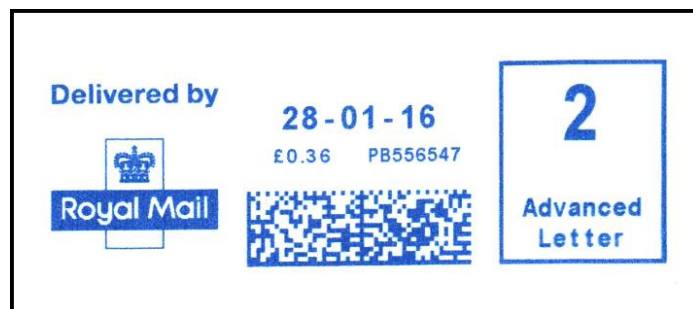


METER NEWS

Issue Number 184 Feb 2016



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Meter of the Month

On page 181-6 we reported a Neopost frank with a serial number of NE9000006 that had a new mail indicia of “2 Advanced Letter” with ‘Tariff Rate 7’ encoded in the matrix block, and it also had no ‘Advanced Mail’ block present in the frank. Normally Advanced Mail items are inscribed simply ‘2 Advanced’ in the indicia block and the Tariff Rate is normally ‘6’.

At the time of that report your editor assumed this was a ‘one-off’ and, to be honest, didn’t really pay it the attention it deserved. However, Peter Mantell has now found a second example with ‘2 Advanced Letter’, this time on a Pitney Bowes frank from Chelmsford City Council – the town being awarded ‘City’ status in 2012 as part of the Queen’s Jubilee celebrations. The full image of the frank is shown below:



As with the previously reported item, this frank has a Tariff Rate ‘7’, Class ‘8’ and Mail Type ‘1504’ (not ‘1503’). Furthermore, your editor believes that these items are connected with the Royal Mail announcement in February 2014 that, as from April 2015, the Advanced Mail block will no longer be visible on Mailmark franks (see pages 160-1 & 160-7).

With the postal rate increases due to come into effect on 29th March 2016, the Tariff Rate is expected to change accordingly. Because of these ‘Tariff Rate 7’ reports, your editor now anticipates that we will see the general Tariff Rate changing to ‘8’ when this occurs.

One final observation is that in both cases the postage paid was £0.36 - the amount normally paid for 2nd class ‘non-Advanced’ mail. Currently, the rate paid for ‘2nd class Advanced’ is £0.45 and users then receive a large discount in a separate transaction. It looks as though with these ‘Advanced Letter’ items the ‘Advanced Mail’ discount gets calculated differently.

Acknowledgements

My thanks this month go to Jon Aitchison, Jim Ashby, Patrick Awcock, David Crotty, John Fowler, Alan Godfrey, Gwynne Harries, Peter Huss, Mike Jackson, Duncan James, Peter Mantell, Robert Petts, Robert Rowe and Peter Wood for their reports, communications or contributions.

Latest Numbers

Below is the list of 'latest numbers' as at the end of February 2016 – with updates shown in red. Please could I have the next reports by the 28th March - thanks.

In the list below, the part of the serial number that directly relates to the model is underlined. Note that those entries that have a date format with hyphen separators are ones in 'Design J' (matrix) format.

Frama (UK)

Matrix F2, F4, F6	<u>F1004014</u>	14.12.15	See MN 182
Matrix F12 etc.	<u>FR2001966</u>	12-02-16	Reported by PM

Francotyp-Postalia

Centormail 240/300	<u>FC5110729</u>	18-11-15	See MN 181
MyMail / PostagePro	<u>FM2658042</u>	27.02.15	See MN 182
PostBase Qi3/4/6/9	<u>FP6110850</u>	04.08.15	See MN 178
PostBase Qi3/4/6/9	<u>FP6115509</u>	15-01-16	See MN 183
PostBase Mini	<u>FP7112814</u>	19-01-16	See MN 183

Neopost

IS-330	<u>N1053426</u>	24.02.16	Reported by PM
IS-350	<u>N1182585</u>	19.11.15	Reported by AN
Various upgraded	<u>N1240746</u>	31.07.15	See MN 177
IS-480	<u>N3030571</u>	22.07.15	See MN 177
IS-240 / IS-280	<u>N3319858</u>	18.05.15	See MN 175
IS-240/280	<u>NE6008722</u>	02-02-16	Reported by AN
IS-480	<u>NE8009338</u>	06-01-16	See MN 183
IS-5000/6000	<u>NE9000466</u>	07-12-15	See MN 183

Pitney Bowes

DM160i/220i	<u>PB175807</u>	29-01-16	See MN 183
DM60	<u>PB2012345</u>	19-01-16	See MN 183
DM50, 55	<u>PB368265</u>	08.12.15	See MN 182
Connect+ 10FC etc.	<u>PB558027</u>	08-12-15	See MN 182
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB620820</u>	06.01.16	See MN 183
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB6627568</u>	26-01-16	See MN 183
DM 110i	<u>PB884566</u>	05.02.16	Reported by PM

