

Princes Risborough North Signal Box

Newsletter



Winter 2019

Dear Supporter,

Welcome to another PRNB newsletter. In keeping with GDPR (data protection) guidelines I polled the distribution list last year to ensure you were happy to keep receiving this circulation. As a result the list is a little shorter than before so please do feel free to pass onto anyone you feel may be interested and advise them to simply request to be added for future copies. My email address is at the end of this newsletter.

Princes Risborough Reconnected



Photo – Mike Shorthouse

Above – GWR 5526 prepares to leave Princes Risborough for Chinnor with one of our Santa Specials on 16th Dec 2018. The commanding signal box can be seen overlooking in the distance.

PRNB Operational Again

Some of the levers in the signal box frame have now been connected to the northern end of the run-round loop of Platform 4. Levers 35 to 40 (between the yellow tread plates shown in the photo on the right) will now be used to operate the points so we have the option of using a single engine for passenger services in 2019. Since the service was restored in August last year it's had to rely on a "Top and Tail" configuration usually with a diesel and steam locomotive at either end of the train.

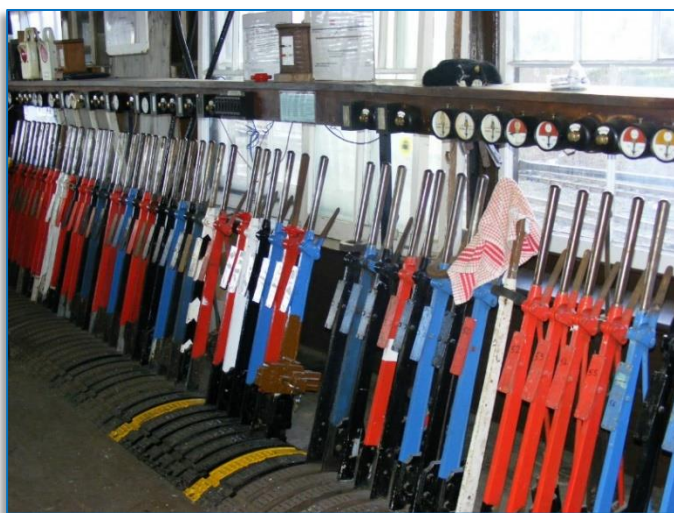


Photo - Steve Growcott





Photo - Steve Growcott

This is actually a temporary arrangement because in time we want the south end of the signal box (which is now separated by the restored partition) to be the operational part with the north end the visitor section hosting the demonstration lever frame and museum. However, it will be some time before the north end can be converted so for now this arrangement is in place. It's good to see cranks and rods emerging from beneath the signal box again.

Left - Most of the external point rodding, cranks and rodding stools to make the points work were recovered from Princes Risborough by CPRRA volunteers working under BR supervision, when the box closed in 1991. After 28 years in storage, they have finally come home!

South West Corner Wood Rot

Just about all of the major pieces of rotten timber have been replaced. Attention has been focused on the SW and SE corners of the signal box where sills and upright posts have been repaired. It was also an opportunity to finish the pair of sash windows in the SE corner.



The insert shows how bad the rotten timber was in the SW corner. This has all been cut out and repaired as shown in the bigger photo if you look closely.

Frame extension

Part of last year's grant from the Railway Heritage Trust allowed us to have manufactured and reinstate the support structure (mainly tubular steel legs and fittings) for the South end of the frame, which had been removed in the BR era. That end of the frame (to be operational one day) has no interlocking equipment under it as it was removed when the layout was simplified by BR in 1968. We shall be restoring it using kit recovered from Radyr Junction, Banbury North and elsewhere. Until that is done we can't use the South end levers, and that is why the "Ground frame" has had to be temporarily installed using levers North of the partition. First we need to finish restoring the building itself, and then sort out the listed building consent to create a new access at the North end.



