

## The red phone box, a British icon, stages a comeback

**Notes & Cues:****Article:**

Sometimes it's hard to let go.

For many Britons, that can apply to institutions and objects that represent their country's past power and glory — stately homes, the monarchy ... and red phone boxes.

Battered first by the march of technology and lately by the elements in junkyards, the iconic phone boxes are now staging something of a comeback. Repurposed in imaginative ways, many have reappeared on city streets and village greens housing tiny cafes, cellphone repair shops or even defibrillator machines.

The original cast-iron boxes with the domed roofs, called Kiosk No. 2 or K2, first appeared in 1926. After becoming a staple on many British streets, the booths began disappearing in the 1980s, with the privatization of British Telecom and the rise of the mobile phone consigning most of them to the scrap heap.

About that time, Tony Inglis's engineering and transport company got the job to remove phone boxes from the streets and auction them off. But he ended up buying hundreds of them himself, with the idea of renovating and selling them.

Britain has a penchant for conserving its heritage, of course. "We are obsessed with the old, and that's because our experience of the modern world has been bruising," Dan Snow, a well-known historian and broadcaster, said. "If you look around at the things that people are very nostalgic for, they are things that remind older people of our imperial and hegemonic past."

**Summary:**