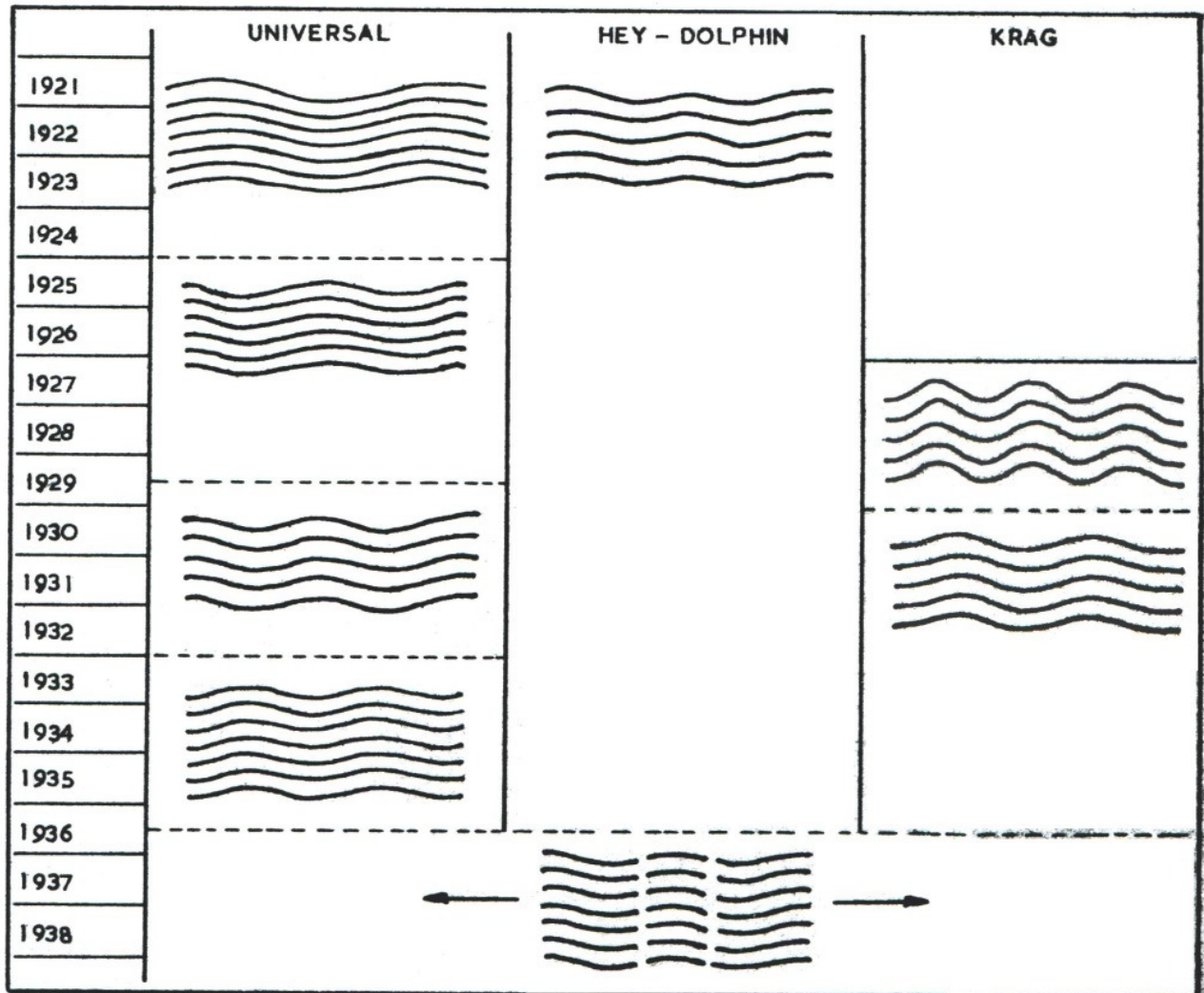


## Evolution of Stamp Cancelling dies

The following diagram shows the evolution of wavy-line cancels from 1921 and can be used to distinguish between the three main types of cancelling machines until the format was standardised in 1936.



