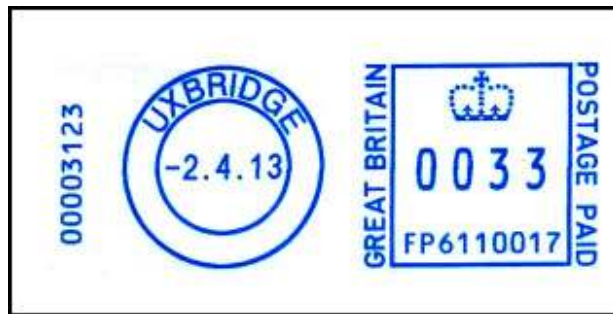


METER NEWS

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Editor: Alastair Nixon, 7 Bramblegate, Edgcumbe Park, Crowthorne, Berks, RG45 6JA. Tel: +44 (0) 1344 775378
Email: nixon48@gmail.com Web site: <http://www.meterfranking.co.uk>

Meter of the Month

Peter Mantell is the first to report an example of the new Francotyp-Postalia 'PostBase' machine reported last month, with a serial number of 'FP6110017'.

According to the web site <http://www.fpmailing.co.uk/> the PostBase model comes in three variants, namely the Qi3, Qi4 and Qi6 and is aimed at small to medium mail volume users.

The PostBase brochure, downloaded from their German web site, refers to these models respectively as the PostBase 30, the PostBase 45 and the PostBase 65 and these numbers reflect the number of items per minute that can be processed through these machines.

Your editor would welcome further reports of this series.

Membership – New member

This month we welcome Dr Gwynne Harries to our community (member no. 0039). He has been a member of The Burton on Trent Philatelic society for over 20 years, a member of the Scandinavia Philatelic Society also for over 20 years, a member of the Royal and a former member of the American Philatelic Society.

Gwynne is a keen collector of Norwegian stamps (especially post horns) and meter marks. He has a very comprehensive collection of meter marks up to 1970 – including examples from 1900 and 1903. Gwynne also collects GB - King George V Downey Heads and Downey Head postal stationary. His interest in UK meter franks is growing. Gwynne's other collecting interests include Ecuador – especially Seebeck issues, USA - Norse American issue and Ericsson Memorial issue and 'Radio' on stamps including radio licence stamps.

Membership – Obituary

It is with great sadness to hear that Ross Irwin our Canada meter stamp expert, passed away on 17 March. Ross died peacefully at the age of 91 and his obituary can be found at:

<http://www.lifeneews.ca/announcement/2509131-irwin-ross-weston>

Acknowledgements

My thanks this month go to Patrick Awcock, David Crotty, Alan Godfrey, Gwynne Harries, Peter Huss, Peter Mantell, Richard Peck, Rick Stambaugh, Jos Wessels and Peter Wood for their reports, communications or contributions.

Latest Numbers

Below is the list of 'latest numbers' as at the end of April 2013 – with updates shown in red. Please could I have the next reports by 28th May - thanks.

In the list below, the part of the serial number that directly relates to the model is underlined.

Frama (UK)

Matrix F2, F4, F6	<u>F1002730</u>	28.03.13	Reported by AN
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Francotyp-Postalia

Optimail 25/35	<u>F04114891</u>	22.03.13	See MN 149
Centormail 240/300	<u>FC5110606</u>	30.11.12	See MN 146
MyMail / PostagePro	<u>FM2654301</u>	10.12.12	See MN 146
PostBase	<u>FP6110017</u>	10.12.12	New, see p150-1 (PM)
Ultimail	<u>FU3117122</u>	07.02.13	See MN 149

Neopost

IS-330	<u>N1052182</u>	01.06.12	See MN 140
IS-350	<u>N1181247</u>	11.12.12	See MN 148
Various upgraded	<u>N1240644</u>	09.11.12	See MN 147
IJ-80/90/110	<u>N1254486</u>	02.03.13	See MN 149
IS-460 (Ex IJ-50)	<u>N1373678</u>	23.04.13	Reported by PM
IS-420 (Ex IJ-30)	<u>N1385456</u>	06.02.13	See MN 148
IS-440 (Ex IJ-40)	<u>N1390617</u>	31.07.12	See MN 146
IS-480	<u>N3026008</u>	11.04.13	Reported by AN
IS-240 / IS-280	<u>N3313245</u>	11.04.13	Reported by PM
IS-5000/6000	<u>N5001484</u>	19.03.13	Reported by PM

