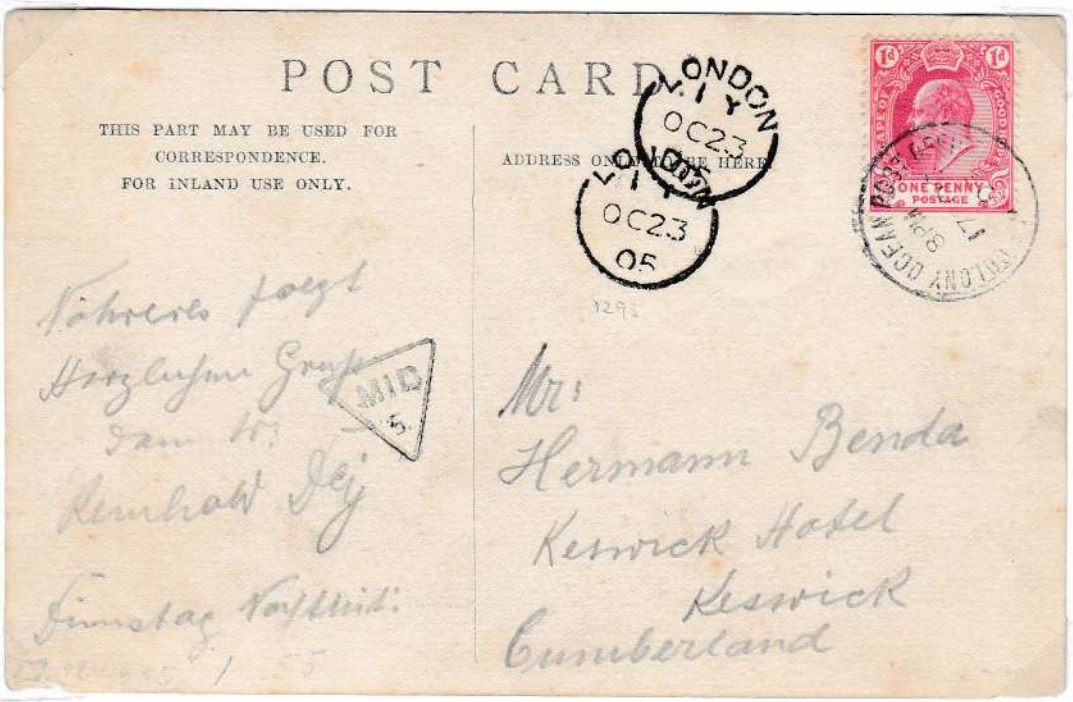
MARITIME - 1900-1910 - THE OCEAN P.O.s

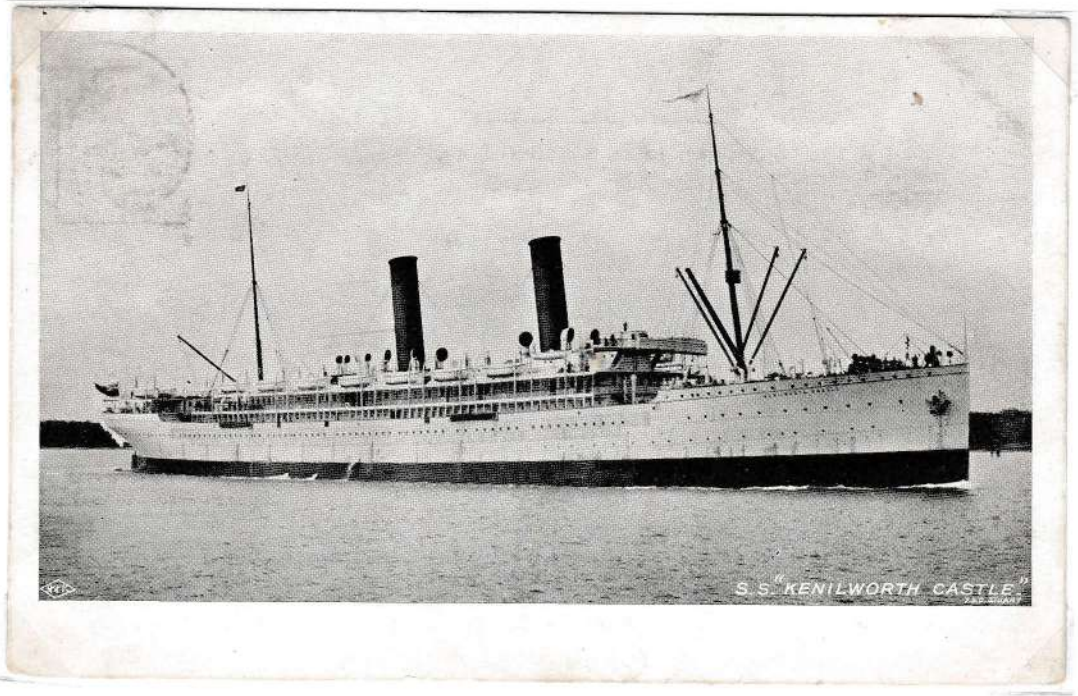
CODE "8 PM" - *KENILWORTH CASTLE*

17 Oct.1905 a pc of the ship posted on the southbound *Kenilworth Castle* dated the day before arrival at Madeira. Returned to UK by *Walmer Castle* reaching Southampton on 21st



London CDSs 23 Oct and inspector's triangle "MID" (Midland), "5" (5th of the 4 hour periods between 4am and 8pm) and indicating mis-sorting

6 Dec.1904 another pc of the ship posted on the southbound *Kenilworth Castle* dated the day before arrival at Madeira. Returned to England by *Walmer Castle* reaching Southampton on 10th



Kenilworth Castle (II) & her sister ship *Armadale Castle* were the first 2 ships ordered by the newly coalesced Union Castle Line. Built by Harland and Wolff she left Southampton on 28 May 1904 on her first mail trip to Cape Town.

