

Hiogo – ‘D30’ Obliterator Survey

By Neill Granger and Andrew Cheung FRPSL

The port of Hiogo was opened on 1 January 1868 and a British Consulate was set up thereafter. The Hiogo Postal Agency was established in 1869 and a single-ring steel c.d.s. was supplied soon after its opening. However, the London GPO Proof Book does not give the dispatch date for this c.d.s. [1, 2]. Like all other postal agencies in China and Japan, letters deposited at the agency received only the c.d.s. on reverse and adhesive stamps on letters were not cancelled until the mail reached Hong Kong.

It was not until much later that the ‘D30’ horizontal killer was assigned to Hiogo. According to the London GPO Proof Book, the ‘D30’ was dispatched with Amoy ‘D27’, Kiungchow ‘D28’ and Hankow ‘D29’ horizontal oval killers to Hong Kong on 9 June 1876 (Figure 1). The Hong Kong Study Circle Journal 307, page 16, published a snippet originating from the Hong Kong Daily Press of Thursday, 21 August 1930 by ‘WS’ probably the *nome de plume* of William Sayers, the then President of the Hong Kong Philatelic Society and he who wrote: -

“Regarding the ‘D30’ I would make bold to state that this chop was never sent to Kobe, and consequently was never legitimately used for cancellation of postage-stamps from that point. I base my statement on the knowledge of conditions prevailing at this port at the time the said chop was received here from England. Arrangements were well advanced for the closing of the offices at the Japanese posts, and Mr. Lister was not the man to amuse himself by despatching things unnecessarily.”

The ‘D27’ and ‘D29’ horizontal oval killers were definitely sent to Amoy and Hankow; there are plenty of ‘D27’ and ‘D29’ covers. However, due to absence of genuine covers to date, we cannot prove that the ‘D28’ was sent to Kiungchow [3]. Therefore, it does not appear that Postmaster General Lister was holding back dispatches from London even though the British post offices in Yokohama, Kobe and Nagasaki were to close three years later in 1879 [4]. Based on the quality of most ‘D30’ strikes, the stamps most probably came off covers rather than cancel-to-order. Furthermore, one 4c grey stamp (no. 4 on the list) with a small part of a cancel believed to be the ‘Hiogo’ c.d.s. makes it likely the ‘D30’ was sent to Hiogo despite the authoritative statement made by ‘WS’ [1].

Webb recorded 29 examples of ‘D30’ on the following Hong Kong QV adhesive stamps: 2c (1), 4c (6), 8c (4), 12c (1), 16c (5), 24c (7), 30c mauve (1), 48c (1) and 96c (3). Including the 2c and 30c on the ‘Seymour’ front, the total number of ‘D30’ was 31 [5]. Proud added two more values, the 18c lilac and 30c vermilion to the list of stamps used in Hiogo [6]. I have not yet recorded any 18c lilac and 30c vermilion cancelled ‘D30’ except a recently identified fake 30c vermilion with wing-margin.

Since then, more ‘D30’ on Hong Kong stamps have been found and I have been collecting illustrations of the different examples of the ‘D30’ obliterator. Initially this was an aid to providing provenance for those stamps which come my way for auction. It soon became apparent that there are similarities in the centring of some values, suggesting that these originated from single panes.

The denominations of Hong Kong QV stamps recorded by me with ‘D30’ are as follows: -

Values	Number of copies recorded ()
2c	(7) various centring with some similarities, three centring high
4c	(8) most centred high, includes two pairs (one rejoined) and two with straight edge, one left and one right
6c	(2) centred low left and central
8c	(8) generally centred slightly high and right. One with left wing-margin
12c	(6) Five centred slightly high and one low. Two left wing-margins (one trimmed)
24c	(6) generally centred slightly low. Two left wing-margins
30c	(2) centred slightly left and centred right
48c	(1) centred slightly low
96c	(3) centred low, centred left and central
16c/18c	(1) centred slightly high
28c/30c	(1) centred to the right (possibly a second genuine example)
16c	(8) two types, centred slightly high and centred to the right. Two right wing-margins (one trimmed and one with margin re-perfed.), one re-joined pair
Total	53

98

To what place	Date when sent	Stamps
	1876	<div>CANNOT BE FORWARDED</div> <div>CANNOT BE FORWARDED</div> <div>RECEIPT RETURNED</div> <div>((D.27.))</div> <div>((D.28.))</div> <div>((D.29.))</div> <div>((D.30.))</div> <div> <div>PORTO-PLATE C PAU 12 76</div> <div>((C86.))</div> </div> <div> <div>ARROYO C AUTO 76 PORTO-RICO</div> <div>((F83.))</div> </div>
Sent to Hong Kong 9 June 1876		
S. Thomas Aug		
S. Thomas 31 "		

