

### Puzzle of the mystery box

Outside Very Nice Things in Market Place, Reepham, stands a mystery box. It is more than six feet tall but quite narrow, and is fixed to the wall in the corner where the shop meets St Michael's House, the last property before the entrance to the churchyard. We know it was there in the early 1900s as we have evidence from dated photographs.



One suggestion made in a “Memories of Reepham” item was that it was known as the “Blanket Box” and contained blankets to be used for people injured in accidents in the Market Place. However, the height of the box would indicate there is room for something larger than a few blankets. It is actually tall enough to contain a canvas stretcher, plus blankets and other items useful in an emergency.

St John Ambulance has a history of providing emergency equipment in boxes where climbers and ramblers could make use of the contents in adverse weather conditions, but we have not found any reference to similar boxes being placed in busy public places.

A second suggestion is that it was a shutter box. Many of the shops in the Market Place would have had wooden shutters to be put up at closing time to protect the window glass and shop window contents from damage overnight. There is a photograph showing a shutter box outside the Bircham Centre, looking like a small sentry box.

If you have any ideas or memories about our mystery box we would love to hear from you.