MARITIME - 1900-1910 - THE OCEAN P.O.s

CODE "8 PM" - *KENILWORTH CASTLE*

24 Mar 1905 pc of Madeira stamped & cancelled on picture side ("8" & "PM" close) posted on the northbound *Kenilworth Castle* the day before arrival at Southampton

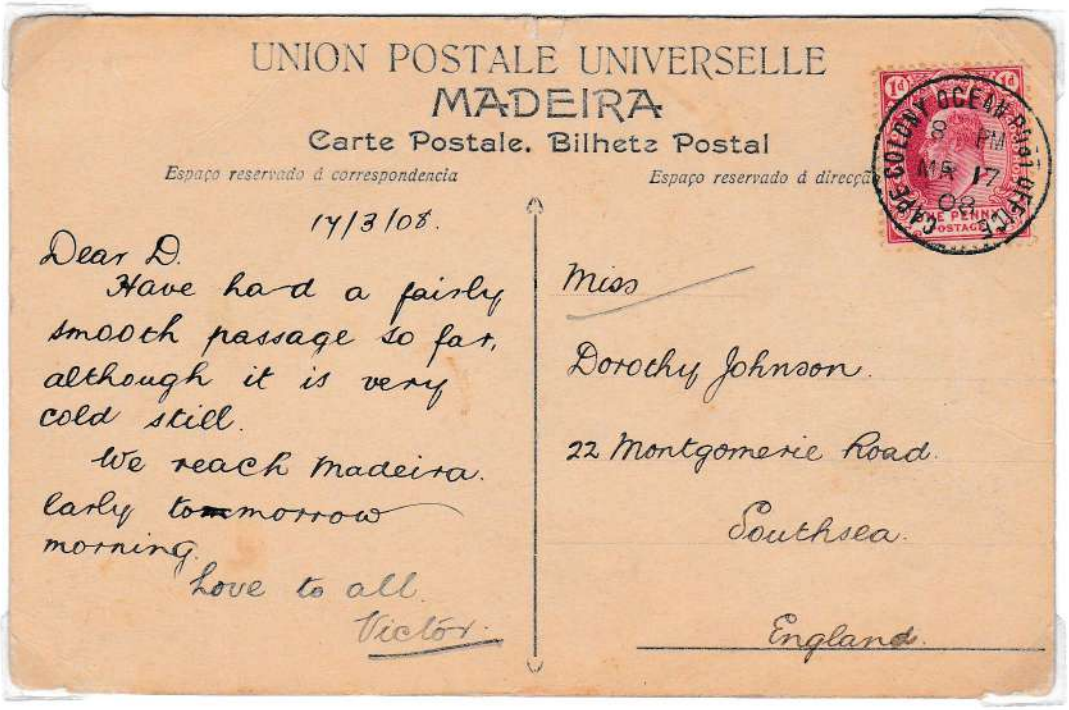
receiving a Southampton packet letter cds on 25th. (*Kenilworth Castle* is recorded at Madeira 21st arriving back at Southampton on 25th)

21 Feb 1906 pc of Madeira posted on the southbound *Kenilworth Castle* at Madeira, back to England on *Walmer Castle* arriving at Southampton on 24th

MARITIME - 1900-1910 - THE OCEAN P.O.s

CODE "8. PM" & "8 PM" - *KENILWORTH CASTLE*

17 Mar 1908 southbound at Madeira, carried back to England by *Walmer Castle*


UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE
MADEIRA
Carte Postale. Bilhete Postal
Espaço reservado á correspondencia
Espaço reservado á direcção
CAPE COLONY OCEAN P.O. 8 PM MR 17 08
17/3/08.
Dear D.
Have had a fairly smooth passage so far, although it is very cold still.
We reach Madeira early tomorrow morning.
Love to all.
Victor.
Miss
Dorothy Johnson.
22 Montgomerie Road.
Southsea.
England.

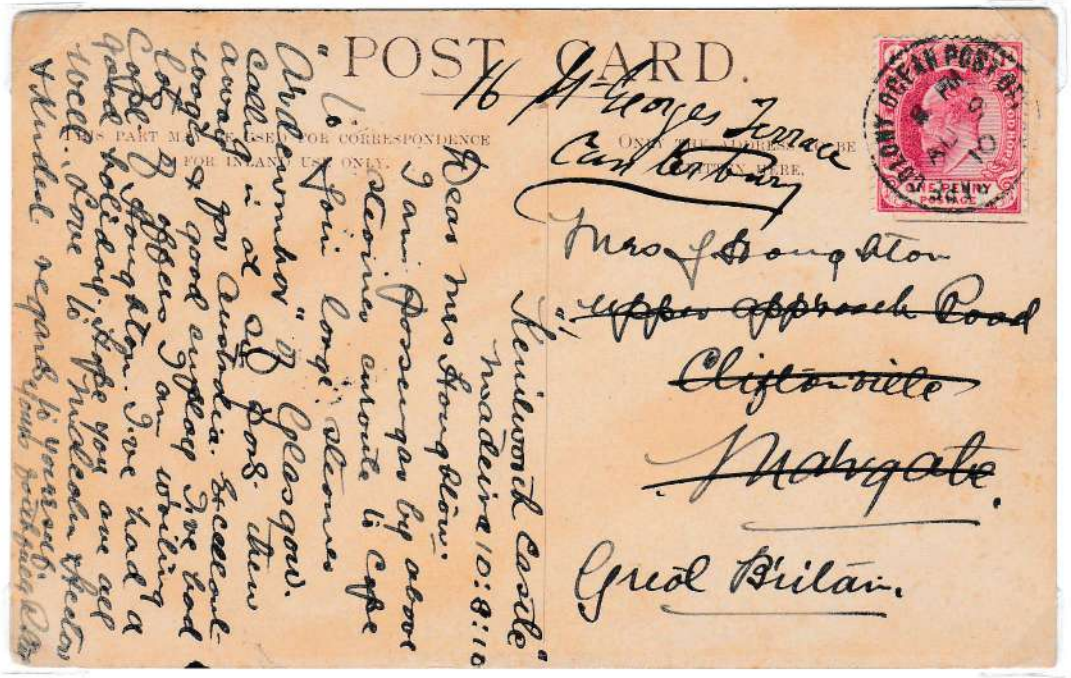
19 Jan 1909 (a puzzle!) a *Kenilworth Castle* pc, confirmed by ms heading, from the script would appear to be at Madeira having just crossed the bay of Biscay, but according to the records she reached Southampton on 9 Jan and didn't leave again until 23rd. *Carisbrook Castle* is reported at Madeira 19/20 Jan. It would appear the records are wrong.

