DESCRIPTION OF THE LETTER BOXES

Number 1 - Edward VII (Type A)
Located at Casemates by the north entrance to Main Street. Edward VII, known as the “Peacemaker”, was Queen Victoria's son and great-grandfather to Queen Elizabeth II.

Number 2 - Elizabeth II (Type C, Double-Aperture)
Located by the entrance to the Main Post office at 104 Main Street. Queen Elizabeth II succeeded her father, George VI, on 6 February 1952. This box is engraved “Royal Mail” instead of “Post Office”. This changed in 1966, when the Post Office was split up to form four separate businesses: Letters; Parcels; Counters; Girobank.

Number 3 - Edward VIII (Type B)
Edward VIII was King of the United Kingdom, the Dominions of the British Empire and Emperor of India, from 20 January 1936 until his abdication on 11 December 1936. He was Queen Elizabeth II's uncle. “Teddy”, as the box is now known, is the only such box ever deployed outside the UK and was acquired from Hassan Shaida, the philatelist, through Arthur Reeder, who owns the letter box museum on the Isle of Wight.

Number 4 - George V (Type A)
George V was King of the United Kingdom, the Dominions of the British Empire and Emperor of India, from 20 January 1936 until his abdication on 11 December 1936. He was Queen Elizabeth II's uncle. “Teddy”, as the box is now known, is the only such box ever deployed outside the UK and was acquired from Hassan Shaida, the philatelist, through Arthur Reeder, who owns the letter box museum on the Isle of Wight.

Number 5 - Victorian (Type A)
Gibraltar's second-oldest surviving letter box is a Victorian pillar box; it is known as “The Vic”. Queen Victoria was great-great-grandmother to Queen Elizabeth II. The box had been originally sited opposite the residence of HE the Governor at The Convent, in Main Street. It was moved to its current location by the Court House on 10 October 2014, following extension works to No 6 Convent Place.

Number 6 - George VI (Type A)
Originally located by the Trafalgar Cemetery, this box was re-sited to its current location by the John Mackintosh Cultural Centre at Main Street on 15 May 2015. George VI was Queen Elizabeth II's father and ascended to the throne, on 11 December 1936, after the abdication of his brother, Edward VIII.

ORIGINS OF THE LETTER BOX

The first organised postal service in Gibraltar dates from 1749, when Governor of Gibraltar Sir Humphrey Bland appointed a Civil Secretary and entrusted him with responsibility for the posts. There was then no regular mail service by sea between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom. Letters were carried by ships whenever possible because the overland route was more precarious, as the roads were unsafe. In 1806, the British Post Office appointed a Packet Agent for Gibraltar and commenced a regular monthly mail service by sea between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom, which was still in operation when the present writer arrived in 1906. The overland mail service by land was started in 1818, and ceased in 1856.

The letter box was brought into service in the United Kingdom by the novelist Anthony Trollope, when he was employed as a Royal Mail Post Office Surveyor. Sir Rowland Hill, Post Master General, sent Trollope to survey the Channel Islands in order to try and solve the problem of irregular mail services as a result of the varying packet boat sailing times, caused by unpredictable winds and tides. Trollope remembered something that he had seen in Paris and proposed a secure box capable of retaining the mail. Vaudin & Son, a foundry in Jersey, were commissioned to undertake the work. The first pillar box went into service at Saint Helier, Jersey, on 23 November 1852.

THE ROYAL GIBRALTAR POST OFFICE

The local delivery of mail was then introduced on 1 October 1858. Prior to this, all mail had to be collected from the Post Office. It was then decided to introduce pillar boxes. Three were originally ordered. One was positioned in Governor's Parade (where there is still an Edward VII pillar box today). The other two were intended primarily for the military garrison and located near the Guard House on New Mole Parade and on Europa Road close to the junction with Windmill Hill. The pillar boxes came into use on 22 December 1858 but none of the original three survive.

In 2005 the Gibraltar Post Office was granted the title of “Royal” by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Gibraltar is the only Commonwealth or British Overseas Territory Post Office outside the United Kingdom to be honoured with this title.
George V Type A letter box dedicated to the birth of Prince George of Cambridge on 22 July 2013 and located at the Evacuation Memorial Roundabout on North Mole Road.

Replica Queen Victoria Penfold letter box dedicated to Kaiane Aldorino, Winner Miss World in 2009, and located outside Gibraltar Airport by the border.

Elizabeth II Type B letter box commemorating Team 54, Gibraltar’s joining UEFA on 24 May 2013, and located outside the NatWest bank at Line Wall Road.

Elizabeth II Type K letter box (with added cypher - only three such examples in existence) - located outside the Philatelic Bureau at Watergardens II, Waterport Wharf Road. It commemorates the Sapphire Anniversary of HM Queen Elizabeth II on 6th February 2017.

George V cast by McDowell Steven & Co Ltd (London & Falkirk)

Elizabeth II cast by Machan Engineering (Scotland)

Victoria cast by A Handyside & Co Ltd (Derby & London)

Edward VIII cast by Carron Company (Stirlingshire)

Edward VII cast by Handyside (Derby & London)

Elizabeth II cast by McDowell Steven & Co Ltd (London & Glasgow)