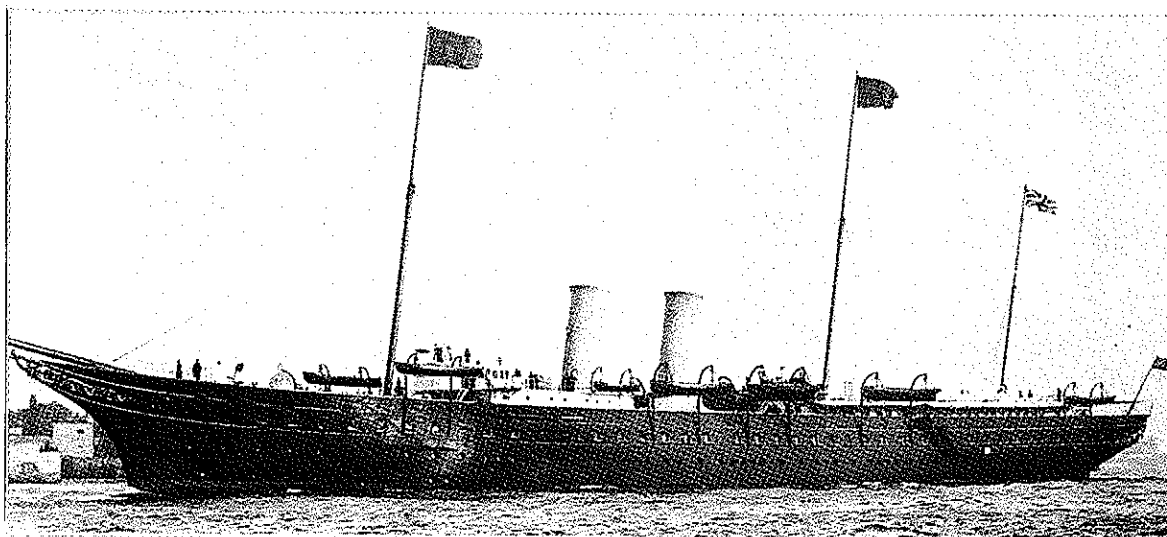
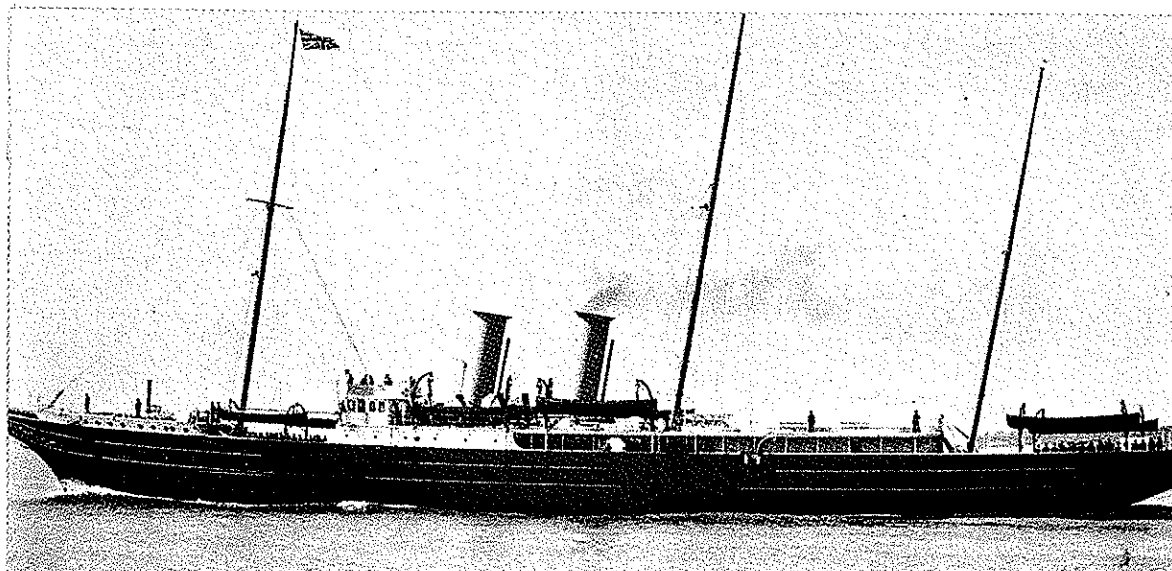

SECTION 5 -

ROYAL RESIDENCES ON THE MOVE



H.M. YACHT "VICTORIA AND ALBERT III"



H.M. YACHT "ALEXANDRA"

ROYAL FLIGHT

The King's Flight was formed on 20 July 1936 by King Edward VIII at Hendon to provide air transport for the Sovereign and members of the Royal Family when on official duties. It was disbanded between 1941 and May 1946 and was renamed the Queen's Flight on 1st August 1952 upon the Accession of Queen Elizabeth. Based at Royal Air Force Benson in Oxfordshire it is under the control of RAF Strike Command.