Advanced Mail Codes

AAGK-HY	NE9000321	16-04-15	See MN 174
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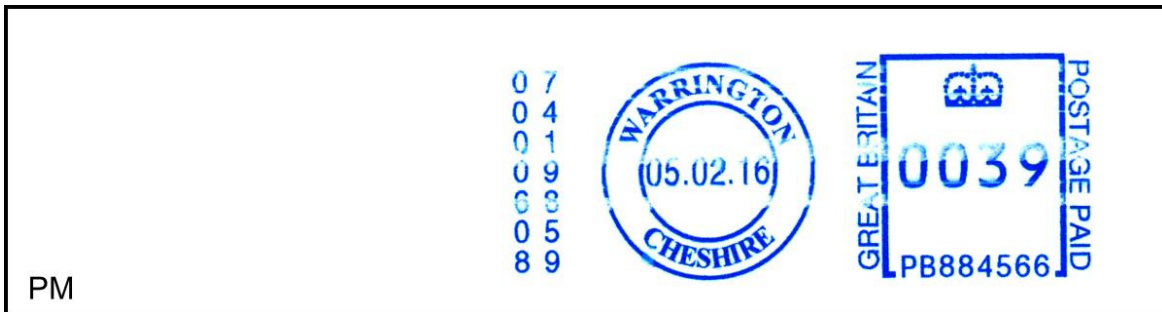
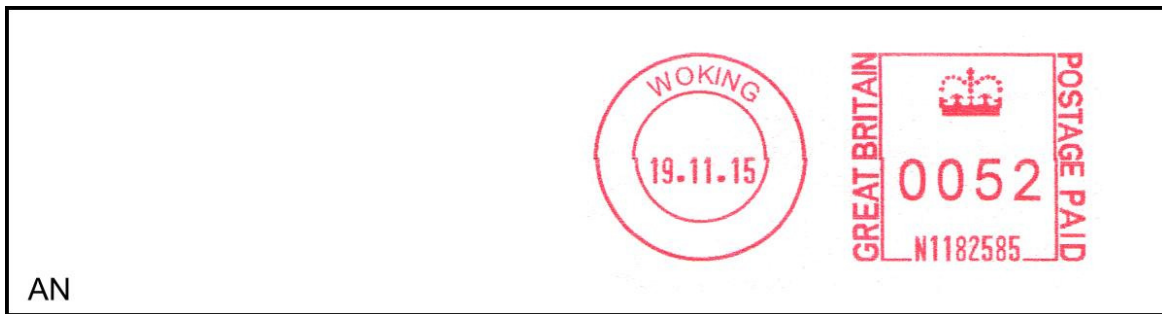
Duncan James reports an earlier date of 23.12.15 for PB884225, reported last month. My thanks also go to Alan Godfrey for his report of FR2001918, dated 05-02-16.

Errata

The date of the PB368265 item in the 'latest number' list of MN183 should have been '08.12.15'. Also, there was a minor error on page 181-1 - in the second line of paragraph 3, this should have read "The Class Code" at the start of the sentence.

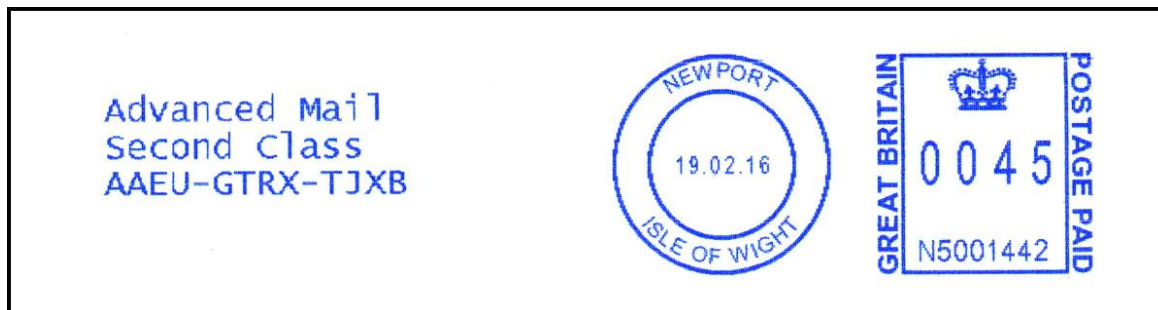
Latest Number Images

Contributor's initials and other details are shown in the bottom left of each image.

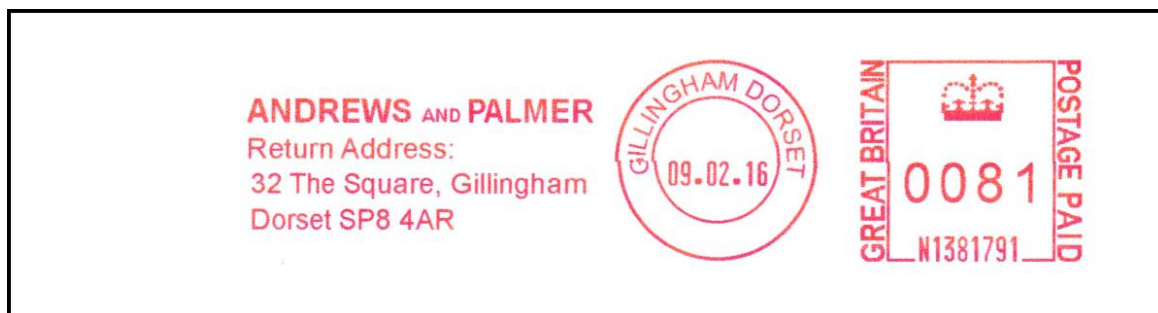


Recent Interesting Items

Peter Mantell reports this frank from a Neopost IS-5000/6000 model with the town die inscribed 'NEWPORT / ISLE OF WIGHT'. It is believed that this is the first report where any text has been seen in the lower half of the town die on these (N5 prefix) machines. This has probably been done to prevent any ambiguity with the town of Newport in Gwent.



