

SYNOPSIS*
DIAMOND MARKS – GREAT BRITAIN

Diamond marks can be found on covers used during the period 1922 until 1985. The marks, normally on the lower half of the cover or postcard, indicate that the already cancelled cover or postcard had been counted when a census of the mail passing through a specific office was being taken. There are two diamonds if the cover was counted twice. A week in October was usually selected. The Post Office needed the data to assess the viability of the office and its staffing needs.

During the war time, the locations of certain offices, including the Fleet Mail Offices, were concealed by replacing the dated town CDS with a diamond. There are three pages illustrating this use.

This exhibit using a selection of covers, shows

1. Various diamonds, regular and narrow, with thick or thin lines, 14 or 15 mm, and regular black or red marks. There is no specific reason for the shape or colour of the diamond marks at a given office.
2. Types of mail being counted, normal inland, incoming and outgoing overseas mail.
3. One page has two covers to overseas destinations mailed in February.
4. One page has two covers mailed during the decimal era, both to Canada.
5. One page has mute (or dumb) cancellations with wavy lines where a diamond has replaced the town CDS.
6. One page has mail received from H.M. Ships with the name of the office replaced by a diamond.
- 7 The last page has a dated diamond cancellation with wavy lines. These were used in 1990s on bulk mailings. The year can be seen on the Canadian inkjet cancellation.

As the census diamonds are not cancellations, there is scant mention in the literature:

R.C. Alcock and F.C. Holland, *The Postmarks of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 465.

James A. Mackay, *English & Welsh Postmarks since 1840*, p. 232 includes dumb (mute) cancellations.

Collect British Postmarks, p. 162 describes dated diamonds and diamonds with wavy lines.

D. Cooper and M. Peach, *GBCC Chronicle*, **30**, October 2009, p. 9-10.

An exhibit can be viewed on line at

www.vicstamps.com/displays/postal_census/postal_census_display/table_contents.html

These covers are not usually sorted out into a separate category by dealers, but can be found when checking the general covers of the reigns of George V, George VI and Queen Elizabeth at a show or by a thorough study of the relevant sections of a dealer's list, such as Bill Barrell.

* Subject to possible change.

Summary of Pages

- 1 Introduction and 1955 letter to Duncan, B.C..
- 2 Three inland mail covers with large black diamonds.
- 3 Narrow diamond amrks with 12 mm sides, one prewar.
- 4 Inland covers with two diamonds, one has both a black and a red diamond is particularly uncommon, and a cover returned to sender..
- 5 Covers with cut-outs, one to Warrington and the other to Sweden.
- 6 Airmail to Europe, Austria and Holland.
- 7 Incoming overseas mail from Canada, with two different sized diamonds, and Nigeria.
- 8 February overseas mail incoming airletter from Canada, forwarded to Germany and OHMS cover to the National Research Council.
- 9 July diamond and O.H.M.S. overseas mail from HMS Achilles.
- 10 F.P.O, mail to Tunbridge Wells and cover mailed at sea to Warrington,
- 11 Picture postcards, incoming from Greece with two diamonds and outgoing one to Chicago.
- 12 Decimal currency, two air mail letters to Canada, 1973 and 1976.
- 13 Censored mail with mute cancellations.
- 14 Forces mail received from HM Ships, checked by censor.
- 15 Postwar mute cancellations.
- 16 Dated diamond mark, 5 December 1996, on cover to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.