

On Friday November 27th Sir William McAlpine opened the newly restored staircase at Princes Risborough North Signalbox

Over the last two years the Risborough Box Group of volunteers from Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway Association have been working every weekend to restore the largest surviving GWR signalbox, which closed in 1991. A major milestone has been reached with the erection of a newly restored main staircase. (The old one had been taken down in the '00s by Railtrack contractors.)

Sir William McAlpine accepted an invitation to open the new staircase on November 27 accompanied by senior Network Rail and Chiltern Railways teams. The Railway Heritage Trust was also heavily represented, and all had a chance to look at the renovation work so far carried out.



As guests start to arrive, Marag the dog wonders whether a sandwich might be spared.

Although only 3/4 of the box can be seen here and there is much restoration yet to be done, the size and atmosphere can be appreciated.



Before restoration began, the building had nearly 200 smashed windows and had been boarded up in the late '90s. Pigeons, weather, a water leak and vandals took their toll.

Shifted brickwork and rotting timbers number among the challenges for the volunteers, along with the missing staircase.

Until now, the only way to reach the operating level has been via a hole in the floor (seen here in 2013)!