Figure 1

Copy of the Proof book at the London G.P.O. Archive showing the four horizontal obliterations sent to Hong Kong in 1876



There are certain characteristics of the 'D30' horizontal oval obliterator worth noting and these are: -

1. The topmost bar of the oval is thinner and shorter than the lowermost bar.
2. The right-side parallel curved bars are narrower than the left resulting in ink often clogged between the bars so that many cancels have the appearance of one thick right bar.
3. The gap between the horizontal bars to the right is wider than the gap to the left due to the upper bars and lower bars are not absolutely parallel.
4. The dot after the '0' is slightly higher than the dot after the 'D'
5. Top and bottom serifs of the '3' aligned perfectly.

Below are examples of what I have recorded. To the best of my knowledge, all 'D30' on the stamps are genuine and most of them come from famous collections and some of them are accompanied by certificate stating 'Genuine' issued by recognised expert or institution.

2c brown wmk. CC



2c (1)

ex. Burghard RL
1961 (#460)
shown in Webb



2c (2)

ex. Ishikawa, Chan
Sotheby's 1981
(#60)



2c (3)

Harmers NY
5/1991



2c (4)

Rose Hutchinson
Major Heron 5/37
Yates 11/39



2c (5)

Spink 1996 HK
(#2402)
Grosvenor 5/06



2c (6)

Spink 2002 HK
(#1655)



2c (7)

John Bull 2007

4c grey wmk. CC



4c (1)

ex. Yates 11/39
ex. V.Gordon-Smith
Cavendish April 95 (#1403)



4c (2)

CRL Dyer 1984
(#3295)



4c (3)

ex. Ishikawa
Sotheby's
1981 (#61)



4c (4)

Argyll Etkin
Dr. A. Cheung



4c (5)

ex. Rose Hutchison
illustrated in Webb



4c (6a)

ex. Major Heron
ex. Richard Chan
John Bull May 2003



4c (6b)

Now repaired [7]
Spink 2003 (#1368)
Pink BPA cert.



4c (7)

Robson Lowe
July 1952

6c lilac wmk. CC



6c (1)

ex. D'Almada
ex. John Parker
CRL 1990 (#1077)
SGHK 1994



6c (2)

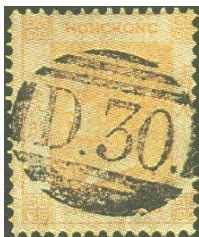
Spink Jan. 2010

8c orange wmk. CC



8c (1)

ex. Hopkins RL 1956,
ex. Dyer '84,
Spink '95 (#1993)
Illustrated in Webb



8c (2)

ex. Rose Hutchinson,
Houston, "Consular"
Sotheby's 1980
Ishikawa (#541)



8c (3)

Argyll Etkin 2004
(#383)



8c (4)

Illustrated in Webb
R. Bodily



8c (5)

Spink 1998
(#734)



8c (6)

ex. Davis
SG 1997 (#339)



8c (7)

Zurich Asia
May 2002 (#842)



8c (8)

ex. D'Almada
CRL 1990 (#1075)

12c blue wmk. CC



12c (1)

ex. Burghard
RL 1961 (#462)



12c (2)

Robson Lowe
May 1973



12c (3)

Richard Chu



12c (4)

ex. John Parker
SGHK 1994 (#1193)



12c (5)

R. Lowe Oct. 1983
(#1286)



12c (6)

J. Bull/SG 1992
(#933)

24c green wmk. CC



24c (1)

ex. Burghard
RL 1961 (#463)
illustrated in Webb



24c (2)

Richard Chu
illustrated in Webb



24c (3)

ex. Dyer, Parker
CRL 1985(#3149)
SG 1994 (#1388)



24c (4)

ex. Major Hopkins
R. Lowe 1956 (#67)



24c (5)

ex. Cranford, Houston
R. Lowe '59 (#793)
illustrated in Webb



24c (6)

Philachina PC35
Dec. 2009

There is a 24c stamp with clipped perfs. at bottom mentioned in the November 1939 Yates sale but I have not been able to find a scan of this stamp yet and therefore I have not included this into this survey.

