

Princes Risborough North Signal Box

Newsletter



No. 1 - Summer 2015

Dear Supporter,

Welcome to the first PRNB Newsletter. We've made significant progress with the restoration of the signal box over the last year and a half since Network Rail granted us access and feel it's well worth sharing this with our supporters. The objective of this newsletter is to provide a more detailed update on the restoration progress. Firstly we must acknowledge and thank all our supporters whose donations from the initial appeal in 2011 have made this possible. Since that appeal, the money has continued to trickle in and because we spend the money very carefully we have managed to make it last this long.

Sash Windows

The sash window repairs are an ongoing task. Some recover with a rub down and repaint but others require some replacement of rotten wood. The picture opposite illustrates this. In addition we have to replace panes of glass which are broken/missing. During the winter months the putty drying process proved to be very slow which was frustrating. However with the warmer/sunnier weather that should not be such a problem as we continue the work.

Bucks Free Press » News

NEWS

Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railways volunteers and Bucks UTC students start improvement works to semi-derelict signal box in Princes Risborough



Princes Risborough North signal box.

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Inevitably some sash windows are beyond repair and require complete replacement units. We are delighted to announce that students from the Buckinghamshire UTC are to manufacture these at their joinery workshop in Aylesbury. This news article appeared in the Bucks Free press. For the full story go to...

[http://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/12957166.Heritage railway volunteers team up with students to start improvement works to semi derelict signal box/](http://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/12957166.Heritage_railway_volunteers_team_up_with_students_to_start_improvement_works_to_semi_derelict_signal_box/)

For ease...

Google search "bucks utc signal box" for this and other similar news clips.

The students are studying construction and with the UTC focusing on heritage it's a perfect partnership.



Risborough Box Group

The replacement of each pair of sash windows provides an external image of progress but there is of course a lot more happening that is not so obvious. It's worth noting some of the main structural problems that have been dealt with since we gained access on Oct 2013. One of the more serious was the movement of the north wall as can be seen in these pictures showing it separating from the rest of the building. At the upper window sill level we've recorded about ¾" of movement. This has been halted by the insertion of tie-rods running the complete length of the box with patress plates at either end.



Where support posts and window sills have rotted the dead wood is cut out. New pieces are fabricated and fitted in to match. Once painted looks as good as new and able to take the weight bearing required to keep the structure sound. We've tackled two locations so far with at least another 3 or 4 that we know about to do.

Nameboards

We've had new nameboards cast from aluminium after a collection from a small group of volunteers. Now painted and ready for mounting on the front of the box - see photograph.

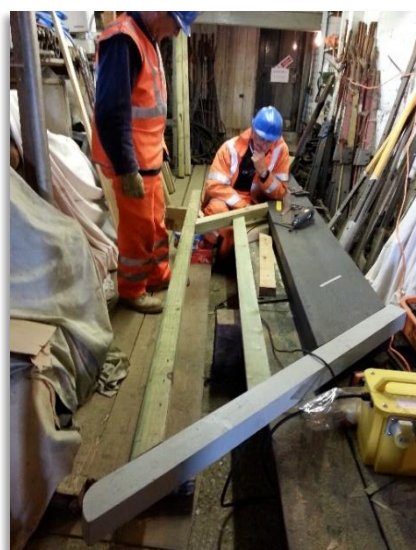


We intend to have an official unveiling ceremony later in the summer and will invite a suitable dignitary to perform this task for us. Before we can arrange this we need to improve access to the signal box which leads nicely onto the next news article.



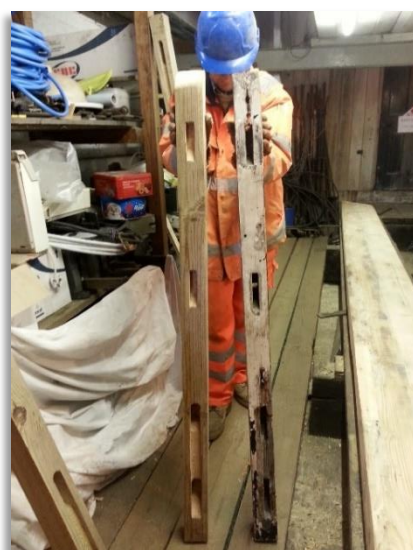
Staircase

Design and fabrication of all the pieces required to put back the staircase has been continuing at a pace. The joinery department which repaired many of the sash windows upstairs has moved down to the ground floor where the parts have been cut and machined. The picture to the right shows the right hand string being checked for position for the first time and allowing for adjustments to be made for when it's ready for permanent fixing.



