



Philatelic Bureau

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Christmas Greetings to all our Readers

New Issues

1 We hope to be able to include a stop press notice with this edition on the subject of next years stamp programme.

Pillar Box Designs

2 Nowadays we tend to accept the fact that wherever we happen to be in the United Kingdom there is a posting box somewhere in the vicinity. There are in fact over 100,000 such boxes in this country and Post Office records have recently produced from their archives some very interesting facts and illustrations about their introduction in the United Kingdom. We learn that the demand for more postal facilities arose following the introduction of uniform penny postage in 1840 but it was not until 1851, that the British Post Office followed the example of France in providing road side posting boxes.

Introduction 1852-1853

3 In November of that year Anthony Trollope, then a Surveyor's Clerk in the Post Office suggested, as part of his proposals for improving the postal services in Jersey, that the scheme operating in France be tried in St. Hellier, Jersey. Trollope's report reads:-

"There is at present no receiving office in St. Hellier postage stamps are sold in every street and, therefore, all that is wanted is a safe receptacle for letters Iron posts suited for the purpose may be erected at the corner of streets in such situations as may be desirable, or probably it may be found more serviceable to fix iron letter boxes about 5 feet from the ground, wherever permanently built walls, fit for the purpose can be found Should the Postmaster General be willing to sanction this experiment, I would recommend the four sites marked on the enclosed map of the town"

4 A subsequent notice issued by the Postmaster of St. Hellier advised the public that on 23rd November, 1852, "Roadside Letter Boxes" would be opened in the following places:-

"David Place, nearly opposite the Rectory. New Street, in front of Mr. Fry's, Painter & Glazier. Cheapside, top of the Parade. St. Clements Road, corner of Pleasance".

In December the Postmaster of St. Heller wrote " the Road-side Letter Boxes work satisfactorily I feel assured that their introduction into England would be followed by most beneficial results but there they they must be introduced liberally and energetically, and with fitting modifications as to size, form and make".

According to the "Guernsey Star" dated 10th February, 1853, the scheme was extended to St. Peter Port, Guernsey, on 8th February, 1853.

Unfortunately, no record of the design of the original boxes erected in the Channel Islands appears to have survived, but they are known to have been made locally by a John Vaudin.

A hexagonal Pillar Box in Union Street, St. Peter Port (see fig. 1), still in use today, is thought to have been erected sometime before 1857 on the site of one of Vaudin's original boxes. It stands 4'8" high, is hexagonal in shape and has a horizontal posting aperture.

Following the District Surveyor's report on the success of the Channel Islands' experiment the scheme was rapidly extended to the mainland.

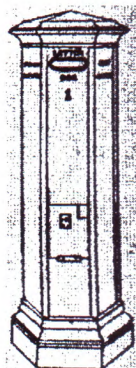


FIG. 1

London Pillar Boxes 1855-57



FIG. 4

It was not until 1858, however, that London received its first road side letter boxes. On the 11th of April six boxes were opened to the public. They were sited at Fleet Street; Strand; Pall Mall; Piccadilly; Grosvenor Place and Rutland Gate. Their designer was A.E. Cowper, the Post Office's Consulting Engineer, and they were made by Messrs. H & M.D. Grissell of Hoxton. The boxes were rectangular in shape and they stood approximately five feet in height above ground level. Their posting aperture was situated horizontally on the side of the roof (see fig. 4).

London etc., new standard Pillar Boxes: 1857-59

6 Before the close of 1855, Mr. Cowper was recommending the adoption of a new standard design for London Pillar Boxes. In response to an official invitation to produce an improved design, following public complaint about the previous ugly appearance, the Department of Science and Art submitted a design for an ornamental box which was adopted. The contract for the manufacture of these boxes was placed with Messrs. Smith and Hawkes of Birmingham in 1856. Erection commenced early in 1857 and although they seem to have been originally planned for London the new boxes were apparently also distributed to the larger provincial towns. These boxes stood 4' high and were 1'8" wide. Their posting aperture was situated horizontally on the slope of their domed roof (see fig. 5).