Pitney Bowes

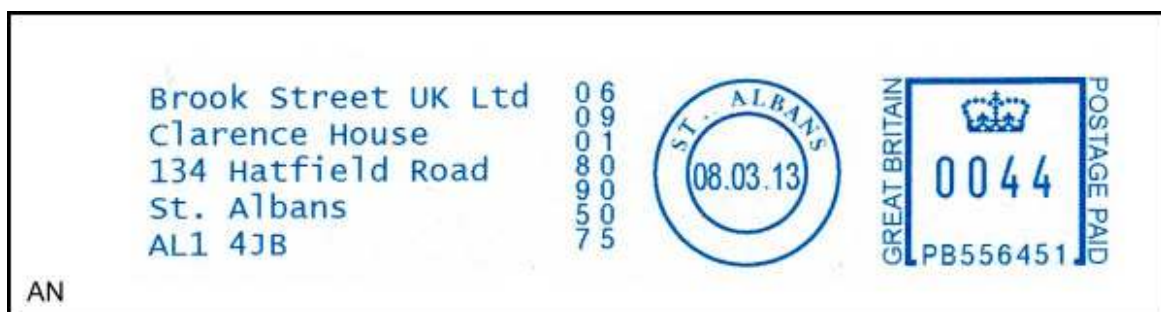
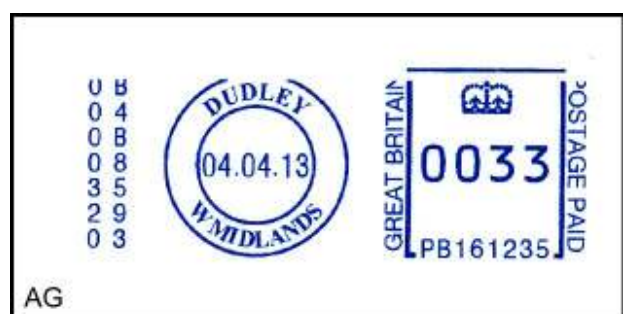
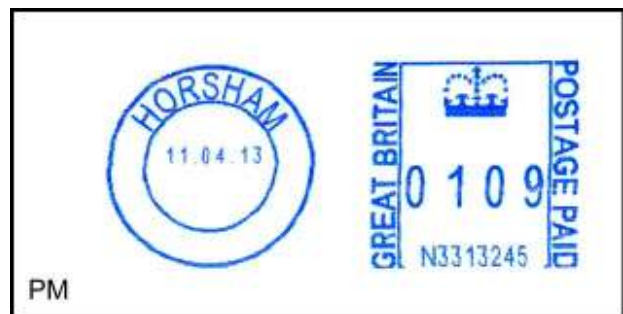
DM50, 55	<u>PB099074</u>	15.03.13	See MN 149
DM160i/220i	<u>PB161235</u>	04.04.13	Reported by AG
DM50, 55	<u>PB334088</u>	21.03.13	See MN 149
DM 810, 900 etc.	<u>PB527636</u>	21.01.13	See MN 149
Connect+ 1000 etc.	<u>PB551669</u>	22.03.13	See MN 149
Connect+ 10FC etc.	<u>PB556451</u>	08.03.13	Reported by AN
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB618597</u>	10.04.13	Reported by PM
DM100i, 150i etc.	<u>PB873729</u>	20.03.13	Reported by PM

Advanced Mail Codes

AAEU-LR	F1002463	03.12.12	See MN 146
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Latest Number Images

Here are images of the latest numbers reported this month. Note that the N3313245 item is the first report of blue ink for this series.

