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# Thematic Letter Boxes 1



Why do I collect letter boxes as a theme? Well, I guess that I have always had an interest in street furniture, be it telephone kiosks, signage, weighing or vending machines - they have all fascinated me down the years. Therefore, when I decided to start a thematic collection, letter boxes seemed a logical choice, especially in view of their obvious postal and street connections.

I had mainly been a general collector until then, so was not too surprised at the number of appropriate items that I already possessed. Within no time, I had everything that had ever been issued world-wide on the theme – or so I naively thought! Two decades later, I am still finding “new” material dating back many years. It is clear that I shall never be complete.

One evening I was, like so many collectors before me, badgered into entering my local club competition night. Eight blank sheets stared up at me crying out “fill me”. So I did, but with more writing-up than philatelic material! I never won the trophy, but I was given much encouragement on how to improve. (The judge could so easily have put me off for life with barbed comments – not unknown, unfortunately.)

Slowly, eight pages became nine, then 16, 32, 80 and I am now working towards 128 competitive sheets. My medal level is slowly improving as I continue to receive guidance from other exhibits, jurors and fellow exhibitors. I am not a “pot-hunter”, per se, but I do relish the challenge that competing against others brings – not to mention the immense feeling of satisfaction knowing that you have given of your best.

Early on in my box collecting days, I was immensely fortunate to stumble across the Letter Box Study Group (LBSG). Having joined, I soon found that others shared my passion for the letter box, in its many guises. Some members specialise in owning real boxes, or collect miniature models. Others are into postcards, box spotting (like train spotting, but without the anorak!) or preservation and recording. It is a multi-faceted interest.

I compiled a preliminary listing of all letter boxes known to me on stamps and have slowly expanded this to include postmarks, Cinderella's, booklets and stationery. Currently out of print (but see Vera Trinder, who has stocks), a new electronic web edition may eventually appear.

For almost a decade, I compiled a quarterly newsletter “Philately and the Letter Box” for the LBSG until available time eluded me.

My collection has given me a great deal of pleasure, has acted as the excuse for world travel, and, through my authorship, has enabled me to make many philatelic friends around the globe.

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