CANCELLATIONS

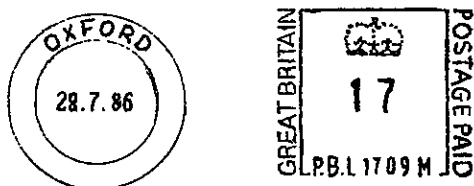


Fig. 5.1

5.1 Seen 1982/6. Machine number P.B.L 1709M. Used by Officer Commanding.

KING'S AND QUEEN'S FLIGHT

The certifying stamps have been used on some mail carried on board aircraft of the King's and Queen's Flight and on certain correspondence emanating from RAF Benson.



Fig. 5.2



Fig. 5.3



Fig. 5.4

5.2 THE KING'S FLIGHT/(DATE)/ROYAL AIR FORCE triple circle. Always applied in violet ink. Seen 1947.

5.3 THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT double circle with Royal Monogram fully within centre circle.

5.4 THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT double circle with royal monogram above centre circle. Seen 1986.

FLIGHT PLANNING

Duties include collecting and displaying weather information and dealing with navigation warnings for all of the country.



Fig. 5.5

5.5 THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT/(DATE)/FLIGHT PLANNING rectangular. Struck in red ink. Seen 1982.

OFFICER COMMANDING

The duties of the Officer Commanding vary from selecting Officers for the Flight, to welfare and disciplinary problems (of which there are few).

**OFFICER COMMANDING
ROYAL AIR FORCE,
BENSON,
OXON, OX9 6AA**

Fig. 5.6

5.6 OFFICER COMMANDING/ROYAL AIR FORCE/BENSON/OXON, OX9 6AA unframed. Seen 1982 to 1984 in red ink on items of Queen's Flight mail.

ROYAL TRAINS

British royalty have used trains to travel around their Kingdom for many decades, indeed since the reign of Queen Victoria.

ROYAL TRAINS WITHIN BRITAIN

The Royal Train maintained for exclusive use by the Royal Family when in Great Britain has stocks of Buckingham Palace notepaper and envelopes on board at all times.

Unfortunately no special cancellation or certifying stamp has ever been used as all mail receives the normal royal monogram certifying stamp of the period and a postmark from the nearest Post Office to where the train stopped.

ROYAL TRAINS ABROAD

When the Royal Family travel abroad on State Visits it is not uncommon for a Post Office to be set-up on the train and for special cancellations to be applied by the host country.

Examples are 1934 when visits were made to Australia and New Zealand and the 1939 visits to the United States of America and Canada.

As the scope of this book is restricted to Royal Household mail posted from within the United Kingdom readers are directed to the bibliography contained within this book from page 178.

ROYAL YACHTS

Many previous Royal Yachts existed but they had no postal significance.

H.M. YACHT "OSBORNE II"

Laid down at Pembroke in 1870 and Commissioned in 1874. Tonnage 1,850, length 250 feet, beam 36 feet 2 inches. Wooden construction with two funnels and three masts. This vessel was the last with paddle wheels.

It has not been ascertained whether a Court Post Office operated on board.

CANCELLATIONS

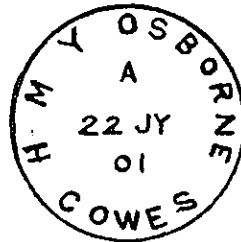


Fig. 5.7

5.7 H M Y OSBORNE/COWES single circle. Only recorded used at the Royal Regatta, Cowes, Isle of Wight in 1901. Skeleton type 30mm.

H.M. YACHT "VICTORIA AND ALBERT III"

Built at Pembroke in 1899 and commissioned in 1901. Length 380 feet, beam 50 feet, displacement 5,500 tons. Broken-up in 1955. A wooden sheathed steel hull, twin screws with two funnels and three masts.

Whilst the Cowes Regatta was being held, His Majesty King George V had the Court Postmaster set-up a Post Office on board. It was necessary for him to dress for the occasion by wearing a peaked cap of the Royal Yacht Squadron and a blue reefer suit.

