

METER NEWS

Issue Number 177 July 2015



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Meter of the Month

On page 160-7 (February 2014) we reported that from April 2015, the Advanced Mail block would not be visible in Mailmark franks. This has not been observed yet but, perhaps, my Meter of the Month is the first sign of this happening because the Advanced Mail Code itself is missing. On the other hand, it may just be an error. The full image is shown below:



Editorial

The Meter News community had their inaugural meeting at Midpex, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire on 4th July - see photo alongside.

From left to right we have: Gwynne Harries, your editor, Michael Dobbs, Jon Aitchison, Alan Godfrey and Peter Mantell. It was a great get-together and we look forward to similar meetings in the future.



This month we extend a warm welcome to Mike Jackson FRPSL as member number 0044. Mike's philatelic interests are anything GB, including meter franking - especially the early period. He has edited 'The GB Journal' for the Great Britain Philatelic Society since 1981. Earlier this year he won a Large Gold at Stampex for his KGV Downey Heads and has written various books over the years. He is also interested in private telegraph and telephone stamps, and the postal history of his home town of Melton Mowbray.

Acknowledgements

My thanks this month go to Jon Aitchison, Dave Baker, Michael Dobbs, Ray Downing, Alan Godfrey, Gwynne Harries, Peter Huss, Duncan James, Mike Jackson, Peter Mantell and Robert Petts for their reports, communications or contributions.

Latest Numbers

Below is the list of 'latest numbers' as at the end of July 2015 – with updates shown in red. Please could I have the next reports by 28th August - thanks. In the list below, the part of the serial number that directly relates to the model is underlined.

In the table below, note that those entries that have a date format with hyphen separators are the ones in 'Design J' (matrix) format.

Frama (UK)

Matrix F2, F4, F6	<u>F1004010</u>	27.05.15	See MN 175
Matrix F12 etc.	<u>FR2001609</u>	27-07-15	Reported by PM

Francotyp-Postalia

Optimail 25/35	<u>F04115620</u>	04.06.14	See MN 164
Centormail 240/300	<u>FC5110688</u>	28.04.14	See MN 163
MyMail / PostagePro	<u>FM2657744</u>	07-01-15	See MN 171
PostBase Qi3/4/6/9	<u>FP6110841</u>	25.04.14	See MN 173
PostBase Qi3/4/6/9	<u>FP6114701</u>	08-07-15	Reported by AN
Ultimail	<u>FU3117315</u>	23.05.14	See MN 164

Neopost

IS-330	<u>N1053186</u>	23.04.15	See MN 175
IS-350	<u>N1182423</u>	13.02.15	See MN 172
Various upgraded	<u>N1240746</u>	31.07.15	Reported by AG
IS-480	<u>N3030571</u>	22.07.15	Reported by PM
IS-240 / IS-280	<u>N3319858</u>	18.05.15	See MN 175
IS-5000/6000	<u>N5001705</u>	20.10.14	See MN 168
IS-240/280	<u>NE6005894</u>	11-06-15	See MN 176
IS-480	<u>NE8006815</u>	16-07-15	Reported by PM
IS-5000/6000	<u>NE9000370</u>	22-05-15	See MN 175

Pitney Bowes

DM160i/220i	<u>PB172484</u>	22-07-15	Reported by PM
DM60?	<u>PB2005246</u>	23-07-15	Reported by PM
DM50, 55	<u>PB366087</u>	03.07.14	Reported by PM
Connect+ 1000 etc.	<u>PB551797</u>	23.04.14	See MN 162
Connect+ 10FC etc.	<u>PB557706</u>	01-06-15	See MN 176
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB620598</u>	20.05.15	See MN 175
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB6626704</u>	08-05-15	See MN 175
DM 110i	<u>PB882633</u>	20.07.15	Reported by PM

Advanced Mail Codes

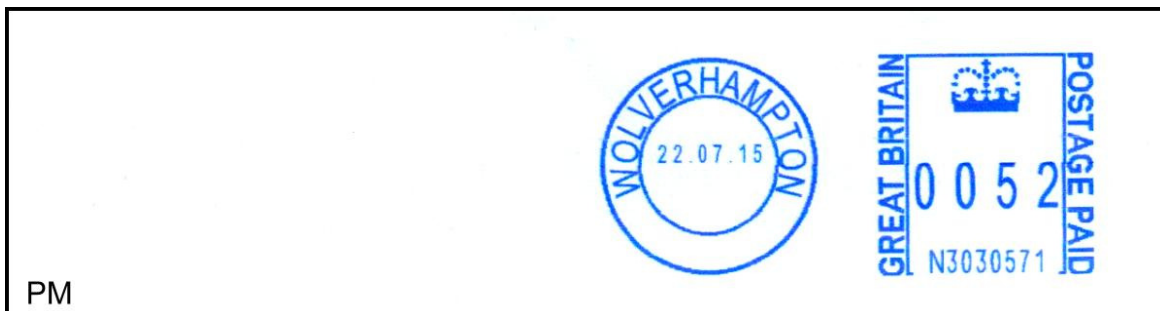
AAGK-HY	NE9000321	16-04-15	See MN 174
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Peter Mantell also reports an update to the N137 dead series, with machine no. N1373741, dated 09.07.15 – see illustration alongside.

