

Previous Articles - 60

Madame Joseph Forgeries - an Update

by Chris Georgallis - (Cyprus Study Circle)

It has been impossible to find a Madame Joseph (MJ) forgery of the Cyprus 6 May 1935 Silver Jubilee First Day Cover (FDC). I have seen the fake MJ 6 May 1935 Nicosia Registered cancellation on stamps at a Stampex Exhibition many moons ago but have never seen a fake FDC. It is known that fake MJ 1935 Silver Jubilee FDCs for the Commonwealth countries exist and are often addressed to the City Stamp Shop in London EC4.

One such Cyprus cover was illustrated in the "Flagstaff", the journal of the Silver Jubilee Society and having seen a scan, sent to me, I can say with some certainty, that it is not a fake but a genuine FDC.

Here we have three covers, with Registration labels issued from a Nicosia Post Office and cancelled at the same time of day, 5pm. To these we will overlay the transparent overlays of the forged MJ cancellations, which were made pretending to have been cancelled at the same Post Office and at the same time of day, 5pm as the covers here.



Cover illustrated in issue 49 of the Flagstaff Journal.
(Cover A).



Virtually identical cover in my collection.
(Cover B)



Another cover in my collection

The overlays, which are of fake MJ cancellations, would be expected to completely and perfectly cover the cancellations on the covers, if the covers are MJ fakes. If they do not, then the covers are genuine covers and genuine FDCs.

Below we see close-ups of sections of each cover with the overlay superimposed over the cancellation on the covers.



The dash in the 5 of 5pm is longer on the cover than the MJ cancellation.

The stop after the 5 of 5pm is present on the cover but not on the MJ cancellation.

The width of the cancellation oval on the cover is wider than that on the MJ cancellation.

The text on the cover does not coincide exactly with that of the MJ cancellation.



The D of Registered on the cover doesn't superimpose exactly with that on the MJ cancellation.

The 6 on the cover is more flat than on the MJ cancellation, which is more curved.



There are further differences but the major points that one should note as ways to determine whether a cover is genuine or not are those given above.

The same points also apply to this cover.

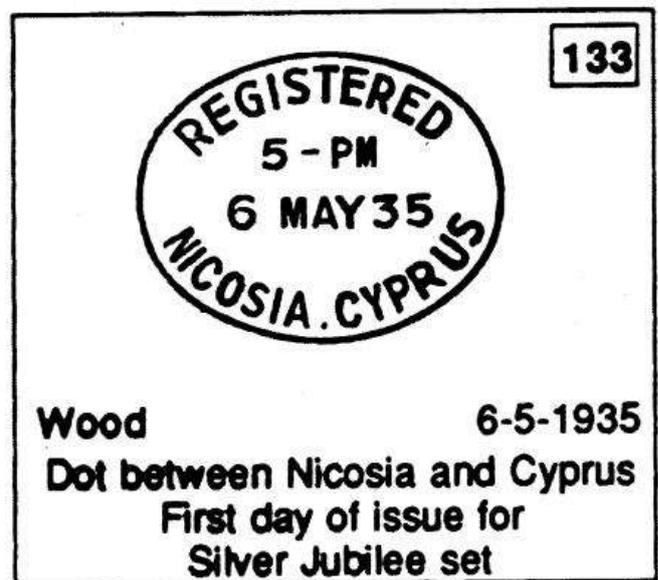
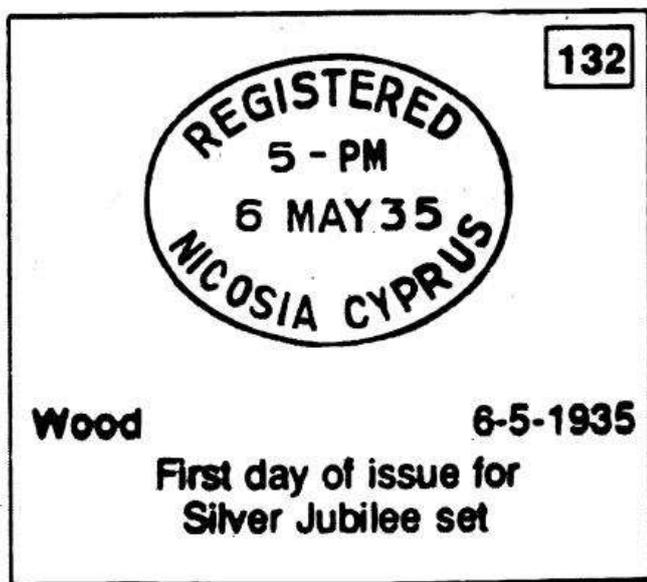
For the above three covers, I have used the MJ No 133 cancellation from the book: *Madame Joseph Revisited*, by Brian M. Cartwright, (Royal Philatelic Society London, 2005).

