the Halterworth direction, but it will show that passenger trains still call at Romsey and pass onto Salisbury.

Our train will be the 10.35 ex-Southampton service train, arriving at Romsey at 10.44:

- * On the station to welcome it will be the Romsey Town Mayor, Councillor Charles Mead; the Mayor of Test Valley Borough Council, Councillor Brian Palmer; and the Chairman of Salisbury District Council, Councillor Ian West; as well as a host of other local dignitaries, and South Wales & West Railway's Service Group Manager Chris Gibb.
- * The Abbey bells will hopefully be ringing a peel from 10.00 until 11.00 (in spite of it being Lent!).
- * In the absence of a modern Romsey Town Band, the Romsey Schools' Orchestra's brass section will be playing. It seems appropriate to have today's youth celebrate the past, showing there is a bright future ahead as well.
- * The local theatrical group (Romsey Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society) will dress up in Victorian costumes.
- * The Romsey & District Society will decorate the station in bunting.

The dignitaries will then board the train for a special trip to Salisbury, courtesy of South Wales & West Railway Ltd, who operate the services on the line. Chris Gibb, who helped us re-open the signal box in 1991, will be present to help supervise matters.

The train will call at Dunbridge and Dean stations, at each of which it is hoped a representative from the local parish councils will board the train and join the official party.

After a suitable pause at Salisbury station, during which time the city of Salisbury may host some sort of event, the party will board the 11.48 and return to Romsey, arriving 12.14.

The Romsey Town Mayor and Mayor of Test Valley will then venture to the Signal Box site, where Councillor Charles Mead, the much-loved Romsey Town Mayor, will perform the official opening of our visitor van, on which will be mounted a suitable plaque. The official party will be able to view our new display boards, and then come and witness our 48-hour signalling marathon in progress (even having the chance to help!). We expect them to leave by 1.30pm.

So why do it? Well, three main reasons:

- * To give us a focus for our own efforts at the signal box. It's good to have a target to aim for.
- * To make the most of an excellent media and publicity opportunity for us, the railway, and the local community. It will be a very cost-effective event.
- * Because it's (still) there!

Let's hope many of you will be there also!

NEWS OF "FRIENDS OF ROMSEY SIGNAL BOX"

We had 62 members as at 31 December 1996. As mentioned earlier, subscriptions for 1997 are now due. Early payment will give us much needed cash at a time of high investment in materials to complete important work during 1997. So please respond quickly.

But we cannot survive on the members we have. It will be increasingly difficult to maintain, let alone develop, the box and site with existing volunteers all experiencing reduced availability thanks to growing work, study, and domestic commitments.

1997 must be the year to RECRUIT. *RECRUIT. RECRUIT!!*

Firstly we must take advantage of our March weekend and make all visitors welcome. Any signs of interest in the project must be fostered (carefully), and names/addresses taken for the future distribution of the newsletter and a membership form.

Secondly, I am appealing to ALL members to consider who they may know - family, friends, colleagues, those at school - who may be interested in helping. What we need are active volunteers who can spend a little time down at the box on the occasional Open Day or other convenient occasion.

Relevant experience and knowledge would be a benefit, obviously, but they are certainly not a pre-requisite for joining. For example, I am sure Richard Read and Chris Hack would echo that they have learnt a tremendous deal from their experience with the project and it was several years before they were in a position to pay that back (albeit now many times over!). Both have become key members of the team after starting with us with virtually no particular skills to offer.

Even if you yourself can only be an armchair member (welcome in itself, of course), you may know someone who would be in a position to help on a more active basis. Tell them about the project, suggest they come down one Open Day, advise them to introduce themselves (we're not always as attentive as perhaps we should be), and then ask them afterwards what they thought.

If between our 62 members we can recruit 11 new, active members, it would actually double the number of helping hands on the site.

Hence the message for this year:

"RECRUIT ELEVEN IN '97"

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NEWS

Nine members attended at 2.30pm on 5 January in the signal box for the third such Annual General Meeting. Apart from committee members Dick Hewett, Alan Gilmour (who travelled down from London especially), Richard Read and Ben Penn, we were delighted to see Craig Philips and John Read from Romsey, and three more long-distance supporters: Adam Rapley (Basingstoke), Simon Cooper

(Chippenham). and John Prytherch (Warrington). Their support was particularly appreciated. Apologies ran into double figures, partly as a result of the flu epidemic and also work commitments.