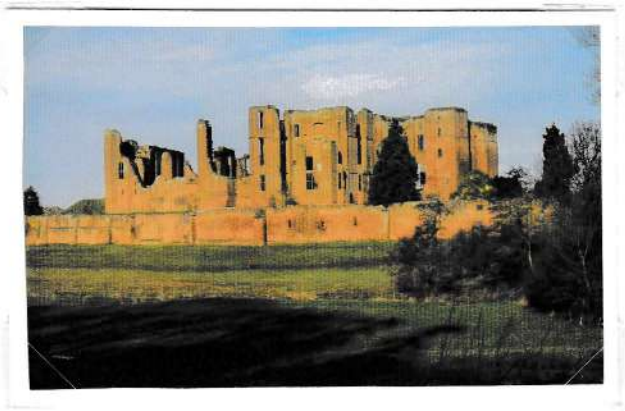
POST CARD.
THIS PART MAY BE USED FOR CORRESPONDENCE FOR INLAND USE ONLY.
ONLY THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN HERE.
CAPE COLONY POST OFFICE 8. PM JA 19. 09
Mr W. Tunge
Buckhold Cottage
Pangbourne
Berks
England

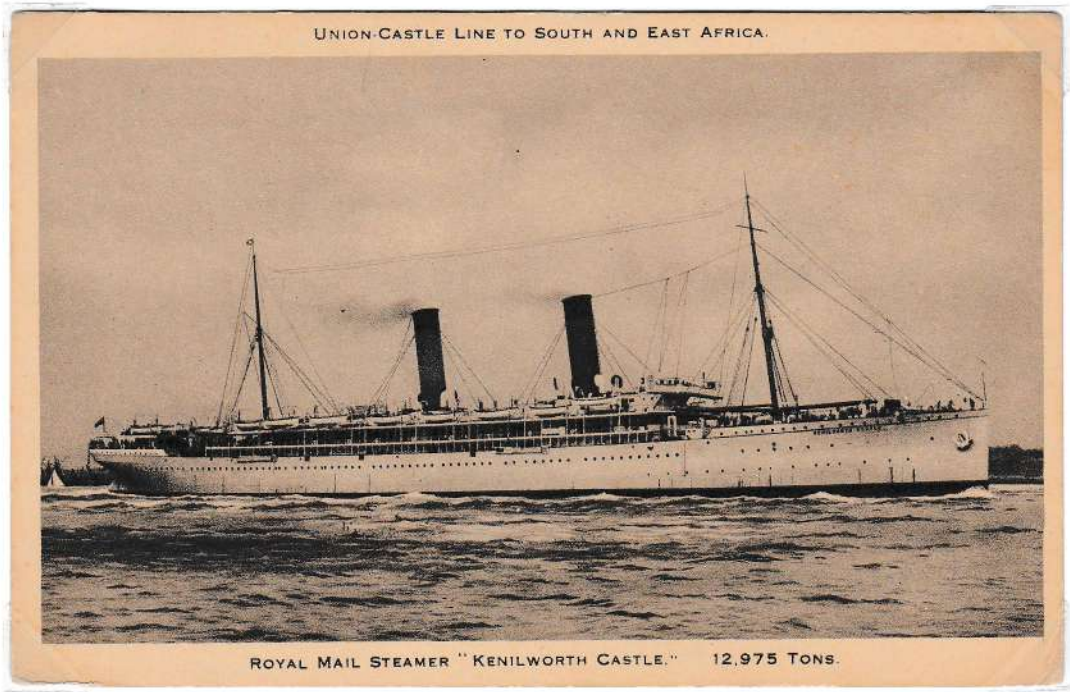
(back to England on the *Norman*)

MARITIME - 1June 1910-1911 - THE OCEAN P..O.s

9 Aug.1910 "8 PM" postcard of *Kenilworth Castle* southbound at Madeira back to England
Carried back on *Kildonan Castle* reaching Southampton on the 13th



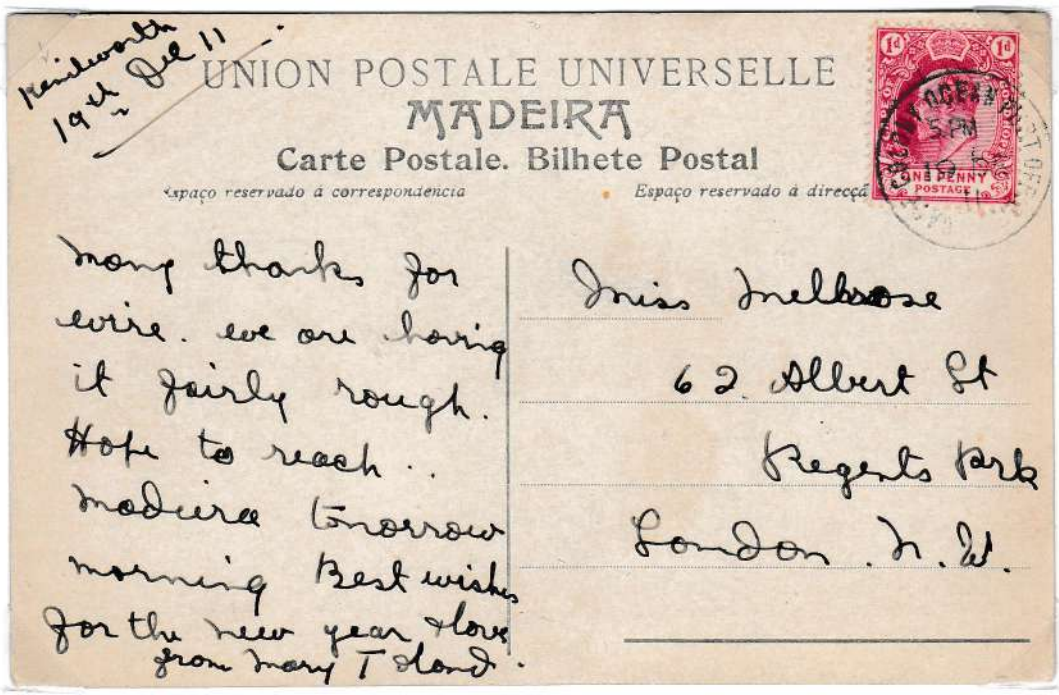




MARITIME - 1June 1910-1911 - THE OCEAN P..O.s

3 Oct.1911 "C" *Walmer Castle* on arrival at Cape Town, franked ORC 1d, addressed to Amsterdam taken back to Southampton by *Armadale Castle* leaving next day and arriving on 21st

