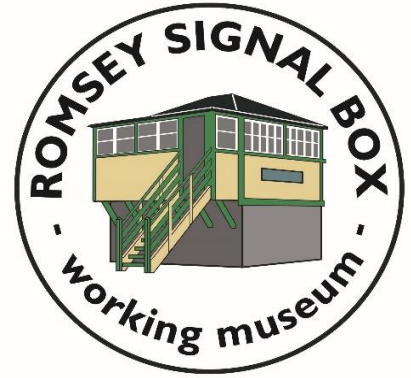


The Signal

| Newsletter of the Friends of Romsey Signal Box
A sub-group of the Romsey & District Buildings Preservation
Trust, Charity no 270498

| No 67 - November 2022



40 years on...



Headteacher Mrs Audrey Gebbie back in the box, 40 years since it closed



From the Editor....

Peter Chatfield, Newsletter Editor/Co-Chairman

Hello and, once again, we have quite a bumper newsletter for you.

We go to press in the Remembrance period and we're delighted that members Kelly and Alan have made a beautiful tribute on display at the signal box – thank you both.

Our headline news is that we celebrate 40 years since the box was closed/30 years since reopening to the public - with Audrey Gebbie the star of the show! As if to endorse that milestone, August's AGM finally confirmed our full integration with Romsey & District Buildings Preservation Trust, and we have once again broken records for visitor attendance at Open Days. Volunteers - especially our younger members - have stepped in magnificently to cope with the numbers of visitors we now have at the site. Please see the Chairmen's Report, AGM Report and Minutes, and the Open Days Report for this and much other news....

The Buffer Stop Café has always been an important facility, and now more than ever as the number of visitors and volunteers have steadily increased. For some time, Dave has often managed it (almost) single-handedly (what a hero!). It's therefore good news that John and Lee are also now able to run the Café. See Dave's report below....

August's front page featured the replacement of short levers by long levers in the Romsey Signal Box frame and, for this edition, Adrian fully explains why and how this was done. When I received Adrian's article, it generated some discussion about 'push-pull' levers - a notable feature of some LSWR boxes - and also about 'short-pull' levers - so, we also have an article on these aspects of mechanical lever frames.

Neil gives us his usual membership report, and writes on an unfortunate hedge infestation.

Finally, due to the volume of content in this edition, we have postponed *Knowing Me, Knowing You*, but hope to resume again in February with two of our members, yet to be identified....!

Very best wishes, Peter

Update and News from the Chairmen

Dick Hewett and Peter Chatfield write:

This has been a momentous period for the Friends as we regularise our status as part of the Romsey & District Buildings Preservation Trust and experience record visitor numbers. Our membership continues to grow, matched by an increasing number of volunteers on site. The committee are active and progressive, with a number of important issues being pushed forwards as quickly as can be managed.



These include making progress with the Education Building, moving forward with the structural work on the signal box, and significant enhancements to the signage and other facilities for visitors around the site. All these projects are now being led by members of the committee with the aim of completing them during 2023. Significant expenditure will be invested if it is shown to be justified to ensure the target dates are met, and where professional contractors will be engaged if we lack the skills and resources amongst volunteers.

Beyond those words, the reports in this edition of The Signal highlight all the developments – so read on!

Remembrance Day

Dick Hewett writes:

Members Kelly and Alan have for several years mounted a beautiful display of (woollen) poppies on the side of the British Legion in Romsey during the Remembrance period.



We are fortunate that, this year, they instead designed a display for the side of the signal box, against the wall by the point (facing down Brick Lane). This is a wonderful contribution to the annual commemorations, and remains on display to visitors and passers-by until the end of the Open Day of 19th November. *(Image from Malcolm Moore)*



AGM Report / Minutes / Elections / Friends' Procedures and Terms of Reference - Update

Dick Hewett, President, Treasurer & Co-Chairman, writes:

23 members gathered in the sunshine on 20th August for the Annual General Meeting, where the Friends ratified the proposal to formalise our status as a sub-group of the Romsey & District Buildings Preservation Trust. This is a significant step forward in making us a more official and legitimate organisation than in the past, giving us greater protection and stronger governance, whilst increasing the responsibilities and legal requirements of the current time.