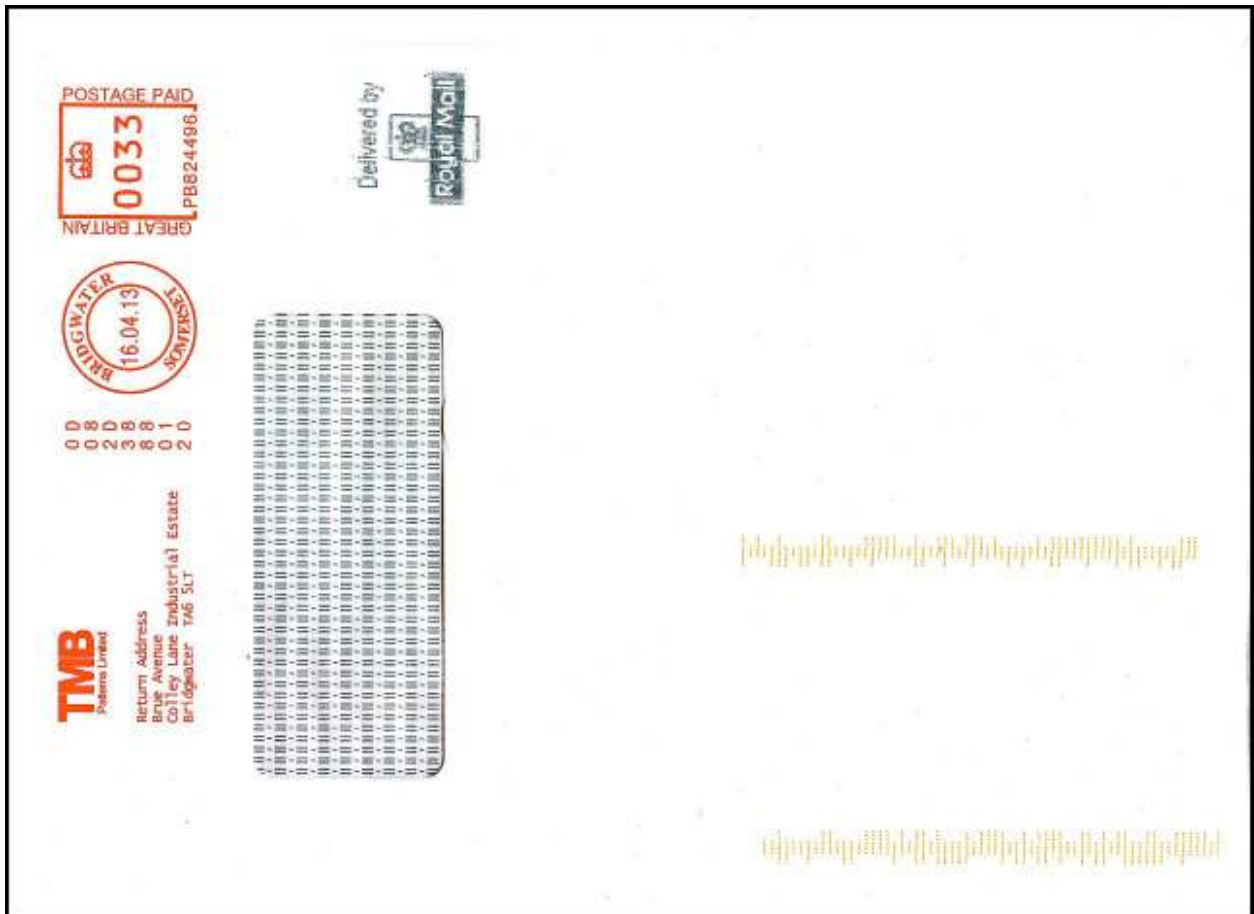


Latest Number Images Continued



Royal Mail Branding

Your editor reports this C5 sized envelope that has been franked on the short edge of the envelope. The branding mark was applied sideways, beneath the frank and clear of the envelope window. The tagcode decodes as IMP 117 (Bristol - Machine 8).



Recent Interesting Items

April is the month of Postal Rate changes for Royal Mail. This year, although the rates remained unchanged for stamped mail, the rates for meter mail have been increased. On 2nd April, the First Class rate for meter franks increased by 3p from 44p to 47p, whereas the Second Class rate increased from 31p to 33p. Peter Mantell reports this meter franked item that has received an ink-jet printed 'Revenue Protection' messages from the sorting equipment at the South Midlands Mail Centre (SMMC).



For postal mechanisation enthusiasts, the tagcode of this item decodes as:
Machine 414 (SMMC – machine 2), Day 11, Time 39 (19:30-20.00), Item 1375.

Presumably, when a large number of underpaid items are found, applying such messages by machine is more efficient than by hand stamping each item separately. Your editor would welcome similar reports – especially from other Mail Centres.

