



Goldblatt

The Eight Cape of Good Hope HOODED CIRCULAR DATESTAMPS of 1888



Kelly

An attempt to find the threads that bind their disparate use, as well as to more accurately define the individual HCDs themselves.

Steve Hannath



Early but not Earliest Recorded (ER) use of the Kimberley HCD.
1888. Cover. KIMBERLEY '1 OC 99' to PARIS, FRANCE.



Kelly



Kelly



Kelly



Kelly



Jurgens / Frescura

All examples of the HCDs shown in the main Reference works are included
Unfortunately, it has not been possible to accurately reproduce all supplied
examples to exact size and scale. The main reference works include:

- F. Frescura RDPSA, "Post Offices and Postal Markings of the CoGH, 1792 - 1910" (2021).*
- R. Goldblatt RDPSA, 'Postmarks of the Cape of Good Hope' (1984).*
- A. A. Jurgens RDPSA, "Handstruck Letter Stamps and Postmarks" (1943).*
- R. Putzel RDPSA, "The Postmarks of South Africa". (Various volumes. 1992 - 2003).*
- A. Visser RDPSA, "On-line Addendum - Post Marks of Southern Africa". (2023).*
- S. Kelly "Hooded Postmarks of Southern Africa" (2022.)*

Why this project?

Postmarks of the HCD (Hooded Circular Datestamp) can present themselves in a variety of ways depending how the postal clerk set it up. I have always wanted clarity on its many varieties and the reference books and the sage words of experts have never provided me with definitive answers.

From asking questions about the HCD the main sense I got was that the experts would prefer it if I went away and let them get on with work they enjoyed and for which they had answers. Their best explanations were generally stock answers based on long-held assumptions and pre-conceived notions of the HCD and post office working practices. Given the protean nature of the interchangeable HCD, many experts have developed woolly open-ended answers to explain its varieties. None of this satisfies me.

I have always wondered what the first HCDs looked like. I assumed they had a uniform appearance. Was the asterisk on the top or at the bottom and what was the date format - Day before Month or vice versa?

As no-one knew anything with any certainty, few dared to risk looking foolish. One of the better if necessarily vague answers I received made the suggestion that the HCD was probably issued broken down in a box and that its assembly was left to the individual postmaster or postal clerk. Taking this argument to its logical conclusion, each HCD had the potential to be assembled differently ie. there was no standard look on the day of issue. This argument concluded that variations existed right from the beginning and that we were unlikely to understand and/or find certainty in anything so changeable as the HCD.

I had to take this argument on the chin. It hurt. I did not find it helpful or attractive. While it possibly explained how open the HCD was to variations in appearance, the excessively potty-trained side of me felt that even if it was supplied as parts in a box, the manufacturers of the HCD and the Cape Post Office would surely have provided assembly instructions that produced a uniform look. (I doubt they were going to provide different instructions to different post offices.) That being the case, I decided to accumulate as many HCDs as I could - one can never have enough data samples - most especially the earliest ones from 1888, the year of the HCD's issue. I hoped that examples of the earliest datestamps would allow me to glimpse what the HCD first looked like in the eight post offices that received it. I also hoped to find similarities between them ie. a standard design format.

Keeping an open mind, I am NOT yet able to make any decision based on such a small data sample. I am NOT yet beginning to see the emergence of any pattern. While it is far too early to state a conclusion with certainty, I am beginning to see that often the earliest HCDs would appear to have an asterisk on top, the Date in-between the bars, most often in the format Day Month Year but also Month Day Year, and both with a Time Code letter at the base. Most probably one or the other or both were the original issue format. Everything else is a later variety. The rotation of the asterisk has become 'interesting'.

NOTE: Prof Alex Visser has a list of ER (Earliest Recorded) and LR (Last Recorded) dates for HCD postmarks based on Franco Frescura's work. Thanks guys, this is very useful. However, and most importantly, their ER list is supplied in the format Day Month Year. Is this just how they chose to list their records - or is this the format on their ERs? If their presentation of these dates matches the ER HCDs from which it is taken, it shows without doubt that Day Month Year was the standard issue format. I suspect that this is an error on their part. I need to get this resolved. It could be a breakthrough. Or not!

This is work in progress. We will look at other HCD issues also.

PLEASE SEND EXAMPLES OF YOUR HCDs.

Send JPG scans at 300 dpi.

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BEACONSFIELD (Updated 26/10/2023)

EARLIEST RECORDED: 25 JU 88 - NO EXAMPLE AVAILABLE

(06/06/2023)

TOP:

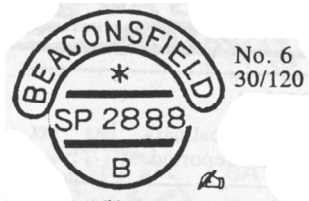
BETWEEN BARS:

BOTTOM:

USED:

Source: F. Frescura / A. Visser.

Sorry but until we see this one, we can't tell you anything about it.



"Hooded Circular Date-stamp". "B" code at bottom, star at top. Date Sept 28, 1888.

SP 28 88

TOP: Asterisk vertical

BETWEEN BARS: Month, Day, Year

BOTTOM: Time Code Letter B

USED: As illustration only

SOURCE: R. Putzel. (Postmarks of SA. Vol. 1/178.)

Putzel's Example. No. 6

Note: The above is hand-drawn with a broken circle opposite 'S' & '8'.



NEW - 26/10/2023

DE 17 88

TOP: Asterisk vertical

BETWEEN BARS: Month, Day, Year

BOTTOM: Time Code Letter D

USED: On postcard.

SOURCE: S. Hannath.

Note: The postmark's circle is broken opposite 'S' & '8'.

1888. Postcard. BEACONSFIELD 'DE 17 88' to GRAHAMSTOWN.



Putzel's No. 6.

Note Artist's Error:

The hand-drawn example above is without the break in the circle opposite 'J' & '9' as seen in the scanned image.



JA 29 89

TOP: Asterisk vertical

BETWEEN BARS: Month, Day, Year

BOTTOM: Time Code Letter D

USED: Used above twice on dispatch.

SOURCE: S. Kelly

BEACONSFIELD / 2



No. 6a
As No. 6, but date with
day before month. (1890/1).

10 JY 91
TOP: Asterisk horizontal
BETWEEN BARS: Day, Month, Year (bars broken?)
BOTTOM: Time Code Letter F
USED: On receipt
SOURCE: S. Kelly

Visser Addendum. No. 6a

Visser shows no example. The above is taken from Kelly. Example submitted to Visser 04/07/2023.



20 JU 9.... (94?)
TOP: Asterisk vertical
BETWEEN BARS: Day, Month, Year
BOTTOM: Nothing
USED: On dispatch
SOURCE: S. Kelly

This example was submitted to Visser 04/07/2023.

Note: The hand drawing has missed the broken circle
and possibly an inverted '2' in the DAY.