We are confident we now have very comprehensive and fair documentation to protect everyone, and to avoid issues arising which could have arisen without this preventative work.

The minutes of the AGM follow in this edition of The Signal, so I shan't repeat the rest of what was discussed, but suffice to say the meeting was very positive. Our enthusiastic and supportive membership have given the new committee their full backing, and we move onwards with new developments and increasing activities, as reported elsewhere.



The day finished with a barbecue provided by Dave, which was much enjoyed by everyone (including Dick, who took the photos!).



Friends of Romsey Signal Box AGM 20/8/2022 Minutes

	Meeting opened at 1633, with 23 members present.	Action
1	<p>Present: David Stonor (DS), David Trewern (DT), Peter Chatfield (PC), Neil Kearns (NK), Jamie Brooker (JB), Janet Payne (JP), Dick Hewett (DH), Malcolm Moore (MM), Christine Moore (CM), Noah Moxom (NM), Andrew Moody (AM), Byron Horne (BH), Aaron Thomas (AT), Adrian Birtles (AB), Lee Wainwright (LW), Charlie Wainwright(CW), Ann Noble (AnN) , Alan Noble(AIN), Kelly Combeer (KC), Alan Combeer (AC), John Pennells (JP), David Vine (DV), Colin Varney (CV)</p> <p>Apologies received: Tim Bourne, Kathy Moore, James Moore, Dale Greenwood, Steve Hailes, Garth Long, Alan Johnston, Keith Phillips, Freda Bates, Roger Burfitt, Bill Tyndall, Roger Parkin, Christine Hall, Ian Culley, Roger Pleasant, Frank Akerman, Graeme Hay, Audrey Gebbie, Anne Hewett, Marion Canning, David Canning.</p> <p>PC welcomed everyone and thanked them for their support and continuing development of the site.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting Accepted as a true account of the proceedings by all present.</p> <p>Matters arising. Education Building: Work is ongoing and first room now being fitted out. Unused corner near the canal bridge: Still under consideration and awaiting thoughts from the Solent G Scale group.</p> <p>Accessibility Improvements around the site: Still under consideration.</p> <p>Filming: AT will follow up with contacts at Winchester University.</p> <p>PIC role: Working well and has become a permanent feature of open days.</p>	<p>JB</p> <p>DH</p> <p>BH</p> <p>AT</p>
3	<p>Report by Co-Chairmen DH explained that JB stood down as chairman in March and thanked him for all his efforts. PC and DH were covering the role between them and the division of responsibilities was explained.</p> <p>The signal box stairs have been replaced in the last year following the discovery of rot in load bearing components. The new stairs are constructed of treated acoya wood which has a better life than softwood and will be used for any replacement woodwork in the signal box.</p>	



