

Princes Risborough North Signal Box

Newsletter



Summer 2017

Dear Supporter,

Welcome to another PRNB newsletter. Inevitably with the extension project at Risborough kicking off it has been difficult to maintain focus and the pace of work previously enjoyed with the signal box. However, the restoration still progresses in a number of areas despite the workforce being spread across the two projects. As well as "news" from the box I've also featured "views" from the box (extension works) since this is likely to be of interest to many of you signal box supporters.

99 Year Lease Agreement

I guess I should start with one of the most important pieces of news regarding the box (including the required operating area around it) and that is that we are now in possession of a full 99 year lease. Earlier this year the CPRRA paid the second instalment to Network Rail and the lease was executed on 1st March 2017. The railway is now fully responsible for the structure and its upkeep and any liabilities that go with it. In effect it belongs to us. Congratulations must go to the board members who strived to get this finally completed.

North Chimney Repairs

Thanks to the money raised last year by Anne Saunders, the cost for the repairs to the chimney at the north end of the box has been covered and the job completed.

Right - you can see the scaffolding that was erected with Steve and Richard making a closer inspection of the work required. Initially it was thought that the failed mortar would require all the bricks to be removed and rebuilt but that was fortunately not the case.



Stabilising, slate works, flashing replacement and repointing were all required. The "bend" created when the top section was rebuilt at some stage in its history will remain. The scaffolding was then moved to the South chimney for similar works. In addition to the scaffolding, our own tower was erected at the rear of the box to allow repairs to the soffits and fascia boards.

Left – Steve getting a bird's eye view from the roof of the signal box on a clear sunny day.



Risborough Box Group

Sash Window Repairs

The slightly narrower sash windows to the left of the staircase as you walk up it have been re-fabricated with pieces from other windows by the sterling work of Jeff and Nick. They also manufactured new window bar mouldings from scratch using a routing table. These are the ones which the Aylesbury Technical College were going to make for us but unfortunately they never materialised.

Below left – One of the pair in question which has just been reglazed.

Below right – Close up of labels showing the ongoing support from Quickseal who kindly sponsor all our glass requirements.



NR Corporate Volunteers

We've continued to have a number of groups from Network Rail spend their corporate volunteering days at PRNB. Some have also worked on the extension project. The main task was painting the roof inside the box and cutting back vegetation on the extension project. Here are a collection of photographs captured over multiple days. We are most grateful to all of them for choosing to work on our project and hope to see them back on an on-going basis. In fact the next groups have planned to visit in July and August and potentially again in September. Some will likely work on the extension project while the weather permits then back in the signal box during the winter months.



Views from the Signal Box

As mentioned here's the article on "views" not "news" from the box. I tried to think of a witty slogan based on that old comedy program "Not the 9 'o Clock News" but could not come up with one. No doubt I'll have a flood of them from the S&T Joke Department once I've published this! These are all fairly recent ones for your perusal.



The top photo shows DR 77002 parked up just north of the box. Rotating clockwise the next photo shows a set of points laid out under construction with original platform beyond to the left. Next the Flying Scotsman pulling away from platform 2. Then a photo showing a gap in the line south of the bridge where the points for sidings 1 and 2 once stood. When refurbished this will go back but rotated by 180 degrees to form part of the run round loop to the south of our platform. The No.1 siding then being removed and positioned alongside our platform when its construction is complete. Then the same gap but looking south with our box van in position. Finally in the centre the old original platform with new oversail blocks having just been laid.

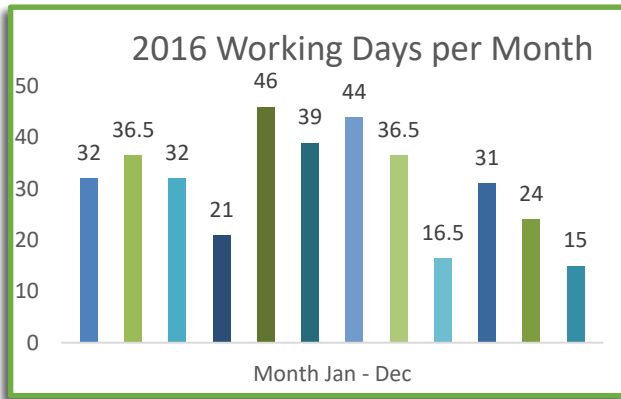
PICPR

Since the CPRRA extended its service to Risborough this new position has had to be staffed during operational days when any of our trains travel beyond Thame Junction. Whilst the signal box is NOT an operational building the PICPR occasionally uses the box as his base. The "Person In Charge Princes Risborough" is responsible for taking "control" of the Thame branch and sidings at Risborough once contact has been made with NR operations at Marylebone.



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 2016. As expected the days spent on the project was going to be affected once manpower was to be diverted to the Risborough extension.

However, it's encouraging that time is still being spent there to keep the restoration on progress. Why not come and join us?

Risborough Festival – PRNB Opening

The local council asked us if we would be willing to open the box to the residents of Princes Risborough as part of their week-long festival as we did last year. We were delighted to do so of course so opened from 10:00 to 16:00 on Friday 7th July which was the “Open Buildings” day within the festival. We had a steady stream of over one hundred adults and children during the day. The children especially enjoying the pulling of the levers. Note the correct use of the duster!



Sponsored Walk – Sunday 24th September

Anne Saunders is back again to do another sponsored walk in aid of the PRNB restoration fund. This time it's a 12 mile walk along the Phoenix Trail starting and finishing at the signal box. Funds for keeping the restoration of the signal box are always on-going as you would expect so please do consider helping if you can by sponsoring Anne with her gallant effort. Our main focus is still on structural timber repairs. Several of the pillars between the windows, structural sills, transoms etc. need rotten sections cut out and replaced. We need to make the building fully sound before we can move on to the signalling equipment restoration. Sponsor pledges to me please using either of my contact details below. Cheques payable to CPRRA. Many Thanks.



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

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