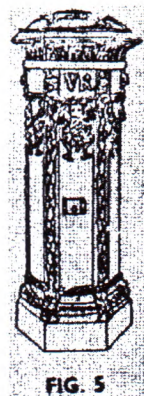


FIG. 5

Country Pillar Boxes, non-standard 1852-1860

7 Meanwhile, since 1853, Pillar Boxes of varying design and manufacture had been erected throughout the remainder of the Country. Prior to 1856 Messrs. Handyside and Co. of Derby were making hexagonal Pillar Boxes very similar to the early box still in use today in Union Street, St. Peter Port, but with the posting aperture in a vertical instead of a horizontal position. They stood about 4'6" in height (see fig. 2). In 1856 the design of these early Handyside boxes was modified to incorporate an "hours of collection" plate and a wider collar below the rim of the roof for the Royal Cipher and the wording "Post Office" (see fig. 3)

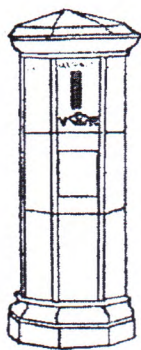


FIG. 2

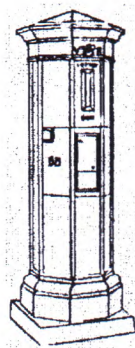


FIG. 3

8 During the same year Messrs. Smith and Hawkes made three tall Pillar Boxes with fluted columns and vertical posting apertures. But, because of obscure instructions by Mr. Edge, their designer, each-had a high domed roof surmounted by an ornate crown (see fig. 7). Their overall height was about 8'. The Post Office, feeling it could not reasonably decline to accept the boxes, erected one of them at New Street Station, Birmingham. Smith and Hawkes new boxes, similar in appearance to the earlier three, but without the domed roof and crown, were apparently being distributed until about 1860 (see fig. 8). In that year their pattern was altered to incorporate a horizontal posting aperture (see fig. 9).

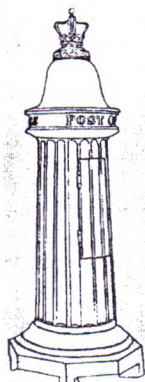


FIG. 7

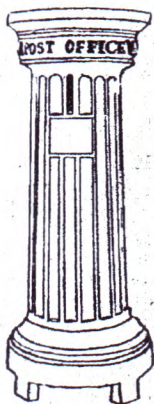


FIG. 8

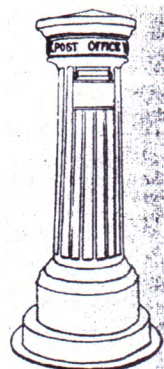


FIG. 9

9 Country Pillar Boxes, standard 1857-59

Early in 1857, however, the Postmaster General had agreed that "for the future all Pillar Boxes for Country use should be manufactured after the same pattern as those now made for London (fig. 5), omitting the external decoration". The contract for supplying such boxes (fig. 6) was immediately placed with Messrs. Cochrane & Co. of Dudley who submitted the lowest tender.



FIG. 6.

10 It was soon realised, that the capacity of these new standard Country Pillar Boxes, due to less frequent clearances than for those in London, was inadequate for the heavy postings experienced by such towns as Birmingham and Liverpool. In October, therefore, Mr Cowper was asked to prepare yet another design. The lowest tender for these proposed larger-type boxes was that submitted by Messrs. Leigh of Manchester and in October 1858 their sample box was erected for trial in Ranelagh Place, Liverpool, but after one weeks use it was quickly removed, the main object being that letters posted therein were too easily removed - by members of the public! Unfortunately, no pictorial record of this box appears to have survived.