In 1902 a direct wire was established between the Yacht and Cowes, and also London for the visit to the Isle of Wight. A PMG Minute read:

"In response to Commodore Lambton's request directions were given for a four-wire cable to be run to the Royal Yacht's buoy off Cowes.

"The Yacht reached its moorings at 4:50pm on the 16th, the cable was at once attached, and at 5:20pm the special circuits were working well.

"The arrangement made is for the Royal Yacht to have direct telegraphic communication with London and with Cowes Post Office by separate wires and for two Telegraphists to be in constant attendance on board the Yacht. In addition to this the staff at the Cowes Post Office has been temporarily increased by the addition of four Telegraphists while a special circuit from that office to London with Southampton intermediate has been made up."

An entry in the Post Office Weekly Circular of 8 September 1903 read:

"Treatment of Correspondence for His Majesty's Yachts

"It has been arranged that the Commanding Officers of His Majesty's Yachts should, before leaving any port in the United Kingdom, give directions to the local Postmaster for the re-direction of their correspondence.

"These directions should of course be acted upon, and they should, moreover, be telegraphed at once both to the Superintendent, Inland Section, General Post Office, and to the Postmaster of the port of destination of the Royal Yacht. The instructions will then be telegraphed from the Inland Section to each of the Offices which is supplied with the Admiralty Weekly List of Addresses.

"Letters, Parcels, &c., for His Majesty's Yachts should be accorded the same treatment as packets for His Majesty's Ships (see Rule 211 (h) and Parcel Post Rule 108 (g)) with the exception that private packets for His Majesty's Yachts even if specifically addressed to a different port should be re-addressed when occasion requires at any of the Offices supplied with the necessary information."

An entry in the Post Office Weekly Circular of 29 July 1913 read:

**"Their Majesties on board the Royal Yacht "Victoria and Albert"
at Cowes during the Regatta**

"Telegrams for the Royal Yacht should circulate to the Central Telegraph Office which will be in direct communication therewith. Boatage should not be charged."

CANCELLATIONS



Fig. 5.8

- 5.8 **HIS MAJESTY'S YACHT/(CROWN)** single circle 28mm. Used at the Cowes, Isle of Wight Regatta on mail posted on board. Seen 1904 on face of a postcard, ie not cancelling a stamp, through to 1934.

SHIPS CACHETS

H.M. YACHT
"VICTORIA & ALBERT"

Fig. 5.9

H. M. Yacht Victoria & Albert

Fig. 5.10

HIS MAJESTY'S YACHT VICTORIA & ALBERT

Fig. 5.11

H.M. YACHT
VICTORIA & ALBERT

Fig. 5.12

H.M. YACHT
VICTORIA & ALBERT

Fig. 5.13

- 5.9 **H.M. YACHT/"VICTORIA & ALBERT"** two line cachet.
- 5.10 **H.M. Yacht Victoria & Albert** single line cachet in blue. Seen 1904.
- 5.11 **HIS MAJESTY'S YACHT VICTORIA & ALBERT** single line cachet in violet. Known used during a royal visit to Dublin in 1904.
- 5.12 **H.M. YACHT/VICTORIA & ALBERT** two line cachet. Seen 1908 in violet.
- 5.13 **H.M. YACHT/VICTORIA & ALBERT** two line cachet. Seen 1909 in blue.