Peter Mantell also reports the following frank from a Neopost IS-420 model where the county name 'DORSET' is shown in the top half of the town die. It is unusual (apart from London districts on the N5 series) to find the county in the upper half of a town die.



Peter Mantell reports the first sighting of red ink on the PB66 series.



Peter Mantell also reports the use of red ink on PB162663.



Leicester Meeting - 13th February 2016

Five of us spent a most enjoyable day at Leicester with the meeting kindly hosted by Gwynne Harries at the Leicester Language Academy. The meeting lasted over 7 hours and it was particularly good to welcome Peter Huss who flew in from Germany for the occasion!

Peter Mantell showed part of his collection of Pitney Bowes specimen franks from the 1960s and 1970s period. This display provided a fascinating insight into how the company's quality control operated at that time. Gwynne Harries showed a very interesting collection of his early Leicester material that told the story of the part that Arthur Wheeler played in the early days of meter franking in the UK. Mike Jackson showed some particularly interesting and very rare early GB meter material. Your editor spoke about 2D barcodes and the research made so far with regard to the format of the matrix code block in the Royal Mail's Mailmark™. Some useful input to this (and various communications since the meeting) was provided by Peter Huss on the use of 2D barcodes in other countries.

The photo below shows the five of us at the meeting. From left to right we have Gwynne Harries, Mike Jackson, your editor, Peter Huss and Peter Mantell. Apologies were received from Michael Dobbs, Alan Godfrey, Jon Aitchison and Jim Ashby.



One of the topics that emerged during the day was the subject of UPU regulations governing the use of meter franking – in particular the mandatory use of red ink that was stated in the 1920 UPU regulations. Your editor would be pleased to hear from anyone who can identify any present-day UPU regulations driving the use of ink colour.

Currently the Royal Mail United Kingdom Post Scheme states that a Franking Mark must be printed in blue ink by Mailmark™ Franking Equipment and Smart Meters, and in red ink by all other Franking Equipment.

Coloured Slogans

On page 170-12, we reported this frank from Milton Keynes Council with the wording for the return address block in small font and in a box. Now Peter Mantell reports that the user has made some changes to the format of that block. To meet Royal Mail regulations, the text is now in larger letters and the box has been removed. However, the words “If undelivered please return to:” have been omitted, which therefore means that it still breaks regulations as “Return Address” should have been included above the address (see page 67/5).



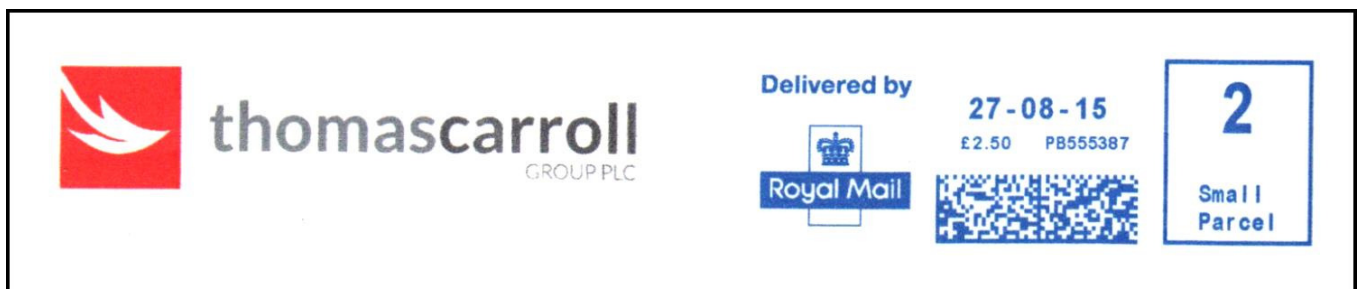
Peter Mantell sends this ‘Swim for life’ logo used by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), based in Loughborough.



Duncan James reports this ‘monster’ frank from the University College of Estate Management (UCEM), based in Reading. This must be an expensive use of black ink!

