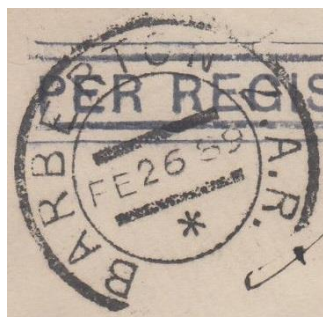


Cape Hooded Circular date-stamps and ZAR Truncated Double Circle (TDC) date-stamps.

There are some interesting parallels between Simon Kelly's Type 2 Cape Hooded date-stamps and the neighbouring ZAR's Truncated Double Circle (TDC) date-stamps, but also some interesting differences. (TDC date-stamps were also used in the Cape, at Cape Town and Graaff-Reinet; they aren't discussed here mainly because I don't have a similar source of detailed information; according to Jurgens and Goldblatt they were introduced in 1890 in the Cape, two years later than in the ZAR.)

Four of these ZAR TDC date-stamps survive in the Ditsong Museum (Pretoria). Three are marked "DE LACY" on the side. (Other ZAR date-stamps in the Ditsong Museum are stamped "DC BERRI PATENT LONDON", "WF WIEDHOF MANUFACTURER LONDON", "W LETHABY & CO LONDON" and "DE LACY LONDON": De Lacy was evidently a London manufacturer, and the TDC date-stamps were presumably made there.) They have a hinged construction (normal at the time) to allow the insertion of slugs. They were used at nine offices; examples are illustrated here:



As with the Type 2 Cape Hooded date-stamps, in the ZAR Truncated Double Circle date-stamps the central date line sits between two fairly thick horizontal bars, with the date in six characters: dd mm yy or mm dd yy. Above and below the date line, there are usually a letter (often called a time code letter and thought to indicate time of day) and a 6-pointed star.

Details vary from office to office. In summary:

	usual form of date	EKD	LKD	Museum date	upper	lower
Barberton	mm dd yy	JU 12 88	OC 5 95	[SP 4 94]	blank	6-star
Boksburg	dd mm yy	25 OC 88		[1 FE 95]	A	6-star
Johannesburg	dd mm yy changes to mm dd yy	3 AP 88	DE 5 89		C-H	A-D, blank
Klerksdorp	dd mm yy	28 JU 88	16 MY 90	[19 JU 90]	A then 6-star	6-star then A
Krugersdorp	mm dd yy changes to dd mm yy	FE 19 89	9 NO 96		6-star	A-E
Lydenburg	dd mm yy	13 OC 88	9 JY 95		A	6-star
Marabastad	dd mm yy	(17 JY 88)	6 DE 95		6-star	D
Potchefstroom	dd mm yy	24.11.88	30.9.93	[31 JA 94]	blank, A	6-star
Pretoria	dd mm yy	(20 JY 88)	17 JY 89		6-star	(A-E)

(() indicates some uncertainty, [] indicates dates on instruments now in the Ditsong Museum)

ZAR TDC date-stamps first appear in 1888, the same year as Cape Hooded Circle date-stamps, but the latest recorded date of use (1896) is earlier; the inner part of the date-stamp is a little larger in the ZAR TDC date-stamps (inner circle 19-20 mm, as compared with 18-19 mm in Type 2 Cape Hooded date-stamps).

As the date and the letters or stars in the upper and lower half-moons were produced by changeable metal slugs with different letters, numbers or a star, the format of the date and use of the “time code letters” or stars depended on the clerk setting up the date-stamp, and, probably, on the instructions of the postmaster and on post office regulations. In practice, there seems to have been a fair amount of variation, and occasional errors when slugs were put in upside down or sideways.

Date format: In ZAR TDC date-stamps, the date most commonly appeared with the date before the month, i.e. dd mm yy, though at Barberton all the examples seen are mm dd yy, at Johannesburg the format changes in November 1889 from dd mm yy to mm dd yy, and at Krugersdorp mm dd yy is commoner in 1889-1892, and dd mm yy in 1893-1896.

In Type 2 Cape Hooded date-stamps, again there appears to have been local variation – judging from the examples figures in Simon Kelly’s presentation, mm dd yy was usual at East London, Grahamstown and King Williams Town, while dd mm yy was usual at Kimberley and Simonstown.

“Time control letters”: In the ZAR, use was clearly variable. At several of the nine TDC date-stamp offices, they seem to have been ignored: at Barberton, letters were not used and the upper half-moon was left blank; at Boksburg, Klerksdorp, Lydenburg and Potchefstroom, the letter used was always an A, with a star in the other half-moon. At Krugersdorp and Pretoria, a limited range of letters (A-D or A-E) appeared in the lower half-moon, with a star in the upper half-moon; while at Johannesburg letters appeared in both half-moons.

Use in the Cape seems to have been a bit more consistent: at most offices there is a star in the upper half-moon and a range of letters in the lower half-moon, though we don’t as yet know how these letters were used.

Bas Payne, with many thanks to Steve for useful comments on an earlier draft.