

Friends of Romiley Station



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024

Welcome to our December Newsletter and the last in 2024. Yet again it has been a busy year at the station. However, our work has not just been at the station as we continue to build links with other groups within the Romiley community helping them whenever we can as they in turn help us.

Looking back to last December we reported that damp issues meant that a solution was needed before the platform two waiting room could be reopened to the public. We are delighted to say that last month the necessary work was undertaken and that the waiting room is now looking good and is once again open to the public. No doubt it has been much appreciated during the recent cold spell.

As usual there will be no Newsletter over the Festive Season so may we take this opportunity to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas as well as a wonderful New Year. We will be back with a combined January and February edition.

CHESHIRE BEST KEPT STATIONS (CBKS) PHOTO COMPETITION

This year, in addition to the usual awards, CBKS have teamed up with Cheshire Life magazine with the first ever running of a Photo Competition.

Earlier this year they invited entries which were to follow the theme “Brightening Up Our Station”.

All the entries went through an initial judging process with the judges whittling them down to a shortlist of 9 photos.

Those photos are all featured in the December edition of Cheshire Life and are available to view on the CBKS website where you can cast your vote for your favourite one.

To view the photos go to <https://www.bestkeptstations.org.uk/photocompetition/> where you can then cast your vote. There you will find that two photos from Romiley are on the shortlist. You can vote for one photo, and you can only vote once.

Voting closes at 5pm on Saturday 28th December 2024.

The results of the Competition will be announced at the CBKS Annual Awards Evening on 6th February 2025 (See below).

TASK SESSIONS

We held a successful task session at the station on Saturday 9th November after which some of us were able to seek suitable liquid refreshment in Platform One.



The session was very much one aimed at tidying up areas near to the Platform 2 ramp after which we planted a large number of spring flowering bulbs that we hope will add a great deal of colour to the station early next year.



As can be seen from the photograph to the left each autumn produces a great number of leaves that need bagging up before being taken to the local recycling centre near Rose Hill station.

We will be holding our next session on Saturday 14th December, when we will be putting up all the Christmas trees and decorations.

Work commences at 2pm so do pop along if you are free. There will also be a Task Session on Saturday 11th January (also from 2pm) so as to carry out further general tidying up as well as undertaking a full litter pick around the station.

'NEW' PLATFORM PLANTERS

Last month we were so delighted to be able to report that the former rock salt containers on Platforms 1 and 2 had been converted into planters before each being planting out with two perennials, violas, grasses and bulbs (primarily small daffodil bulbs) that would come into flower next spring.

Sadly, within weeks of the work being undertaken a person or persons unknown took it upon themselves to help themselves to the contents by stealing the majority of the plants.



Before the theft



After the theft

It really is disheartening to think that there are people out there in Romiley who selfishly steal things that have been provided for the enjoyment of everyone.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Each March we hold our Annual General Meeting. Accordingly, we are starting the process of making all the arrangements for the next meeting.

Full details will be set out in the January/February Newsletter together with a provisional agenda.

The final agenda will appear in the March Newsletter, so if having seen the provisional agenda you would like something else to be added then please do get in touch with the Secretary, Angie Clark, using the email address fors@btinternet.com.

The full accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024 will also be published in the March Newsletter so as to give everyone time to read through them before the meeting takes place.

However, at this stage we do want to let everyone have the proposed meeting date so that it can at least be put in your 2025 diaries (paper or electronic these days).

The meeting will take place on Tuesday 18th March 2025 at 7pm.

We haven't, as yet, confirmed a venue but will do so early in the New Year.

STATIONS ON THE HOPE VALLEY ROUTE - GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

This month's quiz is basically a general knowledge quiz with 20 questions, which just happens to be the number of stations between Manchester Piccadilly and Sheffield (inclusive) via Romiley.

Below we list all 20 of those stations followed by a question the answer to which uses some or all of the letters from each station name before being rearranged so as to give the correct answer.

No letter is used more times than it actually appears in the station name.

1. MANCHESTER PICCADILLY

Which English actor, born in 1946, played Lord Mountbatten in the third and fourth seasons of The Crown?