Further to page 123-6 and earlier, Peter Mantell has received from Peter Huss a further example of a user incorporating what appears to be a Department Number in the slogan position – in this case a large '5'.



With reference to the Personal Post franks shown last month on page 149-7, Jim Ashby writes to say that he may be able to shed some light on the abnormal date indications.

In these machines, the townmark was loaded using a data card, as was the slogan. The townmark can be classified as “fixed data” in that it remains the same at each printing, as opposed to the date - which can be classified as “variable data”. The fixed data of the TM consists of the double-circle design, the town name and the two dots in the date.

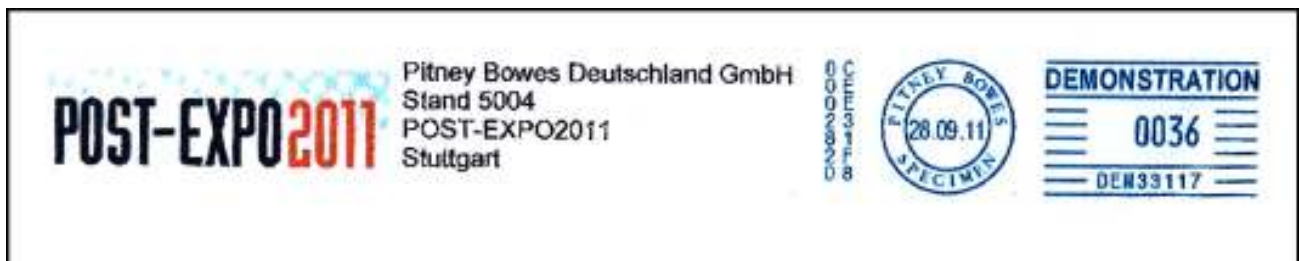
Jim assumes that there was something amiss in the definition of what height to print the dots in the TM.

Recent Interesting Items Continued

Jim Ashby has recently acquired on eBay this demonstration frank from the POST-EXPO 2011 Exhibition in Stuttgart.



From the same eBay purchase, Jim also acquired this Connect+ demonstration frank.



Pitney Bowes Connect+ Images

We know that the Connect+ machine is capable of printing in colour over the entire area of a mail item – both front and back. Peter Mantell reports this unusual item where the Ageas company logo has been printed in colour alongside the address window and significantly below the frank.



Single and Dual Head Printing

Jim Ashby has studied a number of patents to obtain information on ink-jet postage meters. In the past, it had been assumed that indicia bearing a visible misalignment of the upper and lower halves must have been created by dual print head machines, but apparently this is not the case.



Although different models print differently (right to left, top to bottom, etc.), the two main types are as follows:

Single print head:

The single print head prints the top half of the indicia from right to left, at which point the print carriage is moved downwards to allow the bottom half of the indicia to be printed from left to right. Misalignment can be caused horizontally by poor software timing control, or vertically by mechanical inaccuracies in the carriage mechanism.

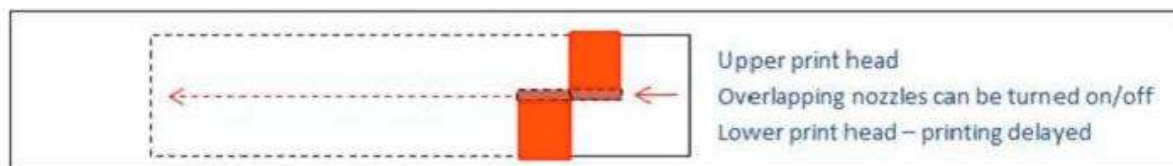


In the Neopost IJ25 example shown above, it would appear that either there was a problem with the vertical positioning of the carriage that holds the single print head, or the envelope got moved during the second half of the print cycle. The latter seems more likely given the slight rotation of the lower half of the indicia.

Dual print head

This can be either a single unit containing two print heads, or two “single” print heads mounted adjacent to each other.

The dual print head prints from right to left but, because the two heads are offset, a delay signal is added to one print head by the software to provide horizontal alignment. Vertical alignment is achieved in some cases by selectively activating the nozzles at the midpoint of the two cartridges, although other methods exist.