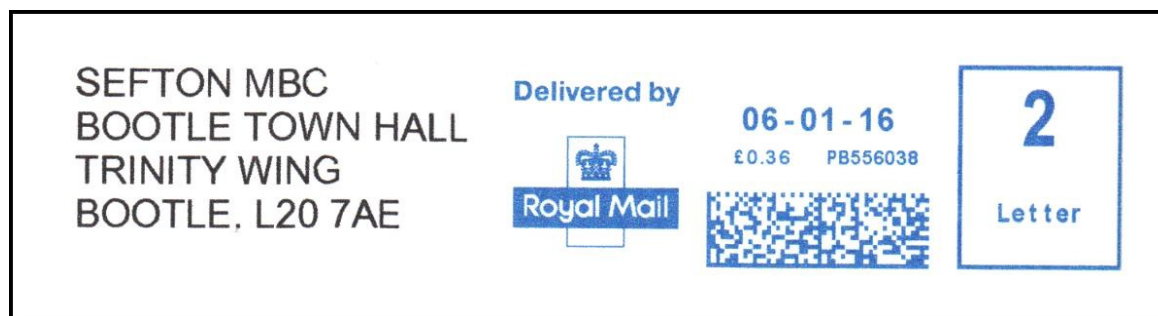


Peter Mantell sends this coloured slogan from the Thomas Carroll Group which is one of the UK’s leading independent providers of business insurance, personal insurance broking, financial management, health & safety and employment law consultancy.



Coloured Slogans continued

Peter Mantell also sends these two black 'Return Address' items.



Mailmark™ News

Duncan James reports a new '2 Letter PP Reply' indicia with a class code of '3' and Mail Type '3002', the 'PP' presumably standing for 'Postage Paid'. It is puzzling why this payment option exists in the first place and why the user has applied £0.36 of postage. Surely the user sending the item back under the 'Reply Paid' scheme should not be paying any postage! In this case, the 'PP Reply' option may have been selected in error by the user. It is interesting (but not surprising) that the date gets suppressed with this payment option. However, the date within the matrix block decodes as '23.02.16'.



On page 183-14 we showed an item from Lytham St. Annes Soap Workshop bearing the indicia '2 L Letter 500g'. The Mail Type for this was '0103' with Class code '2' which had not previously been recorded for this weight on 2nd class. Your editor also reports this (Signed For) 2 L Letter 100g item, bearing a postage of £1.73, that has not been recorded before.



Mailmark™ News continued

Further to the report on page 183-8, your editor has investigated further the significance of the 'Class' code when interpreting the 'Mail Type' code and can confirm that the two codes should always be read in conjunction with each other. Another important aspect that was noticed during this investigation is that the Small and Medium Parcel indicia do not indicate the item weight (unlike the Large Letter and Special Delivery indicia). With this in mind, the list of codes has been completely re-formatted and the resulting 'full' list is given below.

The following table lists the Mail Types recorded against each Class code. It attempts to list all of the UK codes that are expected to exist – the ones in red indicate those that have not yet been reported. Please note that the same has not been attempted for overseas codes as there would be too much guesswork involved in this at this stage.

Class	Mail Type	Visible Type	N/L report	Comments
0	0000	Zero Test	163-1	Code 9995 used from 2015
1	0001	1 Letter	161-3	
1	0101	1 L Letter 100g	162-4	
1	0102	1 L Letter 250g	163-5	
1	0103	1 L Letter 500g	164-6	
1	0104	1 L Letter 750g	-	Not yet reported
1	0301	1 Medium Parcel	-	1kg weight not yet reported
1	0302	1 Medium Parcel	170-9	Assumed code for 2kg
1	0303	1 Medium Parcel	170-9	Assumed code for 5kg
1	0304	1 Medium Parcel	-	10kg weight not yet reported
1	0305	1 Medium Parcel	-	20kg weight not yet reported
1	1111	1 Small Parcel	161-7	Assumed code for 1kg
1	2221	1 Small Parcel	-	2kg weight not yet reported
2	0001	2 Letter	161-1	
2	0101	2 L Letter 100g	161-7	
2	0102	2 L Letter 250g	161-7	
2	0103	2 L Letter 500g	184-7	
2	0104	2 L Letter 750g	162-3	
2	0301	2 Medium Parcel	170-9	Assumed code for 1kg
2	0302	2 Medium Parcel	-	2kg weight not yet reported
2	0303	2 Medium Parcel	181-6	Assumed code for 5kg
2	0304	2 Medium Parcel	-	10kg weight not yet reported
2	0305	2 Medium Parcel	-	20kg weight not yet reported
2	1111	2 Small Parcel	-	1kg weight not yet reported
2	2221	2 Small Parcel	170-9	Assumed code for 2kg
3	5000	(Special Delivery) 9AM 100g	162-4	
3	?	(Special Delivery) 9AM 500g	-	Not yet reported
3	?	(Special Delivery) 9AM 1kg	-	Not yet reported
3	?	(Special Delivery) 9AM 2kg	-	Not yet reported
3	0100	(Special Delivery) 1PM 100g	162-3	
3	0101	(Special Delivery) 1PM 500g	183-8	
3	?	(Special Delivery) 1PM 1kg	-	Not yet reported
3	0104	(Special Delivery) 1PM 2kg	178-7	
3	?	(Special Delivery) 1PM 10kg	-	Not yet reported
3	?	(Special Delivery) 1PM 20kg	-	Not yet reported

