THE POST OFFICE
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS' JOURNAL

Vol. XXIX October, 1936 Part 3

Kiosks

By F. J. JUDD

A brief review of the earliest types of telephone kiosks is given and the new Jubilee Kiosk described

Introduction.

IT may come as a surprise to many to be reminded that the now well known and extremely useful telephone kiosk is a comparatively recent innovation as apart from a very small number provided by the National Telephone Company, the first kiosks, constructed in wood, were not introduced until 1912 and then only in very limited quantities.

In 1913 concrete construction was first mooted, but it was not until 1918 that serious consideration was given to this form of manufacture. In 1921 kiosks modelled to the same design as the wood structure made their appearance.

In view of present day activities in connexion with the provision of kiosks it may be of interest to note that in 1918 it was considered undesirable, owing to the supposed reasons of misuse and theft, to provide kiosks unless there were no alternative.

Kiosks, Nos. 1, 2 and 4.

The original type of kiosk, known as Kiosk No. 1 (Fig. **1**), left much to be desired from an appearance point of view and when it was realized in 1927 that the kiosk had come to stay and increase in number, the eminent architect, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, R.A., was commissioned to furnish a new design, resulting in the introduction of the cast iron kiosk No. 2 (Fig. **2**) now so well known in the Metropolitan area and perhaps to a somewhat lesser degree in the larger provincial cities.

A telephone kiosk combined with a stamp-selling machine, known as kiosk No. 4 (Fig. **4**) designed on the general lines of kiosk No. 2, but of more generous dimensions, has been provided to meet special circumstances, and 50 such structures are at the present time in existence, but further provision of this class of kiosk is not being made.

The Concrete Kiosk.

Owing to the high initial cost of kiosks No. 2 it was decided to give further attention to the possibilities of improving the appearance of the concrete type structure and in 1929 kiosk No. 3 (Fig. **3**), again to a design by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, made its appearance and was adopted for general use in urban districts, the cast iron model No. 2 being utilized as the standard for the Metropolitan area and for a limited number of sites possessing outstanding architectural interest in other localities.

The scheme of decoration was given close attention and the designer finally recommended the well-known light portland (Clipsham) stone with window and door frames in Post Office red.

Experience has proved that concrete generally is difficult to obtain in standard quality and in spite of every precaution being taken by the periodical testing of samples of cement and aggregate, difficulties arise in the form of disintegration and scaling, etc., and such troubles are difficult to deal with efficiently and economically.

The handling and transport of concrete kiosks which, in spite of care in design and construction, are inherently fragile, presents difficult features and these disadvantages, coupled with the ever-present problems associated with the necessity for maintaining a satisfactory appearance, have finally led to the abandonment of concrete and the adoption of cast iron as the one standard for future provision.

The Jubilee Kiosk.

The new kiosk No. 6 (Fig. **5**), perhaps already better known as the Jubilee Kiosk, has been designed by Sir Gilbert Scott and has been approved by the Royal Fine Arts Commission. The policy of substantially increasing the number of telephone kiosks in rural areas has rendered it highly desirable to give careful consideration to the choice of a decorative scheme that will ensure adequate advertising value to the telephone service, and the choice of colour somewhat naturally falls to the familiar Post Office red. This colour, although not without objections from some quarters on æsthetic grounds has nevertheless received the approval of the Royal Fine Arts Commission and this approval is supported by the Councils for the Preservation of Rural England, Wales and Soctland, thus placing the Post Office in a particularly strong position to justify the choice made.

Kiosk No. 6, as would be expected from the source of architectural design, presents particularly fine proportions and simple, dignified lines. The over-all dimensions are:—Height, 8 ft. 4 in.; width, 3 ft. 0¼ in.; depth, 3 ft. 0¼ in., with a door height of 6 ft. 5¼ in. A modernistic touch, not over-emphasized, is introduced by the horizontal glazing scheme and this feature furnishes a remarkably free view from the inside of the kiosk.

FIG. 1.—KIOSK NO. 1.

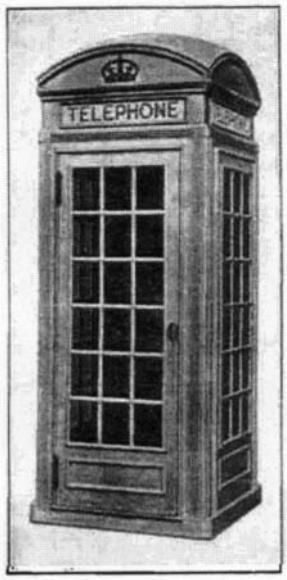

FIG. 2—KIOSK NO. 2.

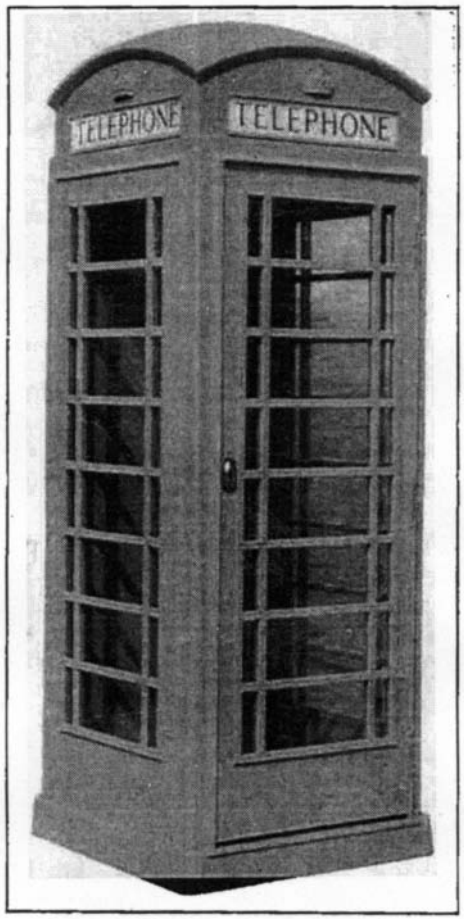

FIG. 5—JUBILEE KIOSK.

