

# METER NEWS

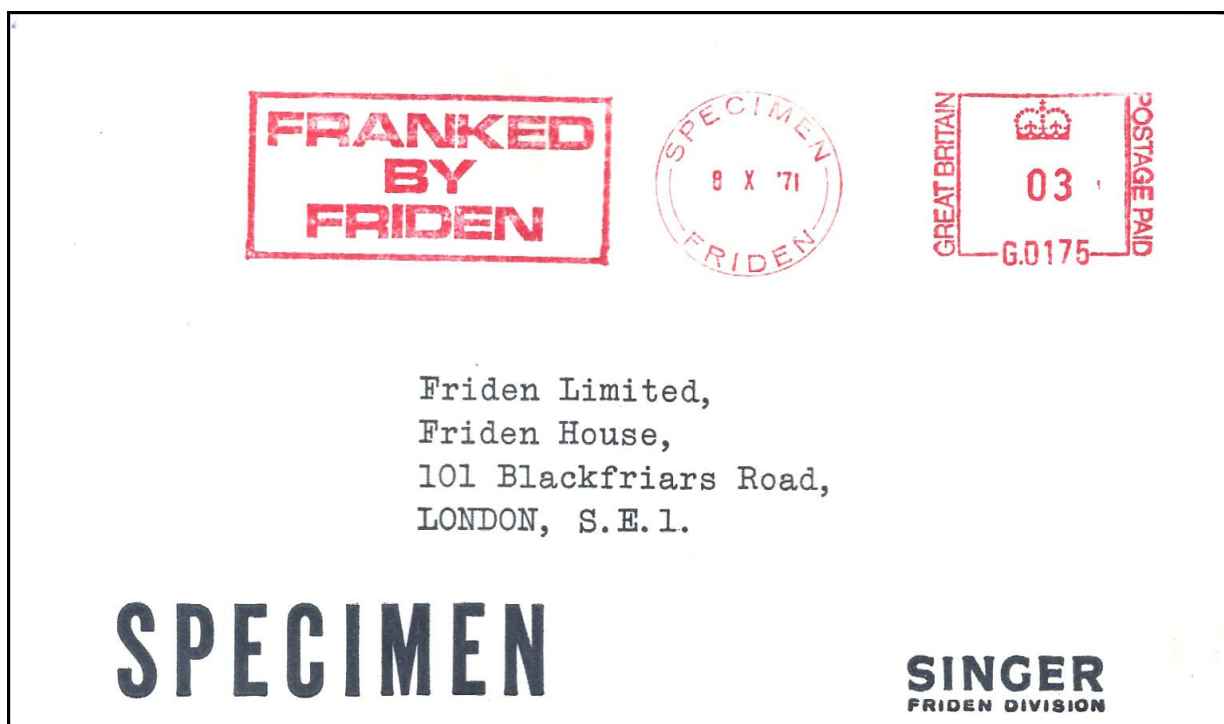
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## Meter of the Month

My Meter of the Month comes from Jim Ashby and shows the shorter (squashed) version of a Friden specimen frank from 1971. These 'G' prefix franks came from models 410/420 and the higher specification models 9010/9020 and first sold in the UK in 1970. Jim also sends a specimen cover, shown below, with the longer version of the frank. All models were assigned numbers in the same series and about 1100 in total were sold in the UK.



## Obituary

It is with much sadness that I report the recent passing of Ray Downing, having spent most of the last three months in hospital. Ray's main interest was postal mechanisation and he was a prominent member of the Postal Mechanisation Study Circle (PMSO). Ray was also interested in meter franking and was an occasional contributor to Meter News. He was a friend of mine for nearly 30 years and will be greatly missed.

## Acknowledgements

My thanks go to Jim Ashby, Jon Aitchison, Peter Huss, Mike Jackson, Duncan James, Peter Mantell, Robert Petts, Roy Richardson, Thomas Rösner and Peter Wood for their recent reports, communications or contributions.

