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AN EDWARD VII ROYAL MAIL CAST-IRON WALL-MOUNTED POST BOX

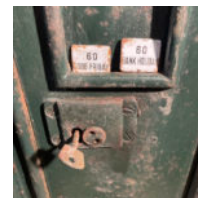
green painted, possibly from an installation in Ireland, made by W.T. Allen of London

the fascia plate cast in relief with the crown and monogram of Edward VII, the hooded slot cast in relief with "POST OFFICE" above the hinged door - with working lock and key - and bearing the maker's name "W.T.ALLEN, LONDON", the interior with sections of the collection basket and two enamelled indicators "Good Friday" and "Bank Holiday",

DIMENSIONS: 71.5cm (28³/₄"") High, 26.5cm (10¹/₂"") Wide, 32.5cm (12³/₄"") Deep

PRICE: £2,150

STOCK CODE: 46423



HISTORY

LASSCO salvaged this Edwardian post box from behind a garden shed in Buckinghamshire where it had lain under a tarp for many years. These characterful and robust post boxes are highly sought after today - and it's good to find an Edward VII. On the passing of Queen Victoria in 1901 W.T.Allen adjusted the "V.R" monogram to "E VII R" around the same crown motif - a different crown was incorporated after 1905.

The green colouration is interesting and possibly indicates it was installed in Ireland. The original post boxes, that first appeared in Jersey in 1852, and soon followed by a national roll-

out, were initially painted red; being deemed to garish they were then painted green. However, by 1879 it was determined that they should universally be painted the more visible red. All of this was before this particular post box was made. The first post boxes of this type, “the wall box”, didn’t appear until the 1880’s when they were first installed in Shropshire.

As we understand it, Irish boxes were green at least after the time of the partition. There are signs on this post-box that it has previously been red-painted but the green is clearly of some age and is an authentic hue. So there’s two likely explanations: either this post box was bought privately from a disposal in Great Britain, and some time ago, painted green to distinguish it for private use – or – it was painted red as part of the production line at Allens before being later designated for an Irish destination and painted green.

If the latter, then this box is indeed a rarity as it was made to the Edward VII pattern (1901-1910) and survived the subsequent creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Installed post boxes bearing the British insignia after 1922 were mostly replaced or vandalised – although remarkably some can still be found in operation. There are some in use whose insignia was replaced with an IFS monogram. Generally, post-independence Irish boxes are to a quite different vernacular specification.

W T Allen of London got the contract for the casting and supply of post-boxes from 1881 – with a number of foundries being sub-contracted to cast for them thereafter (and W T Allen wall boxes can still be found in use in Ireland although after 1922 the commissions increasingly went to others such as the IVI foundry at Athy, County Kildare.).