Mailmark™ News continued

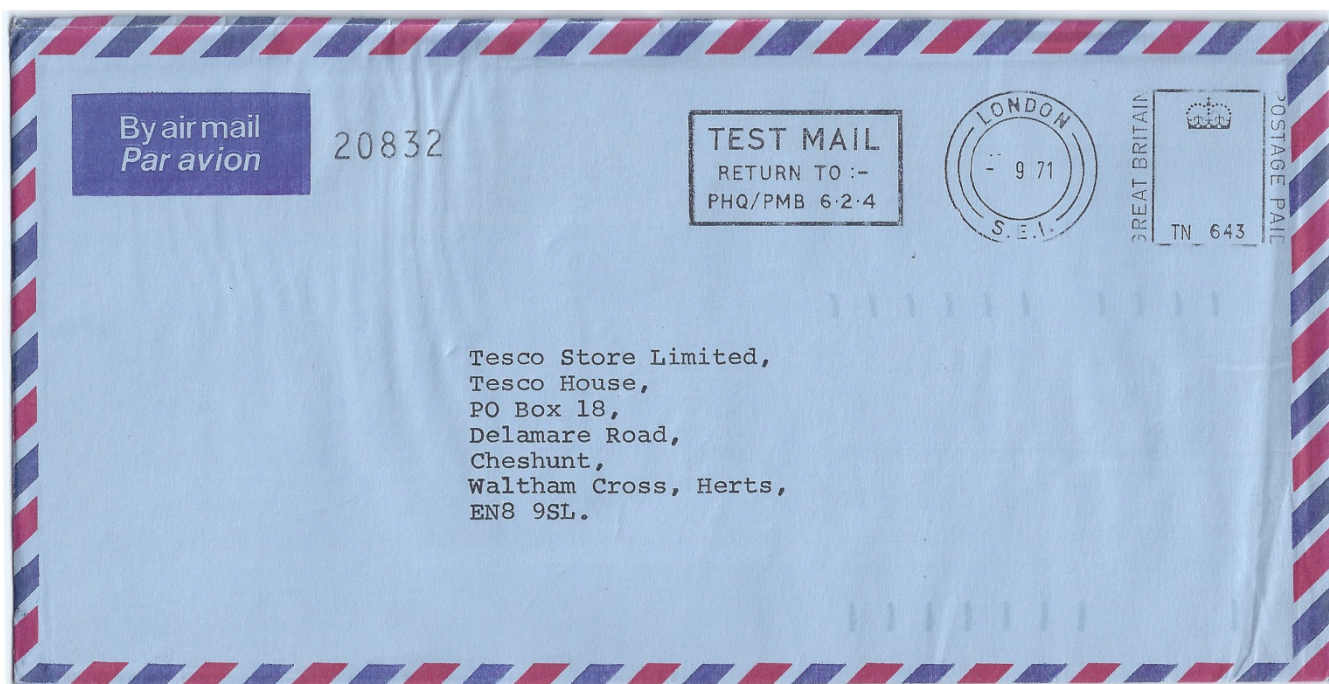
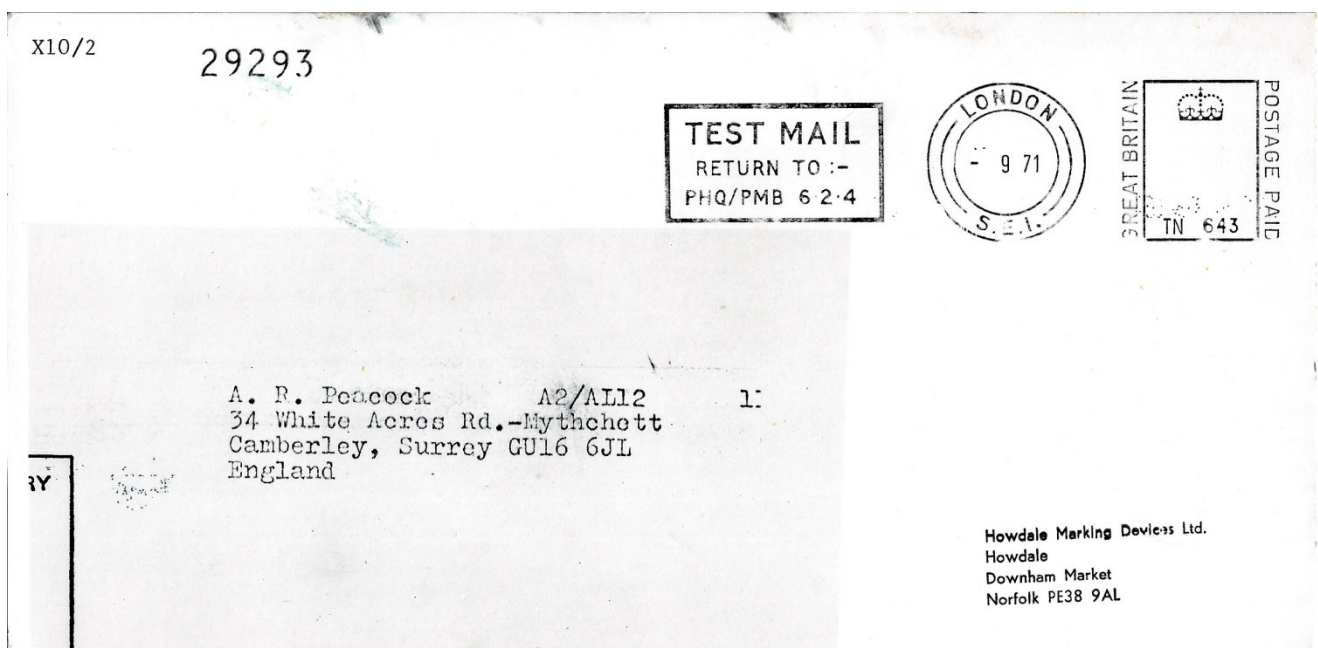
Class	Mail Type	Visible Type	N/L report	Comments
3	3001	1 Letter PP Reply	-	Not yet reported
3	3002	2 Letter PP Reply	184-7	
4	-	-	-	Class code 4 not used
5	-	-	-	Class code 5 not used
6	6001	A Europe 20g	164-6	
6	6002	A Europe 60g	165-6	No longer in use
6	6016	A ROW1 10g / 20g	168-8, 182-7	
6	6032	A Europe250g	175-7	No longer in use
6	6096	A ROW2 20g	170-9	Also for A ROW2 10g?
6	6097	A ROW2 60g	166-1	No longer in use
6	6098	A ROW2 100g	177-5	
6	6201	A Europe 100g	178-7	
6	6202	A Europe 250g	178-7	
6	6520	ITS Europe 100g	-	Not yet reported
6	6521	ITS Europe 250g	-	Not yet reported
6	6522	ITS Europe 500g	178-1,178-7	
7	1100	(Signed For) 1 Letter	179-6	
7	2100	(Signed For) 1 L Letter 100g	179-6	
7	?	(Signed For) 1 L Letter 250g	-	Not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 1 L Letter 500g	-	Not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 1 L Letter 750g	-	Not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 1 Medium Parcel	-	1kg weight not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 1 Medium Parcel	-	2kg weight not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 1 Medium Parcel	-	5kg weight not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 1 Small Parcel	-	1kg weight not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 1 Small Parcel	-	2kg weight not yet reported
7	5100	(Signed For) 2 Letter	180-6	
7	6100	(Signed For) 2 L Letter 100g	184-7	
7	?	(Signed For) 2 L Letter 250g	-	Not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 2 L Letter 500g	-	Not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 2 L Letter 750g	-	Not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 2 Medium Parcel	-	1kg weight not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 2 Medium Parcel	-	2kg weight not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 2 Medium Parcel	-	5kg weight not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 2 Small Parcel	-	1kg weight not yet reported
7	?	(Signed For) 2 Small Parcel	-	2kg weight not yet reported
7	7001	SU Letter 20g	181-1	
8	1403	1 Advanced	161-7	
8	1404	1 Advanced Letter	-	Not yet reported
8	1503	2 Advanced	161-7	
8	1504	2 Advanced Letter	181-6	
9	9995	Zero Test	180-5	
9	9998	PF Frank Pay	179-1	
9	9999	Surcharge Payment	163-1	

