

THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

With Christmas just around the corner we are thinking of calling friends and family but not, I suspect, from a red telephone box.

In 1924 the Royal Fine Art Commission invited three architects to submit designs for new telephone kiosks. The winner was Sir Giles Gilbert Scott who also designed Liverpool Cathedral where he is buried. Scott was at the time a trustee of Sir John Soane's Museum and he topped his kiosk with a dome similar to that on the mausoleum Soane had designed for himself. It was produced in cast iron as GPO model K2, replacing the K1 concrete kiosk.

Later designs had a similar appearance. The most common, the somewhat smaller K6, was introduced for King George V's silver jubilee in 1935.

The colour red was chosen to make them easy to spot, although Scott had suggested silver. These robust and iconic survivors of the 20th century, found in almost every town and village, are worth preserving. At the last count, 51 within the Hundred Parishes had been listed.

Most red phone boxes have now been decommissioned although a few, like the one in Anstey, still operate as a pay phone. Many villages have used the box to house a defibrillator; others have inventively turned them into informal book exchanges and information points.

Some villages have been even more imaginative: the box in Standon has been transformed into a greenhouse full of colourful plants.

With Christmas in mind, the Society still has a limited supply of its book *The Hundred Parishes: an Introduction*. The 400-page hardback with a thousand photos is available for £25 from tourist information centres and good book shops, or by arrangement with me – 01279 813226.

The Society's trustees wish you all a very happy Christmas.

Ken McDonald, Secretary