

"The Signal"

*The Newsletter of
The Friends of Romsey Signal Box*

President: Dick Hewett

No 41, April 2009

Chairman: Peter Chatfield, tel 01892 522143, email: chairman@romseysignalbox.org.uk

Editor: Dick Hewett, tel 01794 500523, 42 Botley Road, Romsey, Hampshire, S051 5AP

email: treasurer@romseysignalbox.org.uk

www.romseysignalbox.org.uk

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the AGM of the Friends of Romsey Signal Box will be held in the Signal Box Pavilion at **3.30pm** on **Sunday 7th June 2009**, at the end of the June Open Day. Refreshments will be provided before and during the event.

Nominations are invited for posts on the Committee. Peter Chatfield, Dick Hewett, Clive Millward, Roger Pleasant, Neil Kearns and Ted Mason all offer themselves for re-election. We will also have an election for Young Members Representative: currently we have two candidates, George Cooper and Geraint Shippides.

Agenda:

1. Apologies (inc President)
2. Acceptance of record of AGM (2008) (see "The Signal" No 40, Dec 2008)
3. Chairman's Report
4. Financial and membership statements
5. S&T review
6. Site development review
7. Younger members review
8. Election of committee of the Friends
9. Diary dates 2009-10
10. Action list
11. President's statement (see pages 6-9 of this issue of "The Signal")
12. Any other business
13. Date of next AGM

Peter Chatfield, Chairman

Chairman's Report

It has become noticeable in recent times that Romsey Signal Box is almost reverting to its original role as an educational facility. I mean that in its widest sense: the historic building and the site offer a lot for our younger members, and it's great to see them enjoying contributing to the development of the site. While the signal box continues to thrive via the interest of the public, it has been something of an unexpected - but very welcome - spin off that younger members of the project usually constitute about half of our volunteers at open days.

Partly, but not entirely, due to our younger folks' involvement, a further welcome trend is that we are now regularly getting member/volunteer attendance in double figures at open days. Surely the fact that so much has been done to make the site really attractive and interesting, and now having such a buzz of activity going on, provides an incentive for members and others to come down to the site, see what's going on, have a chat, or maybe just sit outside having a leisurely cup of tea. (Or alternatively, cart slabs around or start a bonfire....!!) May I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have contributed in any way to making the signal box and site the attractive place it is today.

Of course, it's a 'living' project and further developments are afoot. Anyone who has not seen the site for a bit will notice the superb lawn and flower beds - so attractive at this time of year. However, work is planned to resurface the level crossing, extend and improve the paths, improve the area on the far side of the crossing, and re-roof the Visitor Centre, to mention just a few things. We also now have a number of signalling items awaiting restoration and installation - with additional signals to be connected to the box.

Inside the box, the S&T group continue to restore the equipment, including the recent key-operated audible warning. Outside the box, work to re-start renovation of the building is imminent, thanks to the continued support and commitment of Romsey & District Historic Buildings Trust.

And there are plans to engage more with the local community. Dick and myself meet shortly with Robert Grime of the Romsey & District Society to discuss establishing stronger links with the town, and trying to encourage a few local folks to assist particularly with acting as Guides for visitors on Open Days.

I could go on, but suspect the editor by this point is muttering 'please don't!', so can I just say, once again, a million thanks to all you good folks who continue to make things happen down on the site - and hope to see you for the AGM and free buffet (who said that was a bribe to get folks to turn up?!).