## Latest Numbers

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

In the list below, the part of the serial number that directly relates to the model is underlined. Entries with hyphen separators in the date indicate 'Design J' (matrix) format.

### Frama (UK)

Matrix F2, F4, F6	<u>F1004086</u>	12.04.16	See MN 186
Matrix F12 etc.	<u>FR2002806</u>	17-08-16	Reported by PM

### Francotyp-Postalia

Centormail 240/300	<u>FC5110729</u>	18-11-15	See MN 181
PostBase Qi3/4/6/9	<u>FP6116290</u>	19-07-16	See MN 189
PostBase Mini	<u>FP7115102</u>	20-06-16	See MN 188

### Neopost

IS-330	<u>N1053555</u>	19.08.16	Reported by PM
IS-350	<u>N1182853</u>	29.04.16	See MN 187
Various upgraded	<u>N1240763</u>	15.06.16	See MN 188
IS-280c / 350c	<u>NE6010109</u>	27-06-16	See MN 189
IS-420c / 440c	<u>NE8011696</u>	21-07-16	See MN 189
IS-480c	<u>NE9000556</u>	29-07-16	Reported by PM

### Pitney Bowes

DM160i/220i	<u>PB178161</u>	12-07-16	See MN 189
DM60 (model K722)	<u>PB2018531</u>	21-07-16	See MN 189
DM50, 55	<u>PB312413</u>	02.08.16	Reported by DJ
DM50, 55	<u>PB368735</u>	11.04.16	See MN 188
Connect+ 10FC etc.	<u>PB5575343</u>	27-07-16	See MN 189
Connect+ 10FC etc.	<u>PB558209</u>	18-05-16	See MN 188
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB620832</u>	01.06.16	See MN 188
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB6628066</u>	15-08-16	Reported by PM
DM 110i	<u>PB885160</u>	05.08.16	Reported by DJ

### Advanced Mail Codes

AAGX-JZ	NE8009481	24-02-16	See MN 186
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### Date Error

Robert Petts reports that, back in 1998, the month of February was somewhat extended – at least in London W4. This spectacular date error comes from a Pitney Bowes model A921 machine, serial PBC15325.