Glazing – Rear Windows

It was decided to “contract out” the work to replace all the glass in the downstairs windows at the rear of the box. This was always going to be a fairly lengthy job so getting a contractor in released the volunteers to concentrate on other tasks. The work was completed in the summer and the amount of light entering the locking room now has changed the conditions in there immensely.



Quickseal, our glass sponsor from Aylesbury has done us proud again by supplying free of charge all the glass required to complete this work and also enough for when we tackle the front windows. Our thanks to Eddie Howes who owns the company.

Left – Image showing the newly glazed windows of the downstairs locking room. Note also the second GWR nameboard in place. This was done in time to welcome the first passenger train into Platform 4 last August.

Ceiling and Paintwork

A lot of effort has been put into getting the ceiling and internal walls painted. Whilst there is still more to be done it's evident that the inside of the box is looking much more clean and tidy.

Whilst the rotten structural timber has been cut out and replaced we are aware of a few other bits here and there that need doing. Plus some of the paintwork from the early years of the PRNB restoration (mostly outside) has finally aged and requires a re-paint.



Right – The freshly painted ceiling looking better than it has done for well over two decades!

Princes Risborough Festival Week – PRNB Public Opening

Once again we are delighted to open the signal box to the local community as part of the council organised festival week activities. This will be our 4th year of involvement and will take place **on Saturday 6th July from 10:00 to 16:00.**

In past years we have always had a steady flow of visitors who are keen to see how things have been progressing. It also provides us with the opportunity to promote the railway in general and raise some funds for the signal box. At the time of writing ideas are being discussed how we may be able to put on more of a show now we have platform 4 available to us.

Additional PRNB Open Days

As well as opening during the festival week, we've decided to offer the general public at large and railway enthusiasts an opportunity to visit the box during 2019. Dates for these will be **Saturday 18th May and Saturday 12th October both from 10:00 to 16:00.**



Anne's Sponsored Walk

Congratulations to Anne Saunders and her boyfriend Gareth for completing another sponsored walk last year in aid of the PRNB fund. They were also accompanied by Andrew Longworth, another CPRRA member who wanted to take up the challenge. Together they developed a route which included all 8 public crossing points across the line. A total of 17 miles from Risborough to Chinnor and back again. Just over £600 was raised and as I write Anne is planning another walk. Provisional date is Sunday 9th June.



Would any of our readers like to join her and try to raise some extra funds? Get in touch if this is of interest and I'll keep you posted on developments. Current thinking is to use the same route but with a free relaxing train ride back to Princes Risborough including tea and cake.

Risex 2019

Once again we will be attending this model railway exhibition with our informational display boards, leaflets and other promotional material. We'll have two stalls as we did last year, one concentrating on PRNB and the other on the railway in general.

Attendance is always very good so why not come along to support us and enjoy the many model railway track layouts. Apparently it's quieter in the afternoon so if that's preferred, come then.

Admission – Adults £4 – Children £2

Light refreshments and homemade cakes available

For more information on this event go to <http://www.rdmrc.org.uk/risex2019.htm>

Presented by Risborough & District Model Railway Club

RISEX 2019

MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

Community Centre
PRINCES RISBOROUGH
Saturday 23rd February 2019
10am to 5pm



Featuring some of the very best local layouts, trade support & demonstrations.
Light refreshments will be available.
Community Centre, Wades Park, Stratton Road,
Princes Risborough, Bucks, HP27 9AX
See our website for full details rdmrc.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1173999



Making PRNB Greener

A little outside of the scope of the signal box restoration but we would like to thank The Woodland Trust for granting us new tree and bush saplings from their "Free trees for schools and communities" project. These were required to help re-establish a greener environment around the site of the signal box and platform 4. In November we planted over 400 saplings with another batch of the same number arriving in March. Over time we hope this will hide much of the industrial development across the boundary line and provide a lot more habitable space for the local wildlife.

Any comments/feedback to myself at Funding@RisboroughBox.org.uk (Alan Jeffries)

Postal Address: PRNB Fund, 27 Bedfordshire Way, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 3BA.



Risborough Box Group