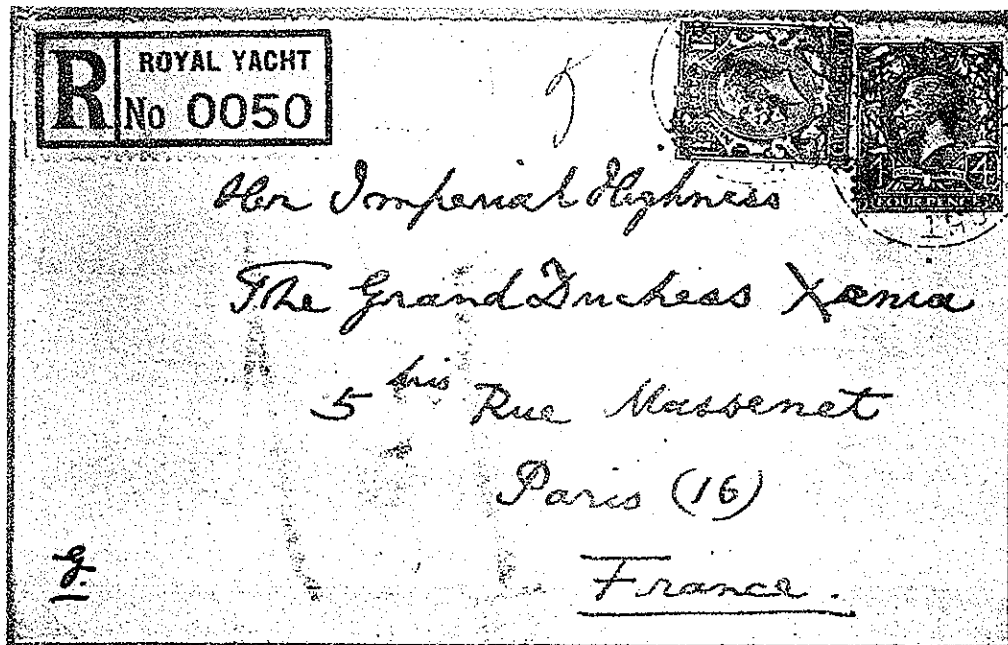
REGISTRATION LABELS

ROYAL YACHT. "No. 0050". Seen 1934. See illustration on next page.

H.M. YACHT "ALEXANDRA"

Launched 1907, commissioned 1908. Tonnage 2,050, length 275 feet, breadth 40 feet, draught 13 feet. Twin screw vessel. Sold in 1922.

The only interest lies in the envelope flaps worded "H.M. YACHT ALEXANDRA".



Yacht mail registered letter sent in August 1934

H.M. YACHT "BRITANNIA"

Launched in 1954 it serves as official and private residence of the Queen. Length 412 feet 3 inches, beam 55 feet, gross tonnage 5,769. Twin screws, one funnel and three masts. Built by John Brown & Co. Ltd. Refitted 1987.

Whilst the Yacht was being built, the SS Gothic served as a temporary Royal Yacht for much of the tour of the Commonwealth in 1953 to 1954 but as she was outside British territorial waters is not detailed within this book.

Mail to and from Britannia is carried in special bags, placed under seal and sent via normal routes across land, sea or air. It is not uncommon for the seals to bear special instructions and registration markings. Even when at sea the red boxes are flown in by helicopter with the mail.

Separate arrangements apply to the crew's mail which is cancelled by a Post Office maritime mail marking. When required, the Marines become Postmen.

BOGUS ROYAL YACHT CACHETED COVERS

Covers cancelled 21 June 1971 at Tristan da Cunha bearing a 7d stamp depicting Britannia together with a two line straight cachet in black worded "H.M.R.Y. BRITANNIA" appeared on the American stamp market that

year. The then Flag Officer, Royal Yachts, Commander JES Raymond, RN confirmed that the Yacht had not been to Tristan since 1957. Covers reported seen were addressed to Boston, USA. Commander Raymond also confirmed that no straight line cachet had been used on board Britannia. This could have thrown into dispute the ships cachet if not for the genuine OHMS cover used from Sierra Leone during the 1961 royal visit.

SHIPS CACHETS

H.M. YACHT "BRITANNIA"

Fig. 5.14

5.14 H.M. YACHT "BRITANNIA" straight line cachet. Seen 1960 and 1961.

ROYAL MONOGRAM CERTIFYING STAMPS



Fig. 5.15

5.15 THE ROYAL YACHT double circle with royal monogram above circle. Seen 1977 to 1981.

POSITIONS ON BOARD THE YACHT

COXSWAIN

The Coxswain is the officer responsible for the steering of the vessel.

not seen

Fig. 5.16

5.16 COXSWAIN/(DATE)/H.M. YACHT/BRITANNIA Known but not seen by the author

ENGINEERS OFFICE

This certifying stamp is used by staff employed as engineers on board the Royal Yacht.

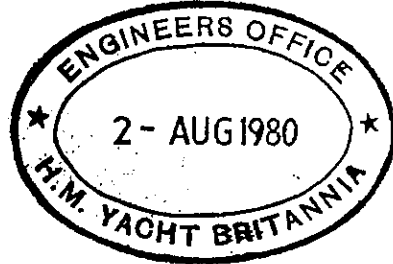


Fig. 5.17

5.17 */ENGINEERS OFFICE*/(DATE)/H.M. YACHT BRITANNIA double oval. Seen 1980 in blue.