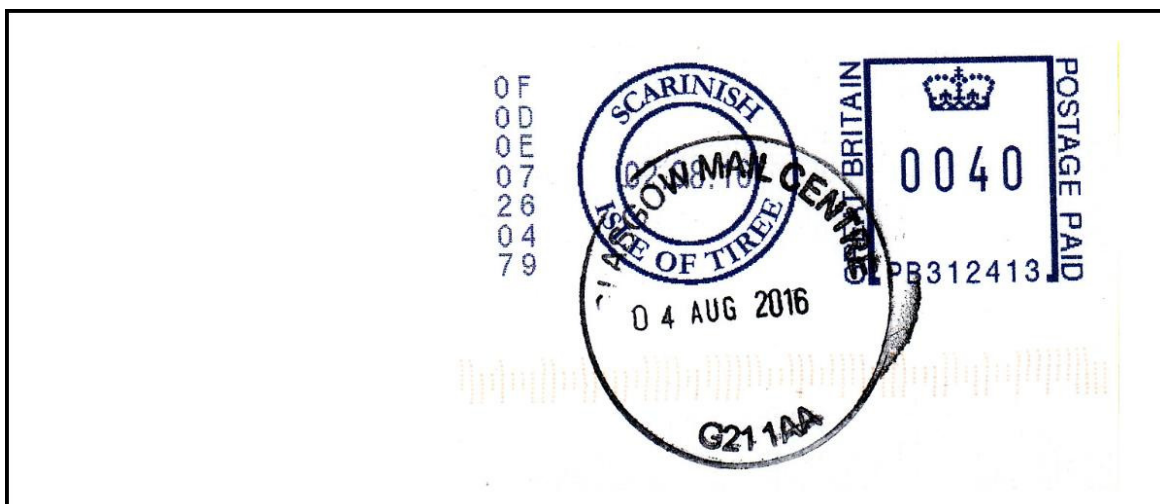


## Latest Number Images

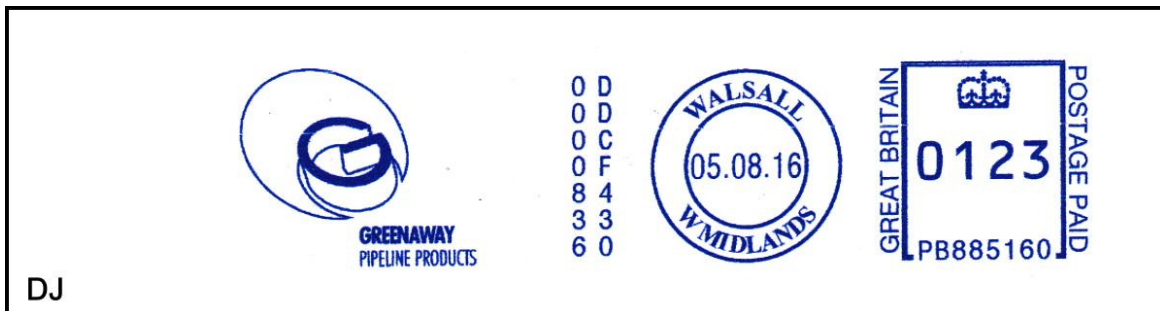
Contributor's initials and other details are shown in the bottom left of each image.



Duncan James reports this highest number which also interesting because it comes from the village of Scarinish on the Isle of Tiree in the Inner Hebrides. It is the main village on the island and has a total population of just 650. The user is not known but it could well be the only franking machine currently being used on the island. The item also bears a circular meter date-correction handstamp, applied at Glasgow Mail Centre.



## Latest Number Images continued



## Recent Interesting Items

Duncan James reports two interesting items this month. The first is a pre-loaded 'HANDLE WITH CARE' slogan - with a significant alignment problem between the upper and lower print heads.

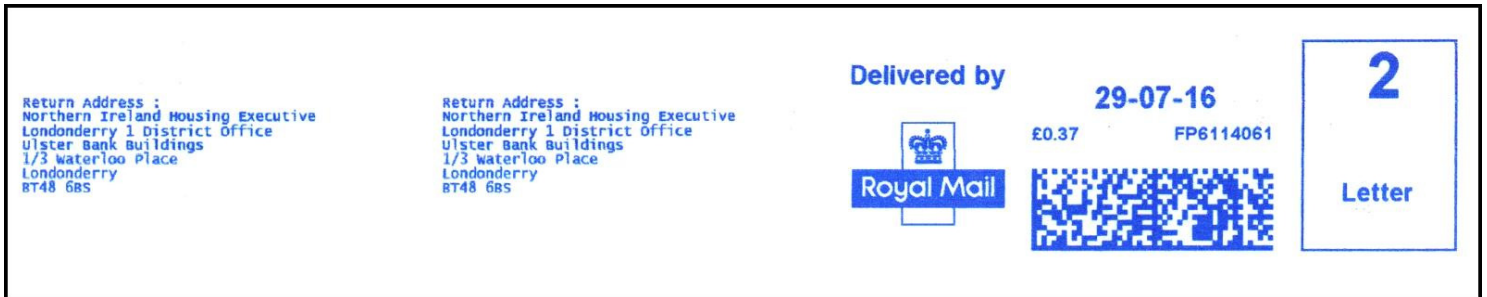


The next is this rather nice rhyming slogan from Charcon Creations. The company sells spare LEGO pieces and is based in Herne Bay, Canterbury, Kent.

