

The Friends of Hebden Bridge Station - 2020

What have we been up to?

Well, it has been an 'interesting' year. We had our last official meeting on 2nd March 2020 and no meetings since then – March seems like a lifetime ago! Because of the continuing restrictions on meetings, we thought it would be useful to give you an up-to-date resumé of what the Friends have been up to this year.

Our Big Spring Clean Up had to be cancelled due to the 'lockdown' which was a disappointment as we had many members who were keen to be involved. However, we have since held an Autumn Clean Up and recruited more than the requisite 6 people to be litter-picking, tidying and removing weeds from paths around and at the Station. As you probably know we are recompensed for our efforts by Hebden Royd Town Council with the sum of £60, which is a useful addition to our coffers.

Having managed to get through the lockdown, we have held a few (socially distanced) Working Parties to tidy up the borders, pruning, planting, litter picking etc. In addition, some of our most active members have been watering and litter picking throughout the hot summer.

From Brighouse Friends, we gratefully received additional half-barrels for our extended Platform Two which have certainly enhanced the new extension. Two replacement barrels have now been requested recently as a couple of our original barrels are falling apart.



When we were on our Big Autumn Clean, we saw Tornado coming through on a special excursion

The Signal Box

The efforts to take over the Signal Box, under the umbrella of the Community Land Trust, continue but are effectively on hold for the moment. Nevertheless, progress has been made so that we are very hopeful that the future of the Signal Box is secure. The Signal Box has been painted and spruced up by Network Rail so that it is looking especially attractive. On our website there are links to two films made by FARSAP.

<http://www.hbstationfriends.org.uk/index.shtml>

We are still uncertain when the work to create an extension to the existing car park is to start, although we hope that it will be before the end of this year. In the meantime, major structural work is being carried out on the bridge carrying the tracks above Mayroyd Lane. It is expected that the work will be completed by the end of November 2020.



The Lamp Room is looking smarter.



Dave Norton, our Station Manager, retired at the end of August – he really didn't seem old enough! We thanked him warmly for all his efforts and help over the years. Our new Station Manager is Dean Howard, who we are hoping to meet at some point in the future.

Book Swap and Station Café

Our Book Swap continues to thrive. It seems to be a much-valued part of our activities. Conscientious members of the Friends have helped keep the shelves stocked. We now have an unusual addition to the waiting room on Platform 2 in the guise of a stuffed Heron which sits on one of the bookcases looking a little intimidating. Opinions about the Heron vary.

It has been a tough year for Lisa and Antoinette in the Station Café. They have now reopened and coped well with the difficulties in accommodating social distancing rules for their customers. Their efforts are much appreciated. The café adds a friendly and welcoming atmosphere to the Station, not least through the helpfulness and warmth of Lisa and Antoinette. We have made an application to Northern for benches to the front of the Station which the café's customers can use. These benches would be a welcome addition to the seating outside the Station and will be invaluable as the COVID-19 restrictions continue. Needless to say, the Café is a very attractive venue for those who want to shelter under the platform canopy to enjoy their bacon butties while being suitably socially distanced. All users of Hebden Bridge Station are encouraged to continue to support Lisa and Antoinette.

Finally, big thanks must go to all of the members of the Friends who have helped maintain the borders, planters, plant swap, information boxes, water-butt. I hope you'll agree the Station is looking much better for all of the Friends' efforts.

David Taylor's book "Hebden Bridge and the Railway in the Nineteenth Century" (2019) is selling well and if you haven't yet bought a copy, I would urge you to do so. There is a link on our website on how to buy a copy:

<http://www.hbstationfriends.org.uk/news.shtml>

Lesley Mackay, Secretary, Friends of Hebden Bridge Station 21st October, 2020

