

## Pillar to post A new issue of stamps to mark



### Technical details

**Printer** Joh Enschedé stamps

**Process** Lithography and recess (intaglio)

**Size** 30 × 41mm

**Sheets** 100

**Perforation** 14 × 14.5

**Phosphor** 2nd class one band, others two bands

**Gum** PVA

**Gutter pairs** Horizontal

### Plate numbers and colours

**2nd** 1A greenish black ● 1B new blue ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D greenish yellow ● 1E grey ● 1F silver

**1st & 47p** 1A brown-purple ● 1B new blue ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D greenish yellow ● 1E grey ● 1F silver

**E** 1A deep blue ● 1B new blue ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D greenish yellow ● 1E grey ● 1F silver

**68p** 1A deep brown-red ● 1B new blue ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D greenish yellow ● 1E grey ● 1F silver

**Phosphor** 1G on all values

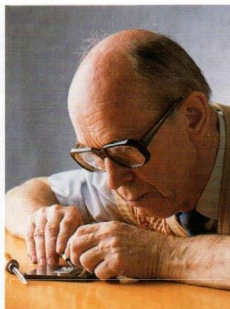
TO MARK the 150th anniversary of the introduction of the first roadside pillar boxes, five colourful stamps go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Royal Mail Tallents House on 8 October.

The stamps are as follows. 2nd class: 1857 highly decorative box designed for use in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh, in its original green and gold livery. (A plain 'economy' version was produced for use elsewhere.) 1st class: 1874 early mainland box of an 1856 design, but with horizontal aperture adopted in 1857, shown in the red livery adopted in 1874. E (European rate): 1934 airmail box with dual notice plates, a feature introduced in 1932. (Special blue-painted boxes for airmail postings were in use 1930-38.) 47p: 1939 oval, dual-aperture version of cylindrical design of 1879 painted in wartime livery of yellow gas-detecting paint on the roof and white paint at the base for greater visibility during the blackout. 68p: New-style box in use 1980-2001. Today, new installations are of the traditional design from 1879 – cylindrical and with a cap with a milled edge.

The stamps were designed by Silk Pearce with the boxes engraved by Czeslaw Slania – his fifth set of engravings for Royal Mail special stamps. He has also engraved the Machin head of The Queen for the current high values and 1st class from 1999 *Profile on Print* prestige book.

**FIRST DAY FACILITIES** Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches about a week before 8 October, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House or Bishop's Caundle, Sherborne must reach Tallents House by 8 October. Price £2.74 UK (including VAT) or £2.34 overseas (no VAT). Stamped covers can be sent on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Bishop's Caundle postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO2 21' or 'FDO2 22' respectively. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Bishop's Caundle postmark. A non-pictorial Bishop's Caundle postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FDO2 22 NP'. For details of sponsored handstamps see the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

# the 150th anniversary of the familiar pillar box



The Pillar Boxes stamps were designed by Silk Pearce, with engravings by Czeslaw Slania (left) – his fifth set of engravings for Royal Mail. Mr Slania was awarded the Reginald M Phillips medal for stamp design and the Rowland Hill Lifetime Achievement Award earlier this year.



## PILLAR TO POST

Royal Mail Mint Stamps

1839 was soon followed by a variety of new designs: in 1868 an elegant hexagon with a cap decorated with acanthus leaves; in 1907 a simple pillar with a cap with a milled edge; and in 1980, a large version with separate posting apertures for town and country.

Experiments in recent years have led to a rectangular design of 1968 and a different cylindrical design of 1980, pillar boxes for new installations essentially of the same design that served so well for 123 years: a simple iron pillar with a cap with a milled edge.

Until 1874 boxes were painted green, but red became standard to aid visibility. It took 10 years to repaint every letter box.

The smaller version weighs approximately 500kg and the larger dual-aperture model for town and city centres weighs 900kg. Traditional style lamp post boxes are still available for rural locations, which are also being served by a new-style 'Blanton' box for mounting on pedestals. There are boxes especially designed for franked mail posted at business parks and for indoor locations such as shopping centres.