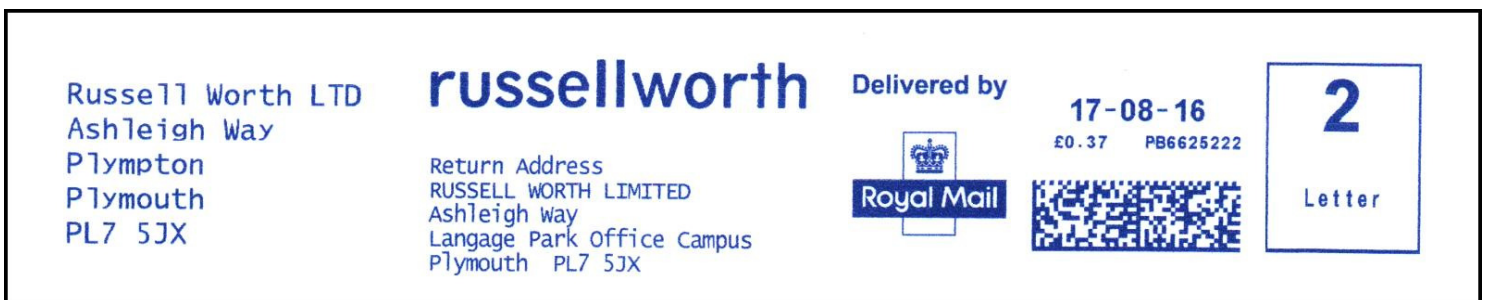


## Recent Interesting Items continued

Peter Mantell reports this frank where the user return address is repeated. It comes from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in Londonderry.



Peter has also found another 'repeated address' frank – this time from a company called Russell Worth Ltd., based in Plymouth, Devon.



Further to the report on page 189-6 of meter serial FM2650489, Peter Mantell reports a similar occurrence with just the date showing in the town die. The user details are unknown.



Further to page 178-6 and earlier, Duncan James reports a fourth example of a meter with a QR code - from a company called 'Home Ideas & Gifts Galore' based in Honiton, Devon.



Surprisingly, the QR code decodes as “**This is an example of DataMatrix Barcode 1236 9234235345334**”. It does not, therefore, contain a link to the company’s web address and hence it is not much use to the person receiving the item! Your editor has no idea whether the string of numbers has any meaning or not.

**Coloured Slogans**

Five slogans to report this month – the first is from Duncan James and comes from the ‘College of Occupational Therapists’ in London.



	<p>Return Address 106-114 Borough High ST London SE1 1LB</p>	<p>Delivered by </p>	<p>11-08-16 £0.89 PB557612 </p>	<p><b>2</b> L Letter 250g</p>
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The other four are all black slogans, sent by Peter Mantell.

<p>General Medical Council 3 Hardman St Manchester M3 3AW</p>	<p>Delivered by </p>	<p>09-08-16 £0.51 PB556422 </p>	<p><b>1</b> Letter</p>
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<p>Return Address: Specsavers Optical Cirrus House 10 Experian Way Nottingham, NG2 1EP</p>	<p>Delivered by </p>	<p>29-03-16 £0.51 PB556874 </p>	<p><b>1</b> Letter</p>
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<p>Lester Aldridge LLP Russell House 31 Oxford Road Bournemouth BH8 8EX</p>		<p>Delivered by </p>	<p>26-07-16 £0.37 PB556882 </p>	<p><b>2</b> Letter</p>
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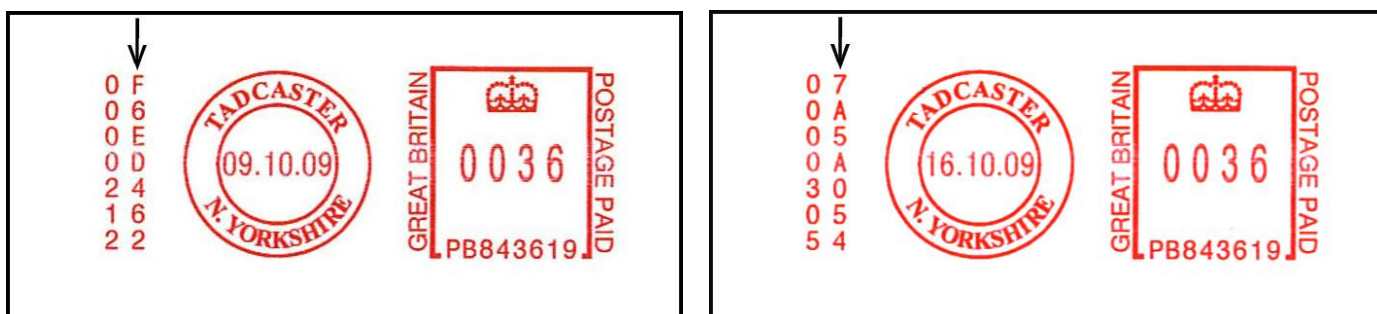
<p>Private &amp; Confidential</p>	<p>Return Address Teachers' Pensions 11B Lingfield Point Darlington DL1 1AX</p>	<p>Delivered by </p>	<p>03-08-16 £0.51 PB556207 </p>	<p><b>1</b> Letter</p>
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## Security Codes on Pitney Bowes Design H franks