Historic Items

Jim Ashby has recently acquired these two test mail items with the meter frank 'TN 643', dated '- 9 71'. The first shows what appears to be some (random) IJP dots just above the serial number and the second shows some OCR tag and routing code marks. Jim has, therefore, questioned whether the '1971' date is correct.

Fortunately, Patrick Awcock has been able to throw some light on these and he believes that they were test mail items that were used at Mt Pleasant with the original V1 OCR in about 1982. He thinks that they were, in fact, printed and not produced by an actual meter machine. Patrick says that they were designed to test the appearance of stray data / addresses that might confuse the OCR.

Reports of similar items would be appreciated as they are of key postal mechanisation interest.



Early Pitney Bowes Licences

On page 81-4 we listed the first 33 Pitney Bowes machines and gave two dates for each one, namely the date the licence was issued and the earliest date recorded on live mail. What was not recorded in the table was the date the machines actually went into service. Jim Ashby has found two newspaper articles relating to early PB machines. They show that, at least in the early days, there could have been a significant period between the licence being issued and the machine going into service:

M. No.	User	Licence issued	Newspaper Details
7	J.S. Fry, Bristol	25 Jan 23	First setting: Morning of 6 Mar 23 at GPO Bristol First use: Afternoon of 6 Mar 23
16	Cooperative Wholesale Society, Manchester	30 Oct 24	First setting: Morning of 12 Nov 24 Installed: Afternoon of 12 Nov 24

The first demonstration was held in the office of the Engineering Department at the GPO, London, on Wednesday 17th May 1922. It was stated that the machine would be installed with the Prudential approximately one fortnight later, although the list on page 81-4 (from PO archives) gives the date of licence issue as 16 Aug 22. Pitney Bowes machines were also mentioned as being demonstrated at the Business Efficiency Exhibitions in Manchester (1926), London (1927) and Glasgow (1928). The insert here shows an illustrated article from the Western Daily Press, dated 7th March 1923:



Are the days of the postage stamp numbered? This question must have arisen in the minds of those who were present at the General Post Office yesterday, when the Postmaster (Mr Luke) set the first Pitney-Bowes Postage Meter in Bristol for Messrs J. S. Fry and Sons, Ltd.

The words postage meter convey but little as to the significance of this new machine, of which at present there are only ten in daily postage assumes abnormal proportions, are the elimination of the old time and money wasting method of sticking on stamps and sealing down envelope flaps, the safe-guarding of the stamp account, as in the absence of ordinary stamps they cannot be pilfered or misused, and the speed with which a large outgoing mail can be dealt.