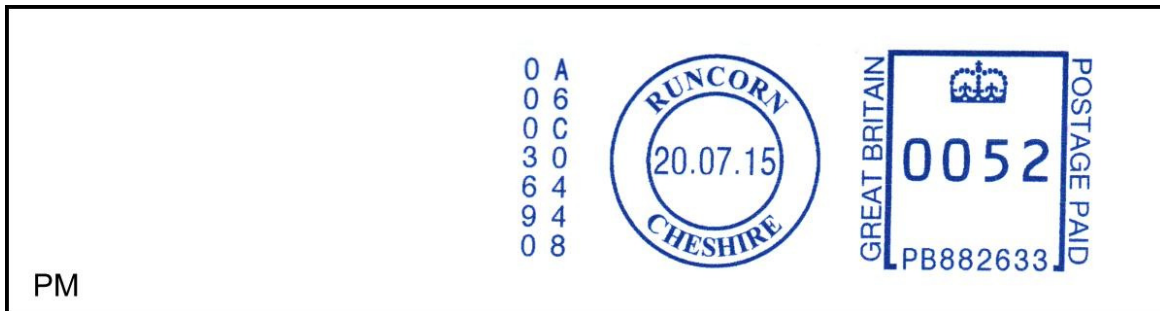
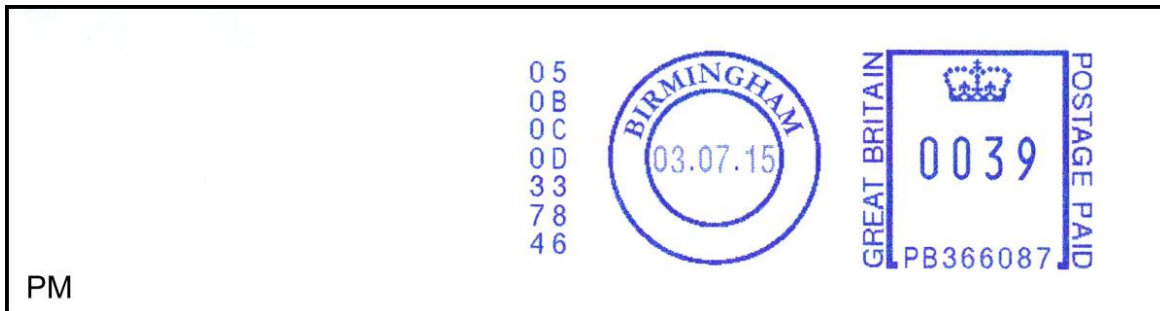


Latest Number Images

Here are images of the latest numbers reported this month – with contributor's initials etc. shown in the bottom left of each image.



Latest Number Images Continued



Instructional Handstamp

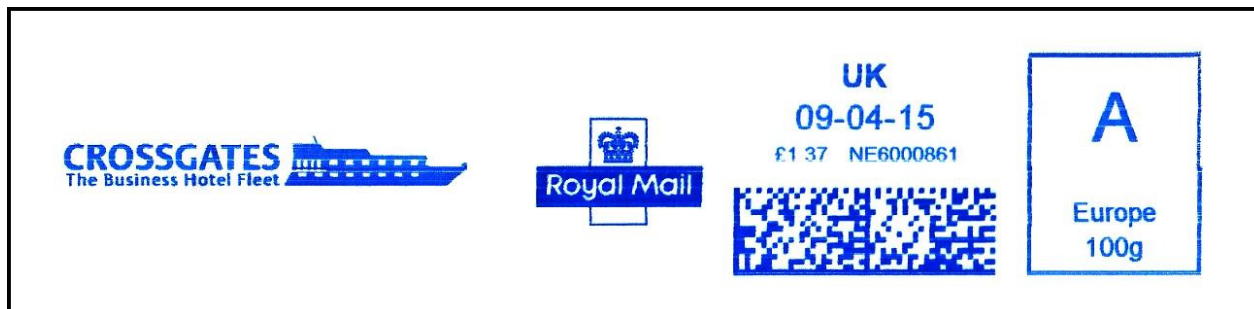
Peter Huss sends this Revenue Protection handstamp from November 2014, inscribed "Thames Valley Mail Centre SN3 5TQ". The 'built-in' Air Mail logo in the frank is thought to be of a design previously unrecorded in Meter News.