In past newsletters we have occasionally made reference to the security block that appeared on many of the Pitney Bowes models that were manufactured from the mid-1990s onwards. These blocks are only found on Design H franks and comprise either one or two vertical columns to the left of the town die. On the higher speed (PB5 series) models, the single column indicated a visible item count, whereas all other models had two columns in the security block with the right hand column encrypted. When these initially appeared, the first digit in that column had a fixed '1' to indicate Pitney Bowes, followed by 5 encrypted digits. However, we have only ever been able to decode two of those 5 digits and it is now unlikely that your editor will ever be able to set aside enough time to further the investigation. It is therefore probably a good time to 'close the chapter' on this topic.

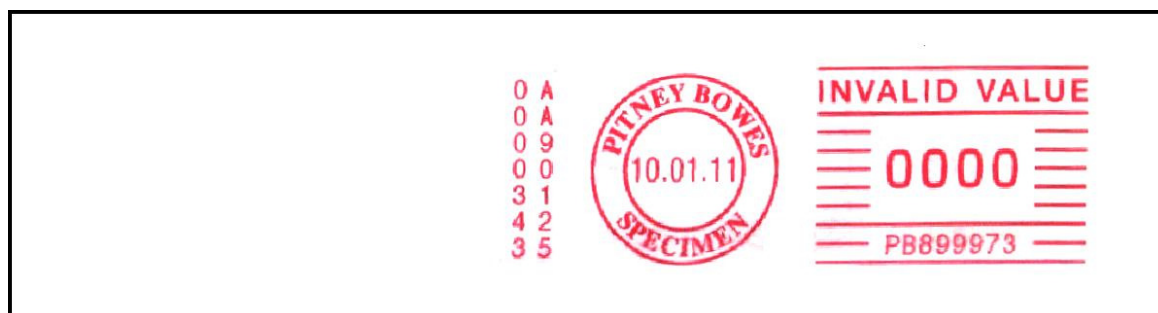
In the May 2001 newsletter (on page 7-3) we included a report on the PB2, PB7 and the original PB30 / PB37 series, that two of the encrypted digits were constant for any given machine. Furthermore, we provided a formula for calculating what those two digits were, dependent on the meter serial number.

Then in June 2004 (on page 44-1) things became more complicated with the introduction of the PB8 series when the number of encrypted characters in the right-hand column was increased to 7 - the first four characters being in hexadecimal. On page 50-7, a suggested modification to the earlier formula was given to take account of this new series. However, it now seems that was not the full story as at some stage those two 'constant digits' no longer appeared in the encryption - as seen in these examples from PB843619 in October 2009:



Then in November 2010 (on page 121-5) our hopes were raised that we might be able to break the code when your editor found an 'item number 1' on a PB0 series frank but even the discovery of this item did not help.

