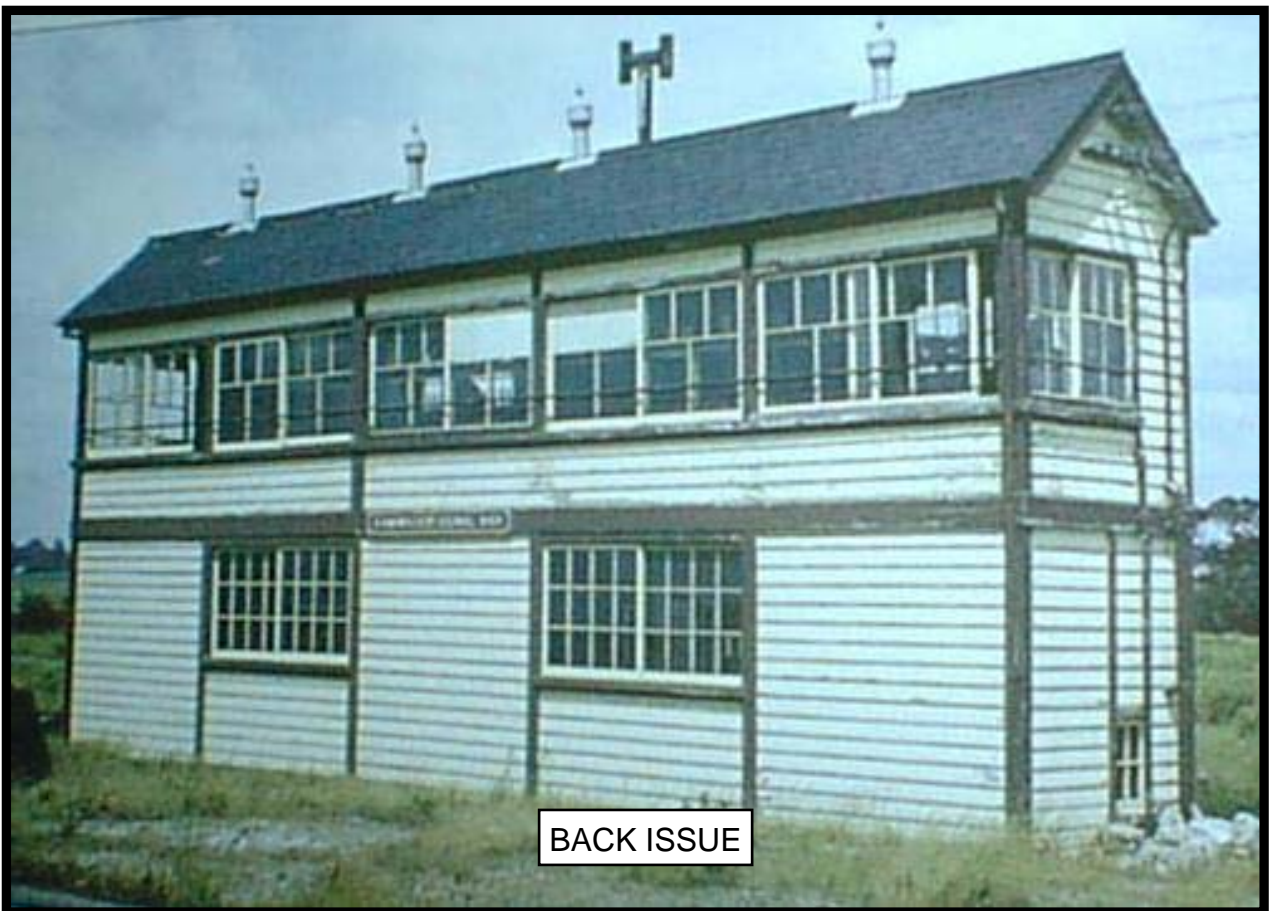


Exminster Signal Box Preservation Project

NEWSLETTER

No 1 Winter 2002/3



*Journal of the
Exminster Signal Box
Preservation Project*

*Exminster Signal Box Preservation Project***NEWSLETTER****No 1 Winter 2002/3***Journal of the Exminster Signal Box Preservation Project***INSIDE THIS ISSUE...**-
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Cover Photograph:.....

Exminster Signal Box in July 1966. The down loop

and platform having been removed, the box is well

clear of the running lines. This will be advantageous to

us in the demolition process.

EDITORIAL**Welcome!** to this newsletter, and **Thank You!** for supporting the Exminster Signal Box Preservation Project.

This publication aims to be a journal of the activities of the Project, to serve not only as a method of keeping our supporters updated, but also as a historical record for future reference.

This first edition brings several exciting pieces of news, including our new website, an update on the Project's progress, a competition question and some Exminster technical information.

Articles, letters, comments, photographs, etc are always welcomed from readers. Exminster was operational for over sixty years, there must be hundreds of ex-staff with memories and information. A regular column from an ex-Exminster signaller would be a wonderful attribute.

Enjoy reading, and thank you again for your support.