Peter Chatfield, Chairman

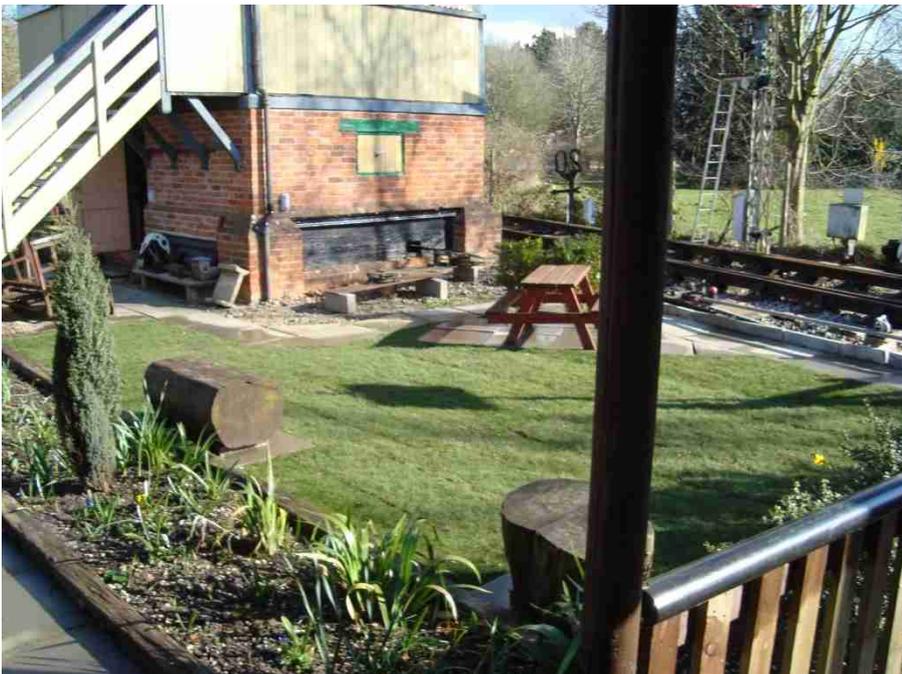
Operating Day (Adult Members)

There will be an operating day on Saturday 25th July for our adult members. (A younger folks’ operating day is proposed for November.) This is an opportunity to operate the box in an authentic way. Usually people are rostered in turn to work on the frame, the simulator, the train register, with a 'floating' roster member who acts as Control, tea maker, or however they choose to act....

Please would any interested members let Peter know by the end of May if you would like to attend this, and what hours you would like to do. Depending on the interest, the day could be around 9am - 6pm (or possibly longer). In time-honoured fashion, unlimited tea and coffee will be available. We will charge £3 for up to 4 hours and £5 for over 4 hours. (And any donations welcome!)

Progress on site

Site Manager Clive Millward reports:



As you will see from some of the pictures in this edition, it has been a very productive year.

Work to relay all the paths around the site with slabs from the old school site is very nearly complete. Grass has been laid, whilst the gardens have been extended and planted both around the entrance and in other areas: thanks to all involved. This will reduce the need to strim weeds

by at least 60% now and by 90% by the year end when the work is finished.

The telegraph poles rescued from the school have been “plated” ready for the external phone systems. The timber for the trolley should be on site by the May Open Day, but some basic instruction in the use of tools must be given to the younger members before they start cutting wood (under supervision); we need a professional job which they can proudly point to and say “We rebuilt that”.

Now the better weather is here, there will be lots of external painting to be done, to enhance the visual appearance of the site yet further.

The artifacts within the visitor centre need to be fixed to the walls to prevent accidents, and then labelled appropriately.

The routine servicing of equipment is now well established by either Jamie or Luke, overseen by an adult for safety. So now we should never hear a squeak or have a seized item anywhere on site. The few, small water leaks which resulted from the hard winter have now been sorted.



Neil has routinely sorted out the tools within the smaller of the two sheds, whilst the larger shed is almost ready for use. And I'm sure we will soon fill it! Especially now we have had to remove most items from the tunnel under the railway for security reasons.

Last November we enjoyed a Bonfire Buffet. Our thanks go to Joan for it's presentation. This was probably the first time one had been arranged for the members present, and it went down so well that we are having another one during the Open Day and AGM on 7th June. Pleased let Neil know if you intend to be present at the AGM so Joan will have some idea of numbers.

Finally, although it is only a small site, please can ALL members remember to sign “In” and “Out” on every visit, for health and safety. The register is in the pavilion.

(Ed: Thanks to Clive for that brief report, which doesn't do justice to the amazing work which has been undertaken on the site, thanks almost totally to Clive's own attendance, enthusiasm and leadership of other volunteers.)

Signal & Telegraph (S&T) Work

Mike Walshaw reports on yet another successful working session.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE WORK DONE ON 28 FEBRUARY 2009

Present: Simon Cooper, Stuart Jones, Clive Millward and Mike Walshaw.

S&T Faults.

A burnt-out yellow lamp in the block shelf repeater for Signal 1R was replaced.

