

UNIVERSAL PLAYING CARD Co. (Alf COOKE), Leeds & London, 1925-70.

In 1866 Alf COOKE set up as a general printer in Leeds. In 1925 they started to produce playing cards under the name of UNIVERSAL. Alf COOKE & Son, with UNIVERSAL as a subtitle, appears from c.1958 onwards. The firm produced packs for Pepys (Castell Brothers) at various times. In 1970 the playing-card business was sold to WADDINGTON's, who eventually discontinued the UNIVERSAL courts and brands. All their standard English cards are VERY COMMON.

U1: small margin, in three or four colours. 1925-c.1940. Also found in wide size; for a short period around 1975 these wide courts, with a few slight plate alterations, were used by WADDINGTON for their Poker cards. There are slight variations on some of the plates, especially the white and yellow striations on some of the courts. There is a No-revoke pack produced for Kum-Bak in 1928.



No revoke, 1928



Three colours



Wide, with red on centre band

U2: larger margin, redrawn. Note that the queens' mouths touch the cheek line. In three colours only. c.1938-50



U2

U2.1: redrawn or retouched plates. Queen's mouths do not touch the cheek line, QC has an extra lip-mark at one end, and there is a broken 'tooth' on the design of JC. Found in three or four colours. c.1950-66.



U2.1

U3: U2.1 redrawn, in four colours only. The white lines at the centre of the JS all slope the same way; QC has an extra mark by her nostril at both ends. The courts of COOKE's centenary pack are of this type. c.1966-70.



U3

ACES:

1: "Co Ltd", shading on inner spade. 1925-c.1955.

1.1: "Co" only, inner spade white. c.1930-40.

1.2: "Co" only, shaded inner spade. c.1950-55.

1.3: "Alf Cooke" added. c.1956-70.

1.4: Name removed, used by Waddington. c.1975.

2: anonymous ace, similar to one used by BRITISH P.C. 1925-35.

3: anonymous. c.1930-40.

4: anonymous, based on 1. Used in Pepys' Zodiac packs first with UNIVERSAL courts, then with GOODALL courts printed by WADDINGTON. c.1965-75.

There are a number of special advertising aces; the stationer and importer, L.G. Sloan, had a special ace and joker in the 1930's.



1



1.1



1.2



1.3



1.4



2



3



4



Sloan