19 Dec.1911 **Code "5PM"** (unrecorded error) of Southbound *Kenilworth Castle* at Madeira addressed back to London, taken by *Armadale Castle*, arriving Southampton 23 December



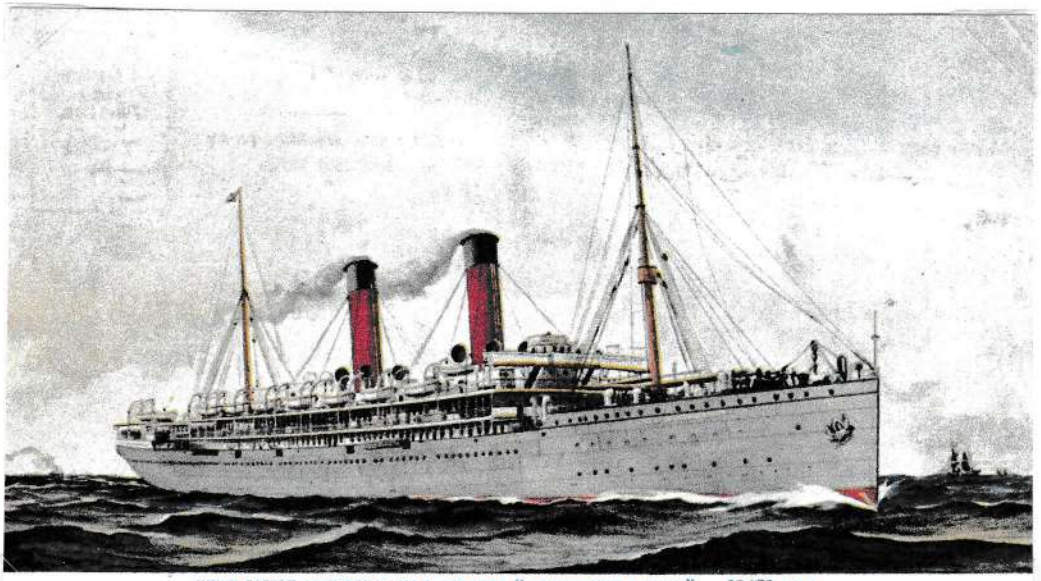
The "5" may not actually be an error as this is her penultimate, or last, trip using the old Ocean PO cancels so it may be in anticipation of the new Union Ocean PO canceller in which she was allocated the number "5". It is still unrecorded.

1912-13 THE "UNION" OCEAN POST OFFICES

OCEAN P.O. "5" - *Kenilworth Castle*

4 Mar 1912 the day before arrival at Cape Town with a very strange date error "20 Mar 4-" the "20" referring to 20 Feb (the day before arrival at Madeira), the month has been changed to March, the "4" being the day but there is no year figure

Scarce "Goudini Road" (HO Worcester) s/ring transit 6 March



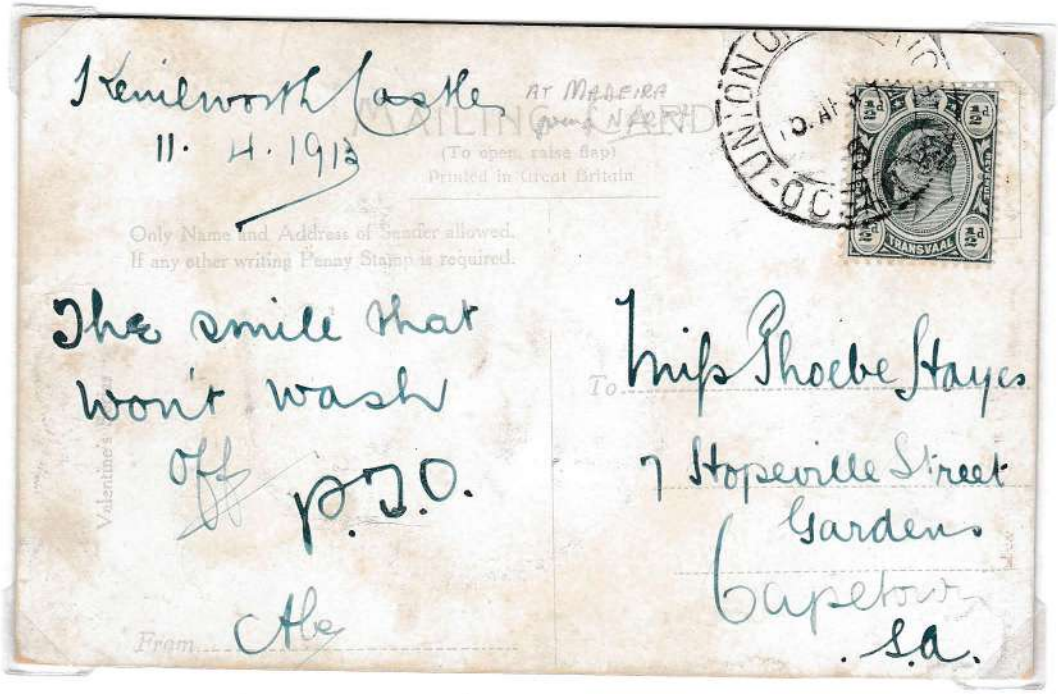
UNION-CASTLE LINE ROYAL MAIL STEAMER "KENILWORTH CASTLE." 12,975 TONS.

