

13 and 14), as well as Newport-on-Tay and Tayport (DD6).

In north-east England, **Chris Larsen** has completed part of Newcastle-on-Tyne (NE17) for us and **Andrew R Young** has covered another part of Middlesbrough (TS8).

To our southern activity and **Derek Robinson** has carried out new surveys in several parts of Southampton (SO30, 31 and 45). **Linda and David Fawthrop** are proving unstoppable in Somerset with Street and Dulverton (BA16 and TA22) now completed.

Ian Taylor has been resurveying in Sussex and has covered Arundel, Polegate and Hailsham (BN18, 26 and 27) and, last but not least, **Stephen Nicholson** has surveyed Looe, part of Torpoint and Callington (PL10, 13 and 17) for the Group.

It is only through the efforts and legwork put in by our surveyors that The Directory is growing and steadily heading towards our aim of covering all boxes in the UK. We all thank them for their work and enthusiasm.

We also encourage all Members to consider a survey of their home town, village or postal district. It can be very satisfying taking a previously poorly and patchily covered area, accurately recording all the boxes and bringing The Directory up to date. As well as taking the Group one step closer to its aims with each box surveyed, Members can come across unfamiliar footpaths and lanes, coves and views, backwaters and hidden gems and often within 10 miles of home.

What will you discover if you give it a go?

SURVEYS COORDINATION

Our Surveys Coordinator, Mark Pardoe, keeps track of who is working on which surveys. He then types-up and publishes all our completed survey results. If you are thinking of surveying one or more postal districts, please get in touch with Mark and, when complete, please submit your results direct to him. He passes electronic copies into The Directory once he's worked on them. All completed surveys, frozen-in-time as at the date of survey are available direct from Mark. For a price-list, contact him at his address in the back of this issue, enclosing an A4 SSAE with 81p postage. We also offer a written "Master Guide to Surveying Letter Boxes". This pamphlet is free to all Members – either by using the Order Form in the centre pages of this issue, by sending an SSAE and short request note or an email to Mark Pardoe or Andrew W Young (surveys@lbsg.org or rak-orders@lbsg.org). □

Andrew W Young

Information Officer

info@lbsg.org

"CHECK-ON-LIARS" USA "PENFOLD-STYLE" LETTER BOX... Glenn H Morgan

In 1893, a book was published in America entitled *The Story of Our Post Office* by Marshall Cushing. There is much to interest the postal historian within its 1,050 pages, but perhaps the most interesting part for Members of our Group is the story behind the Penfold look-alike box that could so easily have seen service in the USA. This book is outside of its copyright period, making it possible to quote directly from it. The relevant portion reads:

"A year ago, perhaps, [i.e.1892] a clever fellow came to the Department with an estimate that the present United States mail system is responsible for one half of all the lies that are told; for, said he, when a man neglects to write to his dear lady, or a husband neglects to write to his dear wife, or an impecunious young man to his dear tailor, it is the custom for him to picture himself the pink of punctuality and to lay all the blame upon the mails.

The clever fellow declared that a business man with a golden opportunity wanted him to become a partner in a scheme. He wrote a letter accepting the business man's proposition. He wrote the letter on Tuesday morning. The man sailed on Wednesday morning for Europe. He should have got the letter Tuesday afternoon, but he did not get it at all until he returned from Europe. The man had made arrangements in the meantime with another partner, and they made \$5,000,000 together.

The delay had been in the street letter box. The nickel-in-the-slot machine came out about that time, and the "check-on-liar" machine was soon devised. It is five feet six inches in height and two feet in diameter, and is meant to stand without the aid of a lamp post. There is a clock, which is guaranteed to keep correct time, on its face. Back of this clock is the "check-on-liar" device. It operates after the fashion of all slot machines. The letter, falling in the slot, is stamped, and one knows where the letter was posted, the number of the box in which it was posted, the date of the month and the time of day and the year.

The box is cumbersome, is useless, perhaps; but it is thought by many that the time when all mail matter is dropped will yet be recorded mechanically, so that more and more, all through the service, the exact responsibility for delays may be laid. With the advent of the house collection box the need of the "check-on-liars" is practically removed, of course."

There is no doubt as to where the inventor got his design inspiration from, but he failed to convince the US Post Office Department of the merits of such a device and it was never put into production. □

