

So, that was that for the Type F boxes, and in time they were all gone from the streets. However there are still a couple to be found around the country in museums and in private hands. The BPMA have at least two singles and possibly two twin boxes, the Late Arthur Hunt also had one of the best surviving examples of a single box and the equally late Mr. George (wogglehopper) Corner had a single example complete with concrete base! Both of these boxes now reside over here at The Isle of Wight Postal Museum alongside my initial box from Birmingham—box 637.

How can I sum up the Type F experiment? I don't think that anyone came out of it covered in glory; indeed, the replacement for this venture was again square in design but made of cast iron instead, in the form of the Type G—every bit as ungainly although longer lasting. Probably the only good thing that came out of the Type F experiment was the new size collection time plate and the rotary time dial that went on to be used in the successful K Type. Alas, neither that size time plate nor the rotary dial are used for any of the newer products so we can say that the experiment has finally run its course.

Sometimes in life it is better to just say *no*, and in my case I should have done just that all those years ago in Birmingham and perhaps I would still have a few strands of hair left? □

There was a superb chapter-and-verse article by Julian Stray in *Cross Post*, Autumn 2008, on these boxes, well worth seeking out if anyone wants additional reading on the subject.

## Universal Postal Union Letter Box Statistics

Glenn Morgan

The UPU is responsible for, among other things, collating postal statistics for virtually every postal administration worldwide. I have recently accessed its letter box database and record below the highlights. Be aware though that occasionally countries have failed to provide statistics in the most recent five years available (2006-10), while others have not done so during one or more of the five years, which might slightly slant the information below.

### Letter Box Volumes

The number of boxes per country varies wildly, as one would expect. Similarly, the statistics for 2006 v 2010 while perhaps showing no movement at all (Bahamas - 22 boxes), or a downward trend (USA – was 345k, now 205k), can even be on the up in some places in the world (Algeria – was 4.7k, now 7.6k).

The countries closest to having the least number of boxes in use are Ascension, Falklands and Cape Verde with just two boxes on each island, but Sao Tome beats them with just the one box. Paraguay and Tonga record zero boxes in use, which explains why there are also zero urban and rural collections. Perhaps perversely, the former released at the end of 2011 a pair of stamps depicting letter boxes! (Shown right). Peru records that zero collections are made, but indicate that 373 boxes are *in-situ*.

The most boxes in use exceeding 100,000 are located in India (645.0k), USA (205.0k), China (204.6k – street boxes only), Japan (186.7k), France (150.0k), Russian Federation (146.2k), Great Britain (115.2k) and Germany (110.0k).



### Rural Collections

In view of its important position in the history of the British letter box, it is appropriate that Jersey is recorded as having the most collections from rural letter boxes anywhere in the world, with 12 collections made per week (although its most recent stats are from 2006, so this may have altered by now), followed by Barbados and Cayman Islands each with 10 per week. Great Britain is shown as having had 10 in 2006, but by 2009 this was down to six, i.e. one collection per working day.

The statistics further reveal that there are no rural collections *ever* if you live in the Bahamas, Belize, Djibouti, Grenada, Monaco, Paraguay or Tonga. While those living in Algeria, Ascension, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brunei, Dominican Rep., Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Ghana, Greenland, Guatemala, Kiribati, Liechtenstein, Libya, Macedonia, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Myanmar, Oman, Poland, Qatar, Senegal and Virgin Is. benefit from just one collection per week. Not so good if you just saw the postal worker depart into the distance without your letter!

### Urban Collections

Rural Bolivians may have just one collection per week, but its urban dwellers have an impressive three collections on average each working day, equalling French Polynesia, Monaco and Swaziland. Just ahead is Japan and Kiribati each with four collections daily. The Vatican wins the prize for the most number of daily collections with five, while Paraguay, Peru and Tonga are the only countries to show zero collections.

Incidentally, Great Britain is shown as having 1.7 per day, although it must be remembered that with its high-speed mail processing equipment, Royal Mail does not need to make constant collections throughout the day anymore. All other countries have either one or two collections per working day on average. □