2. ARDWICK

Litmus paper turns red when dipped in what type of liquid?

3. ASHBURYS

What do we call an alloy of copper and zinc, often used to make musical instruments?

4. BELLE VUE

What instrument, often used by builders, is designed to indicate whether a surface is horizontal or vertical?

5. RYDER BROW

Which Force in the UK is a law enforcement command within the Home Office that carries out immigration and customs controls?

6. REDDISH NORTH

The worlds heaviest flying boat, the "Do X", was manufactured by which former German aircraft manufacturer who specialised in the production of such aircraft?

7. BRINNINGTON

Which gambling game, featuring 90 numbers, sees players use a dabber to mark their cards?

8. BREDBURY

One pair of players seek to win two games in what version of the card game Bridge?

9. ROMILEY

What is the name of the red muppet character in Sesame Street that speaks with a high pitched falsetto voice?

10. MARPLE

A 30th Wedding Anniversary is given what name?

11. STRINES

On a ship what is the opposite of bow?

12. NEW MILLS CENTRAL

On a map of the London Underground what is printed in red and runs from Epping to West Ruislip?

13. CHINLEY

2.54 centimetres is what imperial measurement?

14. EDALE

Which singer's studio albums simply have a number as their title?

15. HOPE (DERBYSHIRE)

The Inner and Outer what form an archipelago off the west coast of the Scottish mainland?

16. BAMFORD

John James who is a fictional character that first appeared in the 1972 novel, First Blood by David Morell but has appeared in several films bearing his name since then?

17. HATHERSAGE

The Computus determines the date of which annual Christian festival?

18. GRINDLEFORD

Topol was what on the roof in the 1971 film musical in which he played Tevye?

19. DORE AND TOTLEY

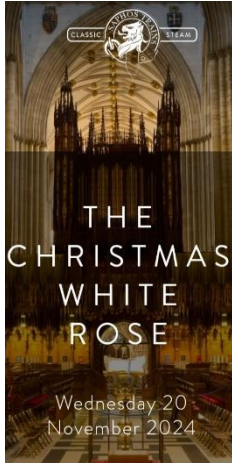
Which is the third largest of the Channel Islands as well as being the northernmost one to be inhabited?

20. SHEFFIELD

What fuel currently powers all the trains that run from Manchester Piccadilly to Sheffield?

As usual all the answers are to be found at the end of the Newsletter.

STEAM TRAIN VISITORS TO ROMILEY



With the reopening of the line through New Mills Central operators of steam train excursions have once again been able to route them through Romiley on their way to travel up the Hope Valley.

Saphos Trains, who use Locomotive Services Limited for the provision of the steam traction, routed two of their specials through Romiley towards the end of November, both of which were heading for York.

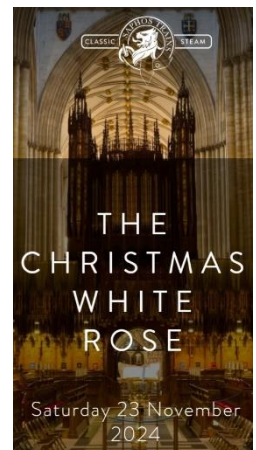


The first of these on 20th November was hauled by A2 class, No 60532 Blue Peter. This was a very special trip as Blue Peter was having its first outing at the head of a revenue-earning passenger train for 22 years.

It looked magnificent as it sped through the station and we are grateful to several of our members who sent us the selection of photographs that we feature here.



The second train to visit Romiley, some 3 days later, was LNER Thompson Class B1 No. 61306 Mayflower.



This is a 4-6-0 steam locomotive built in 1948 at by North British Locomotive Company.

It has been running on the main line now for a number of years having undergone a major overhaul that was completed in early 2019.

2024 REMEMBRANCE DISPLAY

This year we are indebted to two of our members, Neil and Jan Farrell, who kindly took on the task of compiling and then putting in place a suitable display by way of remembrance.

The display was in place at the station a couple of weeks either side of Remembrance Sunday before Neil and Jan took it down.