	<p>Work on the signal box structure is being assessed. Items to be addressed include – checking and possible replacement of timber framing, removal and replacement of cladding, Windows to be refurbished/replaced, structural investigation to improve support of the frame and remove acro props, brickwork repairs and re-pointing. All this work will be done by professionals and James Laffeaty is co-ordinating the work. The target is for completion by spring next year.</p> <p>Open days have averaged 38 visitors per open day. It looks as if 2022 will be a record year for visitors.</p> <p>Covid regulations have been relaxed which has made operations much easier, although the timed visits to the signal box operating floor have been retained.</p> <p>We have a good number of volunteers which could lead to more frequent opening. The limiting factor of opening more frequently is having more trained people to operate the café.</p> <p>Progress towards a more diverse membership, eg increasing younger members, is encouraging as we seek to be inclusive.</p> <p>The Wednesday working parties are proving to be very productive, to the extent of occasionally running out of work.</p> <p>PC has been working on revising and updating policy documents for the Friends. PC also edits “The Signal”, our magazine.</p> <p>The close relationship with the Building Trust is continuing to develop. The project to replace some of the cut down levers with full height levers is almost complete with snagging and minor adjustments. Thanks were given to AB for co-ordinating the work and to Roger Pleasant for providing the contacts to obtain the levers many years ago.</p> <p>The October 2022 celebration has been cancelled. It was felt that a VIP event was not appropriate with a scruffy signal box and unfinished education building. Holding the event in 2023 would allow for these works and the new signage to be completed.</p> <p>The meeting noted, with regret, that David and Marion Canning have not been in good health and it is difficult for them to get to the signal box. We have sent them very best wishes; also, a message of thanks was read out from David and Marion Canning.</p> <p>Colin Varney is taking on the role of operational training lead (with particular reference to the younger members).</p> <p>The policy on safeguarding is under consideration and BH has offered to lead this subject.</p>	JL
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	<p>JB has agreed to continue to lead the work on the education building. AB will continue to lead on maintenance – including site repairs and refurbishment.</p>	
4	<p>Financial Report</p> <p>The financial report was presented by DH. These Friends of Romsey Signal Box accounts to 31st March 2022 will be incorporated into the Romsey & District Buildings Preservation Trust (RDBPT) accounts that will be formally accepted at their AGM in November. They have already been audited as part of the RDBPT accounts.</p> <p>We have experienced higher open day takings with over £1,300 taken in the buffer stop café. The Friends also have a regular income from hire of car parking spaces on weekdays. The main expenditures are electricity and water, maintenance, smart water marking of exhibits, insurance and a contribution to the Brick Lane facilities.</p> <p>This year our expenditure was higher than income, but that included the replacement of the Signal Box steps, otherwise we would have been in surplus. The Friends are financially stable following the major payment reported in the 2021 AGM.</p> <p>Dick is also temporary treasurer for the RDBPT.</p>	
5	<p>Membership report (Neil Kearns)</p> <p>We have 80 paid up members with a number of members who need reminding to renew. (Three more paid by the end of the meeting.) Thank you to the 27 members who have joined since the last AGM.</p>	
6	<p>Site Report</p> <p>Most aspects were covered in the co-chairman's report.</p> <p>CV queried whether there was any possibility of the site being expanded. DH answered that the signal box site itself could not be expanded, but there may be a possibility of creating a museum space in Romsey station if and when it is refurbished by Three Rivers Rail Partnership.</p> <p>NK said there was some planning being done on changes to the gardens.</p> <p>PC thanked all those involved in keeping the site in good condition.</p>	
7	<p>Election of Committee</p> <p>No one has offered to join the committee other than the current committee membership. Jamie Brooker would not be standing.</p> <p>DH and PC explained how the role of co-chairmen is functioning. They do not want to remain in this situation long term and hope a new Chairman will come forward in due course, but will stand for this role for the next year. This would ensure continuity over introduction of the Procedures and Terms of Reference with the RDBPT and the revised site procedures and safety instructions.</p> <p>All those in current roles were willing to stand again.</p>	



	<p>Dick Hewett (Co-Chairman, Treasurer, RDBPT Trustee) Peter Chatfield (Co-Chairman, Policy Management) Neil Kearns (Membership Secretary) James Lafferty (RDBPT Trustee) Malcolm Moore (Committee Member without portfolio)</p> <p>Proposed David Stonor. Seconded Lee Wainwright.</p> <p>Passed unanimously.</p>	
8	<p>Acceptance of the “Procedures and Terms of Reference for Friends of Romsey Signal Box.”</p> <p>DH explained how this document had been sent out some weeks ago for consultation. This title was chosen on legal advice within the RDBPT because a subsidiary organisation (FORSB) could not have a constitution as well as the primary organisation.</p> <p>In the last few days some worthwhile comments were made by one member. These were distributed late last week in a copy of the Procedures with the alterations shown as tracked changes.</p> <p>The first motion was to accept the principle that the Procedures and Terms of Reference for Friends of Romsey Signal Box confirms that the group is part of RDBPT. Passed unanimously.</p> <p>The second motion was the adoption of the tracked changes on the document which clarified various issues. Passed unanimously.</p> <p>The RDBPT has accepted the original Procedures and Terms of Reference in principal and will formally accept the procedures with the changes at the next RDBPT Trustees meeting in September.</p>	
9	<p>Signal Box Handbook and site procedures.</p> <p><u>Handbook.</u> PC explained that the new handbook has been prepared covering the history, policies, and safety recommendations for the site. It has just been waiting for confirmation of the 2022 Committee members. It will be printed commercially with copies distributed to all members, and will be posted on the web site.</p> <p><u>Site Procedures.</u> Many have been approved already as part of the “Duty of Care” for volunteers and visitors. 12 documents, mainly safety and emergency procedures will be displayed in the Mess Hut. On the day operational procedures (Fire, accidents etc) will also be displayed in the locking room. These documents will be copied to new members.</p> <p>JP suggested that these procedures should be shown on the website.</p>	<p>PC/DH</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>



