

Correction to THE ANGLO-FRENCH MARITIME MOVEABLE BOX

The Foreword on page v should read as follows:

FOREWORD

The Moveable Box Service, established between Great Britain, the Channel Islands and France in 1843, and later extended to the Mediterranean, provides a unique type of Maritime Mail, notable for the distinctive datestamps and “MB” handstamps used by the British Post Office, and the use of French numeral cancels on G.B. stamps. This subject has long fascinated philatelists and has been written upon in other works, by such eminent writers as Bill Newport, Alan Robertson, Raymond Salles, Colin Tabeart, Bryan Hunt and Philip Cockrill, but no work has previously been published exclusively on the subject, and many aspects of the topic remained unexplained.

I am therefore delighted to see this new publication by Doug McGill, well written and researched with findings from original archives and records, museums and numerous auction catalogues and collections. A visit to the Guernsey Museum led to the discovery of what is now seen as the earliest known example of a Moveable Box.

Doug explains the use of ship letter handstamps on M.B mail, postal rates, the misuse of M.B markings on Paquebot marks, M.B mail without M.B handstamps or with Paquebot marks, the use of London datestamps on mail landed at Newhaven, and the numerous small French ports which had mail services to and from the Channel Islands, all subjects which have previously caused confusion amongst philatelists. The chapter on the Mediterranean Illustrates the only two recorded examples of the Alexandria M.B datestamp and explains how the service expanded from Egypt and Malta to France and Italy.

Many fine covers are illustrated, notably the incredible Ballon Monte letter, covers with imperf G.B. or French stamps, and covers to Jamaica and Peru. The appendixes show the cancels and handstamps used, with dates and colours, and recorded postage stamps, whilst the lists of recorded covers give a very useful idea of the relative rarity of handstamps. Such lists will never be complete, but many collectors and auction catalogues have clearly been consulted, as shown by more than sixty boxed “MB” handstamps listed from five ports. The book quotes the original 1843 Convention establishing the service, the 1857 convention which introduced special handstamps, and shows how the Moveable Box service expanded before gradually fading away between the wars, finally ceasing due to World War Two.

A highly recommended book for all collectors of G.B. Channel Islands and French postal history, maritime mail, or indeed anyone with an interest in postal history.

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