Note that a few of the Hey-Dolphin machines (at Hornsey N8, North Finchley N12, London SW1, Reading and Norwich) sometimes had 7 wavy lines rather than 5. However, Hey-Dolphin machines always had the year in the rim of the town die rather than in the central portion.

Except at Stockport, Margate and Doncaster, Universal machines had single-circle dater dies. Also, Universal machines between 1921 and 1936 can be distinguished from the single impression Krag machine cancels by the inclusion of a small inner arc at the bottom of the die.

## Universal machine – Census marks

From 1933, Universal machines were used to apply a census mark in the form of a 'diamond'. Normally, these marks were applied during October each year to indicate that the mail item had been included in the GPO annual census. Occasionally, these marks can be seen on mail from other times of the year.

These 'diamond' postmarks continued to appear until 1985 when the practice of marking census mail ceased.



*Meter-franked item showing a census 'diamond' – 26 Oct 1960*



## 1944 – ‘D-Day’ machine cancels

Just prior to D-Day (June 6 1944), Forces mail in the UK received triangular machine dies as a security measure.

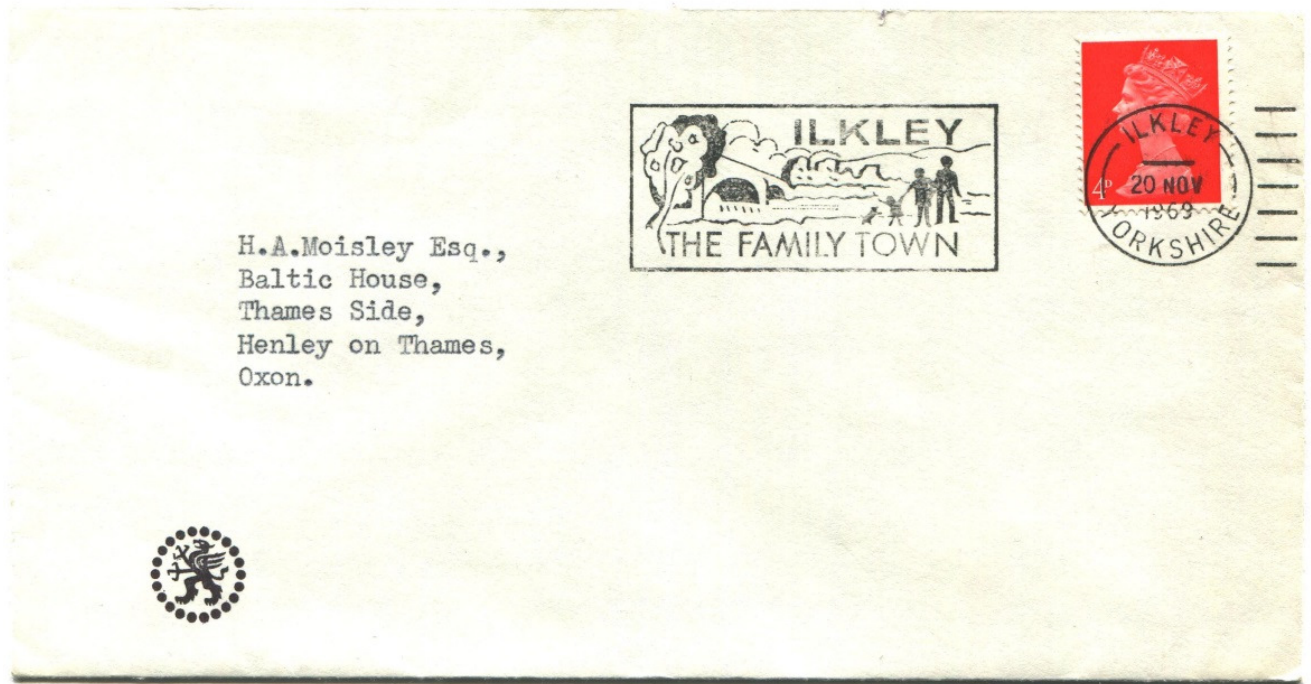
Universal cancelling machines were generally used for this purpose and the Post Office Branch number was incorporated within a triangular ‘town die’.