	<p><u>Extra Procedures.</u> DH: Safeguarding will be strengthened with more youngsters and vulnerable adults volunteering on the site. This will improve “Duty of Care” and protection for them and for the volunteers supervising them. BH has been appointed as our Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), and DH as our Deputy DSO. The Friends will arrange for BH to have extra training.</p> <p>Regular volunteers will undertake a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check. Members will be encouraged to register for an update service which means their DBS check will be valid for other organisations.</p> <p>Simple on-line training will be offered for awareness and observing off site problems and how to report such issues.</p> <p>The consent form for children and vulnerable adults will be reviewed and reissued.</p>	<p>DH</p> <p>DH</p> <p>DH</p>
10	<p>Diary Dates.</p> <p>Open days will continue in the normal pattern, though consideration is being given to opening on a more regular basis during 2023. Diary dates will be advertised in The Signal and on the website.</p> <p>The 40th anniversary of the signal box closing and 30th anniversary of reopening as a museum will be recognised during and after the Open Day on 15th October.</p>	
11	<p>A O B</p> <p><u>Emergency Contacts:</u> A secure “Next of Kin” emergency contact system will be set up for volunteers on site. This will be a written system, not electronic. JP suggested that the members consent to being included on each record card. This should be outside the considerations of GDPR with suitable security.</p> <p>Agreed by members in the meeting.</p> <p>Catering Report (DT)</p> <p>The café is going from strength to strength with many visitors just calling in for tea and cake. Prices will increase as the costs of supplies are increasing. Extra help would be very welcome as it takes one day of baking in addition to operating the café for a day. Thanks were expressed for all the hard work done by Dave.</p> <p>LW asked when was the admission price last reviewed. DH replied 2015 when we started charging for admission. The current price was felt to be good value and at about the right level. As we are financially stable there is no need to increase admission at present.</p>	DH
12	<p>Date of Next AGM</p> <p>19th August 2023 at Romsey Signal Box.</p>	
	<p>Meeting closed 1805.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">NK 23082022</p>	



Open Days and Events



The signal box: taken on the recent Open Day (6th November) with sunshine and heavy showers (image by Malcolm Moore)

Dick Hewett writes:

Well, what can I say! We have yet again smashed the record for the number of visitors to Open Days (857 in 2019, already 939 in 2022) – and still with two Open Days to go at the time of writing. Not only that, when group and private visits are included, our overall number of tickets issued during 2022 has already reached 1,117 (1,046 in 2019). We go from strength to strength.



Noah (on the right) discussing the operation of Cowley Bridge Junction with John, a retired signaller who has travelled several times from Cardiff to Romsey for the day, to enjoy operating the miniature frame. A great opportunity for our younger members to gain further knowledge and expertise.

Our Open Days now regularly attract at least 40 people, and sometimes considerably more. Indeed, over the two days of Heritage Open Days we broke the record for an Open Day (“La Ronde” during the Romsey Festival in 2021 excepted) with 104 visitors on Saturday 18th September, a hectic day indeed – only to smash this the next day, Sunday 19th, with 120! Those of you who know the site will realise that this is a huge number of people to accommodate, especially when they all want their time in the signal box.





Byron and Hayden in full control of Cowley Bridge Junction



Charlie giving an explanation to visitors during a demonstration

It was particularly impressive that we managed to entertain all these visitors with a relatively skeleton staff. Indeed, most of the demonstrations and guiding on the Saturday was undertaken by some of our younger members – but even more impressively, on the Sunday just four of them covered all the demonstrations and guiding both in Romsey box and on Cowley Bridge Junction, without any adult assistance. Congratulations are definitely due to Byron Horne (19), Noah Moxom (16), Charlie Wainwright (14) and Hayden Brodick (14). It was a privilege to witness, exemplified by briefly watching and listening to Charlie giving an absolutely word perfect, succinct answer to a lady asking about the repeaters on the block shelf, in front of about 15 adult visitors at one point during the afternoon. This typifies how much they have developed their skills, knowledge, and self-confidence, and how much we can trust them to deliver.



