



"The Signal"

*The Newsletter of
The Friends of Romsey Signal Box*

No 28, May 2003

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Future secured???

It's been over six months since the last edition of "The Signal" – six months in which the Project seems to have taken two steps forward and one back. 'Twas ever thus! The very fact that it has taken several months to get round to producing this edition after the AGM in February is symptomatic of the current state of play – still probably too few people doing too many things, and your Editor and ex-Chairman still amongst them!

We have welcomed some more members since October, but a few longer-standing names have dropped off our circulation list. As usual, hard copies of "The Signal" are only being sent to those who have not provided an email address. If you are on the web, make sure we have your email address – it makes it so much easier to keep in contact, and significantly reduces our photocopying and postage costs.

We have a full report of the Annual General Meeting on 2nd February. Once more this edition also reports on the latest developments – and summons your help to build on the progress being made. Yes, we have had some new volunteers coming forward – but we can always do with more. A list of the new duty holders is included: we are always happy to spread the load further!

A final observation from me: The renewed interest and volunteer force has made me much more optimistic for the future, but I still need to be convinced that I could step out of the Project and it would continue to thrive without me. We haven't reached that stage yet. The more people who come forward to take the initiative, the greater the chances of that happening in the longer term.

Nevertheless, in the short to medium term, the future of the box has been secured. It is now up to everyone involved to make the long-term future secure as well.

Dick Hewett, Newsletter Editor

Annual General Meeting, 2 February 2003

1. Attendance

13 Friends of Romsey Signal Box met in the box on 2nd February:

Dick Hewett, Peter Chatfield, Simon Cooper, Steve Hailes, Ken Hale, Rod Hoyle, Garth Long, Bob McCann, Colin Meheux, Bernie Peel, John Read, Ken Rye, Howard Sprenger.

Apologies were received from:

Tim Bourne, Peter Cattermole, Alan Johnston, Peter Jordan, Chris King-Smith, Ted Mason, Andy Moody, Barry and Olwyn Sherratt, Danny Scroggins, Bill Tyndall, and Richard Young.

2. Minutes

The record of the EGM held in October 2002, as published in the edition of "The Signal" No 27, October 2002, was confirmed as correct.

3. a) Financial statement

A financial statement for the 10 months ended 31st January 2003 was adopted. There was a deficit for the period of £59.71, but this left a healthy carry forward balance of £1911.12. The Chairman hoped that now there were more volunteers on board, more essential maintenance could be carried out for which these funds were available, for purchase of materials.

It was decided that the next AGM should be held in June 2004 to enable the meeting to receive a full 12 months financial statement to the end of March 2004.

b) Membership

The Chairman reported that 41 members had renewed their 2003 subscriptions and approx 10 more were likely.

4. Matters Arising from the EGM

The Chairman referred to the actions from the EGM in October. A small Working Group had met during the November Open Day to review progress.

4.1 Open Days

Documentation of the Opening and closing procedures for the Box, and keyholding, had now been organised. The Chairman emphasised four important factors which Open Day Guides must comply with:

1. Issue a ticket to each visitor;
2. check there is no-one on the points before operating points levers;
3. refuse admission to visitors under 16 years of age unless accompanied by an adult;
4. and encourage visitors to give donations.

A video of the talk which Dick Hewett gives at Open days is now available as a training aid.

4.2 Revised Constitution, Agreement with School and Health & Safety Policy

The Chairman said a revised Constitution had been prepared and promised this would be circulated with the next Newsletter. The meeting with the school Headteacher was overdue and would be arranged as soon as possible to discuss the revision of the Friends' agreement with the School Governors. The Chairman outlined his response to the Health & Safety Inspector's report and assessment, and these would be considered by the Trust.

5. Election of Committee/officers of the Friends

On a proposal from John Read, seconded by Simon Cooper, the following Committee was unanimously elected:

1. Chairman: Colin Meheux
2. Treasurer: Dick Hewett
3. Secretary: Ken Hale

Site Manager: Bob McCann

4. Roster Clerk: Howard Sprenger

Other duties were allocated as on page 5. In particular, Danny Scroggins would be asked to organise Marathon/special projects, of which the Heritage Open Days on 12th - 14th September was highlighted.

6. Diary of Open Days 2003

It was agreed special visits by interest groups should be encouraged. The Romsey Historical Society was expected to visit the Box in May.

7. Revised action list

a) The pavilion: We needed to decide whether to go ahead with this project as soon as possible since the timbers of the dismantled building were deteriorating. It might be possible to construct a smaller building using the best of the timbers. Dick Hewett to check whether the offer of a grant from Test Valley BC still held good. Bernie Peel to liaise with the Trust to agree what is needed and to assess the condition of the timber.

b) It was agreed to hold an EGM on 1st June, with the following agenda:

1. draft constitution
2. to receive 12 months' accounts to 31 March 2003
3. committee report
4. decision on the future of the pavilion project.

c) Replacement of rotten sleepers: Steve Hailes to investigate the cheapest source.

d) Cowley Bridge: Bill Tyndall and Dick Hewett to progress

8. Any other business

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to Dick Hewett for his long service as Chairman.