30c mauve wmk. CC



30c (1)

Grosvenor
May 2008



30c (2)

Spink
March 2012

48c rose-carmine and 96c brownish-grey wmk. CC



48c (1)

ex. Burghard, Ishikawa
RL 1961 (#463),
Sotheby's 1981 (#62)
Spink 2001 (#2293)



96c (1)

ex. Cranford, Ishikawa
R. Lowe '59 (#794)
Sotheby's '80 (#542)
Zurich Asia 2002 (#1222)



96c (2)

ex. Rose Hutchison, Yates
illustrated in Webb
R. Bodily



96c (3)

ex. Burghard
R. Lowe 1961
(#465)

16c/18c, 28c/30c wmk. CC



16c/18c (1)

ex. Richard Chan
Sun 1979 (#209)



28c/30c (1)

ex. Richard Chan
Sun 1979 (#210)
John Bull Feb. 2003



28c/30c (2)?

Reported in HKPS NL
August 2003 ex. eBay
Status to be confirmed

16c yellow wmk. CC



16c (1)

ex. Rose Hutchinson,
Heron, R. Lowe July 62
illustrated in Web



16c (1a)

ex. D'Almada
CRL 1990 (#1076)
(re-perf. right)



16c (2)

ex. Burghard
ex. Houston
RL 1961 (#466)



16c (3)

ex. Dyer
CRL 1985(#3150)
R. Lowe Dec. 1956



16c (4)

ex. Ishikawa
ex. Richard Chan
Sotheby's 1981 (#63)



16c (5)

ex. William Kwan
Spink 2004 (#160)



16c (6)

Re-joined pair
(Left) ex. John Gartner, Harmers June 2005



16c (7)

Overstruck by horiz. killer
Treasure Hunter Nov. 2004

Hong Kong Philatelic Society August 2003 Newsletter reported a second example of the 'D30' on a left wing-margin 28c/30c sold on eBay, the strike is unclear and therefore its status cannot be ascertained. I have not included this copy in my survey until it has been expertised.

The conclusion of my study is that it appears that panes of sixty of (2c), 4c, 8c, 12c, 16c and 24c were dispatched to the post office in Hiogo. It is claimed that the postmark was in use from 1876 until December 1879. However, it seems likely that only one stock of panes was sent out and as the 16c issued in August 1877, it would probably have been after this date.

The 'unique' D30 cover-front

The famous 1879 'Seymour' cover-front to Nottingham (see below) bearing 2c, centred high and to the left and 30c, centred slightly high (both not included in the above survey). Note that the stamps have a different centring to the above list, which is not unreasonable if the stamps were carried into the port.

In a recent publication, Messrs. Goldsmith and Cheung have expressed doubt regarding the status of the cover-front following discovery of a different Hiogo c.d.s. on a postcard [8].



Forgeries

This is the rarest of the Treaty Port postmarks, so has been the attention of those making fake postmarks and plenty of good forgeries are known. Luckily, most are not too difficult to spot, here are some examples: -

1. Fake 'D30' struck on top of a faint 'B62' on a 2c brown sold on eBay in 2003 [9].
2. Fake 'D30' on unused copy of the late printing 12c deep-blue issued after closure of the Hiogo post office.
3. 'D30' on 8c from the 1992 John Bull / Stanley Gibbons sale looks dubious, the two bars on the right and left are too wide apart.
4. Fake 'D30' on the 30c vermillion has different inking quality compared to the known genuine examples.



2c brown
HKPS NL 2003/9 pg.5



12c blue
Source unknown



8c orange
J. Bull/SG 1992 (#932)



30c vermillion
Source unknown

This forged 'D30' cover was sent to both BPA and RPSL for certification recently. The forger applied the fake 'D30' on mint stamps; note that the fake Hiogo c.d.s. is based on the 'Seymour' cover-front but with different date. This demonstrates how much care is needed when collecting these postmarks.



References:

1. Dr. Andrew Cheung, The Hiogo (British P.O.) circular datestamp, Hong Kong Study Circle Journal #366/21-23.
2. The page showing the Hiogo c.d.s. on the GPO Proof Book is probably missing.
3. Fake 'D28' covers are known to both RPSL Ltd. and BPA.
4. In his Annual Report, the Hiogo British Consul stated that "The British Postal Agency at this Port was closed at the end of November 1879...." in contrast to Yokohama 31 December 1879 and Nagasaki 30 September 1879. See E.B. Proud's The Post Office in the Far East page 443.
5. F.W. Webb, The Philatelic and Postal History of Hong Kong and the Treaty Ports of China and Japan.
6. E.B. Proud, The Post Office in the Far East page 444.
7. Hong Kong Philatelic Society December 2003 Newsletter page 5, 'Cosmetic Surgery Magic'.
8. Mick Goldsmith, "Death of a Talisman", Hong Kong Study Circle Journal #366/23-24.
9. Hong Kong Philatelic Society September 2003 Newsletter page 5, 'D30 on B62'.