Audrey Gebbie watching Theo (with the cap) and Hayden operating Cowley Bridge Junction

Then on Saturday 15th October we marked the 40th Anniversary of the signal box closing (17th October 1982) and 30th Anniversary of re-opening to the public (17th October 1992) with bunting, a small display of press coverage, and a social event for members. We were delighted to welcome Mrs Audrey Gebbie who visited the box (unexpectedly). As members will

know, Audrey was the headteacher who originally suggested saving the signal box. She was delighted to see the ongoing progress and meet some of the volunteers. The whole site is well beyond anything she imagined in 1982! We hope she will be back next year for our VIP event.

We continue to welcome new volunteers for Open Days. It's amazing how far some are prepared to travel to come and spend the day at Romsey. Such is the number of volunteers offering dates that I regularly have to select from those available, asking some to step down.

It's a nice problem to have, and one we hope to capitalise on in 2023, as we have decided to open for even more Open Days next year, as a trial. In addition to the regular first Sunday and third Saturdays, we plan to open also on Thursdays during the school holidays from May to October. We have a number of younger volunteers who are likely to be available then, and we would hope to attract families to attend. On all these occasions we shall offer the staple diet of half-hourly explanations/demonstrations in Romsey box.



We shall also open on Bank Holiday Mondays from Easter to August, as well as several other extra dates. On these latter occasions we plan to be fully operating Romsey box to a timetable. Colin Varney (*pictured here*) and Neil Kearns have created a suitable train timetable. We hope this will attract some enthusiasts who will get the more complete and authentic experience which we can offer. Visitors will be invited to enter and leave at any time (numbers permitting). It will also give some of our members the opportunity to build their skills in operating, well beyond the

standard demonstrations, and appropriate training is now being organised to get us ready for launching this new initiative. The first two training events are planned for Saturday 17th and Wednesday 28th December. Any members interested in operating the box to a full timetable during these Open Days are invited to attend one of these events: email Neil, Colin or Dick.

This ambitious plan will require support from members, particularly in August when we are increasing from two Open Days to EIGHT! There is a minimum resource we require to open up, and that must include people with the requisite skills and training – mainly for demos in Romsey box, Cowley Bridge, and the Buffer Stop Café. So put it on your calendar for 2023, and be prepared to offer as many dates as you can to enable us to fulfil this schedule. None of us plans to be there every Open Day, but with sufficient offers of staffing I'm confident we can spread the load and provide the full visitor experience. (We hope we won't have to pull back in 2024.)

At some stage during 2023 we plan to have the promised VIP opening of the Education Building, together with other major developments (major work completed on the signal box structure, and new signage and visitor facilities around the site). This will be programmed once we can be sure everything will be ready.

Exciting times!



Buffer Stop Café Report

Dave Trewern writes:

Hello everyone. I hope you are all well. The hot weather has gone and we are well into Autumn now, which means some possible menu changes in the cafe.



I try to adjust the menu according to the season and weather. It's now fast approaching the time for homemade pasties, sausage rolls (a trayful shown here), hot dogs and toasted sandwiches. We always have a stock of Heinz soups, cup soups and beans on toast throughout the year, which do sell steadily.

I have mentioned previously that it is very difficult to judge how much food to bake and bring along to the open days. On rare occasions it can be about right but mostly we either have too much or too little for the number of visitors. Luckily no food is thrown away as we have many willing volunteers ready to devour the surplus at the end of the day. I also have instructions from "Management" sometimes to bring some home.