## PILLAR BOX RED ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY THREE YEARS

# 150<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

In this 150th anniversary year of Britain's first pillar letter boxes, Royal Mail is proud of the fact that some of its earliest examples remain in service. It recognises too that its letter boxes are a much loved and quintessential feature of the British street scene. For this reason, Royal Mail is committed to a policy of preserving all its letter boxes, irrespective of their age, for as long as possible, in their existing locations, so that they might continue to serve their community well into the 21st century.

## MUCH LOVED FEATURE OF

A presentation pack containing the five stamps (left, price £2.35) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available. The pack has been written by Jean Farrugia MBE, former Post Office Archivist, and author of *The Letter Box* (1969).





One of the first Post Office letter boxes, on the corner of Fleet Street and Farringdon Street, London, in 1855.

**Anthony Trollope and posting boxes** The introduction of roadside pillar boxes is credited to Anthony Trollope, better-known as a novelist. Less well-known is the fact that he worked for the Post Office, starting in 1834 as a clerk in the Secretary's Office on a salary of £90 a year. He did not enjoy the work and seven years later, he applied to become one of a new body of surveyors' clerks who travelled the country investigating complaints about postal matters. He was appointed to work in Ireland, and during this period he began to write, although at first with little success. Later he became a Surveyor and worked for a while in Egypt and the West Indies. He left the PO in 1867 to concentrate on his literary work.

In 1851 Trollope recommended the introduction of roadside posting boxes as used in France. The first were erected in Jersey in November 1852. A report in a Jersey newspaper at the time states: 'The Post Office Receivers are now erected and in full use, and a very great convenience they are to the public. They are made of cast-metal, are about four feet high and are hexagonal. On three of the sides, near the top, are the Royal Arms; on two sides the words Post Office; on the other the words Letter-Box; with a protected receiver. A sliding cover allows the collector to unlock the receiver and remove its contents. They are painted red and fitted in solid granite blocks two feet deep and raised four inches from the ground.'

Unfortunately the first Jersey boxes do not survive but two erected in neighbouring Guernsey the following year are still in existence. One is still in use in Union Street, St Peter Port and the other, presented by the new Guernsey PO to the British PO in 1969, is part of the Heritage Services Consignia collection of letter boxes. The two Guernsey boxes have featured here in August 1972, July 1978 and December 1987.

Articles on Anthony Trollope were published in December 1967 and September 1994; the latter shows his signature stamp and writing slope preserved by Heritage Services Consignia. A review of James Pope Hennessy's biography of Trollope, which covers his literary and Post Office career, was published here in March 1972.

The earliest surviving box on the UK mainland is at Bishop's Caundle in Dorset. This was manufactured by John M Butt & Co of Gloucester in 1853 and differs from the Guernsey boxes in being hexagonal and with a vertical posting aperture. It was shown here in August 1978. Bishop's Caundle is the location for the alternative first day postmark for this issue.

**Posting boxes on stamps** Somewhat surprisingly few posting boxes have featured on British stamps: 1983 Christmas 12½p; 1985 Public Postal Service 31p and 34p; 1994 Peter Rabbit greetings stamp; 1995 Christmas 19p Christmas; and 1997 Post Offices set. Boxes were shown on the front covers of 10p stamp books, 1971-74, and 1991, 1994 greetings books, and 1995 Christmas book of 19p stamps.

Both Guernsey and Jersey have shown these early boxes on their stamps. Guernsey's first box features on the 6p Europa stamp of 1979, 1980 Penny Black Anniversary 20p, and on the recent £1.75 stamp (see *May Bulletin* p263). A Jersey box, c1860, features on one of the pair of 8p Europa stamps of 1979, and stamps marking the 150th anniversary of letter boxes will be issued in November. Ireland and the Isle of Man have also issued attractive post box stamps – see *Bulletin* October 1998 and March 1999. Letter boxes on stamps from other countries were shown here in Glenn Morgan's article last November. The 'Posting Boxes' feature, published in this *Bulletin* since 1978, is one of our most popular series •

Below, from top left: 1983 Christmas 12½p, 1998 Eire, 1985 Public Postal Service 31p; 1995 Christmas 19p, 1994 Peter Rabbit Greetings, 1999 Isle of Man, and 1979 Guernsey.

