# The passionate journey of a post box collector in Essex



A passionate mail enthusiast, Steve Knight, aged 63, has dedicated over three decades to curating what is now recognised as the largest private collection of post boxes in mainland Britain. Located in his garden in Halstead, Essex, the Colne Valley Postal History Museum boasts an impressive assemblage of 166 post boxes, alongside 25 stamp vending machines and thousands of pieces of postal ephemera. The museum, which has been open to the public for 30 years, welcomes visitors from all corners of the globe, showcasing a significant aspect of UK postal history.

Steve Knight's journey into the world of post box collecting began 35 years ago when he first noticed the striking presence of red pillar boxes on British streets. His initial interest in stamps as a child laid the foundation for this expansive collection. "Post boxes are the icon of the British street," he remarked, emphasising their iconic status. "If you go into central London as a Chinese tourist, the two things they're going to sell is a model of a post box and a telephone kiosk."

Knight views these post boxes as integral components of the UK's social and historical landscape, stressing the importance of preserving these relics for future generations. He stated, "They're an important part of the social fabric and history of where we live. If there's one thing the British can claim as giving to the world - it is the postal service."

The museum includes a range of postal collectibles, with the oldest item on display being a 1857 wall box, recognized as one of the earliest designs to be introduced nationally. It also features unique stamp vending machines from 1917 that were used with pre-decimalisation currency. Highlighting the educational aspect of the museum, Knight frequently hosts school groups, guiding young visitors through the history of British post. He noted, "This is something you never see in public now. Young children can't believe the old pennies are so huge. When they put them into the machine, they have that 'wow' moment."

Knight's commitment to preserving this aspect of Britain's postal heritage has garnered attention and acclaim, making the Colne Valley Postal History Museum not only a notably extensive collection but also the largest publicly accessible postal history site on mainland UK, surpassed only by the Postal Museum in the Isle of Wight. Through his efforts, Steve Knight continues to shine a light on the cultural significance of postal history in the UK's narrative.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.cvphm.org.uk/AboutTheMuseum.html> - This URL supports the information about the Colne Valley Postal History Museum, including its collection of post boxes. It also mentions Steve Knight's role in founding the museum and the restoration efforts of the post boxes.
* <https://www.jang.com.pk/en/35921-meet-the-man-who-holds-uks-largest-private-post-box-collection-news> - This URL provides details about Steve Knight's extensive collection of post boxes at the Colne Valley Postal Museum, highlighting its significance as the largest private collection in the UK.
* <https://www.cvphm.org.uk> - This website of the Colne Valley Postal History Museum offers a glimpse into the museum's collection, including post boxes and postal history items, reinforcing its role in preserving UK postal history.
* <https://theconversation.com/uk-reduces-its-museum-grants-the-end-of-culture-as-we-know-it-75973> - This link does not directly support the specific claims about Steve Knight or the Colne Valley Postal History Museum, so it is not included. Instead, historical context about UK museums could be referenced elsewhere.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_postal_system> - Although not directly mentioned, a general resource like Wikipedia can provide historical context and details about the British postal system, supporting the broader narrative about postal history.