One of the strings and associated parts being made to fit in the downstairs area by Jeff and Richard (left). Richard holding one "old" and one "new" newel post (right).

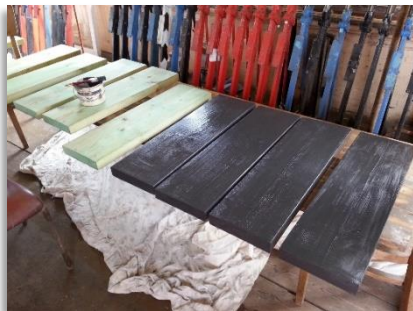
When the staircase is fully restored it will greatly improve the access for volunteers and, hopefully in the near future, visitors!!



Other pictures showing the hand rails being formed (left). Cut out section on newel post to accommodate the screw and safety bar that resides across each window (right).



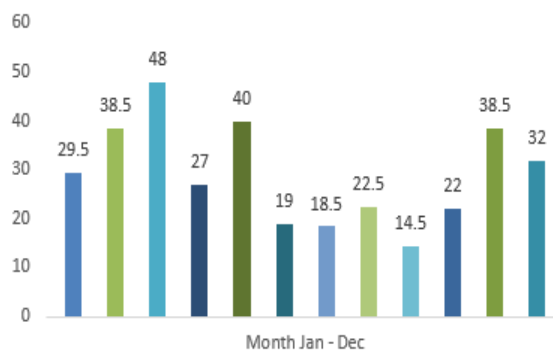
Tenon joints at top of string for fixing to newel post (lower left). Steps being painted (lower right). Fortunately we still have the original tread plates and chairs to hold each step in place.



Volunteer Time

We capture and record the number of hours/days spent on this restoration project as best we can. At some stage in the future when we apply for grants etc the “man days” spent can be apportioned to a “cost” so that helps with the matching funds portion of any grant money we might receive. The graph shows the number of days per month recorded during 2014. As always we are keen for more active members so do get in touch if you’d like to join the team no matter how little spare time you may have.

2014 Working Days per Month



Some of the restoration team looking out of the NW rear window on a sunny spring afternoon as viewed from Ercol's (left). Internal photo of on-going work (right).

Why not join us??



Future lease

We are in negotiations with Network Rail regarding a lease for the signal box and curtilage (the bit we use now). This is NOT the lease for the whole site covering CPPR access to the station to run trains. It's something to give us more security regarding box access. It's highly likely we will need to put up a fence around the agreed area. In this case we might have more freedom to take visitors inside the box by arrangement. Especially with the new staircase in place. We're hoping the fence can be a simple type which won't overstretch our coffers!

Fundraising

We have a small fundraising group consisting of Steve Growcott, Roger Shipway and Alan Jeffries who are examining various ways to raise the additional funds required to keep this project going. These are not insignificant sums of money so we will be looking to apply for grants where we think we may be successful provided we can secure a lease on the box first!! This is a new experience for the three of us so if you feel you have some expertise or advice to offer in this area we would be most grateful to hear from you. Or if you have other ideas on fundraising and/or wish to get involved then please come forward. We aim to meet once a month at Chinnor over a fair number of cups of tea and would be delighted with additional support. In the meantime we still rely on donations to keep the project going so if you are able to contribute we would be most grateful.

That's it folks. Hope you enjoyed this newsletter. We'll produce more as the progress dictates rather than periodically for future editions.

Any comments/feedback to myself at alanj27@hotmail.com (Alan Jeffries)

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Risborough Box Group