The Halterworth Crossing Barrier “UP” lamp was firmly screwed in to make it work.

No.4 Points Bell.

This bell was put into service. It can be rung by turning the SYX Key located over Lever No.4 on the block shelf to warn personnel standing by the points that they are about to be operated. Perhaps we need a small notice on the block shelf to remind the Signaller/Demonstrator to ring the bell prior to operating the points? A louder bell might be needed, which will need its supply wiring strengthened.

Electric Lever Locks and Circuit Controllers.

All of the locks and circuit controllers stored under the lever frame were hauled out for inspection and identification. Altogether there are:

- 11x W&BS Style D4 combined Electric Lever Locks and Circuit Controllers. A similar unit is already fitted to Lever No.6.
- 5x AGS (AEI/GRS) Circuit Controllers.
- 2x W&BS bases for Circuit Controllers.

Despite the covering of dust and some rust on the slides, the units were found to be in reasonably good order. Our proposals for the use of these units will be issued as a separate Note.

A start was made on stripping down and refurbishing the units. One of the Circuit Controllers was refurbished and was installed, temporarily at least, behind Lever No.1, though not yet connected to it.

Single Line Controls – Direction Lever 6 and the Eastleigh Acceptance Switch.

There are several design faults in this circuit. For example Direction Lever 6 can be Reversed after the Eastleigh Acceptance Switch has been set to “Accept” or additionally with Points 11 Reversed and Signal 17 showing a Proceed aspect. Romsey can send a succession of trains to Eastleigh with the Eastleigh Acceptance Switch left at “Accept”, so long as Lever 17 is normalised after each train clears the single line – the Eastleigh Acceptance Switch should be re-set to Normal after each train reaches Eastleigh and ‘**ToS**’ is belled.

The circuitry within the Miniature Relay Block was rewired to correct two of the faults but further work is necessary.

Simulator Block Bells.

The duration of the red LEDs on the Simulator Panel downstairs that light briefly to show that a block bell has been rung to Eastleigh, Redbridge or Kimbridge by the Signaller upstairs was increased from 2½ seconds to 4 seconds to assist the Simulator Operator.

Next Meeting.

The next S&T WP will be held on Saturday 20 June. (Note change of date.)

Mike Walshaw, 8 March 2009.

Where to now for Romsey Signal Box?

(The following article is a personal statement from Dick Hewett, Editor and President of the Friends. It is certainly not meant to be in any way dismissive of our existing members, and I apologise unreservedly if anyone takes offence from any of the comments herein, which are intended to be constructive but at the same time in my view realistic. I hope the topic will get some air at the AGM...)

Anyone who has visited the signal box site recently will realise that dramatic changes are in progress around the site, and the whole visitor experience is taking a huge leap forward.

Verdant grassy areas and flowerbeds, pleasant places to sit and while away the time, the addition of new artifacts, paving where access has previously been difficult, new buildings to store tools and materials, and a generally tidier site all give the air of a visitor attraction on the up.



The signal box itself also continues to see progress, with a water supply to the authentic upstairs sink (at last!), and continued improvements to the electrics. And yet, and yet....

The repairs to the actual building structure have been a frustrating experience for all concerned. Work to provide new boarding has not resulted in a satisfactory finish, and will need to be redone to a new design. The painting has stuttered for many months, and inevitably there will be further significant expenditure for the Buildings Preservation Trust.

Developments on the site also tax our thoughts, with debates concerning the future of the old visitor van, what new equipment to bring onto site, how much further to take the fitting of equipment within the signal box, how to use the remaining space around the site, whether the trollies will ever actually get restored, and a multitude of other issues.

And then it comes down to people. We regularly welcome more than a dozen members to assist on Open Days, as well as the input from stalwarts such as the S&T wizards, and in particular Clive Millward, at other times. Virtually all these members can be seen working hard around the site, which is why the progress is

so evident. And everyone is certainly very welcome. And yet, and yet...