Duties list

* = Members of main Committee

Administrative	*Chairman	Colin Meheux
	*Treasurer	Dick Hewett
	Fund raiser	?
	*Secretary	Ken Hale
	Membership Secretary	Howard Sprenger
Technical	*Site Manager	Bob McCann
	Health & Safety policy and inspections	Bob Hailes
	Community Service liaison	Colin Meheux
	Site caretaker	Les Swanborough
	Electrics/Mechanics/General painting	Bob McCann
	Carpentry/joinery	David Keightley
	Sign painting	Rod Hoyle
	Cowley Bridge Development Manager	Bill Tyndall
	Pavilion rebuilding project	?
Operational	*Roster Clerk	Danny Scroggins
	Guides (Open Days)	Dick Hewett Colin Meheux Peter Chatfield Ken Hale Ken Rye Garth Long Howard Sprenger Steve Hailes Danny Scroggins
	Cowley Bridge Operations Co-ordinator	Bill Tyndall
	Special Events	Danny Scroggins
Publicity etc	*Publicity manager/Local liaison	Dick Hewett
	Website editor	Steve Hailes
	Internet discussion groups	Howard Sprenger
	Newsletter editor	Dick Hewett
	Archivist/librarian/Display boards	Dick Hewett
	Book/sweatshirt sales	Dick Hewett

Chairman's Statement

We are setting off for a new start. We have had an Annual General Meeting and elected a new committee. We are all set for full steam ahead.

You will all be thinking of many ideas and the priorities. I have replaced Dick as Chairman and these are my first thoughts on how to promote the Romsey Signal Box site.

1. Firstly we need to encourage other volunteers. Make every effort to recruit other people.
2. Secondly we need to maintain the site better. We will be putting up the Pavilion and setting out paths throughout the site. We need to be able to cater for disabled customers as well as able-bodied ones.
3. Thirdly we need to be seen to be friendly, and nothing is too much trouble if asked.
4. Fourthly we need to be able, in words of one syllable, to explain the full workings of the box.

Have a good year, and we may be able to stand on our feet at last.

Colin Meheux, Chairman

Membership matters

New members:

We welcome: Stephen Dick, Holybourne, Hants; Christopher King-Smith, Four Marks, Hants; David Lawrence, London. We also welcome back Adam Rapley, Andover.

Renewals:

We currently have 45 paid-up members for 2003. Howard Sprenger, our new Membership Secretary, is emailing reminders to those who haven't renewed yet. Reminders for those not on email are enclosed with this copy of "The Signal".

All members who have not already done so are invited to renew their subscriptions. Rates remain at £5 for adults, £2.50 for children under 16 and OAPs. Send payments

to: Howard Sprenger, 1 The Bartons, Netley Firs Road, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 4AZ. Cheques payable to “Friends of Romsey Signal Box”.

If any members have gone onto email recently (or changed their email address) they should send Howard their details, at howard@derby.org.

Advance notice of Extraordinary General Meeting

An EGM of the Friends of Romsey Signal Box will be held in the Signal Box on Sunday 1st June 2003, commencing 3.30pm. Agenda:

1. Attendance/apologies
2. Acceptance of record of AGM (June 2003) (as published in this edition of “The Signal” No 28, May 2003)
3. Accounts 2002-03
4. Membership statements
5. Revised Constitutions, Agreement with School, and Health & Safety Policy
6. Heritage Open Days September 2003
7. Future of pavilion: final decision
8. Any other business
9. Date of next AGM (June 2004)

Colin Meheux, Chairman, 4 May 2003

48-hour Marathon!!!

With a renewed membership, including several individuals keen to operate the signal box in a more authentic and complete fashion than is normally possible on Open Days, we have decided to undertake another **48-hour signalling marathon** in September in association with the Civic Trust’s **Heritage Open Days**. The Civic Trust encourages tourist (and other) venues to open for free (if they normally charge an entrance fee) or put on a special event. There is extensive publicity, and the last time we entered the scheme we had over 200 visitors in the course of a very successful and enjoyable operating weekend.

The box will be formally “switched in” at **8pm on Friday 12th September**, and will then be manned continuously **until 8pm on Sunday 14th September**. Danny Scroggins is co-ordinating the operating roster. We will need signalmen throughout the weekend (including the night-times!), working on an 8-hour shift pattern. If you can’t do a full 8-hour shift, just an hour or two would help – it can be combined up with other volunteers. And yes – there are people like me foolish enough to be willing to do the night-time shifts!

Accommodation for anyone who needs it can be provided at Hewett Towers (!) – bring a sleeping bag. Alternatively there are several bed & breakfast places in Romsey – and we can recommend the Abbey Hotel.

If you’ve never operated a box before – this is your opportunity to come along and have a go. And if you’re an experienced signalman, or have friends or colleagues who would like to operate a traditional manual box, you’d be equally welcomed. We need an absolute minimum of two people on duty at any one time – one upstairs and one downstairs. Ideally during the daytime we’d have four – one on the frame, one doing the book, one on the simulator, and one explaining it all to the public.

We can also offer sponsorship forms – last time we raised quite a bit for funds with sponsorship for successful completion of our 48-hour continuous operation.

So – if you are in the least bit interested in operating the Signal Box at any time during this marathon, please get in touch with Danny Scroggins on 01488 681057.

SO! See you at one of the Open Days!

Next ones: 1 June (+ EGM), 6 July, 3 August, 7 September, 5 October, 2 November, 7 December.

Plus **48-hour Marathon Operating** – Friday 12th to Sunday 14th September!!!

And keep in contact:

Colin Meheux (01425 672814), Howard Sprenger (01489 799149), Peter Chatfield (01892 522143), Bob McCann (023 8073 2797), or Dick Hewett (01794 500523).