11 Standard Pillar Boxes in two sizes 1859-1866

Before proceeding with a new standard design for use both in London and the provinces, Mr. Cowper first sought the views of the Deputy Comptrollers of the London Postal Districts and eventually, in March 1859, a fresh contract, for the supply of one hundred boxes in two sizes, was placed with Messrs. Cochrane. The main external improvement in the design of these new boxes was the incorporation of the horizontal posting aperture below a protective hood on the roof (see fig. 10). They stood about 4'6" in height. These new-style boxes were found to be so satisfactory that the manufacturers were inundated with additional orders.

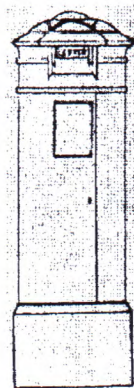


FIG. 10

12 Liverpool, special Pillar Boxes 1863

Liverpool, however, was not satisfied with the capacity of the larger new box, in spite of local modification, and eventually, in February 1863, Mr. Gay, the District Surveyor, was allowed to erect, near St. George's Hall, a large model of his own design. His Pillar Box was surmounted by a crown and was manufactured by Messrs. Cochrane and Co. (fig. 11). Mr. Gay's "rough model" proved satisfactory and the trial of a further six boxes, slightly modified in design, was authorised. The comments of the Comptroller of the Circulation Department on Mr. Gay's design were:- "I do not consider that it

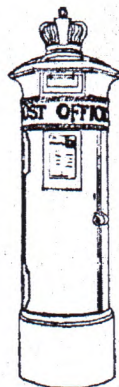


FIG. 11

possesses any special feature which it would be desirable to introduce in the London District the external appearance differs so slightly from those supplied by the present Contractor that it seems to me immaterial which pattern is adopted.

13 Hexagonal Pillar Boxes 1866-1876

In March 1864, the Postmaster General approved a recommendation of the Secretary of the Post Office that there be in future "two different kinds of Pillars, as well as two different sizes as at present the object of increased capacity is obtained with the new Pillar made from Mr. Gay's suggestion but an improvement in the outward shape and appearance of the Pillars has not, I think, been secured. In this latter respect the Wooden model of Hexagon Shape tho' not perhaps remarkably handsome is I think, a considerable improvement on the present Pillars. I therefore recommend that this hexagonal shape be adopted for Pillar Boxes hereafter, the present internal apparatus being retained in the pillars for use in the London Districts and of course for use elsewhere if desired and being omitted from pillars for general use in the country, as in the new specimens For the London district one uniform size, i.e., the larger of the two present sizes - would probably be best for all Pillars. The others - those without the internal apparatus - should probably be of two different sizes - one of equal capacity to the new specimen Pillar lately made from Mr. Gay's suggestions and the other about. Equal to the smaller of the two present sizes".

14 The Postmaster General agreed with these recommendations and the services of J. W. Penfold, an Architect and Surveyor, were employed to embody these proposals in a new design. In October 1865 his design for hexagonal boxes, to be produced in three sizes, was approved (see fig. 12). The tender for Cochrane and Co. for this work was accepted and in September the following year details of the new boxes were circulated with instructions for requisitioning.

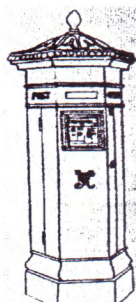


FIG. 12

Extensions of Present Slogans

Slogan

"Greenoch the Town Whose Products Span the Worl

"Book your Place in the Sun at Margate"

"Visit Inverness the Highland Capital"

"Dunbar for Happy Holidays"

"Miles of Curving Golden Sands, Whitley Bay,
Northumberland"

Amendments

The slogan "Bath the Georgian City" at present :
now terminate on the 1st December 1964 and not :
previously stated.