The fact is that most of what is being achieved is not due to any significant involvement on the part of local residents. With one or two notable exceptions (Rod Hoyle and a couple of the younger members amongst them), there is virtually no active contribution by anyone living in Romsey. I myself am finding it increasingly difficult to contribute the time to a project with which I have been so closely involved now for over 20 years, and I stated quite clearly in the last newsletter that I want to take even more of a backseat in the Friends. I am still willing to turn up to give access to the site for official visitors such as HCC, Southern Water and the electricity supply companies when necessary: this illustrates how living closer to the signal box than probably any other member doesn't help me withdraw from the project.

In contrast, a huge reliance is placed upon a chairman who travels for two and a half hours each way from Tunbridge Wells, and a site manager who attends on an amazingly frequent basis throughout the week, by train from Redbridge. Other key volunteers travel from Southampton, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, Andover, and even further afield (e.g. Thatcham, Guildford, and all points of the compass). You all know who you are, and it's fantastic that you do so. But this imbalance in the support from near and far surely cannot be right.



On top of this, notwithstanding the distances our volunteers are incredibly willing to travel to attend, the fact is that very few of us have the confidence and skills to talk to our visitors on Open Days in a way which ensures they understand the signal box and its workings, and go away with a real sense of having enjoyed the visit. In everything we do, we need to make the most of the skills everyone can bring to the party. Our talented S&T team can do things I wouldn't start to understand; Clive, Gavin and others can turn their hands to the many DIY tasks in a way I could never envisage; and Rod and Joan understand plants and gardens where I can hardly tell a rose from a thorn. And so it is with talking to visitors – some have the skills, others don't. It is something we have to face up to.

I have for a long time gained the impression in Romsey that not that many residents are really aware of the signal box, and most of those that are see it as something which occupies a load of geeky anoraks who want to play trains. “How

are things with your signal box?”, people ask me when they meet me in the street – as if it’s my personal responsibility. And yet the box has actually been saved in the first place as a piece of Romsey’s building heritage, and the fact it is a signal box is secondary. The informal group of the Friends have been developing the site to give the whole place some life and permit access for the public. In all my other involvement in the local area I am respected as making a positive contribution to what are seen in comparison as mainstream activities, so why am I seen as something alien as soon as the subject is the signal box?



I believe it is time the signal box was recognised in the local community for what it is: a historic building, a minor tourist attraction, an educational resource – in fact, somewhere of which Romsey should be very proud. We have something unique at Romsey and the local community should embrace it as part of their portfolio of local attractions.

This means promoting it to visitors alongside the other tourist sites in the area, supporting its development through funding and volunteer labour, and being more actively involved in making it accessible to the public. This includes trying to stimulate a far greater representation in the volunteer resource – and particularly where it comes to acting as guides for visitors. There must be a number of people in the local community who are not railway buffs but who have a genuine interest in local history, a bit of engineering awareness, and the ability to communicate with people at all levels – we need to attract them to the box! Retired teachers?....

With all these concerns in mind, Peter and I have been discussing the future of the Friends and how we can perhaps try to address the imbalances between the geographical spread of our volunteers, and also in the imbalance of skills. I raised the issue at a meeting of the Trustees of the Buildings Preservation Trust earlier in the year, and at the same time I was delighted to be asked to contribute an article as the centrepiece of the latest edition of the Romsey & District Society magazine just published, an article which is reproduced (without the photographs) elsewhere in this newsletter. Through Ted Mason and Frank Akerman, I have also had the first of what may become a more regular series of meetings with the Society’s new Chairman Robert Grime, who clearly understood the issues and has promised to work with us to develop a much closer link between the Society and the Friends, to mutual benefit. Various ideas will doubtless be developed to help the process.

Peter and I are meeting with the other members of the Friends committee on 17th May to discuss some of the more practical issues about site development, alluded to earlier; but on the same day we will meet with Robert Grime to take the discussions with the Society another step forward. It is essential to keep the momentum going in this dialogue. (Again, I am incredibly grateful to Peter for taking on the responsibilities of Chairman, but it does mean trying to pull several activities and meetings together on the same day to make his long journeys from Kent worthwhile – which in itself illustrates the issue so dramatically.) *(I am sure Peter will be able to give members an update on these meetings at the AGM.)*

We also need to be much better at getting the interest of visitors who do come to the signal box, especially those from Romsey itself. We need to be honest about the needs of the Friends, and be more skilled at attracting new members who can help to fill those skills gaps, and who can promote the attraction to others. Increased publicity should also play a part – an activity in which I do have skills, but which often takes lower priority than the other responsibilities I still assume for the Friends. (If there’s anyone who is willing to produce the Newsletter, I’d love to hear from them. That’s certainly something that can be done from a distance...)