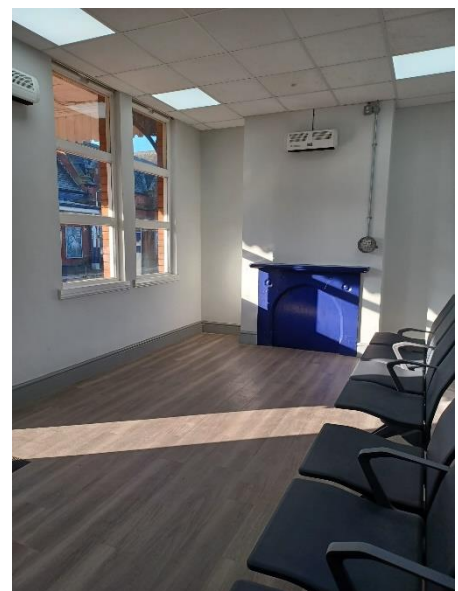


PLATFORM TWO WAITING ROOM

As mentioned in the introduction to this month's Newsletter we are delighted to be able to report that the Platform 2 Waiting Room is now back open for public use.

When it was closed we did relocate one of our book swaps from the Waiting Room into the Ticket Office. It's been very popular in its 'new' location so we will be leaving it there.

However, as a project for 2025 we will be discussing with Northern the provision of some spectacular artwork for the Waiting Room.



CHESHIRE BEST KEPT STATIONS - 2024 AWARDS EVENING



We have been given advance notice that the 2024 Cheshire Best Kept Stations Awards Evening will be held on Thursday 6th February 2025.

Unfortunately, the Grange Theatre in Hartford where the Awards Evening has been held of late is not available this time round and so the event will be taking place using the excellent conference facilities that are available at the Crewe Alexandra Football Stadium.

The stadium is only a short walk from Crewe station.

We will be receiving our formal invitation to the event in the near future.

However, if anyone would like to come along and be part of the FoRS contingent please do make a note of the date whilst at the same time emailing the Secretary, Angie Clark, using fors@btinternet.com.

Once the formal invitation is received Angie will be in touch with full details.

BEE SANCTUARY COMMUNITY XMAS DAY

No doubt every one of our readers will be very busy on the run up to Christmas.

However, if you do have some time to spare on Saturday 7th December we have been made aware of an event that will be taking place in Highfield Country Park which is supported by Avanti West Coast in partnership with the Bee Sanctuary.

As you can see from the poster alongside the activities run from 11am until 2.30pm.

Highfield Country Park is located in Levenshulme and lies to the east of the A6 so is relatively easy to access.



ROMILEY JUNCTION SIGNAL BOX

Regular readers of our Newsletter, as well as anyone who has been to the station over the years, will be aware that it has stood empty now since 2016 following the transfer of all its functions to the modern signalling centre at Ashburys.

Even at the time of its closure it was not in the best of condition. A signal box was built in 1899, replacing one built in 1875 that had been destroyed by fire. However, over the years it had been subject to many changes so that whilst it basically looked like the original signal box very little of it was indeed original. For example all the external timbers had been replaced by uPVC cladding.

It was, however, situated within the Romiley Church Lane Conservation Area and as such it would require planning consent were it to be demolished.

In 2014 such an application was refused by Stockport MBC, a decision that was confirmed upon appeal. Time though has moved on and the box is now in very poor shape. In fact without the provision of extensive scaffolding in 2019 it would probably have demolished itself by heading off down the embankment slope towards the properties on John Street.



As a group we did look at the box to see if it could be put to an alternative use for the benefit of the community, but frankly that was a complete non-starter both financially and practically.

Earlier this year we were consulted again by Network Rail who indicated that it was their intention to submit a further application to Stockport MBC in the hope of obtaining the necessary consent for the signal box's demolition.

Given the situation we readily indicated that we would fully support any such application and our support was set out in a letter from our chair, Alf Clark, to Network Rail (which is reproduced below).

Network Rail have in the last few weeks submitted their application to Stockport MBC, together with lots of supporting information.

If you want to read everything then do go to the Council's planning website <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/find-planning-applications> and search for application DC/094005.

