

Portuguese Penfold Boxes

Probably the only surviving box of its type.

Readers will no doubt be familiar with examples of the Penfold-type boxes sited in far off lands such as New Zealand, but not all will realise that Portugal also had its own version of the 'Penfold' letter box at one point in its history.

It had been thought that they were locally made in that country and that they did not come from a British foundry, but my contact in Portugal states in her (roughly translated) email to me: "Given that this box was imported directly from England, maybe the same manufacturer was used as for English boxes, or even the English post office... but it is an assumption". The translation, cobbled together from eight different online translation services, may be incorrect, so the original Portuguese version follows in case anyone can translate the text in a better way... "Tendo em conta que este marco foi importado diretamente da Inglaterra poderá ser alguma inscrição própria do fabricante ou mesmo dos correios ingleses... mas é uma suposição".



There is no manufacturer's name at the foot of the box (the white lettering at bottom right is the accession number of the Portuguese Postal Museum in Lisbon and reads 'MUSEU CTT I 979 526'). As for when they were manufactured, the museum is unsure stating '19th century?' in its records.

A recent trawl through old issues of the LBSG *Newsletter* saw this very box illustrated in a small photo taken by the late Andrew Smith in 1990 at the store of the museum (see NL140, 2011). The photograph appeared as a part of Ron Hall's 'A-Z of Overseas Letter Boxes: Portugal' feature.

The museum has not been able to ascertain what the lettering 'S N & R' stands for, but the number '166' is the unique box number, a feature commonplace until quite late into the 20th century. The wording on the collection plate loosely translates as: "a tiragem das já está feita" (the collection is carried out), "horas de abertura" (opening hours), "manhã" (morning), "tarde" (afternoon). It is hoped that a reader may be able to add to the above information.



Enlargements of box detail.

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