Note that both print heads are printing simultaneously. By “delayed”, it is implied that one print head will be printing a different horizontal section of the indicia to the other. For example, on a British machine, the lower print head will be starting to print “GREAT” whilst the upper print head is finishing printing “POSTAG”.

Instructional Handstamps

Peter Mantell reports this bi-lingual Revenue Protection handstamp applied at Cardiff Mail Centre. Note that the handstamp uses the abbreviation 'M.L.O.' (Mechanised Letter Office) – a term that was phased-out a number of years ago.



Your editor reports this Revenue Protection item with the office identifier 'MB1'. Normally these identifiers comprise 3 Alpha characters, and not 2 Alpha characters and a number. The list of codes shown on page 133-6 lists code 'MB1' for Plymouth. The tagcode confirms that this item was, indeed, processed on IMP 233 at Plymouth. Therefore, it looks very much like the handstamp was made in error with a '1' being engraved instead of an 'l'.



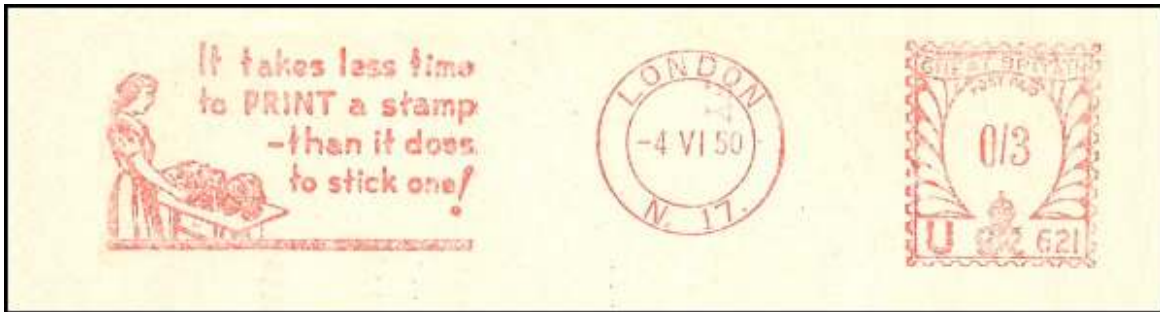
Air Mail Slogans

Peter Mantell has received from Peter Huss a selection of franks with 'AIR MAIL' slogans. As live examples are seldom seen by collectors in the UK, these are illustrated below:



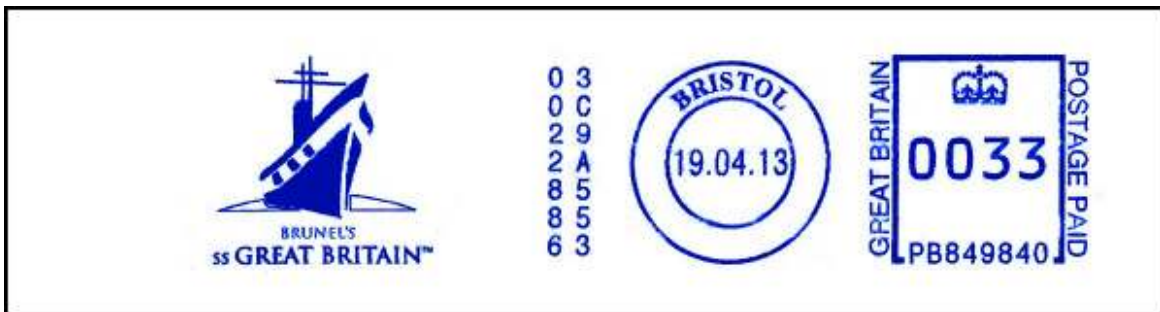
Historic Meter Thematics

Jos Wessels kindly sends this rather nice slogan on UPF machine, serial U 621. Note that the item bears a Transorma ident "FY" - applied in red over the town mark. The relatively high postage of '3d' may suggest that the ident was applied overseas (e.g. Rotterdam).



Meter Thematics

Further to page 124-8, Peter Mantell reports another example of this stunning image of the SS GREAT BRITAIN but this time the frank has been applied in blue ink.



Your editor has found this simple but attractive forklift truck design being used by a company called Acclaim Handling Ltd. based in South Ockendon, Essex.



Finally, my 'Meter Thematic of the Month' award goes to Peter Mantell for this amazing artwork from Apollo Cradles Ltd.

