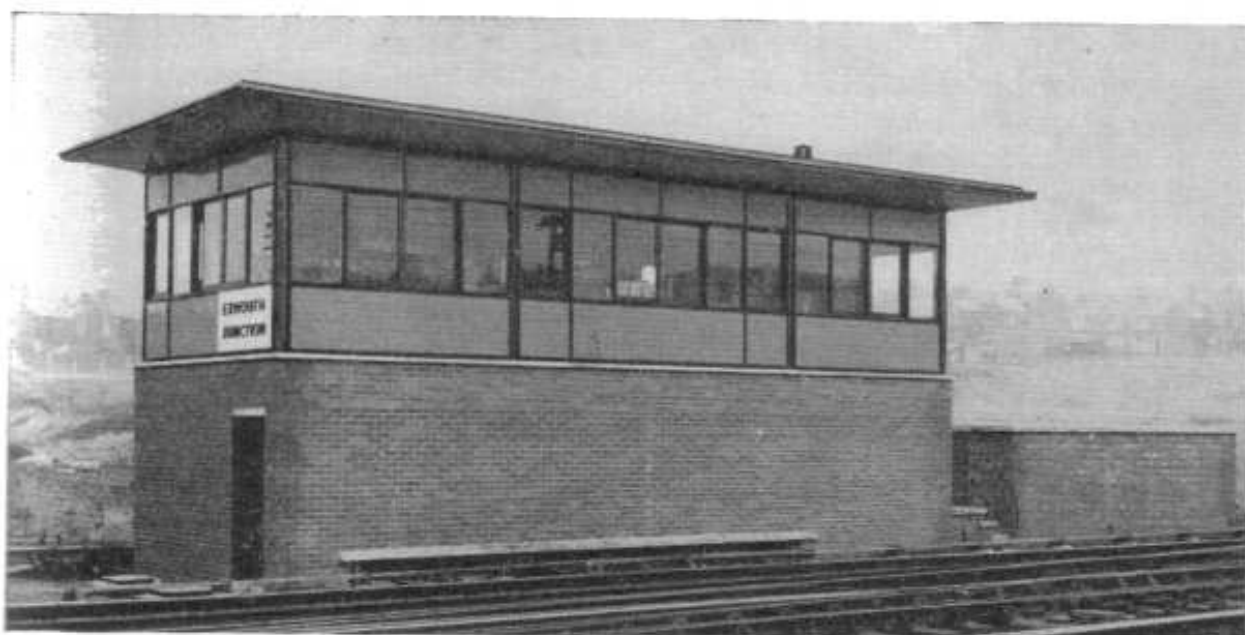


New Signalbox at Exmouth Junction



New signalbox at Exmouth Junction, in the fork between the main line and the Exmouth branch

ANOTHER pre-grouping signalbox to be replaced by a modern structure, under the Southern Region's maintenance renewal programme, is at Exmouth Junction, where the line to Topsham, Exmouth, and Budleigh Salterton leaves the main Exeter-Salisbury line, to rejoin it at Sidmouth Junction. Besides dealing with both main and branch line trains, the new box, situated in the fork of the junction, controls also the entrance to the locomotive depot, the Chief Civil Engineer's pre-cast concrete depot, and the sidings on each side of the line. It was opened in November last.

The old box, which contained a 49-lever Stevens-type locking frame, as widely used by the former London & South Western Railway, and had been enlarged twice, stood where it would have blocked access to the proposed new carriage sheds from both main and branch lines.

The train signalling between Exeter and Pinhoe on the main, and Topsham on the branch, line was controlled by Sykes's lock-and-block. This has given place to three-position block with modern standard British Railways controls, using the Southern Region's own type of instrument. With this the block indicators for the sections in advance can be turned to face the train-booking desk.

Running signals are upper quadrant semaphores, with a route indicator for movements from the up main line to the sidings on that side; the distant signal from Exeter is power operated.

The box was designed in the Architect's office in the Chief Civil Engineer's department at Waterloo and built by that engineer's district staff. The basic structure is of load-carrying cavity brickwork with reinforced concrete floors on steel frame supports. Lightweight steel sections form the roof frame, carrying an aluminium deck-sheet with an insulated and felt finish. The decking is cantilevered out to form a canopy and give some protection against sun glare and minimise the obscuring effect of driving rain on the windows.

A portion of the cabin wall is pre-fabricated with teak framing incorporating the sliding windows and panels below cill level. These have an external face of coloured vitreous-enamelled steel sheets on Asbestolux backing, plastic-faced plywood internally, and glassfibre insulation included between the two faces. This finish facilitates cleaning and will reduce maintenance costs. The ceiling, of asbestos-fibre tiles, provides good acoustics on the operating floor.

Lighting fittings are recessed into the ceiling panels and dimmer switches enable the signalman to adjust lighting

intensity to his own requirements. There is central heating from a solid-fuel boiler and the signalman's cooking and washing facilities are in keeping with modern standards.

The box contains a 64-lever Westinghouse-style "A3" lever frame, with catch-handle locking actuation, and "L"-type lever locks and circuit controllers; this number of levers provides for the introduction later of local diesel services in the East Devon area, the servicing depot for which will be at Exmouth Junction. There are 13 track circuits indicated on duplicate illuminated diagrams; occupancy of a section is shown

by a red oval sign housing two telephone-type lamps. A "power off" indicator also is provided.

The relay room is in the basement and houses also the cable terminations and rectifiers for charging the central batteries; there is also a deep sink with water supply for washing primary cells housed in the basement. Points and point locks, and so forth, are operated through standard B.R. galvanised channel rodding, with steel-bushed grease-lubricated cranks throughout the outside connections. The signalling scheme was designed and the signalling apparatus installed by the staff of the Signal Engineer at Wimbledon.



Interior of the new box, showing the lever frame, illuminated diagrams and instruments, with advance indicators set to face the train-booking desk