Friends of Romiley Station

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4th July 2024

Dear Mr Winstanley

ROMILEY JUNCTION - FORMER SIGNAL BOX

I refer to previous exchanges of correspondence with your colleagues at Network Rail concerning the former signal box to the north west of Romiley station.

As you will be aware the signal box was taken out of use just over 10 years ago now when signalling control was transferred to the Manchester East Control Centre near Ashburys station.

As it was redundant, in poor condition (primarily at that time due to it effectively slowly slipping down the embankment slope to its rear) and frankly of no architectural merit (very little of it comprised the original signal box as constructed) it was considered that the most appropriate way of dealing with it would be to have it demolished.

However, with it lying within the Romiley Church Lane Conservation Area consent was required from the Planning Authority, in this case Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, for its demolition and an application for such consent was submitted in June 2014.

That application was effectively supported by English Heritage who considered the structure as not being worthy of retention.

Surprisingly, despite the facts consent was not forthcoming and as such Network Rail instigated an appeal, which too was unsuccessful being refused in February 2015.

Since then the structure has steadily deteriorated and some years ago it had slipped to such an extent that extensive scaffolding was erected so as to prevent the entire building sliding down the embankment slope into the houses on John Street at the foot of the slope.

In the recent past the Friends of Romiley Station have looked at the feasibility of bringing the signal box back into some form of community use.

However, this was very much a non-starter as the work needed to just save the structure and make it safe for use was estimated as running into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Even if that work could have been undertaken the amount of grant aid required was just not available and support from the likes of the Railway Heritage Trust would not have been forthcoming.

Furthermore, given its location so close to the running line full use of the building would not have been feasible and maintenance could not be safely undertaken to that side of the structure by the actual railway.

So as a group we very quickly concluded that the only feasible option was to have the building demolished.

Not only would that remove the dangers associated with retaining the building but it would also release the land upon which it stands so that in the future it could be used for the possible expansion of platform facilities at Romiley Station and/or an extension to the pedestrian ramp (used by those unable to use the stairs to the platform level).

Therefore, we were delighted to hear that Network Rail were, given the change of circumstances, considering making a further application to Stockport Metropolitan Council for consent for the demolition of the building.

If such an application is made then we would fully support it and take any necessary action to assist in that application being successful this time round.

It simply makes no sense whatsoever to retain it any longer.

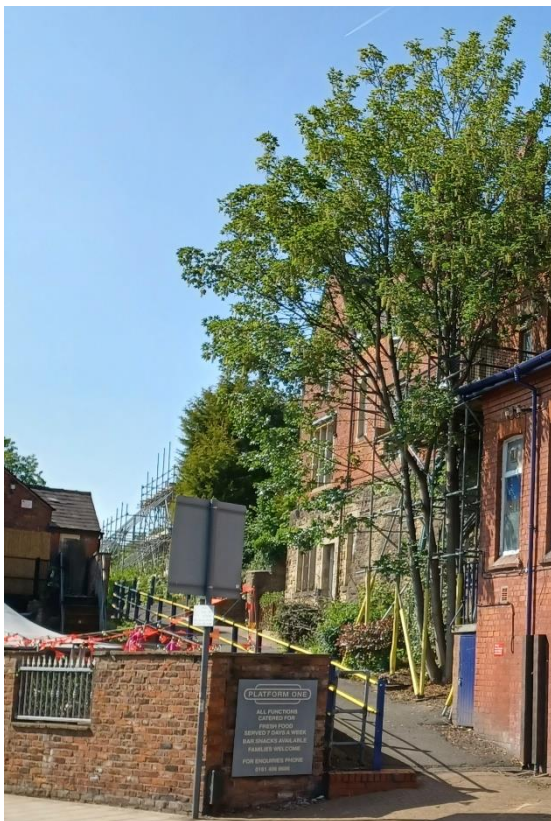
Accordingly, if you require anything further from me then please do get back in touch.