For the first time ever, I shall not be able to attend the AGM this year. With little option in terms of the time I can take off work for a holiday this summer, the AGM falls in the middle of the only week available. Despite this, I hope that the future of the Friends and where the signal box project goes from here will be a subject for discussion. We have been in a situation previously where the future has been in doubt: the key difference this time around is that we have active members around.

The big questions for me are not around the technical development of the site; those are issues with which I no longer feel a great concern, and I am content to let others take that forward. Rather, it is questioning whether the project is sustainable in the long term with the reliance on members from such distant parts; is it right for that to be the case; and what precisely should we do to ensure Romsey Signal Box is recognised and supported by the local community, which guarantees its long term survival as a key part of what Romsey is all about.

We are all supposedly volunteers in the Friends, and yet the sense of responsibility weighs heavy on a few of us. It would be great if a new generation of local people could be actively involved, sharing the load and helping to spread the good news about the box in the local community. If the Romsey & District Society’s more mature members don’t fill the gap, maybe our own younger members could be the catalyst, bringing more young blood into the Friends, and then into the Romsey & District Society, thus bringing the latter benefits too - a win-win situation. We can no longer hide our heads in the sand....

Dick Hewett, President/Treasurer/Editor



The following article has just been published as the centre pages of the Romsey & District Society magazine, together with a range of photographs covering the lifetime of the signal box since it's rescue. Hopefully this will generate some interest amongst Romsey & District Society members, culminating in a volunteer or two to assist with looking after visitors on Open Days.

The Signal Box

Opened around 1870, closed in 1982, but immediately saved for posterity – Romsey Signal Box has had a long life, and thanks to the Romsey & District Buildings Preservation Trust and the Friends of Romsey Signal Box, that life continues. The signal box, which once controlled the junction of the lines from

Romsey to Eastleigh and Redbridge, was declared surplus to requirements when investment in more modern technology was made during the 1970s. At the time of closure, it was one of the oldest signal boxes still operating on British Rail, and a classic example of a mid-sized box of the London & South Western Railway.

That the box was saved at all was down largely to the efforts of just a handful of people, of whom Audrey Gebbie (Headteacher of the Romsey Infants School), Eric Romaine (in charge of the demolition team from BR), and members of the Trust including Frank Akerman were particularly prominent. The box was saved for two key reasons: Firstly, as a historic building; and secondly as an educational resource for Hampshire schools. In the 25 years since its closure, the educational element has become focused upon education for the wider populace and community as a whole. The Buildings Preservation Trust still take the responsibility for maintaining the structure of the actual signal box and have recently invested in new timberwork and decorating to ensure the box's continued survival.

The building stands in its own dedicated piece of land close to the railway embankment where it once stood, at the back of the site of the now demolished Romsey Infants School in Plaza Parade. A group of interested individuals, who call themselves the Friends of Romsey Signal Box, have taken it upon themselves to restore the signal box to working order, develop the surrounding site, and open it all on a regular basis for the public to enjoy. Open Days are held on the first Sunday in every month, as well as on special occasions such as Heritage Open Days and the Romsey Arts Festival. Access is through the gates at the end of Plaza Parade in Winchester Road.

Recent developments at the site include a new visitor centre with displays of the history of transport in the Romsey area, as well as new facilities for visitors (toilet, CCTV, and pleasant seating areas). A core team of enthusiasts look after the workings of the signal box, and others manage the development of the rest of the site. A number of young people are involved, helping to operate the box on Open Days and also starting to restore the trolleys which the Friends like to run on the very short length of track at the site.



Visitors to the signal box are given a brief description of its history and a basic explanation of its role and how it controlled the railways in the area. The talk is pitched at the audience, and can cater for every age from 3 to 93 (and all ages between!). However, the number of people in the Friends able to talk to visitors is very small, and what the Friends need is the addition to the team of several local people who would be interested in helping with these visits. Prior knowledge of anything to do with signalling is not required: in fact, the best guides are those who have to learn from the basics themselves, and who therefore keep it simple! Anyone with an interest in local history in any form, and with the enthusiasm and communication skills to talk to visitors on a very limited number of occasions through the year, would be very welcome.