MARITIME - 1912-1913 - THE "UNION" OCEAN P.O.s

OCEAN P.O. "5" - *Kenilworth Castle*

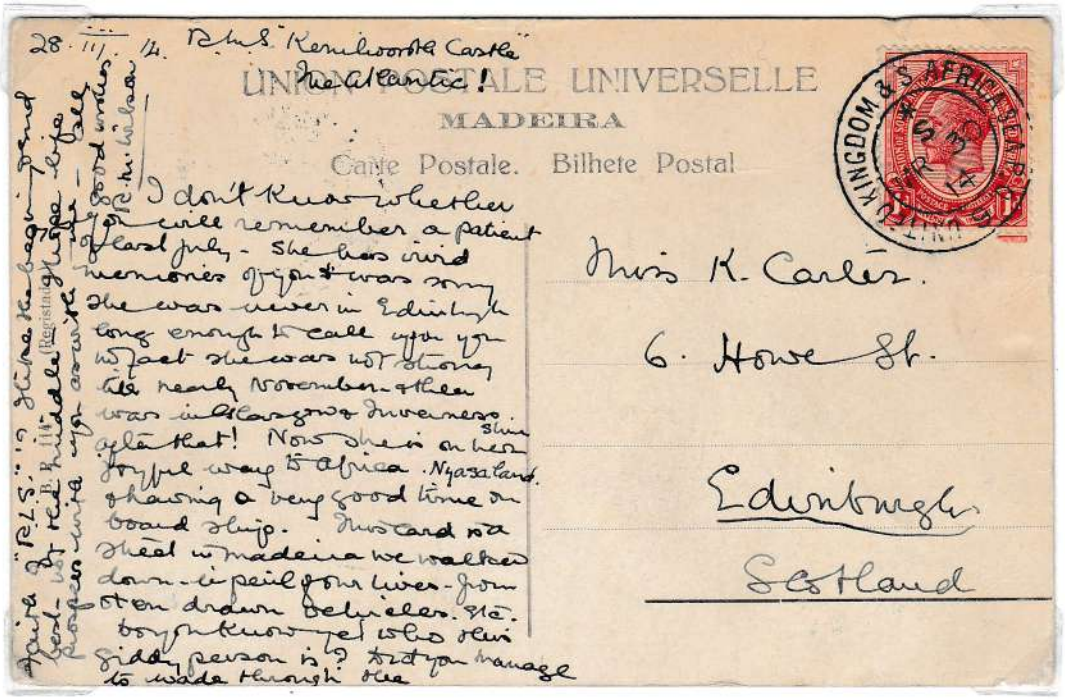
28 Aug 1912 southbound at Madeira, back to Wales by *Armadale Castle*