This month, we include the following 'zero value' frank from machine PB899973 which was one of 14 specimen franks kindly sent by Wang Jingsheng in Beijing. These franks were printed at the same time as the test report that was previously shown on page 183-1.



## Security Codes on Pitney Bowes Design H franks continued

The 14 images were in sequence, running from item 0000341 to item 0000354 and had the following encryption and postage details:

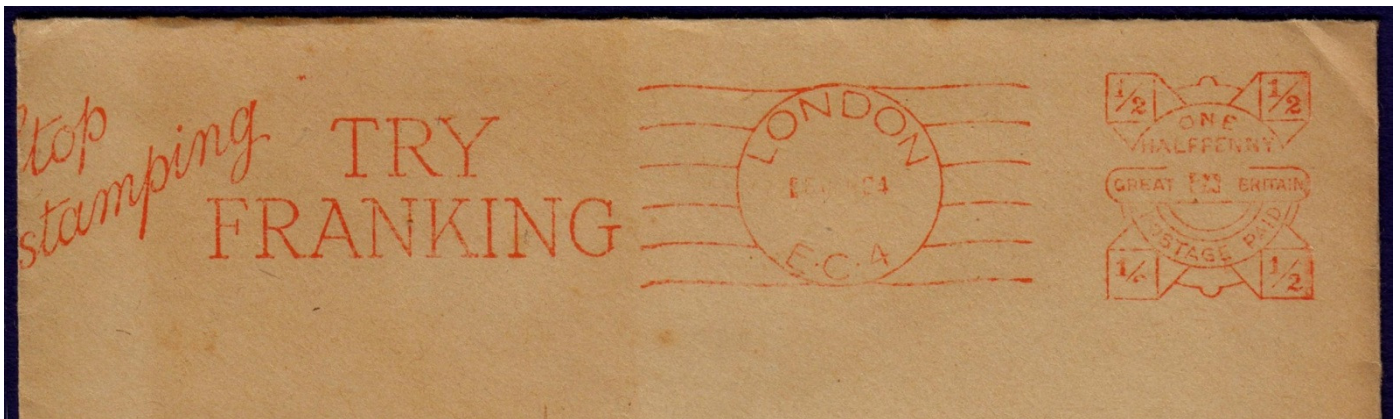
Item No.	Encryption	Postage
0000341	9A43360	9999
0000342	36C4987	0010
0000343	AA90125	0000
0000344	5FE0704	0441
0000345	5B41774	0649
0000346	1D92817	0487
0000347	C6F3239	0520

Item No.	Encryption	Postage
0000348	0466487	0629
0000349	11B2985	0791
0000350	6A79239	0572
0000351	46A0537	0605
0000352	DBBE422	0714
0000353	077A082	0876
0000354	3712964	0742

At some point in the future, the above table may be helpful to anyone wishing to further investigate the encryption used on these machines.

## Historic Meters – ‘Design A’ UPF machines

Further to last month (page 189-14), Jim Ashby owns a similar ‘2A’ in white within a rectangular block on a specimen cover - the top half of which is shown below.



Unfortunately, the date is not clear on this example, but your editor thinks it possibly reads ‘5 JAN 24’. The town die on this frank is ‘London E.C.4.’, compared with ‘London W.C.2’ on the item shown last month.