Yours sincerely

Alf Clark
Chair

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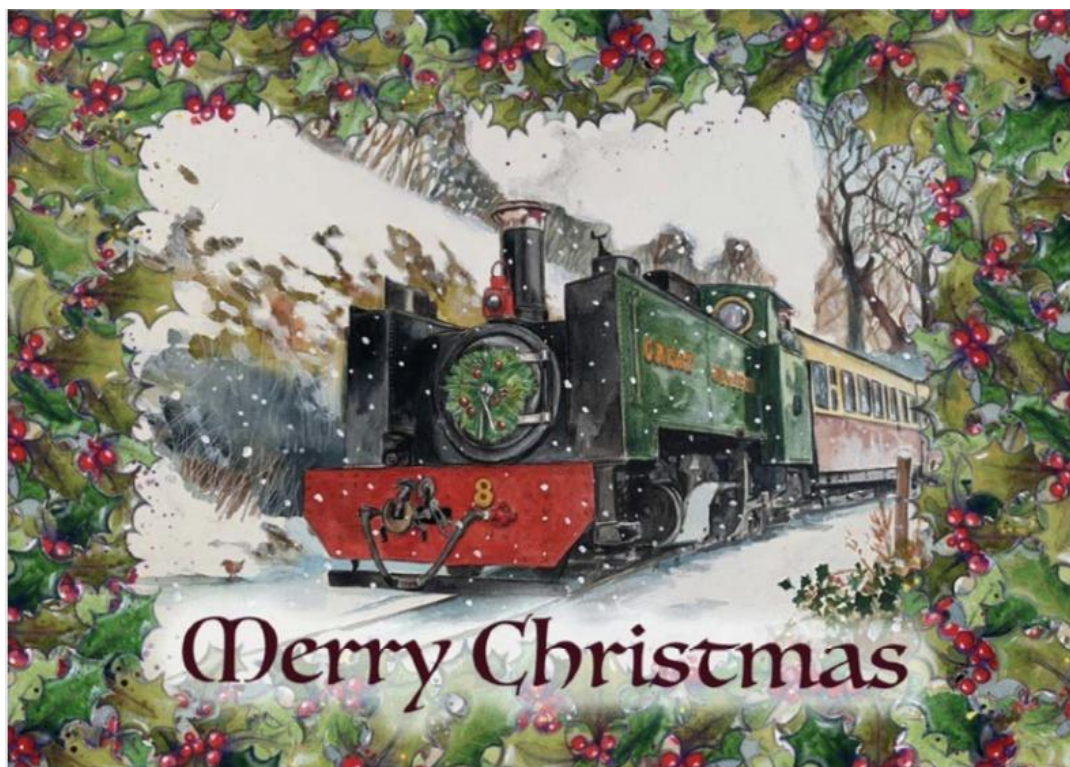
If the necessary consent for demolition is forthcoming from Stockport MBC and the signal box is then demolished we as a group will be pressing for the land upon which the box currently stands to be used for everyone's benefit so as to improve the ramped access to the station.

We hold the view that this could be achieved by extending the ramp in a straight line towards the top before then turning back on itself so as to effectively make it less steep and as such more user friendly and accessible for those using prams, buggies, cycles and wheelchairs.

It would also be much better for the less able bodied who currently struggle with the flight of stairs to platform 1 from the main entrance as well as the ramp itself.

STATIONS ON THE HOPE VALLEY ROUTE QUIZ – ALL THE ANSWERS

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. | MANCHESTER PICCADILLY | Charles Dance |
| 2. | ARDWICK | Acid |
| 3. | ASHBURYS | Brass |
| 4. | BELLE VUE | Level |
| 5. | RYDER BROW | Border |
| 6. | REDDISH NORTH | Dornier |
| 7. | BRINNINGTON | Bingo |
| 8. | BREDBURY | Rubber |
| 9. | ROMILEY | Elmo |
| 10. | MARPLE | Pearl |
| 11. | STRINES | Stern |
| 12. | NEW MILLS CENTRAL | Central Line |
| 13. | CHINLEY | Inch |
| 14. | EDALE | Adele |
| 15. | HOPE (DERBYSHIRE) | Hebrides |
| 16. | BAMFORD | Rambo |
| 17. | HATHERSAGE | Easter |
| 18. | GRINDLEFORD | Fiddler |
| 19. | DORE AND TOTLEY | Alderney |
| 20. | SHEFFIELD | Diesel |



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