Mailmark™ News

Further to the report last month (page 176-4) regarding the Europe and ROW 60g limits changing to 100g earlier in the year, Peter Huss kindly reports two examples of the new 100g rate. However, confusion still remains as to whether the Mail Type codes have changed or not and more examples would be appreciated.

The first example, dated 9th April, was a Neopost item sent to Germany. The matrix block here shows the Mail Type code to be '6002', i.e. the old code has been retained.



The second example, dated 2nd June, is a Pitney Bowes item sent to Austria at the (incorrect) 'ROW2' rate. The matrix block here shows the Mail Type code to be '6098', i.e. it appears that a new code has been assigned as this was previously '6097' for the 60g rate.



Meter Franking Related Web Sites

For those readers with an interest in Southern Africa philately, this web site, by Otto Peetoom is well worth visiting: http://www.southafricanstamps.net/Southern_Africa_Philately.htm Otto says that the site is still under construction but hopes, in the near future, to include articles on Southern Africa meter franks.

Peter Huss reports that the web site <http://www.mailcoms.co.uk/> contains a news blog review of a top-of-the-range machine model 'Qi 3000'. It is not known at this stage whether this is a re-branded version of the existing Centormail or a completely new machine.



Recent Interesting Items

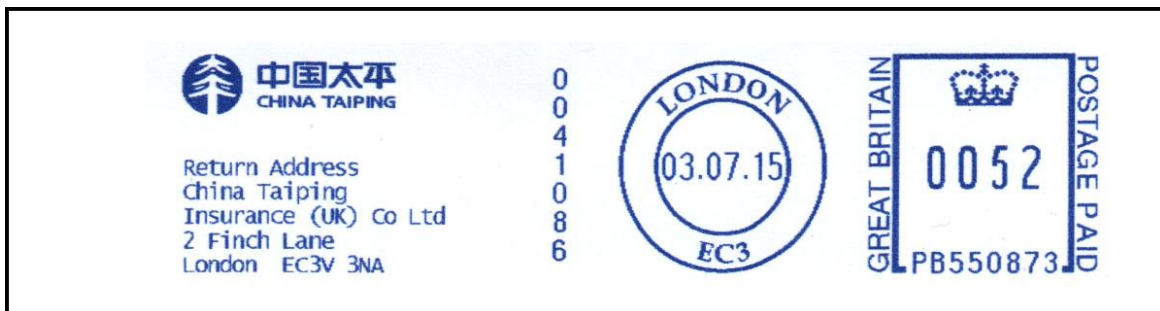
Peter Mantell reports another example from a T1000 machine in blue ink. Although other examples have been reported before, this is still quite a rare occurrence for this model.



Peter Mantell has found another Frama matrix frank with 'UK' included above the date. Note that the top half of the print appeared to be in a darker shade of blue.



Peter also sends this unusual item with the slogan containing some Chinese characters.



Coloured Slogans

Your editor has found this slogan in black from the Department for Business Innovation & Skills. The BIS is the department for economic growth and invests in skills and education to promote trade, boost innovation and help people start and grow a business. The BIS also protects consumers and reduces the impact of regulation.



An estimate of the number of 'Design A' franking machines sold between 1922-27

Further to pages 81-3/4, your editor has attempted to estimate the number of machines sold in the UK each year between 1922 and 1927. The figures have been pieced together using information from articles in the 1923, 1926 and 1927 issues of *The Stamp Lover*, from issues of the *Meter Stamp Bulletins* between 1950 and 1984, from examples from my own collection and with the kind assistance of other Meter News readers, particularly Jim Ashby.

The following table provides an estimate of the number of 'Design A' machines sold each year between 1922 and 1927, broken down by model type (including 'second' and 'relief' machines but excluding 'specimen' machines). The figures are likely to change as new reports come to light. In this respect, scans of franks from this period are always welcome.

Model	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
PB Fixed Value	5	6	8	15	17	5
UPF NZ	1	21	22	38	100	76
UPF High Speed		1	3	1	1	1
UPF TV / Special Midget			1			
Neopost FV/LV				10	93	70
UPF Midget					9	110

Note that, during 1927, 'Design B' (the GvR Cypher) was introduced but, as these tables only consider those in 'Design A', the actual number of machines sold in 1927 would have been greater than the figures shown here. Note also that with regard to the PB fixed value machines, the number on the frank was the licence number, whereas Universal franks had the machine number. It is possible that, in the early years, one or two companies operated more than one machine under that licence but this has not been taken into account here.