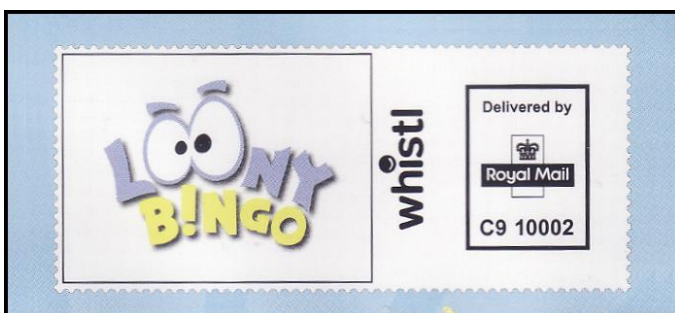
However, Jim believes that both examples are actually from a Universal “Special Midget” rather than a “High Speed” model for two reasons:

- The High Speed used date slugs, with the day and month positioned above the year, whereas the Special Midget had a single row date printed using a rotary date die. Date figures on the Special Midget were also much smaller than those on the High Speed.
- The Special Midget could print a slogan, whereas this was not possible on the High Speed due to the size of the printing drum.



## PPI Thematics

Normally, pre-printed PPI thematic slogans are outside the scope of the newsletter. However, your editor couldn't resist this set of rather attractive examples, found by Duncan James. They advertise various bingo and other games-related web sites.

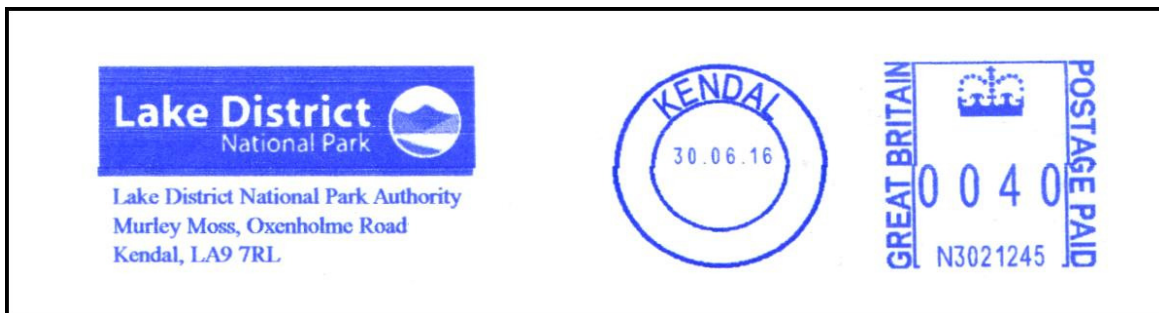


### Meter Thematics

Roy Richardson sends this rather attractive image from Stags Estate Agents based in Okehampton, Devon.



Your editor has found this slogan from the Lake District National Park Authority based in Kendal, Lancashire.



Peter Mantell sends this kite design from Voyage Care based in the cathedral city of Lichfield, Staffordshire.

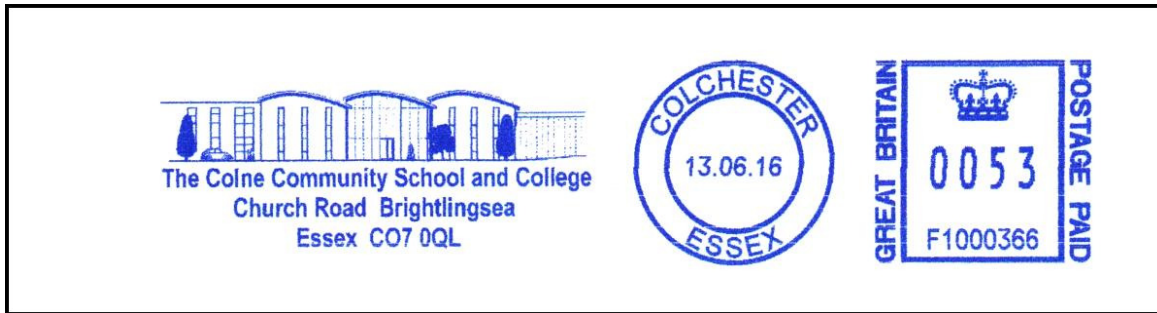


Peter Mantell has found this rocket design from 'Review Travel' based in Handforth, near Wilmslow, Cheshire. I must say, it's rather nice the way the rocket is shown punching a hole in the cloud!