The meeting opened with the Project manager reviewing the previous year's progress, and the financial situation. Much of what had been planned had been achieved, including the repainting of the signal box, but other tasks such as the locks and controllers had proven impossible. Funds spent easily outweighed income and the bank balance was much reduced 12 months on. Income would be a critical item during 1997.

Two major documents were presented to the meeting:

- The draft constitution, provisionally passed with several amendments. Those present were invited to return any comments to the committee before the next committee meeting on 9 February, when the constitution would be ratified.
- A revised version of the agreement with Romsey County Infants School, which will now be tabled at a school governors meeting.

A review of plans for the future included details of the forthcoming celebration weekend, and the (long) list of outstanding work which the team hope to complete during 1997.

The meeting finished at 4.30, in positive vein for the year ahead.

VISIT TO "HILLSIDE RAILWAY"

Several stalwarts of the Friends had a very enjoyable afternoon/early evening helping Derrick Palengat to operate his Hillside Railway on 23 November, including your project manager who was thrilled to be able to drive a steam engine for the first time in his life. It may not have been the Flying Scotsman or even a narrow gauge tank engine - but the satisfaction was just as great! He can now say "I've done it"! Many thanks to Derrick and his wife for their hospitality, and their support for our project.

COWLEY BRIDGE JUNCTION MINIATURE SIGNAL BOX

Signalling gala, Crewe, October 1996

It was a very successful relaunch of Cowley Bridge Junction at the Exeter West Signalling Gala over the weekend of 19/20 October. Our mobile miniature box was one of the highlights of the many displays in Crewe North Junction box, and complemented very effectively the full-size Exeter West box itself.

A number of membership forms were handed out (though none have been returned as yet, it has to be said). And we raised a much needed £50 for funds through the sale of a block instrument donated to the project by member Dave Lyons and sold within ten minutes!

Further events

The diary for Cowley Bridge is included in the calendar of events on the back page. New operators are always welcome - you don't

have to have operated a signal box before (we all had to start somewhere!). Bill Tyndall organises the roster for Cowley Bridge. Anyone who wants to volunteer should contact Bill on 01794-512410.

SHOPPING LIST!!

All members are asked to see whether they have direct access to any of the following currently required items, or to a man who can (collection can be arranged from anywhere in the country):

- Concrete troughing and concrete supporting blocks.
- Floorboards (ordinary household 5"-7" boards would be fine).
- A small fan heater.
- Plastic exterior waterpipes for drainage.
- A quantity of lino, together with underlay.
- Up to 50 metres of external mains electric cable.
- Any historic railway photographs/cine film of the Romsey area.

Any offers: Dick Hewett, 01794-522979.

DIARY DATES

- 27 January 1997 (Monday): 150th anniversary of first goods train to Romsev.
- 2 February 1997 (Sunday): Open Day, 10am-5pm.
- 9 February 1997 (Sunday): Committee meeting, 42 Botley Rd, 8pm.
- 28 February 1997 (Friday): 48-hour Operating marathon starts 8pm.
- 1 March 1997 (Saturday): 150th anniversary of opening of Bishopstoke-Romsey-Salisbury line to passengers:
- Re-enactment of first train. 10.44. Romsev Station.
 - Official opening of Visitor Van, 12.30-1pm.
 - Continuation of 48-hour operating marathon.
- 2 March 1997 (Sunday): 48-hour operating marathon finishes 8pm.
- 27 March 1997 (Thursday): Working party, signal box site, all day.
- 28 March 1997 (Friday): Working party, signal box site, all day.
- 29 March 1997 (Saturday): Working party, signal box site, all day.
- 30 March 1997 (Sunday): Working party, signal box site, all day.
- 31 March 1997 (Monday): Working party, signal box site, all day.
- 6 April 1997 (Sunday):
- Open Day at Signal Box, 10am-5pm.
 - Cowley Bridge at Fernham Hall, Fareham.
- 4 May 1997 (Sunday): Open Day, 10am-5pm.
- 1 June 1997 (Sunday): Open Day, 10am-5pm.
- 6 July 1997 (Sunday): Open Day, 10am-5pm.
- 3 August 1997 (Sunday): Open Day, 10am-5pm.

The next issue of "The Signal" will be in April/May, after the celebrations and the Easter working weekend.

Contributions from members would be most welcome!