

Pillar-Style Mail Boxes in Hong Kong by Stan Cronwall

Reminders of its colonial past are seen everywhere in Hong Kong. The harbor, Victoria Peak overlooking much of the city, and one of the main streets in the business district are still named in honor of Queen Victoria.

Parks, prisons and schools retain their names of British monarchs.

Last fall, there was an article in Linn's about how the People's Republic of China (PRC) is planning to make over the traditional pillar-style postal boxes remaining from Hong Kong's pre-1997 colonial period.



The PRC hierarchy apparently is not happy about the people of Hong Kong and their lack of "appreciation" for being "rescued" from their colonial past. They put forth the silly argument that the old pillar-style boxes are "confusing" to the people.

With the transfer of sovereignty in 1977, the pillar style boxes changed from red as in the United Kingdom to green. The new Hong Kong Post logo was also added, as in the picture to the left.

As of October, 2015, Hong Kong had 1,148 free standing post boxes. There were only 59 pillar style boxes remaining in service. Most of these carry the royal insignia of the reigning King or Queen from the

time they were installed.

The UK Royal Mail set up Hong Kong's mail service in 1841. Two pillar-style boxes remain from the long reign of Queen Victoria. These bear Queen Victoria's coat of arms and both are in local museums. Seven have the cypher of King George V, two from King George VI (the current Queen's father), 46 from Queen Elizabeth II, and one with the Scottish crown. The different cyphers are illustrated on the Hong Kong stamps below.



The one with the Scottish crown (the \$5 value stamp) dates from the first boxes made in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. These bore the cypher, "EII R". This generated protests in Scotland because Queen Elizabeth is the first Queen of Scotland and the United Kingdom to bear that name. Elizabeth I having been Queen of England only.

As of this writing, Hong Kong postal authorities under pressure from the PRC have not announced what additional steps may be taken to mitigate the "confusion" they claim exists.

Stan Cronwall collecting interests include Germany: Third Reich 1933-45 and the areas it occupied (stamps covers & cards). He also collects U.S. World War II Patriotic Covers and Cards; Civil War Patriotic Covers (both U.S. and CSA); U.S Naval Covers; DDR stamps; and, Post WW II Soviet Zone Hitler Head Obliteration stamps, covers & cards.