

Restoring a K6 Kiosk

by Rodney Marshall

As a very recent member I thought I would set out my interest as a non-technical enthusiast before we possibly all become lost in the wonder of fellow members knowledge.

Always fascinated by 'phones as a kid (old ear phones, throat mikes and 9V batteries from the 'real' surplus stores in the 50's) my more recent interest has followed on from collecting street furniture. This covers all items found on the road side, in particular road traffic signs, but eventually the thought of a kiosk of my own became inbedded. This was in 1981 when the current vogue for them was still to start and I didn't - really know how to go about it. But then a chance visit to a large factories 'open day' in the London suburbs gave me the opportunity, for sitting in their main entrance road was a neglected 'phone box' which I now know to be a post 1957 type 6 kiosk. Painted dark green to satisfy B.T's wishes of 'no red' in private ownership, a closer examination showing that it was only one thin coat and the original red was underneath. Made by Cartron it was complete with all its 'telephone' glasses, and all glazing was still glass including the push pull in the door. All equipment was of course missing including the door closer. Purchase was eventually negotiated at the sum originally paid to B.T in 1978 of (50.00 and all that was then left was to move it!

This was arranged with a lorry borrowed from work with a Hiab crane behind the cab, and two friends one with the necessary HGV licence. A compressor and breaking tools were taken along for loud measure just in case the concrete floor was cast to the ground underneath, but fortunately on arrival a crowbar proved it to be just sitting there! To lift it we had to break two top side windows and pass a ^envy timber through to take the chains, it all went so easily that we were soon back on ...me territory.

Unfortunately my garden has no vehicle access and so several Saturdays were spent at the works yard nearby dismantling it with blow lamps, percussion screw drivers, drills and easing oil on all those set screws. (Should anyone want help locally on a similar dismantling project let me know as I'm a glutton for punishment.) A few weeks later on a nice sunny day after cleaning all the set screw threads and replacing the few I had to drill out and with an almost willing group of six friends, after the promise of unlimited beer and beef burgers, we transported each section in a pick up and assembled it on my ready prepared base. The only problem here was that the sides had sprung out a little, but some hurriedly borrowed frame cramps pulled the screw holes back in line and she was finished.

Since then I've reglazed the two broken glasses (those brass studs in the glazing frames just knock out with a drift but the glazing frames snap if you are not very careful) and re-painted it inside and out. Unfortunately I'm not too happy with the resultant colour, does anyone know :: there is a BS number for it.

As already mentioned the lack of numerous re-paints, made preparation easy. How many still in service have thick layers of paint with even the peeling flakes glossed over!. The bearing washers on the brass door butts were very worn allowing the door to drop slightly so I decided I would turn the hinges over. They came off very easily but on turning them I realised that this doesn't achieve anything as they still bear on the same points. A little disheartened I set to, to knock out the hinge pins to replace the washer but to no avail, even my local blacksmith could not manage it, finally realising that they must be fixed for security - and so something

else was learnt. The answer he suggested, was to cut and bend in small "doughnuts" of brass welding rod and this has in fact levelled the hinges up once more and it doesn't look too bad. Obviously I am now on the look out for three new hinges.

At this point I don't really think I knew what I was going to put inside my kiosk, but it certainly was not going to become a greenhouse or a shower that amuses the press so much! I would add at this point that my kiosk is in fact still empty although I do now have all the fittings to complete it. This has taken four years and an awful lot of luck, but the following may give hope to others.

The first line of attack was the A-B coinbox, this shouldn't be too difficult I thought, after all I'd used one converted to decimal coinage in Markyate (Hertfordshire) as recent as 1972 or 3. How wrong can you be? Offered one by a dealer at a skyhigh price I turned to B.T. to whom I wrote many begging letters the of when must have eventually landed on the right desk and after six months they located one for me in Scotland. This was officially presented to me about four years ago to provide them with publicity along with a door closer and an appropriate telephone set which I've since learnt is the model 232. My 232 was obviously the domestic version because it has a drawer in its base unit, but by turning the base around, so that the drawer is at the back, I've been able to cheat and it looks quite good. However I should like to obtain the correct unit which I think is a 232 CB or even just the plain base from one.

The AB coinbox was locked, without a key, and had already been converted to decimal coinage To open it without damage I found a long thin screwdriver is required and by working up through the space that hold the cash box you can undo the screws holding the lock keep plate in position and you are in. The small lock is then very easy to remove and with a blank key from my local locksmith I was able to cut a key to fit without any problems. Mechanically it works and takes 2p and 10p instead of the original 1d, 6d 1/= and so naturally I should like to convert it back. I've not looked into this as yet in any detail, but it would seem that if a new coin slot plate is cut and the coin height detectors adjusted inside it should be possible. Unfortunately the centre coin route (6d) was removed entirely and so I will only be able to us 1d and 1/= coins although should a sixpence be inserted it would fall into the void of the box and automatically come out of the refund slot in the same way as rejected coins and so will not be too unrealistic. My second piece of luck was after the presentation was mentioned in Telecom Today when I was contacted by a couple of retired telephone engineers who said they had various bits and pieces that I was welcome to for my kiosk. This provided the two shelf units, the brass bulb holder and ceiling rose, chrome coin indicator, time clock, umbrella rest and the bevel edged mirror and one of two chrome frames for the back board. The actual back board was acquired from the rubbish heap at the local depot but because the shiny black covering material was so badly worn and damaged with extra screw holes when the 'grey' phones were installed, I've recovered it with a new piece of laminate and so now have to refix all the frames and mirror.

This brings things up to-date where I'm still looking for the posters to go in the backboard frames and to devise a discreet method of locking my kiosk for security.

As you can see I've struggled on without any inside information and feel I've achieved a satisfactory result for my efforts to-date. Now with the forming of the T. H G I hope to learn a lot more and trust the above will provide encouragement to others with a general interest but no telecommunications background.