I would love to be able to offer things like an all-day breakfast, but we simply don't have the room or facilities for this. The kitchen is tiny and we can only seat about nine people inside. Summer is easier because of the outside picnic tables etc. I have been contemplating trying bacon rolls, which should be easy enough. Watch this space, as they say! [Afternote: They



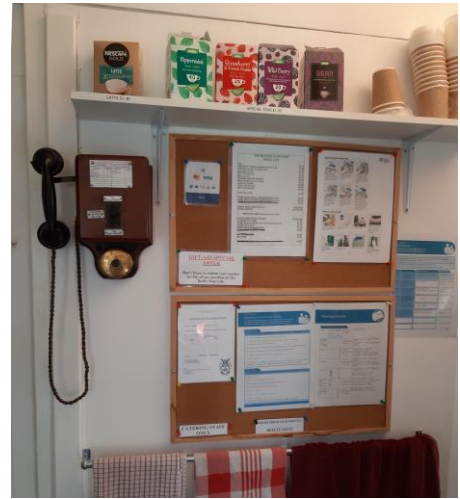
appeared on 6th November and were very rapidly scoffed well before lunchtime. The odour of bacon obviously permeated outside, drawing extra interest. I'm thinking of piping the delicious smell to the path outside!]

John and Lee have completed the training and paperwork and so are able to run the cafe when I am not there, or just feel like a rest! Dick is now including them in the cafe roster. To date, I am still the only person able to bake at home for the cafe. If anyone is interested, it just means the council need to inspect your kitchen and issue a hygiene certificate, which is all free. Just contact me or contact your local environmental health people.

Lee on Buffer Stop duty, making tea for another hard-working volunteer

Alan has been working on the telephone system throughout the site. Some are now working, including the one on the wall in the kitchen. I'm not sure if this is a good thing for me or not because it means people can phone the cafe and order teas etc.! Actually, it is good because when someone is up to their eyes with demonstrations in the box or on Cowley Bridge, I can take them some refreshments.

The hotline to the café!



I reported recently that the cost of ingredients for the homemade produce and the drinks and snacks is rocketing, almost by the minute it seems. Everyone is feeling the pinch but I am trying to hold off any price reviews until the new year. Inevitably some prices will need to rise, but hopefully they will still represent great value. Many visitors comment on what good value the Buffer Stop is.



Well, I apologise for ending this report on a slightly negative note regarding price rises but, overall, The Buffer Stop cafe is thriving and still proving popular. My thanks to everyone who supports it, including volunteers who buy their lunch on open days.

Dave serves another customer with beans on toast. The food may have a price, but the welcome smile comes for free!

After an Open Day: The café is closed to the public, but volunteers and their families enjoy the café facilities during a social on the 40th/30th Anniversary. Charlie serves the tea!



The long and the short of it: new levers for old in Romsey Signal Box

Adrian Birtles writes:

Historical

In the period before signalling at Romsey was taken over by Eastleigh Panel Box in October 1982, most of the mechanically operated semaphore signals and points had been replaced progressively by colour light signals and electric point machines. At this stage, these were still worked from the same levers in Romsey Box and used the same interlocking, but the levers now operated only electric switches. As was normal practice, levers which had been “electrified” had their top 4-inches cut off so that the signalmen could see easily which levers still needed effort to pull them and those that didn’t. By the time the Eastleigh take-over took place and Romsey box was closed, all but four of the 23 levers had been shortened, and it was in this state that the box was rescued and restoration started.



Restoration of the Box and development of the Museum site has included the installation of four semaphore and two ground signals and a set of points which will have a facing point lock, all these being operated from the Box and which from a practical viewpoint ought to have full-length levers. In addition to these, the period chosen for the signalling diagram shows a further six mechanically operated items which for realism ought also to have full-length levers. As it stood, only four of these fourteen were full-length, and it has been a long-standing ambition to restore as many as possible of the remaining ten to full length, with priority being given to those which operate real mechanical equipment.



*The frame in 1987 (above)
and 1991 (left)*

Making the Changes

A complication not apparent at Operating Room level in the Box, is that the levers are of two different types. What we think are probably the older type – possibly original – are one-piece wrought-iron forgings; that is, the long upright part of the lever, the short roughly horizontal “lever tail” (to which the signal wires, etc, are attached) and the bearing boss at the junction of



the two (and around which the lever rotates) are a single piece of metal. To restore the lever tops of these would be possible but not easy. The other, probably later, type of lever is in three parts; a cast iron bottom bracket incorporating the bearing, to which are bolted forged long uprights and short tails. On these, it is *relatively* easy to fit full-length verticals in place of existing shortened ones.