15 Apr 1913 "smiler" card, northbound at Madeira, back to Cape by *Saxon*

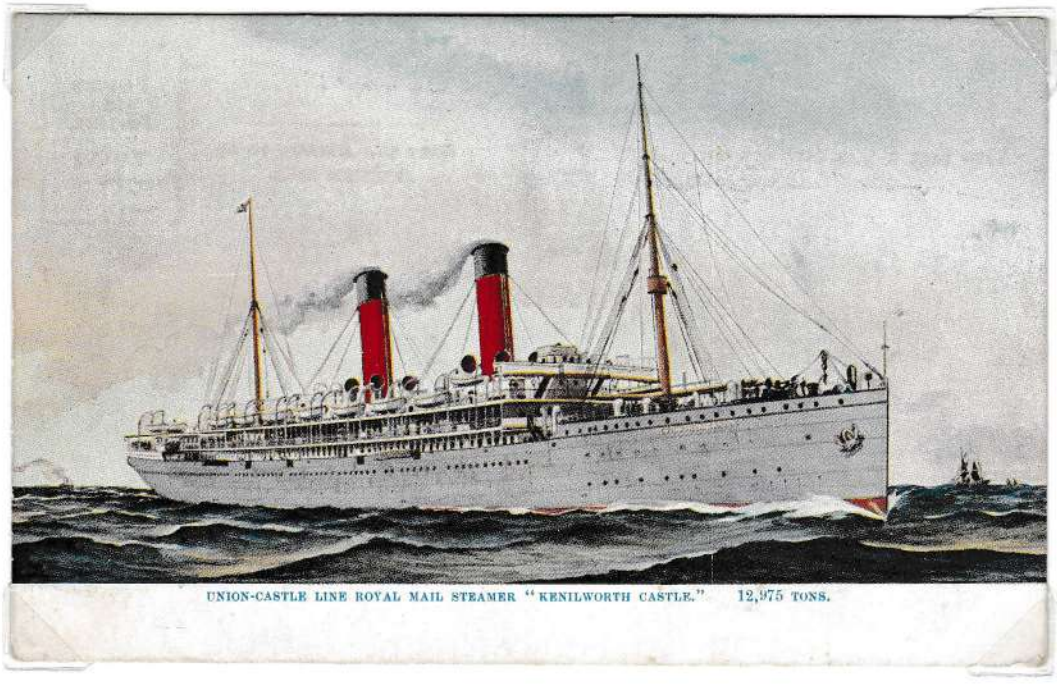


1913-14 UNITED KINGDOM & SOUTH AFRICA SEA POST OFFICES

30 Mar 1914 No."9" on *Kenilworth Castle* travelling south the day before arrival at Cape Town back to UK (Scotland)

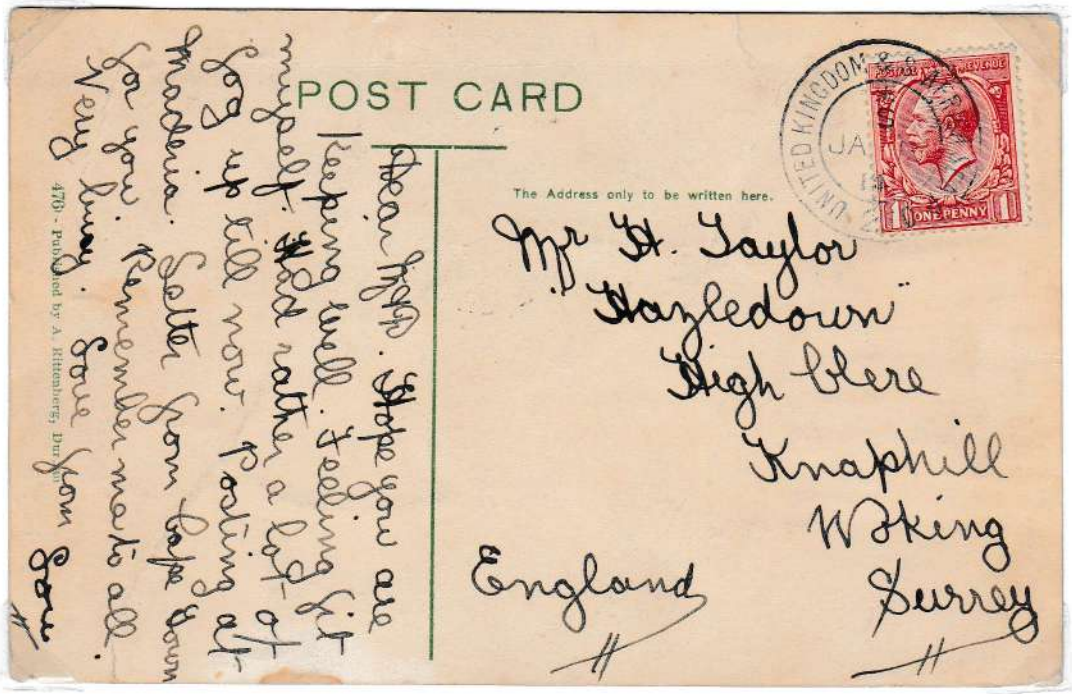


post card of ship

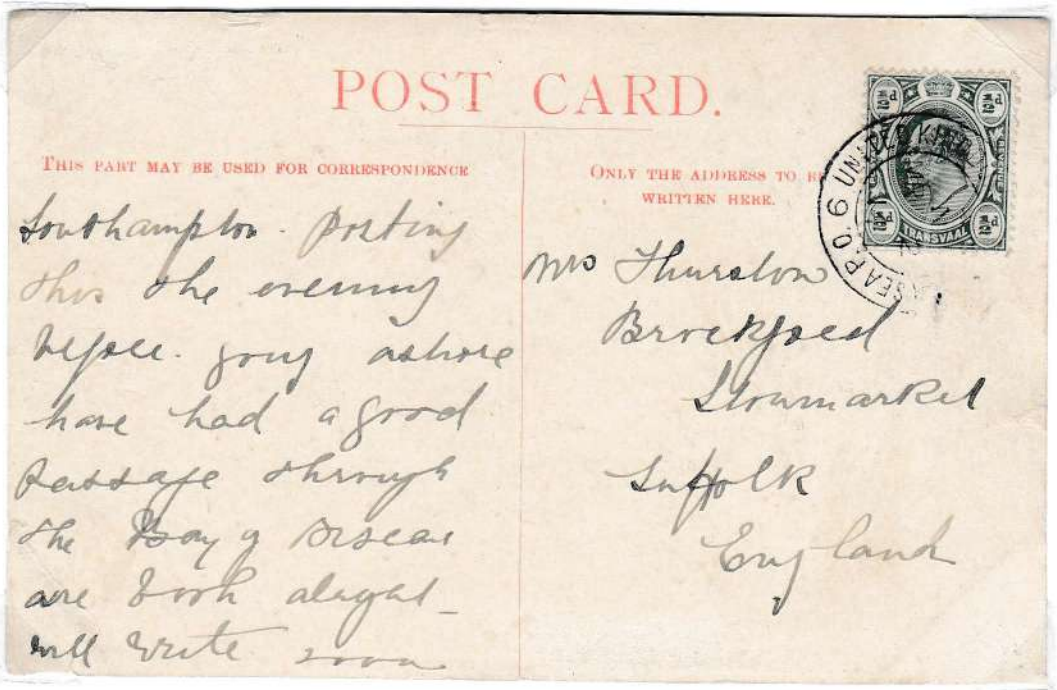


1913-14 UNITED KINGDOM and SOUTH AFRICA SEA POST OFFICES

13 Jan 1914 No."2" (S) *Kenilworth Castle* southbound the day before arrival at Madeira. Back to England on *Armadale Castle*



2 Mar 1914 No."9" (N) *Kenilworth Castle* northbound the day before arrival at Southampton. The ½d rate thus correct as the pc within GB