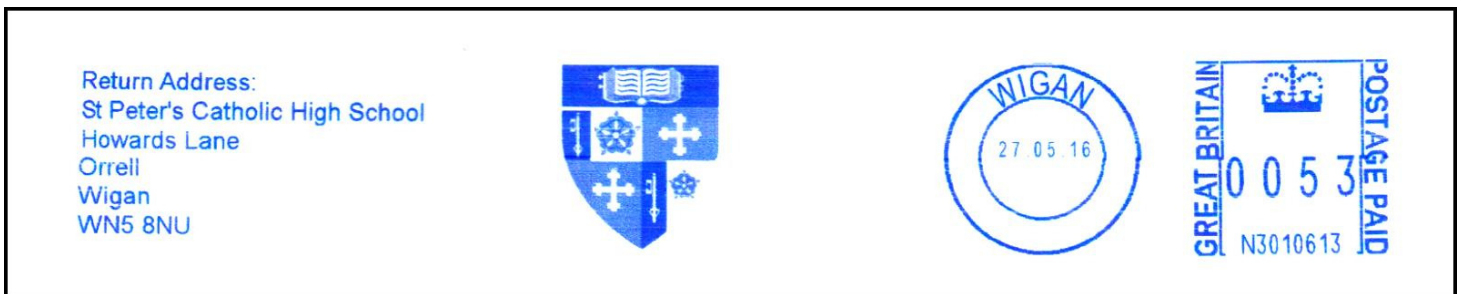


**Meter Thematics continued**

Peter Mantell sends all of the thematic franks on this page, starting with this one depicting the Colne Community School and College in Brightlingsea, Essex.



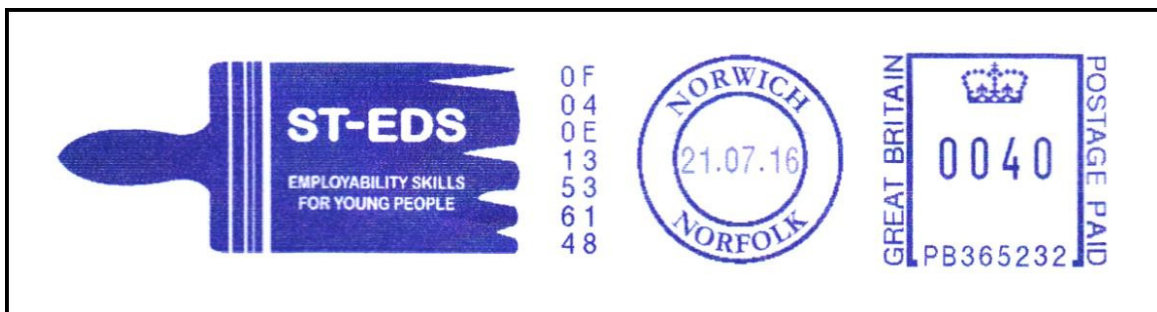
Staying with schools, here is an attractive heraldic design from St Peter's Catholic High School in Wigan.



This logo comes from Minnow Films based in Shoreditch, London. Unfortunately, the image (as the one on their web site) is not great. They must also use a lot of ink cartridges with all that blue!



Also using a lot of blue ink, is this paintbrush design from St. Edmunds Training Centre. The facility offers a wide range of vocational training - including bricklaying, plastering, carpentry and painting.



**Meter Thematics continued**

Duncan James sends all of the thematic franks on this page, starting with this attractive design from 'The Hereford Cattle Society'. A coloured version of the logo, taken from their web site, is shown alongside.



This one comes from a company called Popinz based in Romford, which sells themed customised shoes and accessories.



This one advertises a Radio station that covers Edinburgh and East Central Scotland. The slogan has "RADIOFORTH" superimposed on the word "your".



Finally, my Meter Thematic of the Month award goes to Duncan James for this attractive slogan that advertises the film "Alice through the Looking Glass".