A point of historical interest is that the cast-iron bottom brackets provide for two lever tails to be bolted on for each lever, one either side of the vertical. This enabled levers to be used in push-pull mode if required, something which the L&SWR did quite a lot. (See following article.)

The term *relatively* easy is used since, although all these levers are “standard”, they were all individually forged slightly over-size (and we have found no two with exactly the same dimensions); so, each one had to be adjusted to fit by grinding off metal, and we were fortunate in having the use of an industrial-size angle grinder to do this; it was still hard work but doing it in the traditional way with hand tools would have been a major undertaking.

The key to making any of this possible was, of course, obtaining some full-length verticals to



replace the shortened ones. Here we were fortunate that our friends at the Swanage Railway made us a generous gift of seven verticals which were surplus to their needs. So, after much cleaning-up and adjusting to size, six of these have been fitted in the Romsey frame. In the case of four of these, it was just a matter of unbolting the shortened lever and replacing it with a full-length one, but two of the shortened levers (N^{os} 3 & 5) were the one-piece type, so had to be removed completely before replacement, and this posed some problems.

Problem one was that received wisdom was that the axle on which the levers rotate was in one continuous length along the whole frame, and to remove any lever would therefore require this to be slid bodily sideways which, in turn, would have needed a hole to be made in the Signal Box brickwork. Fortunately, some cautious partial dismantling revealed that the axle is actually in fairly short lengths, one piece for each pair of levers. This made the job much easier, though still by no means child's play.

The second problem was that we had only one spare cast-iron bottom bracket, but we needed two. However, fortune smiled again; short lever 6, which needed to stay short, was of the three-piece type, so we were able to take it out and



replace it with the one-piece short lever 5 and use its bracket for the lengthened lever 3 and the spare bracket for lengthened lever 5.

Doing all this was a fairly intricate job, much of which had to be done within the confines of the Locking Room. However, a team of Dick Hewett, Derek Grover, Noah Moxom and Adrian Birtles got the greater part done within a day, with half a day or so more to complete the fiddly bits, repainting, etc.

So now the frame is much improved, but we still have four shortened levers (all one-piece) which ought to be full-length; we have one spare full-length vertical but no spare cast-iron brackets. So the story is not yet over, and if anyone knows where more parts might be found, please let us know.



Some further background...

Neil Kearns writes:

We seem to have narrowed the date that the frame was given even length pull quadrant plates to be between June 1973 when Andy took these pictures and the conversion to colour light signalling in 1975.

Regarding push-pull levers, Andy Moody has supplied some images taken around June 1973.

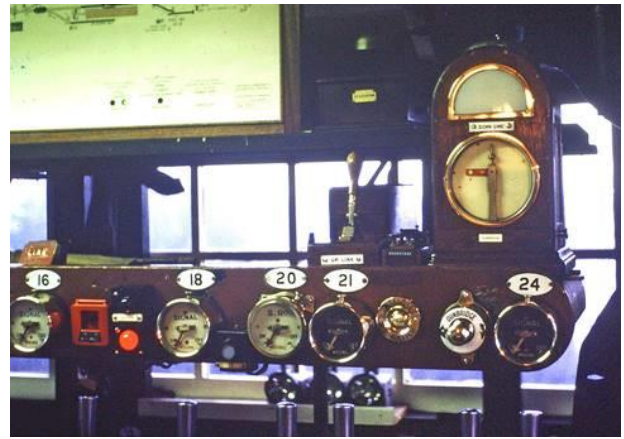


Andy says: "My picture still shows the slots unaltered, so that would confirm that the alterations were made during 1975/76. Interestingly, George Pryers' Volume 9 'Bournemouth Southampton and Branches', Page 47, shows the 1973 alterations, although there are a couple of things that don't look right. It states 3 position open block to Dunbridge and Redbridge, however my photo shows a white band around 13 signal which indicates that it was released by Redbridge giving a line clear. Also Romsey-Dunbridge was still Preece's one wire open block (no white band on lever 3.). Also it states that the full colour light resignalling came into use during 1975: it actually was 1976.

