

BRIEF HISTORY OF LETTER BOXES.

Anthony Trollope, the novelist, introduced the first British PILLAR box in 1852, when he worked as a Post Office Surveyor in the Channel Islands. The first box was erected on the mainland a year later in 1853 at Botchergate, Carlisle

WALL boxes appeared in 1857, LUDLOW boxes (for use in Post Offices) in 1885 and LAMP boxes followed in 1896.

Each new reign brings boxes bearing the Royal Cypher of the monarch and over the years many different types have appeared. The Letter Box Study Group has identified almost 700 different types of letter box!! Many of the oldest types are still in daily use.

The letter box outside Ainsworth Post Office bears the cypher of EDWARD VII who was only on the throne from 1901 to 1910. As I believe the Post Office has been on its present site since about 1900 it would be interesting to know if the same pillar box has been there since then. Because of Edward VII's short reign not many of these boxes were manufactured making the Ainsworth box quite rare.

An absolutely unique box with a lamppost on the TOP of it is situated in Toad Lane, Rochdale (at the birthplace of the Co-operative Society). Another unusual box which contains a telephone kiosk and 2 stamp vending machines all in one structure, can be seen just off the main street in Frodsham, Cheshire.

If anyone has any queries about letter boxes or would like to see photographs of the numerous types you can contact me via Polly or through the website

