

LEW TRENCHARD POST-BOX



While mailing postcards in the letterbox around the corner from Lew Trenchard Church I happened to notice the V R (Victoria Reigns) logo on the front which set my mind thinking about the history of the box and its use over the years.

Some time later I consulted the Post Office Archives in London to discover that the wall-mounted box is a type 'C' (small), manufactured by W.T.Allen & Co., during the period 1881-1904. This silent servant has therefore been in use for around a hundred years and by the Millennium will have served as a mail depository during three centuries.

During its lifetime the box must have safeguarded literally tons of local mail as it awaited collection before onward delivery to addressees across the nation and beyond.

Outgoing letters and cards conveying good news and bad.

Loquacious hand-written Victorian missives in which people

painstakingly expressed fascinating and confidential aspects of their private lives to confidants. Announcements of births and marriages and the dreaded black edged cards conveying news of the loss of loved ones. News connected with two Great Wars, postcards from rural holidays in Devon, the payment of bills for goods and services and the dispatch of those small securely wrapped packages that so excite an eager recipient.

While SBG'S early detailed letters to relatives and friends followed the traditional Victorian trend, by the time he moved to Lew Trenchard in 1881 he seems to have fallen into the habit of penning brief, business-like notelets. By then his energy was already directed toward writing a succession of novels, which in-turn, generated correspondence with a growing readership, publishers and very occasionally his critics. In reality he probably had little time available for the former luxury of recreational writing.

Some of SBG'S mail would have been weighty hand-written manuscripts relating to John Herring, Court Royal, the Gaverocks and Red Spider that had to be carefully squeezed through the small aperture of the box to avoid them being damaged! He also regularly dispatched urgent letters to London and Exeter in the confident expectation that they would be delivered the next day! All this was well over 75 years ago.

Although many similar post-boxes have now been ignominiously consigned to the scrap heap, wouldn't it be rather nice when this particular box is replaced if it could be preserved in some way? After all it is part of the heritage of the area and a shiny new model would somehow not just be the same!

Perhaps someone can recall a story connected the history of this post-box?

KL.