

Princes Risborough North Signal Box

Newsletter



No. 3 - Summer 2016

Dear Supporter,

Welcome to another PRNB newsletter. Restoration work continues in many areas as usual. More rotten timber from the corner pillars, windows and sills have been cut out and replaced. We've re-pointed part of the rear wall and re-glazed and painted many more sash windows.

Short-term Lease Agreement

Earlier in the year we were delighted to report that we have this in place which offers us a little more security. It's a 3 year deal and formalised with NR. The agreement involved erecting a fence around the agreed boundary which now provides us access to the rear of the box. It does also mean we are able to bring visitors into the box and to date we have been open four times for various groups. This is of course a temporary arrangement until the full lease is in place. It's not shown but we've also installed a small gate thus providing a route onto the NR land. This will be helpful for access during the initial stages of the vegetation clearing and platform reconstruction.



Left – members of the PRNB team installing fence corner post at the rear of the signal box. Care being taken to identify the location of electricity supplies and any other underground installations.

Below – The Bubble at PRNB soon after arriving on its historic run to Princes Risborough. A scene now repeated on a regular basis. All change for Banbury and London Marylebone. Watch this space!

Look who dropped by

On Saturday 25th June we downed tools and set off along the Thame branch to Thame Junction. The Bubble soon arrived and on board was a rep from Network Rail who had vital papers with him. Papers that required a signature from cprra. We climbed on board and the papers duly signed by Steve Growcott. From that moment on we were allowed to open the boundary gate and proceed onto the Thame branch which we did with much excitement. The beginning of train services to Risborough had just begun.



Risborough Box Group

Nameboard Unveiling

On Monday 4th July, the start of Risborough Festival week, we were delighted when the new Mayor of Princes Risborough, Matt Walsh agreed to officially unveil our new GWR style nameboard. In attendance were a number of Chiltern and Network Rail personnel plus the usual PRNB Team members. This is one of a pair which were forged from aluminium and paid for by some of the PRNB Team. The signal box really is looking smart again.



Capturing the moment. Cllr Matt Walsh had just cut the tie ropes. You can see the black covering dropping to the floor and unveiling our brand new nameboard. Photo Barry Blight



Above - We often get asked about the locking mechanism. Here Steve Growcott is explaining to Matt Walsh how the device works to safeguard the signalling of trains.

Below middle – Matt Walsh and Alan Jeffries concluding the ceremony with a hand shake. Looked on by Mark Cooper and Chris Turner from Chiltern Railways and Steve Growcott.



Below – You could be forgiven thinking the box has twisted again. Modern day camera features thankfully



Photos Barry Blight



Risborough Box Group

PRNB Events

We've staged a number of formal events in the signal box this year. We commenced with one to mark the 25th year of closure of the box on 7th February. About a dozen ex signalmen/staff who manned or worked within the box were invited back to visit after NR had extended safety cover by closing the rear sidings. It was interesting to hear some of the stories and tales from the past.

Soon after, we managed to secure the short term lease mentioned earlier in this newsletter so we proceeded with an open day on 21st May for supporters who had made donations and helped in other ways. This was followed by another open days for cprra members on 26th June. Both being well patronised.

The formal unveiling of the nameboard came next as previously reported in this newsletter on 4th July.

Then the biggest one. Opening to the public for the very first time so something very new! We chose Saturday 9th July as that was the final day of the Risborough Festival week. The Risborough council kindly promoted this day through their official programme which reached 8000 homes in the surrounding area. It was an amazing success with over 100 visitors young and old. Amazingly the visitors arrived evenly throughout the day so we were never overrun nor never without anybody to talk to. Pulling the levers proved to be one of the popular actions and some really thought they were about to divert a train off the main and round to Aylesbury. We owe a thanks to the staff of the local council for all their help in promoting this.



Thanks to Anne Saunders and Gareth Smith for supplying these photographs. Anne and Gareth were two of the visitors on the day and can be seen pictured individually on the intermediate floor. In view also the ladder we "used to use" to gain access to the operating floor before we rebuilt the staircase.

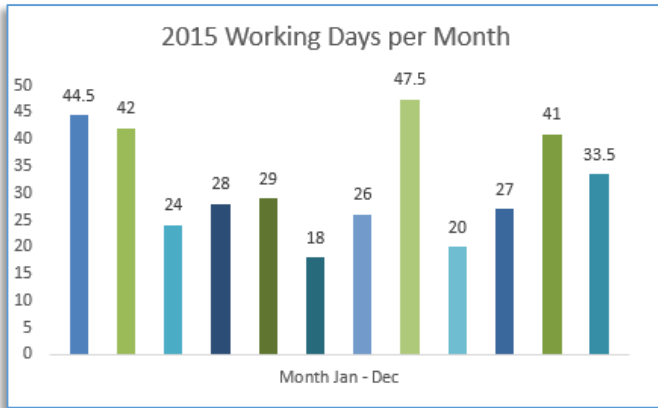
It was generally felt that the open day was a success and paves the way for future events such as this.

It's worth noting that the signal box has also been used on a number of occasions for training and meeting purposes with Network Rail. This included discussions on how the C&PRRA take "control" of the Thame Branch when the trains services resume in the very near future.



Volunteer Days

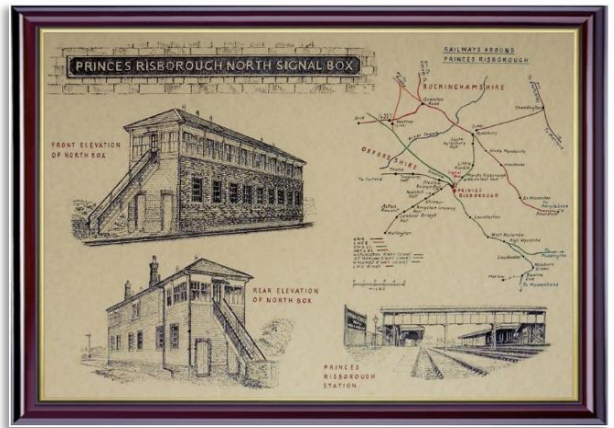
Volunteer days continue to be recorded as this is likely to help with possible grant application.



The graph illustrates the number of working days spent on the project during 2015. This was slightly up on the previous year with a total of 380.5 days attendance. Will 2016 be higher again? Maybe think about some involvement if you have not yet done so to date. Any amount of volunteer time is much appreciated no matter how small so get in touch (detail at end of newsletter) if you want to have a chat about it.

Fundraising

We still have available PRNB prints for sale at £35. These frames are A3 in size and created as one of our fundraising schemes. By purchasing one you are contributing directly to the restoration fund. If you would like one please get in contact. In all cases I will try to hand deliver it if you live within (or close to) the geographic triangle of Chinnor, Risborough and Wokingham in Berkshire. Details at bottom of this page.



Sponsored Walk

Anne Saunders, pictured on previous page wants to do a sponsored walk to raise money to help pay for the emergency repair costs to one of the signal box chimneys which may not survive another windy autumn.

Anne came along as a visitor to our open day. She returned a few weeks later to purchase one of the PRNB prints and stayed for 4 hours. Such was her enjoyment of "just being there". Over lunch she heard about the state of one of the chimneys and the plans/costs to repair it. With that she announced her desire to help and suggested doing a 10 mile sponsored walk. This is now planned for Sunday 9th October and starts at PRNB. Part of the walk will be trackside and progress to the Chinnor signal box and back.

Please do consider sponsoring Anne and help to cover the costs of this repair of which the hire of an elevated work platform is likely to be the biggest. Either pledge direct to Ann at anne@2359.me or use my contact details below.

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

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