FLAG OFFICER, ROYAL YACHTS

Normally appointed as an Extra Equerry to the Queen and, as such, is a member of the Royal Household.



Fig. 5.18

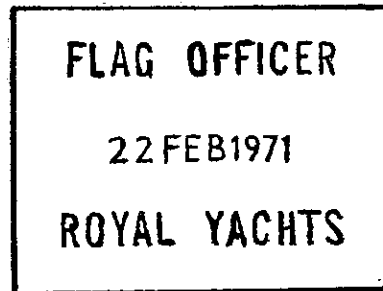


Fig. 5.19



Fig. 5.20

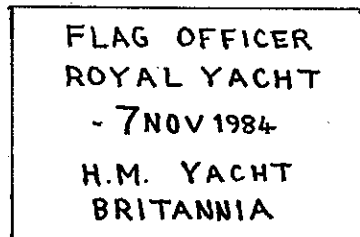


Fig. 5.21



Fig. 5.22

- 5.18 ***/FLAG OFFICER*/(DATE)/ROYAL YACHTS** triple oval. Seen 1958 in red.
- 5.19 **FLAG OFFICER/(DATE)/ROYAL YACHTS** rectangular. Seen 1971-3 in red.
- 5.20 **FLAG OFFICER/ROYAL YACHTS/(DATE)/HM YACHT/BRITANNIA** rectangular. Seen 1975 in red.
- 5.21 **FLAG OFFICER/ROYAL YACHT/(DATE)/H.M. YACHT/BRITANNIA** rectangular. Seen 1984 in red.
- 5.22 **FLAG OFFICER/ROYAL YACHTS/(DATE)/H.M. YACHT/BRITANNIA** rectangular. Seen 1986 in red.

KEEPER AND STEWARD, ROYAL CABINS

Used by the Keeper and Steward, Royal Cabins.



Fig. 5.23

- 5.23 **KEEPER & STEWARD/ROYAL CABINS/HM YACHT BRITANNIA** rectangular. Seen 1963.

MAIL OFFICE

Responsible for the postal arrangements of the Royal Yacht, both incoming and outgoing.

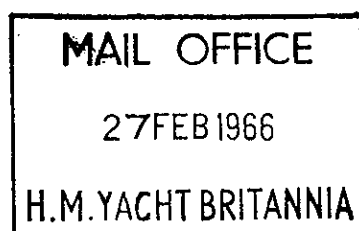


Fig. 5.24

- 5.24 **MAIL OFFICE/(DATE)/H.M. YACHT BRITANNIA** rectangular. Seen 1963 to 1970 in blue.

OFFICE OF COMPTROLLER OF SUPPLY (RENAMED SUPPLY OFFICE)

This officer handles the non-food requirements of the Yacht.

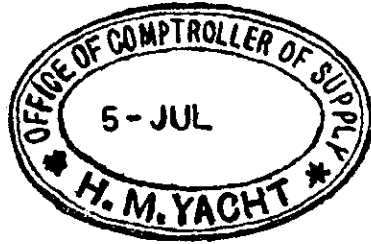


Fig. 5.25



Fig. 5.26

5.25 OFFICE OF COMPTROLLER OF SUPPLY/(DATE)/*/H.M. YACHT/* triple oval. Seen 1960's.

5.26 SUPPLY OFFICER/(DATE)/H.M. YACHT BRITANNIA rectangular. Seen 1967.

VICTUALLING OFFICE (RENAMED CATERING OFFICE)

The Victualling Office provides the necessary food and plans the menus to feed the officers and royal yachtsmen.

The certifying stamps are used by the Chief Petty Officer, Caterer and his Assistant.

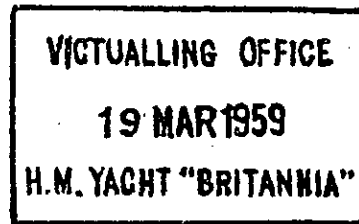


Fig. 5.27

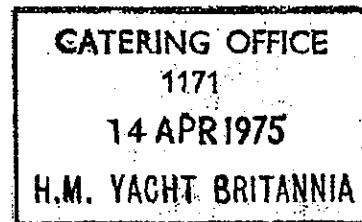


Fig. 5.28

5.27 VICTUALLING OFFICE/(DATE)/H.M. YACHT "BRITANNIA" rectangular. Seen 1959 to 1961 in blue/black ink.

5.28 CATERING OFFICE/1171/(DATE)/H.M. YACHT BRITANNIA rectangular. Seen 1975 in blue.