Romsey Signal Box is unique in Great Britain, as a restored signal box on its own dedicated piece of land, where the public can get directly involved in operating a signal box, as if it were for real. Romsey should be proud of this piece of local history which was originally saved by local volunteers for the local community, but which is nationally unique. Local ownership and involvement is critical for the future viability of the project, and I would love to hear from anyone who would be interested in helping. Please phone me on 01794 500523, or email treasurer@romseysignalbox.org.uk to find out more.

Dick Hewett, President of the Friends of Romsey Signal Box

Thanks to Hampshire County Council

We must record our thanks to Pat McClure, Riley Wood, Stephen Harrison, and their colleagues in Hampshire County Council, who have been extremely helpful

over the past year during the traumas of the demolition of the school and subsequent implications. Throughout they have all recognised the limited resources of the Friends and the Trust, but also the significance of the signal box and our desire to keep it open to the public despite the need for access across what is now an area of waste land. In return for this co-operation, we have agreed to keep an eye on the site on behalf of HCC, and will report any concerns about security and health & safety.

In particular, there has been great co-operation on the restoration of the electricity and water supplies to the signal box (both had previously come via the school buildings), on the acquisition of materials from the site (e.g. paving slabs), and more recently on difficulties with security and the water supply.



On security, we suffered some vandalism to items we had been storing in the tunnel under the railway: HCC immediately arranged for a strong fence to be placed across the far entrance in place of the previous gates, thereby blocking access from that end. On the water supply, we received huge water bills through the autumn and winter suggesting an awful lot of tea was being drunk at Open Days (or that Clive had secretly built a swimming pool on the site as yet another visitor attraction), but subsequent investigation revealed a leak on the old school site: HCC accepted responsibility for the costs involved and have agreed to refund us the full charges made to us by the water company.

We hope the relationship with HCC will continue to be as mutually advantageous when plans for the development of the old school site eventually come to fruition (which is unlikely to be some years away, when the economy begins to recover).

Membership matters (*Neil Kearns writes*):

First of all, thank you to those members who have already renewed your membership of the Friends of Romsey Signal Box for this year.

I will be at the May and June open days if you wish to renew in person. If you wish to renew by post, please send your payment to me:
Neil Kearns, 38 Arundel Road, Boyatt Wood, Eastleigh, Hants, SO50 4PQ.

In case you can't remember the membership rates, they remain as £5.00 for adults, and £2.50 for members under 18 and over 60 years. Thank you. Neil.



West Moors Signal Box

(Photo: Paul Bodkin, via Kevin Robertson)

Ken Rye recalls:

In the late 1950s I happened to be at West Moors station in Dorset observing trains, and was pleasantly surprised to be invited into the signal box which was situated at the end of the up platform adjacent to the level crossing. This turned out to be the first of many such visits.

