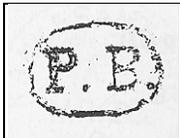


Exploring the Ceylon Pillar Box Usage

By Kathryn Johnson

In the later Victoria Era in Ceylon, a Pillar Box was available for postal use. Over a roughly seven year timeframe, mail was collected from the Pillar Box and marked with the P.B. handstamp, shown below. Much is not known about the Pillar Box usage in Ceylon, this article provides some explanation of what is known, and identifies some open questions that other members may be able to answer from the materials in their own collections.



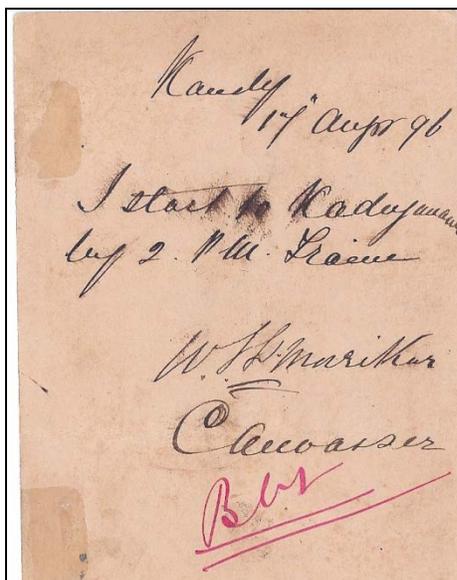
This Pillar Box handstamp marking has been identified as in use from May 13, 1889 to January 27, 1891. (Proud, Ceylon Postal History)



Pillar Box Marking in Use

2c Postcard to Colombo

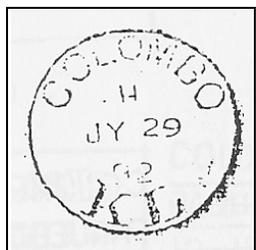
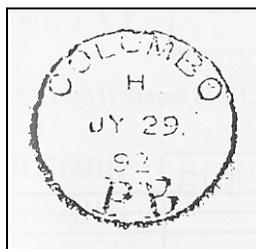
CDS August 18, 1896



Confirming Kandy as the location of the Pillar Box.

Reverse of postcard above, sent from Kandy.

Pillar Box only located in Kandy is presumed. While the Colombo CDS indicates P.B. for Pillar Box pickup, it is likely referring to the collection of Kandy Pillar Box mail. This indication is from the same date of July 29, 1892 on these two CDs, the Colombo P.B. and the Colombo K.L., or Kandy Line, CDS. The markings suggest pick up from the Pillar Box and transport on the Kandy Line to the Colombo GPO.



Recorded Use of Colombo P.B. CDS:

June 19, 1888 to March 30, 1893.

Last identified use, provided here,
of July 4, 1893.



The finding of a later identified use, here, of the Colombo P.B. CDS confirms at least a five year usage of the Pillar Box for customer mail drop off. The post card above confirms an approximate seven year use of the P.B. handstamp. The Pillar Box may have remained in use for a longer time and the marking use discontinued. It is also possible that the Pillar Box was in use for sometime before a P.B. marking was devised or appeared as a necessary postal marking to include. A review of older photos and picture postcards of Kandy city streets may provide greater understanding of the Pillar Box usage.

Questions about Ceylon's Pillar Box Usage:

Perhaps members of the Ceylon Study Circle can further detail the use of the Pillar Box, specifically:

Why the P.B. marking stopped being used?

Was the marking used after the dates recorded up to this point?

Where was the Pillar Box located? Probable locations are outside the Kandy Post Office or at the Kandy Train station.

What did the box look like?

Were there multiple Pillar Boxes in use?

Questions about Ceylon's Pillar Box Usage (continued):

Why was the Pillar Box used discontinued?

Why was it only adopted for use in Kandy?

Finally, are any images available of the Pillar Box on early Kandy city photos? Illustrated here are two Victorian Pillar Boxes. Perhaps the Pillar Box located in Kandy looked like one of these.



Victorian Era
Pillar Boxes
from England