

Ringling the changes: how Britain's red phone boxes are being given new life - 27 August, 2019

Red phone boxes used to be on every high street, but now there are only about 10,000 of them left. And you can only make phone calls from about half of them. In 2015, the traditional red phone box was voted the greatest British design of all time. It was designed in 1924 by the architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

Production of these cast-iron phone boxes stopped in 1968. There used to be more than 70,000 red telephone boxes, but a lot of boxes have disappeared. In the 1970s and 80s, many were melted down, but slowly people started to recognize the boxes' beauty and value.

Since 2008, rather than remove ones that no longer work, local councils and charities can use them as part of British Telecoms adopt-a-box scheme. More than 5,000 have been adopted. There are many uses for the old boxes. Many now contain defibrillators. Some are book-swap points that work like a mini-library. There are even art galleries, museums, a coffee shop, a phone repair company, a shop selling beachwear in Brighton and even a nightclub in Devon.

People can also buy boxes that are being removed. A box in poor condition will cost you almost £2,000 on eBay, or you can buy a refurbished for just over £3,000.

What used to be on every high street?
How many are left?
Can you still use them as a phone box?
What happened in 2015?
Who designed the phone box and when?
What were the phone boxes made out of?
When did production stop?
How many of them were there originally?
What happened to them in the 70's and '80's?
What can local councils and charities now do?
How many have been adopted?
What are the 7 uses they have been put to?
If you wanted to buy your own box, how much are they?