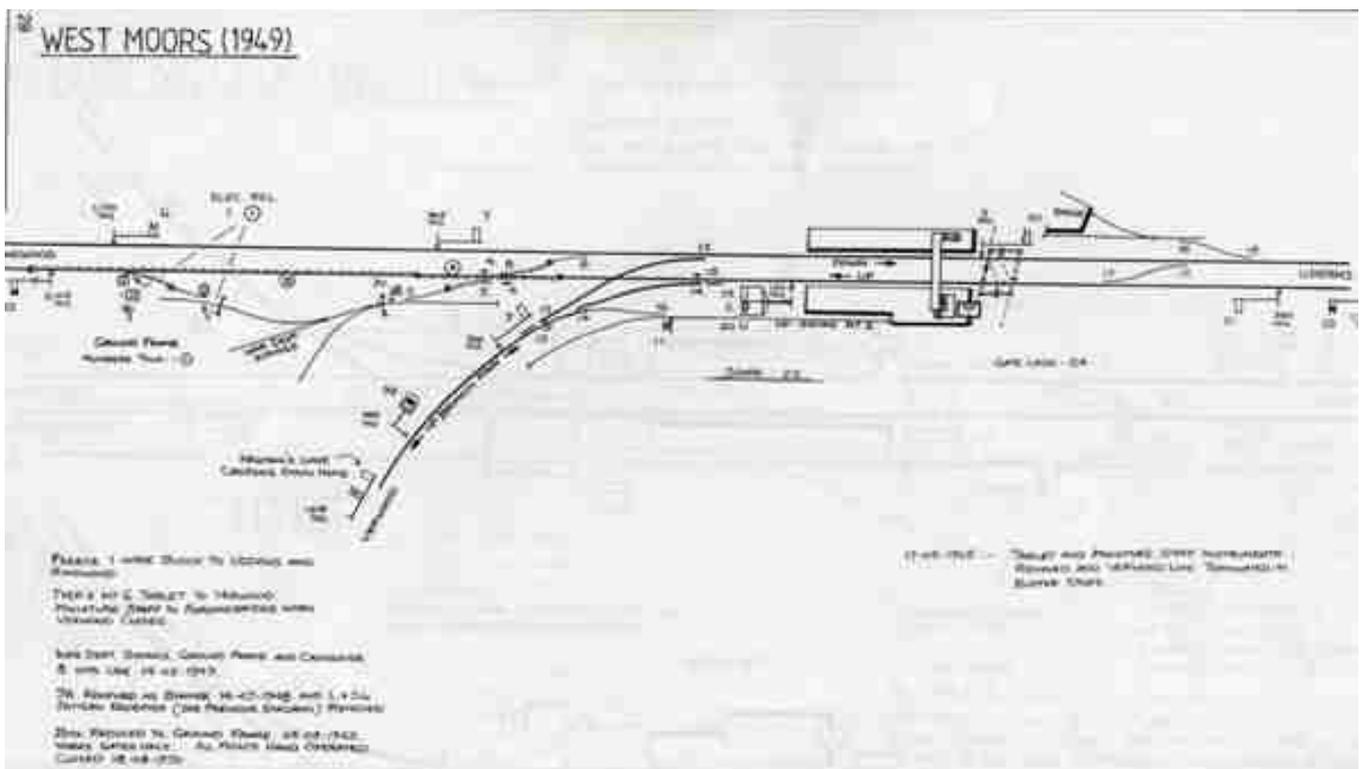
West Moors was situated on the Southampton & Dorchester Railway line (otherwise known as Castleman's

Corkscrew because of the circuitous route it's promoter designed through the New Forest) which was opened on 1st June 1847 (just three months after the line through Romsey), but the station did not open until the Wilts & Dorset Junction line from Salisbury was opened on 1st August 1867. The signalling arrangements were less sophisticated originally, the gates being operated by a gatekeeper (the lodge is still there, no doubt a listed building, converted in the 1960s into a house). I don't know when the LSWR provided the box but it was cramped – the LSWR were not normally generous when it came to providing spacious boxes – and it became even more so when extra levers were added in conjunction with the War Department fuel storage depot established in the Ringwood direction, and basic facilities such as a wash basin were never provided: at least the steps led onto the station platform where facilities were available!

The station was on the double line to Wimborne in one direction and Ringwood in the other. The branch to Salisbury was single, and although nominally independent, the LSWR operated it from the outset but refused to book through tickets from its own system, expecting passengers to travel by time-consuming roundabout routes using their own trains! Wimborne was the main box in the Down direction, but an intermediate box existed at Udden's Crossing, provided with a closing switch and normally only a block post when trains followed one another closely. This happened daily with a Bournemouth West to Salisbury train following closely behind a Brockenhurst



service, and usually on Summer Saturdays when Waterloo to Swanage and Weymouth trains used this route to avoid congestion at Bournemouth. In the Up direction on the main line Ringwood was the next box. The intermediate Ashley Heath Halt was only provided with a non-blockpost level crossing box. Signalling used Preece’s single wire two position indicating instruments, i.e. those miniature semaphore signals located in wooden cases with circular windows. I doubt if our Project could ever afford such items for our box if that ever came onto the collectors market. (Ed’s note: We do in fact have one on loan from Andrew Moody, who saved it from the Romsey area, and who coincidentally now lives in West Moors! It is kept in safe storage for obvious reasons, but will be brought out for display on special occasions in future.)