Using the above data, the following table provides an estimate of the cumulative number of 'Design A' machines sold during this period.

Cumulative volume	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927
PB Fixed Value	5	11	19	34	51	56
UPF NZ	1	22	44	82	182	258
UPF High Speed		1	4	5	6	7
UPF TV / Special Midget			1	1	1	1
Neopost FV/LV				10	103	173
UPF Midget					9	119
Cumulative Total (Design A)	6	34	68	132	352	614

Note that the above table does not reflect the number of machines in use at any one time because the number of machines withdrawn or replaced during this period is not known. However, it is thought that very few machines during this period would have been replaced. Nowadays, the average life of a machine is probably about 3 years before it gets replaced whereas, in those days, this would have been considerably longer. An example of this is Pitney Bowes machine no. 2 which was first recorded on 13 Oct 1922 and was still going strong some 40 years later!

It is hoped that similar reports for later Design Types will be compiled in the future.

Historic Items / Thematics

The November 1960 (Issue 48) of the Meter Stamp Bulletin stated that, from 1st October that year, Universal Postal Frankers would be known as Pitney Bowes Ltd. The following slogans show the 'before' and 'after' of that event on the same machine, found by your editor.



Your editor has found this Festival of Britain related thematic from 1951. The exhibition was the major event of that year and was held at the South Bank, London between 3 May and 30 Sep 1951. The aim of the exhibition was to raise the nation's spirits after the war years and to celebrate the best of British art, design and industry. The user of the frank is the Pressed Steel Company Limited, Cowley, Oxford.



Your editor has also found this rather attractive trout on a Neopost LV machine from 1961.



Historic Items / Thematics continued

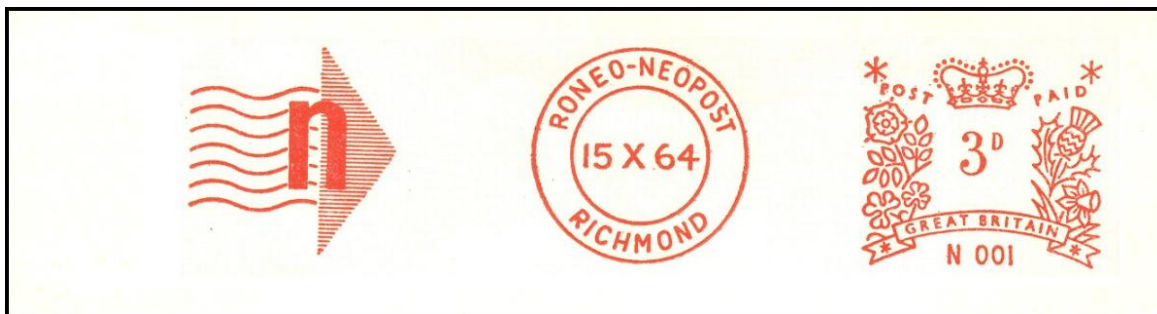
Your editor has found what he believes to be the earliest recorded example of Design B on a Neopost FV machine from London S.E.10, dated 8 IV 27. Would readers please be kind enough to report any earlier dates of Design B from any model, thanks.



Dave Baker has found this Neopost Specimen 'N 001' from 1962 depicting a Vanden Plas Princess. Vanden Plas was the name of coachbuilders who produced bodies for specialist and up-market automobile manufacturers. The name became a top-end luxury model designation for cars from various subsidiaries of British Leyland and the Rover Group,



Meanwhile, Alan Godfrey sends this 1964 artist's impression 'miniature' specimen that also had the serial 'N001'. Note that the 'POST PAID' in die 1 is more horizontal than in the above 'proper' frank.



Ray Downing sends this slogan from 1995 that advertises the Spring and Autumn Stampex. It is believed that the user of machine PBC10666 was 'The Philatelic Traders Association'.



Meter Thematics

Your editor has found this nice multi-thematic (museums, flags and armed forces). The flag is known as the 'White Ensign' or the 'St. George's Ensign' and is used by the Royal Navy.



Your editor has also found this attractive stylised design depicting a wheel barrow from the Walsall Wheelbarrow Company.



Alan Godfrey has found this frank from London Hire Ltd., showing a map of the UK. This frank, by the way, almost made it to the Latest Numbers list on page 2.



My Meter Thematic of the Month goes to this attractive slogan from the Tallylyn Railway Preservation Society, found by your editor. The railway was built on a gauge of 2 feet 3 inches and is one of a number of narrow-gauge lines in north and mid Wales. It opened in 1865 to carry slate, seven miles from Tywyn (on the Cardigan Bay coast) to Nant Gwerno.