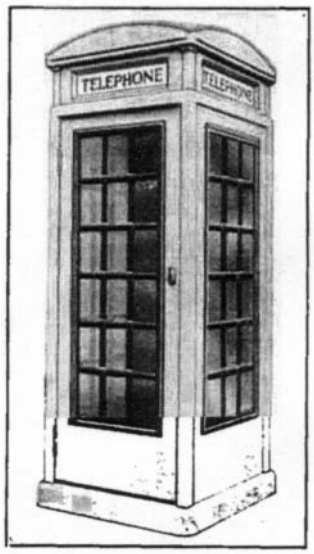

FIG. 3—KIOSK NO. 3.

FIG. 4—KIOSK NO. 4.

The kiosk comprises 18 cast iron parts consisting of:—

1 cill frame;
2 corner pillars prepared for door and side;
2 corner pillars prepared for side and back;
1 transom rail for top of door;
1 transom rail for back;
2 transom rails for sides;
2 crown panels for front and back;
2 crown panels for sides;
1 dome top.
2 side panels prepared for glazing;
1 solid back panel;
1 glazing frame for door.

There are also 24 large and 48 small glazing frame beads.

The kiosks are all best tough grey cast iron thoroughly cleansed and dressed, and considerable care is taken to ensure that all joints are carefully faced and fitted and all screw holes are accurately drilled to template. Every kiosk has to be completely erected on the contractors' premises, the glazing completed with 26 oz. glass, the door hung and restraining straps fitted. After approval by the Department's testing officer the kiosks are dismantled and held pending demand. The door of the kiosk is constructed in teak and the total weight of the structure without apparatus is 13½ cwt.

A new form of door-closing spring is provided giving, by oil check action, a strong, rapid movement for travel up to approximately 1 inch of the closed position, the final movement being entirely without shock.

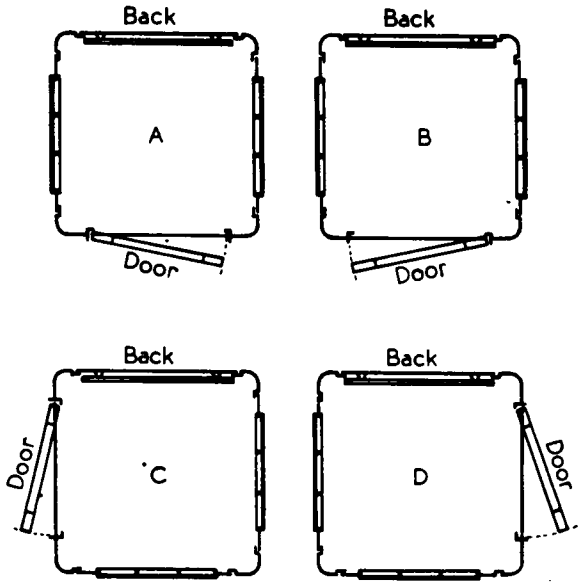

FIG. 6— FOUR TYPES OF KIOSK NO. 6.

To suit all locations the kiosks are made in four types, a, b, c and d as shown in Fig. **6**. The glass "Telephone" signs are normally fitted on all four panels, but where the back or side panel is situated against a wall or building of greater height than the kiosk, clear glass is fitted in the panel adjacent to the obstruction in lieu of the special "Telephone" sign.

Elongated holes are provided in the unglazed panel of the kiosk for leading-in telephone and electric light wires, but where it is essential to adopt an overhead lead-in for the telephone service a special bracket has been designed for this purpose.

Erection.

The erection of a cast-iron kiosk calls for considerable care to ensure uninterrupted progress of the work, and the following brief details of the operations may be of interest:—

It is desirable that the erection should be arranged to ensure that the work, including filling the cill frame with concrete, can be completed in one day.

(a) The cill frame complete with levelling screws is placed in position and corner pillars secured by screws.
(b) Back and side panels are then placed in position similarly secured.
(c) The four transom rails are secured to the top of the corner pillars and side panels.
(d) The crown panels are fitted.
(e) The dome top is fitted.
(f) The door is hung together with the restraining straps and door closing spring.

As the above processes are carried out all joints are lead painted and served with putty and all screws gradually tightened, surplus putty which exudes from the joints being removed. After hanging the door the vertical alignment of the kiosk is tested and final adjustments made. The cill frame is then filled with concrete and finished with a granolithic surface with slight fall towards the door.

Conclusion.

The telephone apparatus used in connexion with the No. 6 kiosk has been dealt with in detail in another article,[1] and it is suggested that the combination of what must be considered one of the best telephone kiosks in existence and the finely finished, well-balanced equipment with its attractive and serviceable layout, should leave little to be desired by the call office using public. At the same time all concerned in Post Office activities will have reason to feel some satisfaction in the introduction of such high standard equipment.

[1] CALL OFFICES. W. A. COLLETT, *P.O.E.E.J.*, Vol. 29, page 178.