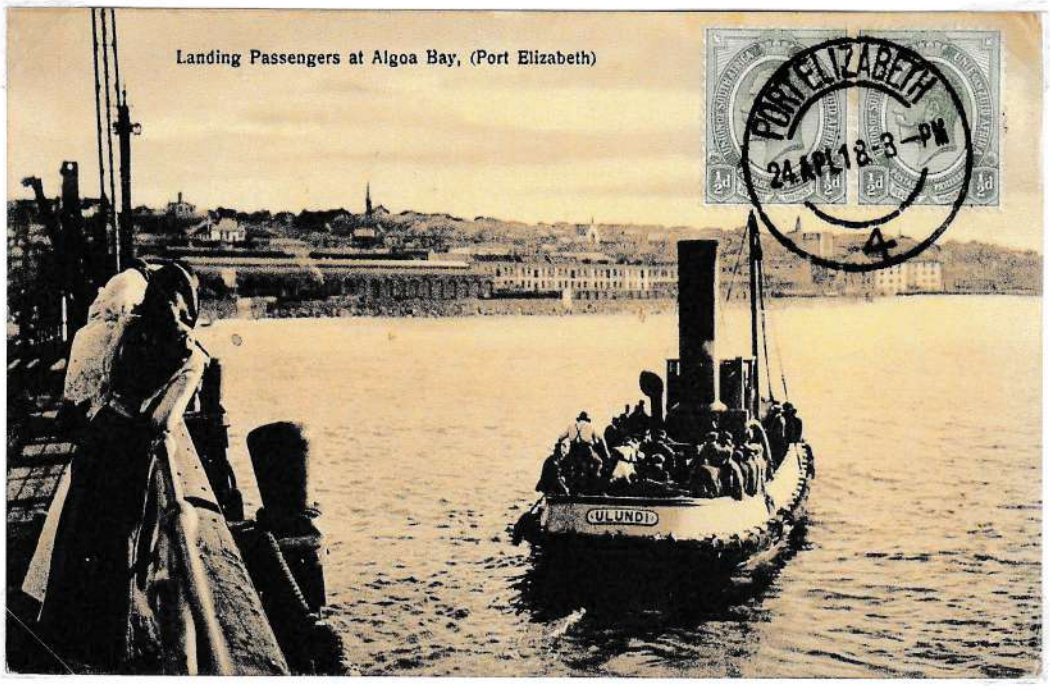


KENILWORTH CASTLE - WW1

On the night of 4 June 1918 a convoy of the *Kenilworth* and *Garth Castles* accompanied by the cruiser HMS *Kent* and four destroyers entered the Channel showing no lights for security reasons. At half past midnight as they approached Eddystone HMS *Kent* changed course to leave the convoy as planned but *Kenilworth Castle* was unaware and suddenly found itself on a collision course and veered sideways colliding with the stern of HMS *Rival* which contained depth charges. Several exploded holing *Kenilworth's* bow. Water rushed in and all were convinced they'd been torpedoed. Despite no official order several life boats were lowered despite no need as the bulkheads were holding. Two of these were swamped by wake and overturned. 15 lives were lost including several volunteer South African nurses. The *Kenilworth* limped in to Plymouth reaching there at 8am.

<u>24 Apr 1918 ppc from Port Elizabeth to Oise recovered from the considerable amount of mail being carried on *Kenilworth Castle* and receiving the French "ACCIDENT DE SERVICE"</u>

(stamps on picture side)

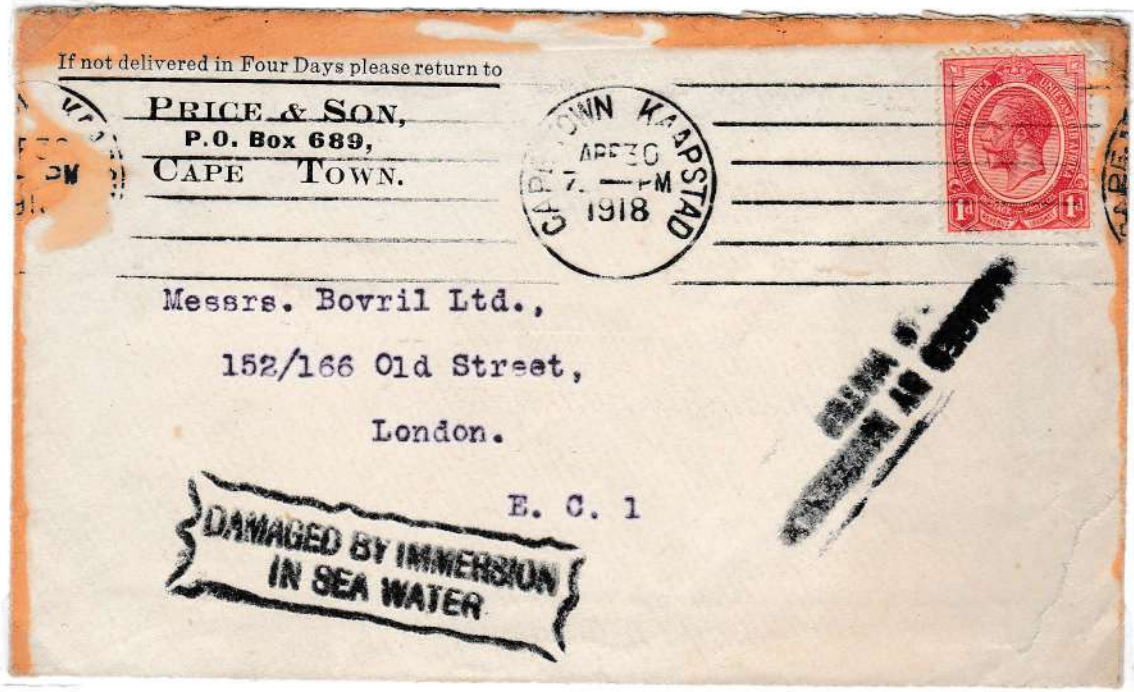


WW1 - Recovered from the *KENILWORTH CASTLE*

Two further covers showing 3 different cachets on mail recovered from the *Kenilworth Castle*

25 Apr 1918 Assurance Society envelope, Jo'burg to Edinburgh

30 Apr 1918 commercial envelope Cape Town to London



The ship was towed into Plymouth Sound & beached. Salvage started on 6 June.
ex: *John Woolfe collection of wreck covers, 2006*