14th Dec. 1964 - "Consett, Co. Durham,
Industrial Sites with all
services available"
(Transposed)
4th Jan. 1965 - "Minehead where Glorious
Exmoor meets the Sea. All
Holiday Amenities, Guide
from Bureau, Minehead, Som"
(Transposed)
22nd Jan. 1965 - "South Molton the Centre of
North Devon"
10th Dec. 1965 (Transposed)

Postmark Slogans

New Slogans

<u>Where used</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Slogan</u>
Bridport	16th Nov. 1964 - 15th Nov. 1965	"Bridport and West Bay, Holiday with a difference" (Transposed)
Seaford	1st Dec. 1964 - 30th Nov. 1965	"Seaford, Sussex, Sunshine, Serenity and Sport" (Transposed)
Leamington	1st Feb. 1965 - 30th April 1965	"Royal Leamington Spa, Garden Town of Shakespearland" (Transposed)
Bath	2nd Dec. 1964 - 12th July 1965	"Bath, Winner of 'Britain in Bloom' Trophy, the Gayest Floral City" (Transposed)
Weymouth	9th Dec. 1964 -	"Relax at Weymouth on the

15 Cylinder Pillar Boxes, reversion to. 1876-78

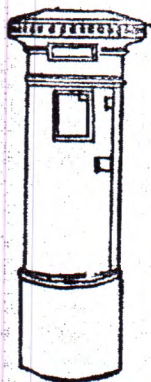


FIG. 13

In the year following, there were frequent complaints of letters being caught up and delayed by faults in the internal construction of the hexagonal boxes and by 1874 the Post Office was seriously considering reverting to earlier cylindrical shape. In June 1876, the Office of Works, having also recommended the change, the Postmaster General gave his approval. However, it was not until October 1878 that tenders for the new pattern (fig. 13) were invited. In November the contract was placed with Messrs. Handyside and Co. and production began the following March.

16 In August 1883, after complaints that larger, letters and newspapers occasionally became lodged in the top of the new boxes, an experimental model with the posting aperture placed a few inches lower in the body was erected for trial in Newgate Street, London. In the following April the modification was made standard (fig. 14).

It was not until November 1887, however, eight years after their introduction, that it was realised the new cylindrical Pillar Boxes did not bear the Royal Cipher or, indeed, any indication that they were the property of the Post Office. By the end of the year a new design incorporating the Royal Cipher on the door and the lettering "Post Office" on the collar below the rim of the roof, had been approved (fig. 15)

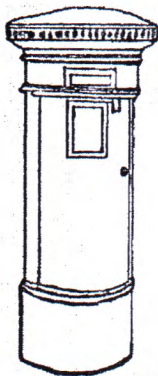
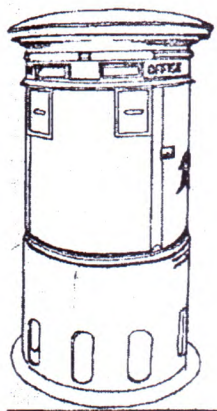


FIG. 14



FIG. 15

17 Double Pillar Boxes 1899



In November 1889, after trials in London, a contract for the supply of double-width Pillar Boxes, comprising two separate receptacles for the posting of town and country correspondence, to facilitate sorting processes, was placed with Messrs. Handyside and Co. (fig. 16).

In 1903 the Post Office decided that the time had arrived to invite fresh tenders for posting boxes, incorporating the various modifications in design adopted over the years. The resulting fresh tenders were placed as follows:-

Pillar Letter Boxes

Messrs. McDowall,
Stephen & Co. of Glasgow

Double Pillar Boxes

Messrs. Handyside & Co.
of Derby

18 Proposed general revision in design, 1912

In 1912 the Postmaster General observed that Pillar Boxes were "unsightly objects and that in these days of Town-Planning and Municipal Aesthetics we ought to show better examples of art applied to postal uses". In consequence, students of the Royal College of Art were invited to submit designs incorporating the many improvements agreed over the years. But, due to the outbreak of the first World War, adoption of any of the chosen designs was suspended indefinitely. No radical change in the external design of the cylindrical Pillar Box adopted in 1874 has, therefore, taken place to date. (see figs, 13 and 17).