Yesterday morning a member of the firm of Messrs J. S. Fry and Sons, Ltd., handed to

existence licensed by the Postmaster-General, six in London and four in the provinces. The machine is a device for printing postage impressions directly upon letters, circulars, postcards, and other mail matter, entirely doing away with adhesive or embossed stamps. The machine will seal down and stamp simultaneously any ordinary-sized envelope at the rate of 250 to 300 per minute.

The great advantages which must make an appeal to big business houses where the

Mr Luke a cheque for £104 3s 4d. The latter then set the machine so that it would be possible to stamp letters to the value of 20,000 1d stamps and 10,000 1½d stamps. At the expiration of that number the firm will renew their cheque to the Postmaster, who will re-set the machine in a few seconds.

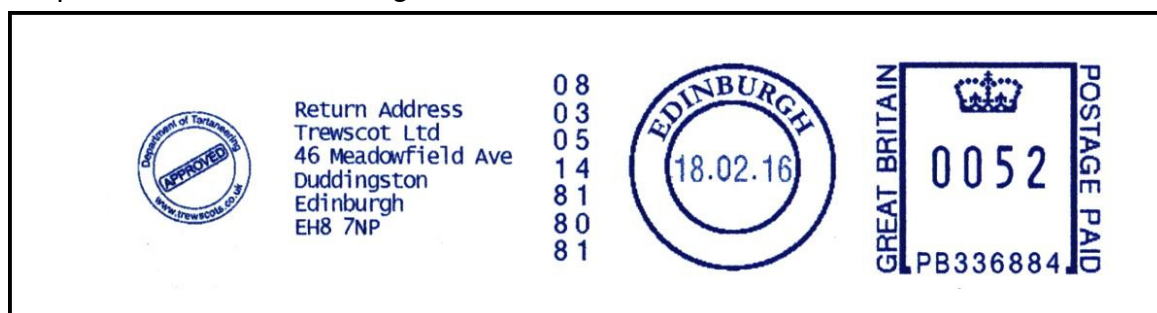
In the afternoon the machine at Messrs Fry's was used for the first time, the first letter to be dealt with in this way being addressed to one of the directors of the firm.

Meter Thematics

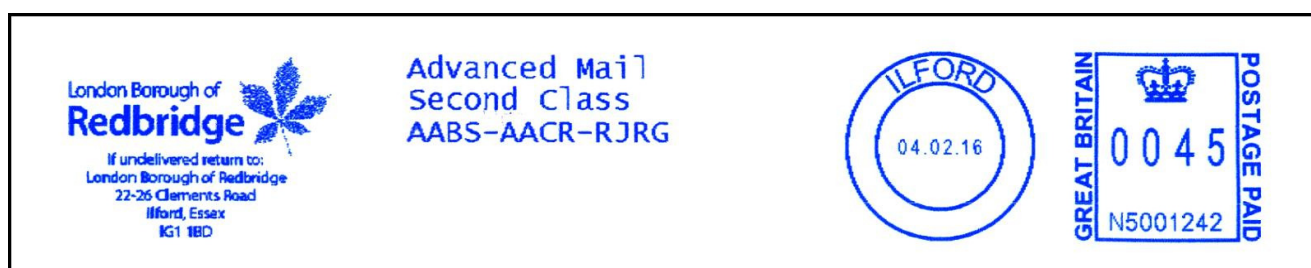
Back in 2011, on page 126-5, we featured a VARIO IT franking machine, made by a company called Telefrank – see image alongside. Jos Wessels kindly sends this wonderful slogan advert in the form of a cartoon character that advertises this machine. It nicely complements the earlier report.



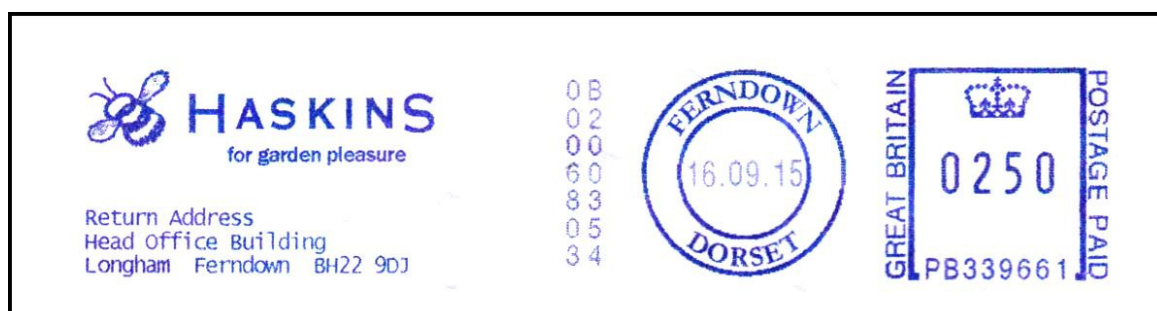
Peter Mantell sends this frank from Trewscot Ltd. in Edinburgh. Yes, it really does say “Department of Tartaneering” – what a wonderful word!



Alan Godfrey sends this horse chestnut leaf, used in the logo of the Redbridge Borough Council, in Essex.



Peter Mantell sends this nice bee – in the logo used by Haskins Garden Centre, Ferndown.