Danny Scroggins
Project Organiser

THE SIGNAL BOX

Exminster Signal Box last signalled trains in November 1986, after which it was closed under the Exeter Area Resignalling Scheme. Railtrack have leased the building and land to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and their contract requires that they maintain the building to its listed building standard. However, as the RSPB no longer have a use for the building, they have informed Railtrack that they plan not to renew the lease when it expired in 2010.

Railtrack know that from 2010 they would have the responsibility of maintaining a useless building, so agreed that if the RSPB could find a better home for it they would be prepared to see it go. Enter Exminster Signal Box Preservation Project...

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THE PROJECT

This Project aims to arrange and execute the dismantling and transportation of the Signal Box to Swindon's 'STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway'. Then it will be our job to rebuild the building and restore its contents, with the ultimate goal of operating the Box to a simulated timetable for the benefit of visitors to the Steam Museum, and railway enthusiasts.

To many, this will sound like another Exeter West. This project has similar aims to the Exeter West Group, yet by no means intends to undermine the work of it. I am grateful to, amongst others, Peter Jordan of the EWG, for their support and advice, allowing us the benefit of their experience of the preservation movement.

One of the first important steps on our journey is to become a constituted society. A group of committee members has to be found, and I have drawn out a governing document that will be discussed and adopted by the committee at their first meeting. The governing document is pretty standard for a preservation society so that is not a great problem. But, as with any new venture of this nature, volunteers are always needed. If you think you, or someone you know, may be able to help, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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SIGNAL BOX TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Exminster Signal Box was opened by the Great Western Railway on 9th June 1924. It stands on the down side of the Exeter St David's – Newton Abbot section of the former GWR. It is a type 28b, all wooden design, 25' wide x 11' deep.

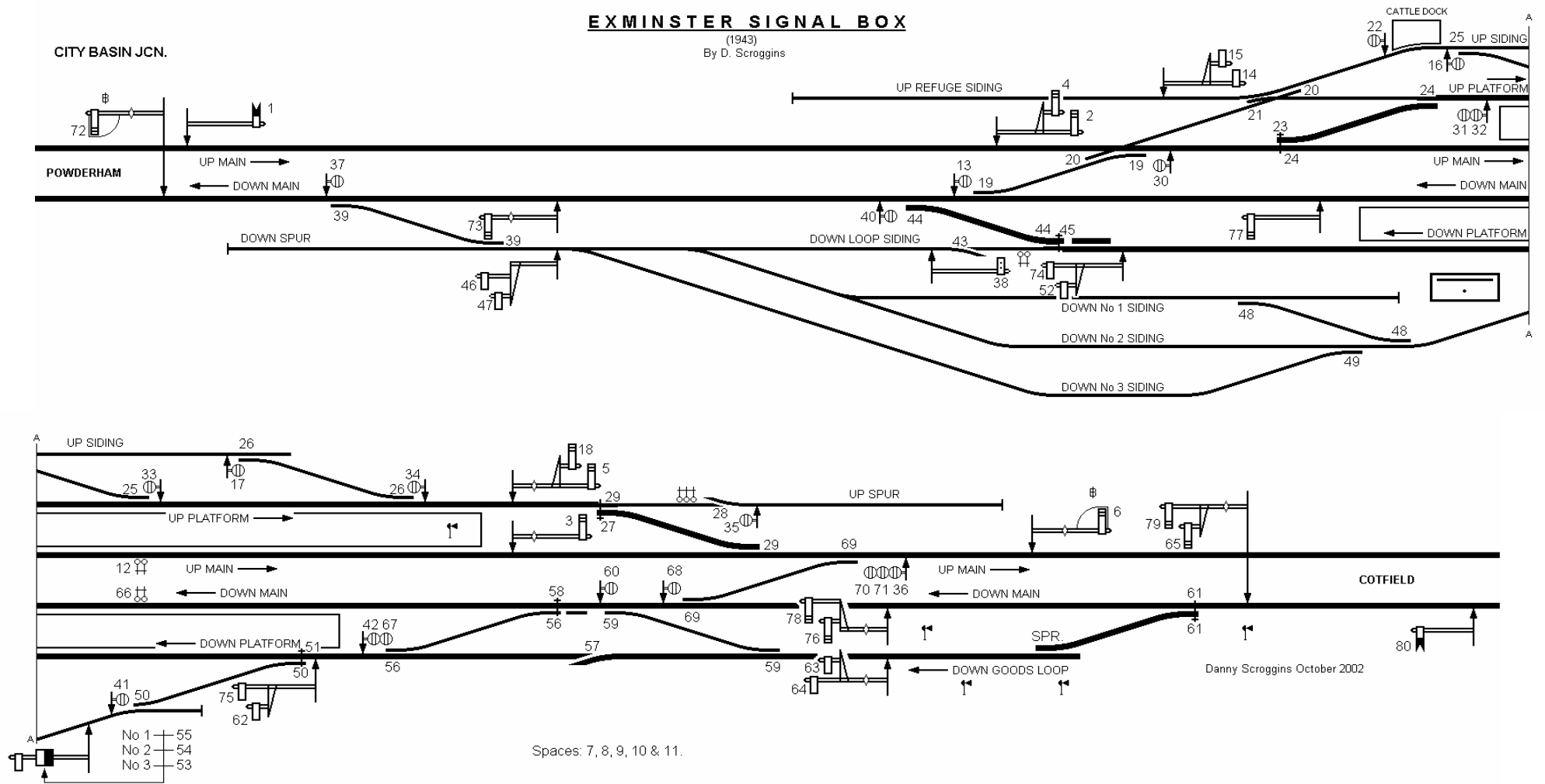
When first installed it housed a 36-lever frame, with 3-bar vertical tappet interlocking. This was replaced by a 56-lever version of the same type in 1931. The current frame, with 80 levers at 4" centres, and 5-bar VT interlocking was first used in March 1941.