The item below shows a Forces mail item with the office code ‘322’ (Gravesend) and a ‘Passed By’ censor handstamp.

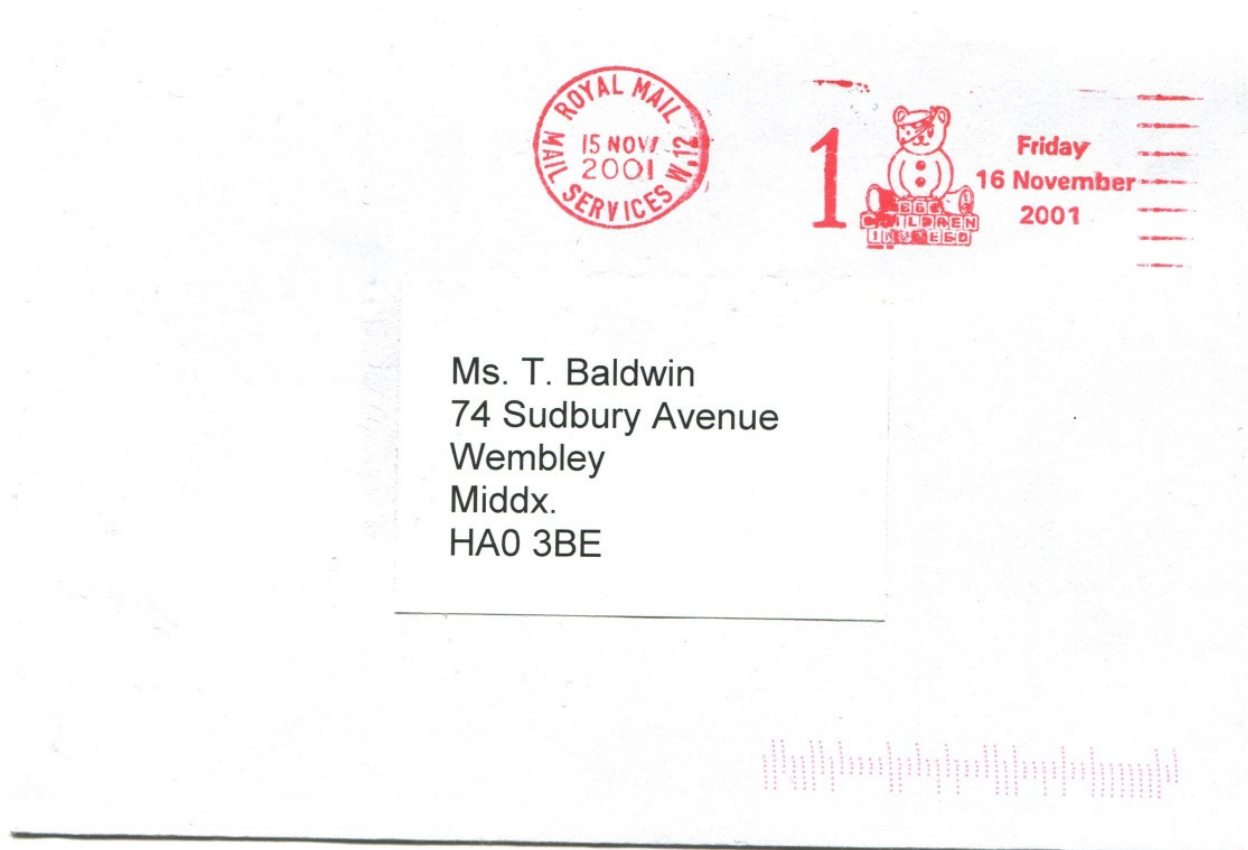


*‘D-Day’ machine cancel with office die ‘322’ (Gravesend)*

# Example uses of Universal SCM machines



*SCM with slogan die in place of standard wavy lines - 1969*



*SCM used for bulk posting – BBC 'Children In Need' slogan 2001*

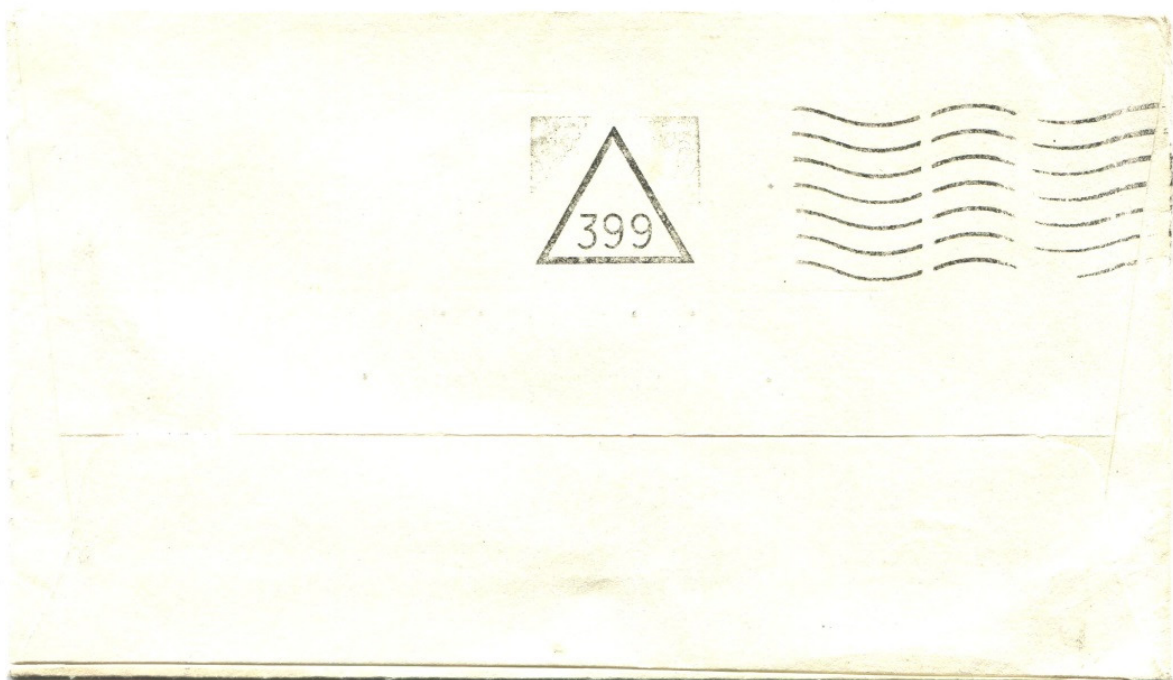


## Universal machine cancels – uncommon usage

This postmark has been applied on the reverse of a meter franked item dated 20 June 1963 and shows a 'Census Diamond' with a full set of wavy line obliterators. The reason for this is unknown.



Triangular town dies are normally applied to bulk mailings but this '399' office code has been applied on a meter franked item (which also happens to be dated 20 June 1963). Again, the reason is unknown.



## Universal machine cancels – uncommon usage (2)

The use of census 'diamond' cancels finished in 1985. However, these dies were occasionally used for other purposes after that date.

In the 1990's they were sometimes used on charity appeal mailings and from 1993 they were used for bulk mailing purposes.

In 1996, dated diamonds were used at Croydon in reserve machines.

The following is an example of a dated diamond with the year inverted that was probably used at Reading. It was probably used as a reserve machine rather than for bulk mailing purposes because of the handwritten address on the envelope.



Mr J. Kavanagh,  
9 Hewett Close,  
CAVERSHAM,  
Reading  
Berks.  
RG4 7ER.

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*Dated diamond (probably used at Reading) with inverted year '2003'*