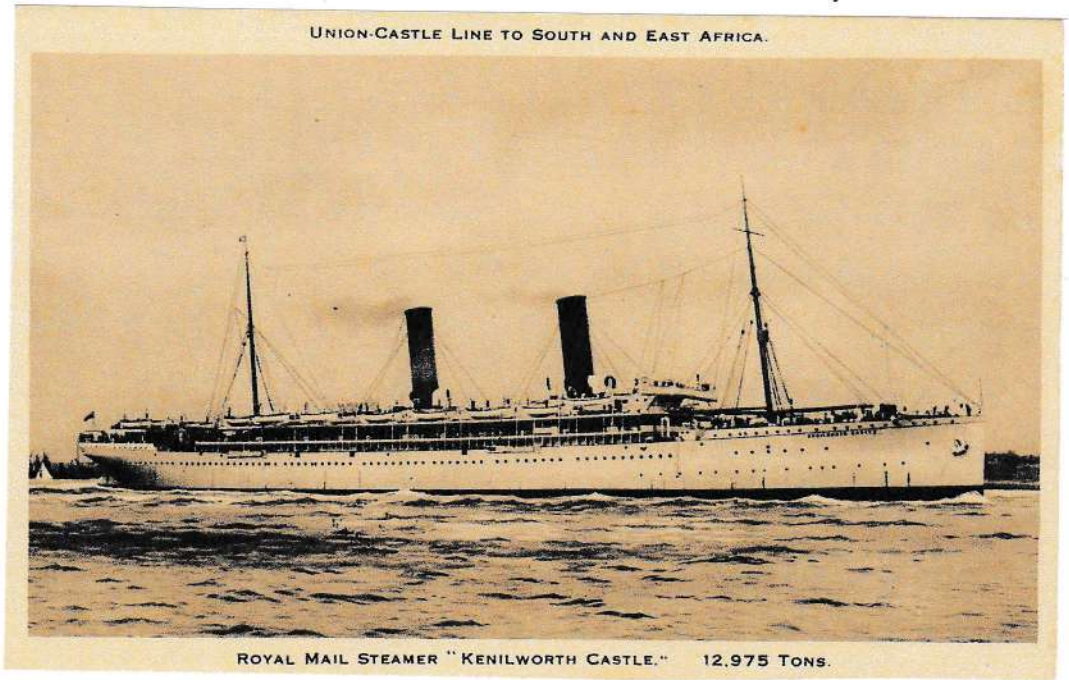
Kenilworth Castle was repaired and took up duties as a mail ship again after the war but, to the chagrin of passengers, was quarantined for 2 weeks when arriving at Cape Town in February 1919 due to an outbreak of Spanish flu.

RECOVERED FROM THE *KENILWORTH CASTLE*

On 4 June 1918 the *Kenilworth Castle* was in collision with its escorting destroyer, *HMS Rival*, in The English Channel suffering extensive damage. A large quantity of mail was salved.

25 Apr 1918 envelope addressed to a major in the POW Co with the BEF in Rouen
Stamps floated off, London NW1 cachet. Re-directed to APO 2 (14 June)

The ship was repaired but in 1919 was quarantined for 3 weeks in Table Bay because of the 'flu.



COPY OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY A NURSE SURVIVOR OF THE KENILWORTH CASTLE ACCIDENT

29 June 1918

Dear old Wrensch,

I just loved you for writing so soon - your letter came on the Kenilworth in a sloppy condition marked "damaged by sea"*. The same description applies to myself, I feel very much damaged by sea. Of course you know all about the accident to the Kenilworth and that poor little Black is drowned. I expect you all felt horrid when you read of the affair and I should think girls will not be quite so anxious to go overseas and certainly parents will not consent so readily. Of course, we are soldiers in a way and soldiers must take risks. I'm sending you one of our newspaper accounts of the affair because it describes what happened to the lifeboat in which Black, Bolus ,a Wynberg girl called Zondendyke and myself were. When the boat capsized I managed to hang on to the side and hung and hung until the boat righted itself but it was the most ghastly few minutes I ever lived through. I remember a big dark wave washing right over me and something, an oar I think, pressed against my throat until I thought I should choke and something else crushed my eye against the boat's edge and I saw stars and felt my eyeball* ***must*** *burst. My corsets were torn right off me and my legs were bruised and bleeding. Then the boat righted itself and I found myself inside. There were just two of us left, the other a fellow passenger named Dawson and his pyjamas were simply torn to rags! Our boat was quite full of water and we had lost our oars and rudder. We didn't see or hear anything of the others then and were drifting right away until the Kenilworth turned and her wash brought us rushing back. I really thought that was the very end but we did a surprising turn and instead of crashing into her we rushed along her side and crossed her stern so close that Mr Dawson was struck in the mouth and his teeth knocked out. The we got out on the other side and that was the last we saw of the Kenilworth. It was horribly dark and we could hear the dreadful calls for help from men and women in the water but could not get near them. Two women drifted right up to the boat and these were saved. One was the young wife of a Colonel of Marines - the other Nurse Zondendyke. I found a bucket and a scoop tied to the boat and these were used to bale out the water. Mr Dawson and I baled and baled until we were too tired to do any more but the boat felt almost respectable again so we all sat huddled together shivering and taking turns at being sea sick!*

When morning dawned we made the ghastly discovery that our barrel of drinking water had been lost when the boat capsized and though there were plenty of ship's biscuits we ate only a few mouthfuls as they were such thirst

provoking things. My veil was hoisted as a sign of distress and then there was nothing to do but look at the sea and wonder what fate had in store for us. I don't wonder that people go mad in lifeboats, the monotony is terrible but it seemed more terrible still when a seaplane and a destroyer passed without seeing us. We had no idea where we were drifting ; far away we heard the sounds of guns but we only saw sea and sea and sea. Such a rough sea too, one moment we were down in a valley, the next high on a wave. We had to hold on sometimes and waves would keep coming in. Take my advice dear Wrensch, and keep away from lifeboats - they are not pleasant things. There didn't seem much chance of being rescued and we didn't like the idea of thirst so we had a calm discussion on the quickest way to die. I wanted Mr Dawson to choke us when our thirst became unbearable but he refused. My throat was dry, then my tongue felt like a bit of leather but I found a tin of varnish, whitish watery stuff, which I tasted and felt much better. Then we made preparations for the night. We found some red flares, signals of distress, which we decided to use that night. We knew it was risky and might bring a German submarine down upon us but something had got to happen, we didn't much care what. Then we sighted "it". "It" was the finest destroyer that ever was built for His Majesty's Navy. It was going away from us but it saw us and came towards us and we realised we were saved. Oh, the relief, for I really didn't want to be choked by Mr Dawson. We were soon safely on board the destroyer and were simply overwhelmed with kindness. The officers told us we were the first women who had ever been on their ship. We were washed and fed and put to bed in the officers' beds and I quite enjoyed that part of the venture. They sent a wireless message to Plymouth saying we were alive and coming, for, of course, by this time everyone supposed we were drowned. As soon as we touched Plymouth Colonel Jones rushed on board and kissed us all twice. Perhaps had he seen me hauling his wife into the lifeboat by her legs he might not have been so affectionate! And so ended the great adventure.

Love from
Bracken

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Contact Joan Marsh (joan@rfidradar.com)