Sadly, from the early 1960s, the number of levers in use decreased. The layout and signalling system was rationalised and rationalised, until when it closed, on the 17th November 1986, 58 of the 80 levers were spaces.

EXMINSTER SIGNAL BOX

(1943)

By D. Scroggins



The box was first equipped with Spagnoletti block instruments, and later WR 3-position types to communicate with Cotfield in the up, and Powderham in the down directions. It was facilitated for closing out, and had several track circuits. (When restored, strategic extra track circuits will be added to simulate a realistic operation. This does not mean that continuous track circuiting will be simulated as this would be entirely unrealistic.) A signal diagram is shown elsewhere in this publication.

If anyone has information on Exminster working etc, I'd love to hear from them: No detail's too small!

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PROJECT WEBSITE LAUNCHED

A website detailing the aims of the Project has been launched at the address below. This will provide the Project with valuable publicity, and provide supporters with an up-to-date progress report. I am pleased to say that in the first few weeks the site received over a hundred and fifty hits, and this has now risen to above three hundred. Soon a 'visitors' book' will be added enabling surfers to comment on the project on-line.

Our thanks go to Luke Cartey for his invaluable help in the design and maintenance of this site. Any comments are welcomed: webmaster@exminstersignalbox.org.uk.

Visit us at www.exminstersignalbox.org.uk

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CHARITABLE STATUS

I am currently in the process of reading a tome of information sent to me by the Charities Commission, in an effort to achieve Charitable Status for the Project. This will enable the supporters to affiliate themselves to something sturdier than the current informal arrangement, and will put the Project in a more suitable legal position.

When Charitable Status is achieved, the proposal is to scrub the 'Project' part of our title, and instead become the Exminster Signal Box Preservation Society (No Italian-Job jokes please!).

There are however some matters yet to be addressed. Not least that a committee needs to be found. I have had a fantastic response in the number of people who want to help the project, but not so many are willing to take up official positions. If anyone feels they might be interested or would like to discuss it further, please don't hesitate to contact me. Please. Please!

EXMINSTER VISIT

If any readers are interested in visiting Exminster Signal Box at Exminster (strange that in this case it is necessary to say 'at Exminster'!), a visit is planned for February 2003. Contact Danny Scroggins.

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LADBROKE GROVE and PENDON PRIORY

As I was about to release this newsletter, I was invited to a meeting at Swindon Steam Museum, to discuss proposals to better the current signal box exhibit, Ladbroke Grove frame. In the event, the meeting was almost irrelevant to this project, but having held publication, I think I ought to give it a plug!

Pendon Museum of Miniature Transport have block instruments from Pendon Priory Signal box, with which they used to demonstrate block signalling. However, without a frame, the demonstrations were limited, so the museum has decided to explore the possibility of a better home for the instruments. This, together with the enthusiasm of experienced enthusiast Mike Hanscomb to build a 20-lever frame, corresponding to the Pendon Priory Diagram, could mean Swindon receives a new indoor signalling exhibit, as well as the Exminster complete restoration.

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QUIZ

Test your brain with this question. The puzzle for this newsletter is:

On the αβ&γ Railway, the cost of building new signal boxes is calculated from the number of points and the number of signals to be operated by that box.

Alphatown Box has ten sets of points, and half as many signals as Betatown. Betatown Box has half as many sets of points as Gammatown, and twenty signals. Gammatown Box has fifteen more sets of points than Betatown, and the number of signals is half the total number of signals at Alphatown and Betatown.

Alphatown Box cost £1,750 to build, and Gammatown Box cost £4,125 to build. How much did the αβ&γ Railway pay to build Betatown Box?

Answers to Danny Scroggins at danny@exminstersignalbox.org.uk, or 21 Priory Ave, Hungerford, Berkshire, RG17 0BQ. Answer and winner announced in next newsletter: Happy number crunching...!

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AND FINALLY...

If anyone reading this newsletter has noticed the number of spelling and Grammar mistakes, please feel free to write an article or make a competition question, or dig out a relevant photograph and send it to me for inclusion in the next issue. Speaking of which, if I don't stop writing now, this'll be the next issue. 7-5-5!

GWR

EXMINSTER SIGNAL BOX

Preservation Project