The branch was rather more interesting. Verwood, the next station, had a box that was provided with a closing switch and this was normally switched out. The next box was at Fordingbridge. West Moors therefore had two sets of single line apparatus, a Tyers No 6 Tablet machine for short section working to Verwood and a Railway Signalling Company’s Miniature Staff machine for long section working to Fordingbridge.

Passenger trains from Wimborne were described as 3-1 for the main line and 1-3 for the branch. In the (unlikely?) event that Wimborne had send an incorrect description and the wrong road was thus set, a large key was provided that would be inserted into the hole in the centre of the block instrument shelf to effectively unlock the system. It is extremely unlikely that it would ever have been used since I recollect one occasion when a branch train was offered and not the expected (delayed) main line train, at which point West Moors used the phone to check.

The box was worked on a split shift system. Opening at around 3.45am and closing at about 10pm, the ‘gap’ was covered by a porter signalman. After passage of the 3.24am passenger and news ex-Salisbury, the duty signalman would not normally be needed for the next train until about 6.45am, so would assist the newspaper wholesaler who had a shed in the yard, sorting the papers for the waiting vans. A useful supplement to the signalman’s pay!

One of the quirks with the miniature staff machine was the ability sometimes to be able to remove a staff simply by lifting it through the gate due to wear with age (like us all!), but, of course, the electrical interlocking was still functional so it was impossible to actually pull off signals. The box was similar to Romsey having 22 levers but in addition had to accommodate two single line machines and a gatewheel and the obligatory coal fired stove. During my visits I was allowed to operate the instruments and levers. Closing/ opening with Fordingbridge and Verwood and testing bells was always exciting!

Finally, it may be of interest to note that the Southern Region was considering closing the two lines in the late 1950s but abandoned the plan to await the infamous Doctor Beeching’s cuts which finally brought closure of the line as a through route, and the signal box itself, in 1964.

(Thanks to Ken for submitting this article. I believe Ken has several other articles ready for submission – I look forward to receiving them for future editions. One concerns the final day of the Romsey-Andover line, which would be very interesting – next edition, Ken? And any more reminiscences from anyone else?)

Signal Box clothing and uniform

A reminder that we still have plenty of sweatshirts (£14), polo shirts (£12.50) and T-shirts (£8). These are always available on Open Days and other special events.

It would be great if EVERYONE present as “staff” on Open Days and operating events were wearing some articles of Signal Box clothing. Please consider making the investment. Credit facilities are available at zero interest!

Newsletter Editor wanted!

Well, my appeal in the last edition for a new Newsletter editor fell on death ears! I will continue for the time being, but if anyone wants to come forward, I’d be very happy to hand over the role. And if I don’t get round to producing the three editions which are intended each year – don’t blame me!

Dick Hewett

Diary dates:

REGULAR OPEN DAYS (including site working sessions) (all Sundays, 10am till *4pm):

3 May, 7 June (* followed by AGM at 3.30pm), 5 July, 2 August, 6 September, 4 October, 1 November, 6 December.
Contact Neil Kearns, 023 8061 8167.

SPECIAL OPERATING EVENTS:

DATES WHEN THE SIGNAL BOX WILL BE OPERATED THROUGHOUT THE DAY (at least from 10am to 6pm), AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Heritage Open Days:

Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 September 2009.

It is hoped that the operation on one of these two days will be largely the responsibility of our younger members, under supervision.

PRIVATE MEMBERS ONLY OPERATING SESSIONS: Saturday 25 July.

Contact Peter Chatfield and ask to be kept informed on plans: email Chatp004@aol.com or phone 01892 522143 (and leave a message).

S & T WORKING SESSIONS: 20 June (change of date), 3 October.

Contact Mike Walshaw, 01929 421913, to confirm dates and arrangements.

SITE DEVELOPMENT WORKING SESSIONS: By arrangement.

Contact Peter Chatfield by phone or email and ask to be kept informed.



Finally, a shot to confirm to those who live “up country” that even in the deep south we sometimes experience a real winter!

If you have received a monochrome copy of this newsletter through the post, but actually have access to the internet and email – let us know. There is a full colour version on the website – www.romseysignalbox.org.uk - and it saves us the costs of photocopying and postage by alerting you to future editions through email.