There are two forged 6 May 1935 cancellations in the book, but the first example No.132 is not relevant as it has No stop between Nicosia and Cyprus, whereas the three covers and No.133 do have a stop between Nicosia and Cyprus.

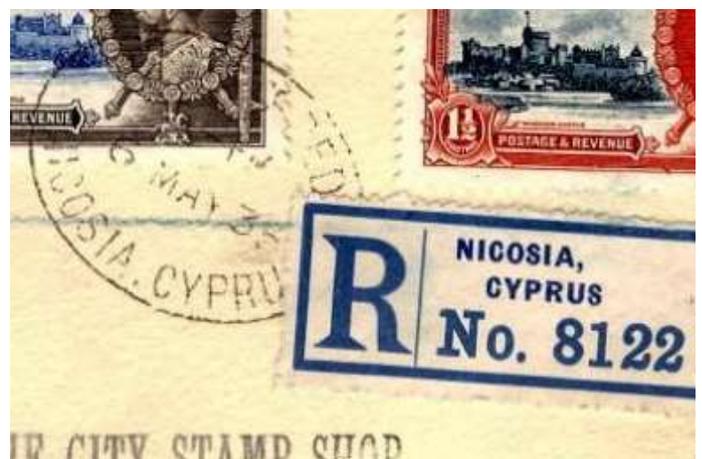
An illustrated FDC of 6 May 1935 for Cyprus was sold on Ebay some time back and was meant to be a MJ Fake. Having examined a scan of it, it has the stop after the 5 in 5pm so had to be a genuine cover. So far I have not been able to find a MJ forgery of the FDC, and those that are said to have been forgeries are not.

It is therefore, not possible to know whether, if fake covers exist, and if they do, whether they bear the No.132 or No.133 fake MJ cancellation.

Below are the two fake cancellations illustrated in the book:



There is an oddness about the above Covers A and B. The registration labels cover the cancellation. Having looked at several dozen covers of the period, these two and only one other cover have been treated in this way. The label is always away from the stamps and cancellation. However, if we look at the covers A and B, there was no room to place the label other than where it has been placed due to the positioning of the stamps and address. The registration number follows a logical sequential order when registered covers of the same period following the 6th May are examined.



With the covers below, a more sensible treatment of the cancellation and label has been carried out.



Cover scan sent in by CSC member



The above is an update to the detailed examination of the genuine and forged examples of these cancels in my article, "Cyprus Cypher", still available as a PDF on this site.

I would like to thank the following for all their help and advice before writing this article on Madame Joseph Forgeries. With their help and direction, I was able to update an earlier article I wrote on the same subject, but I think now this a rather more complete article on this subject. I am not an expert in the field of GV Silver Jubilee but my interest in Cyprus definitive FDCs and their survival has made it necessary for me to tackle the subject of possible forgeries as we have to identify those covers which might influence any research:

Roger B West, Tony Ainscough, Nick Levinge and Neil Donen

CG - December 2017