Meter Thematics continued

The thematics shown on this page have been provided by Peter Mantell. Note that the NE8 item below is also the lowest recorded number for this series (NE8000031).

Return Address:
Daisy Group
Technology House
Hunsbury Hill Avenue
Northampton
NN4 8QS




Delivered by



12-02-16
£0.51 NE8000031




1
Letter




RMBI Albert Edward
Prince of Wales Court
Penylan Avenue
Porthcawl
CF36 3LY
Caring for older Freemasons
and their dependants for over
160 years

00002432



PORHCRAWL
15.6.15

GREAT BRITAIN



0081
FM2655107

POSTAGE PAID



Southgate School
Sussex Way
Cockfosters
Herts
EN4 0BL

Delivered by



UK
23-02-16
£0.51 FR2001145



1
Letter


Return Address:
Killerton House
Killerton
Exeter
EX5 3LE




Delivered by



15-02-16
£0.36 NE8003638




2
Letter




Leeds
CITY COUNCIL
Return Address: Mail Room Services
Westland Road, Leeds, LS11 5SB

Advanced Mail
First Class
AAAH-XZJA-SCLZ



LEEDS
06.01.14

GREAT BRITAIN

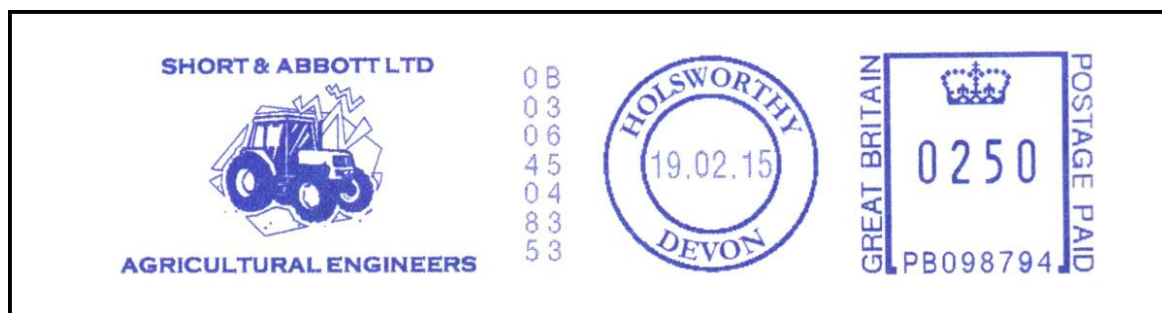
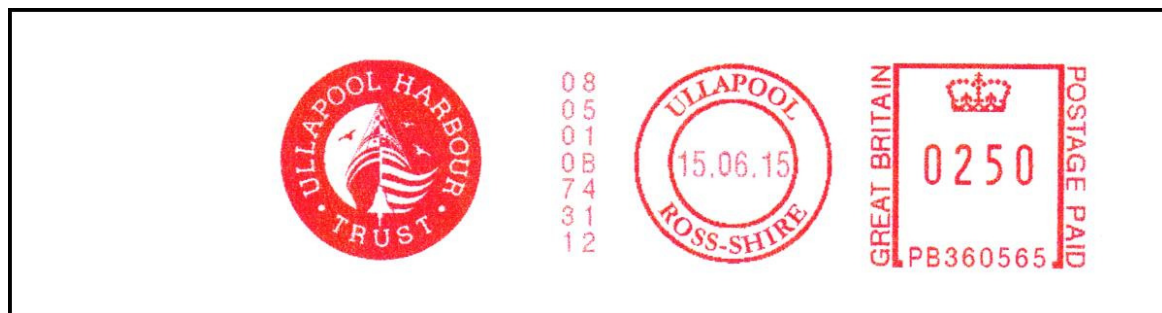
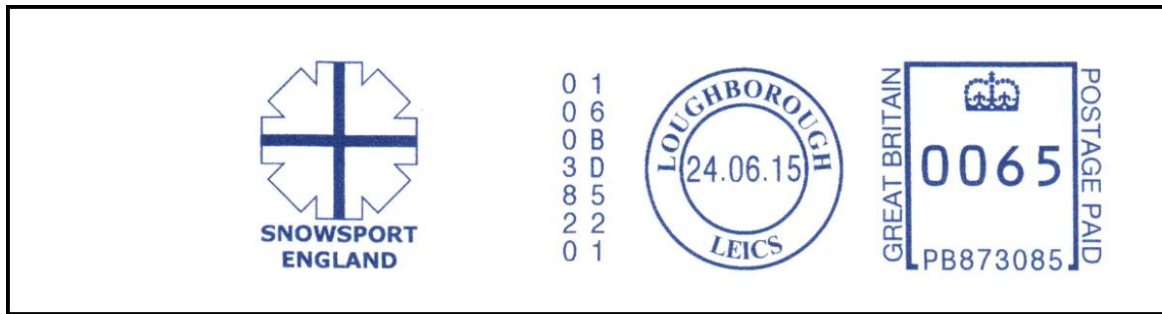


0057
N5001623

POSTAGE PAID

Meter Thematics continued

The following four thematics have also been sent by Peter Mantell.



Finally, my Meter Thematic of the Month is this superb horse-drawn funeral carriage. My thanks go to Colin Peachey for sending this.