"I'm also supplying two colour slides taken on the same day at Romsey of the two block instruments (*see photos on page 18*). The Dunbridge end shows the tops of the levers from 16 to 24. The shortened 17 lever top can be seen, then 18, 20, 21, 23 and 24, which tells us that 23



had been converted to a single pull lever in 1973 and 24 Up branch distant was still in use. It was abolished sometime later.



The Redbridge end (*left*) shows the block shelf layout and confirms that lever B was still in use.”

Neil continues: A few further comments of explanation. Conversion to single-line tokenless block to Eastleigh was done with the minimum of alteration to the rest of the layout. The Down Branch still had Outer (4) and Inner (5) home signals and the separately worked distant signal was B until colour light signals were commissioned. "B" was that odd lever spliced on the end of the frame along with A and A1 which were repurposed after the closure of the ground frame for Wills' nursery. B was monitored by the black faced indicator and 1 and 2 were by then colour light signals as part of the tokenless block installation.

Note that the signals are monitored with traditional repeaters. After the conversion to colour light signals, the signals were repeated on the track diagram.

Membership Matters

Neil Kearns, Membership Secretary, writes:

We have had a few late renewals and, better still, a few new members. We now have 90 members, plus one or two long standing members who have yet to renew.

Any recent interest in flying fauna hasn't been with birds. At the open day in early October, one of the visitors commented that we had an infestation of box moth in the hedges. I had heard of box blight, which is a fungal disease, but not box moth. Online research revealed that the box moth is an unwanted import from the Far East since 2005. Its caterpillars have a liking for eating European box shrubs. The result is plants stripped of leaves and looking rather unsightly. I purchased a pheromone trap which caught about 20 adult males, which has hopefully impeded the breeding cycle before the winter. Next spring will see the areas with die-back being treated with insecticide to kill any emerging caterpillars, and the pheromone trap will be set again. If the infestation is too bad, we will have to replace the hedges.





Here's one down the line! (OK, 'Up' line if you must!) The attractive LSWR Redbridge Signal Box in 1980, just over two years before the end of working to Romsey SB (Flickr)

Website & Blog Updates

There were blog updates in August on the Buffer Stop Café and on the replacement of levers 3 and 5 in the signal box (featured in August's *The Signal*).

October's blog and 1st November featured the upgrade to the signal box simulator panel.

3rd November's blog featured the special poppy display (see above).



Back to 15th October, and Audrey watches James the Red Engine running round it's small circuit. A small boy shows the typical great interest in our little train!



Open Days and Dates for your Diary 2022-23

Please see our website for up-to-date information: romseysignalbox.org.uk.

Our **advertised programme of open days** is as follows:

Open Days 2022-23 (as at 9/11/22) (* Dates shown in red – Romsey Signal Box in full operation)	
November 2022	Saturday 19th
December 2022	Sunday 4 th <i>Saturday 17th and Wednesday 28th: Training sessions for full operation of Romsey Signal Box.</i>
January 2023	Saturday 21st
February 2023	Sunday 5 th ; Saturday 18th
March 2023	* Saturday 4 th ; Sunday 5 th ; Saturday 18th
April 2023	Sunday 2 nd ; * Monday 10 th ; Saturday 15th
May 2023	* Monday 1 st ; Sunday 7 th ; Saturday 20 th ; * Monday 29th
June 2023	Thursday 1 st ; Sunday 4 th ; Saturday 17th
July 2023	* Saturday 1 st ; Sunday 2 nd ; * Sunday 9 th ; Saturday 15 th ; Thursday 27th
August 2023	Thursday 3 rd ; Sunday 6 th ; Thursday 10 th ; Thursday 17 th ; Saturday 19 th ; Thursday 24 th ; * Monday 28 th ; Thursday 31st
September 2023	Sunday 3 rd ; Saturday 16 th ; * Sunday 17th
October 2023	Sunday 1 st ; Saturday 21 st ; Thursday 26th
November 2023	Sunday 5 th ; Saturday 18th
December 2023	Sunday 3rd

Contributions of articles and photographs for the next edition are welcome, please forward them to the Newsletter Editor at: info@romseysignalbox.org.uk

(Please note that copyright may apply to some photographs if sourced via the internet. If you submit photos taken by someone other than yourself, please kindly check with them if they wish their name to be credited to the photo.)

