



Sandford Station Railway Heritage Centre

Registered Charity No. 1136266 - www.sandfordstation.co.uk

NEWS LETTER No.1 - Spring 2012



**Sandford's 'Gem' Opens again for 2012 Season
Saturdays & Sundays & BH Mondays, free entry.
From 11.00am to 4.00pm commencing
Saturday March 31st until the end of October**

Dear Members and Friends.

We have spent an enjoyable couple of years setting up the Railway Heritage Centre at Sandford. We count ourselves lucky to have secured this gem of railway architecture and local history for opening to the public. Working with St Monica Trust has made our side of the project uncomplicated and a pleasure.

Our fine stone building dates from 1869 when the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company constructed the Cheddar Valley Branch Line. Together with the goods shed, now a handsome restaurant, and the stationmaster's house, once again occupied as a home, it forms one of the only B & E station complexes from this period still intact today. Sensitive restoration by St. Monica Trust rendered it 'good as new' and our policy has been to match this with refurbishment to capture the atmosphere of the railway in its heyday. Our aim - to inspire the young and revive memories for older visitors - seems to be working. We find that people of all ages enjoy their visit.

Your support is greatly appreciated. Please come and see us soon & tell your friends!



Stationmaster 'Sam'

A new resident arrived at the station in January 2012

- a life sized GRP bronze type statue of a 1950's

Stationmaster affectionately known as 'Strawberry Line Sam'. He came to us in need of a good home courtesy of North Somerset Council.



Red Ribbon Day

In June, members were invited to an Opening Event with a red silk ribbon cut by Gerald Lee, Director of St Monica Trust, and a tree planted by Sue Gunn using the silver presentation spade used by her great grandmother to 'cut the first sod' of the original railway in 1867.

An Educational Resource for 2012

This month, the Centre will be the backdrop for a short dance film 'Branchline' involving a cluster of primary schools from the area, SMT residents and local personalities. The film will bring in various aspects of the National Curriculum.

In May, it will provide young Rangers with a hub for an environmental effort along the Strawberry Line initiated by them for International Europarcs Day

Watch this Space

Brian Hillier's Replica Sandford and Banwell Signal Box Diagram

We have recently acquired a splendid replica Signal Box Diagram. Sadly, the signal box which stood line-side and opposite the Goods Shed has long since gone, having been demolished in the mid 1960's. The Diagram would have been positioned above the block shelf and its various instruments, giving the

Signalman a plan view of the signalling and track-work layout immediately to his front and extending to the station limits to either side.

Visitors to our station should be impressed with our modest but interesting block shelf display now repositioned in the Booking Office. However, the crowning glory is the colourful Box Diagram now on display.



Contribution by Bob Lovell

Sprucing Up' for 2012

Winter has been spent getting ready for the new season. From Saturday 31st March from 11am to 4pm we will open every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday until the end of October. Hot and cold drinks are now served and we have some very nice souvenir items as well as local railway publications plus the DVD "Memories of the Cheddar Valley Branch" for sale.

The very popular fridge magnet range based on the BR Station Totem shape has now been extended to include: Yatton, Congresbury, Winscombe, Axbridge & Cheddar as well as our Sandford & Banwell. These will be available at £2.50 each from the Centre



The Centre is Proving Popular

Judging by the following comments, all made in our Visitor Book on the 17th September 2011, it seems we're getting some things right:-

- 'Not enough milk bottles! I totally like it, trains are super cool.' – Lucy, Oxford
- 'I really enjoyed it and it is totally interesting.' – John & Becky, Winscombe
- 'A step back in time. Keep up the good work.' – Howard, Worle
- 'Nice to know that nothing is going to waste.' – Manny, Clevedon
- 'Superb—great restoration. My husband enjoyed it better than the museum in London!' – Pam & Phil, Axbridge
- 'Nice to see history preserved on such an important line.' – Chris, Winscombe
- 'A wonderful piece of history for our children.' – Kelly, Weston-s-Mare
- 'It was a lovely experience and the children loved playing trains.' – D., Lympsham

Thanks to everyone for leaving interesting comments in our visitor book

Included with the newsletter is one of our new flyers that will be appearing in various tourist information sites around the area.

See our web site www.sanfordstation.co.uk for more information and details on the articles in the newsletter.

Would you prefer to receive your next News Letter by email? If so please email us at brading1au@btinternet.com with your name, address & email details, thanks.

Please renew your membership if you have already not done so.

From Lois Brenchley & Trevor Perks; On behalf of Sandford Station Railway Heritage Ltd
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