FIG. 17

19 Colour Red adopted as standard colour for Pillar Boxes: 1874

Early in 1874 Pillar Boxes, in Trafalgar Square, Pall Mall, St. George's Square, Belgrave Road S.W. and Sussex Place, Regents'Park were experimentally painted red instead of the usual dark green. Dark green was considered dingy and the Post Office felt the new colour would make the boxes more easily distinguishable. In July of the same year authority was granted for the adoption of red as the standard colour for all London Pillar Boxes. The change in colour throughout the country was implemented as and when boxes required repainting. This process took ten years to complete.

However, the increase in the number of items being posted for addresses overseas for conveyance by air led to the erection of special blue Posting Boxes in eleven areas in the City and West End of London on 23rd June 1930. The scheme was extended to selected areas in the Provinces in 1931, but with the introduction of the "all up" rate in August 1938, for items addressed to certain European countries, the blue boxes were withdrawn

Problems of Designing British Stamps

by

Michael Goaman F.S.I.A.

20 Probably no other country in the world sets itself a harder task in? Stamp designing than Great Britain. The tradition that we do not include the name of the country but instead a fair sized portrait of the ruling Monarch was begun with the first postage stamps over issued. To this is added the problem common to all stamp designers, that of deciding the form of the content of the stamp and the pictorial or symbolic interpretation of the event commemorated.

21 The use of a portrait of the Queen instead of the name of the country is a unique difference, which greatly influences the outcome of British commemorative designs. This portrait on British postage stamps is considerably larger than those that are normally used on stamps of the Commonwealth colonies and it needs even more careful integration with the rest of the design.

22 There is a faction here that would like to see the portrait removed altogether because they feel it restricts the pictorial scope of the design. This is undeniably true, but I would prefer myself to suggest that it merely alters the scope of design so that British commemorative designs are always 'different' from those of other countries, even those commemorating the same event with a similar standard design. This is something worth maintaining in a world of increasing standardisation.

23 A great many well designed stamps have been issued all over the world which include a portrait and the name of the country; there is nothing exceptional in this, since along with the value these elements are the main or only ones included. The problem becomes more acute when a commemorative stamp is required, as it obviously needs a subject to be included as well. Again this has been done successfully all over the place with both large and small portraits, so what is all the fuss about?

24 One answer must be that whereas other countries' commemorative stamps may include a portrait with other elements, it is done occasionally for a special purpose, but in Great Britain it is always done regardless of the event or subject.

34 It is almost impossible to be dogmatic about what constitutes good design in stamps except essential balance. This can be arrived at in so many ways that it would almost appear that no rules exist. That they do in fact exist is constantly proved by the appearance of stamps which, looked at from one aspect or another, may seem to fulfil their requirement, but which regarded as a whole are awkward or ungainly to the experienced eye, which should assure itself of this essential balance before other merits.

35 Essential balance is not just a matter of symmetry of course, but consists of harmony of line, tone, mass and space as organised in a tiny area in the form of lettering, value, subject, portrait and colour.

36 It is in resolving these elements that the influence of the portrait leads to a lack of balance in many of our designs - the conflicting requirements which must in fact be sufficiently prominent in conjunction with a subject drawing which is the main purpose of the stamp. This vital integration is all too rarely achieved. Even less frequently do the lettering and value get sufficient consideration attached to them. Running along with all these elements is space. Whether it is little or much, it is like the case of a watch which holds the wheels together and by its careful fitting permits the whole to work.

37 Multi-colour printing has considerably widened the scope for variety in design. Perhaps the most obvious difference in the appearance of the stamp using several colours compared with one of single colour is that an object may be visually separated from its surroundings by colour alone, when more than one colour is available, whereas in single colour this separation has to be done by changes of tone from the surroundings. This has led to less use being made of the tonal flexibility which is a feature of photogravure. A sort of sculptured depth is to be found in many single coloured stamps which is rarely seen in multi-coloured ones, which are often rather flat in conception. A return to the tonal virtues of the process, using several colours, could be encouraged.

Corrections

In Bulletin No. 7 para. 18.2 the date should read 1st January 1954.