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THE  
METER STAMP  
BULLETIN

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Meter Stamp Study Group

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EDITORIAL NOTES

**A**POLOGIES for the blank back page in the last issue, due to the typist getting more into a page than was anticipated, and by no means to shortage of material.

Members' opinions seem to be generally in favour of continuing the present size of page, at least until we are able to increase the number of pages further (which is dependent on increasing membership), though for detailed check-lists full quarto or f/cap pages will be more convenient.

Stocks of the first two numbers of the Bulletin are now completely exhausted.

To save fruitless inquiries also, I am sorry to say that I am quite unable to advise members where they can obtain a copy of the Harris Catalogue, of which the publishers have been sold out for some years. Our "library" copy of the 1940 edition is still available

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for lending (within the British Isles only). As it has proved advisable to use stronger and heavier packing than at first allowed to prevent damage in the post, I have had to increase the charge to 8d. (low-value stamps please, or Irish commems.)

Several suggestions have been received that we should ourselves try to bring out a new edition of the catalogue, since Harris Publications will not consider doing so; but in view of the small sales that can be anticipated, the present-day cost of typesetting and printing would seem to be prohibitive. From inquiries which I have made of practical printers, the cost - however few copies are printed - cannot be much less than £200, so that if only a few hundred copies can be sold, it would be necessary to charge something like 20/- each; and I do not think many people would be willing to pay as much for a catalogue of about 180 pages. Only if we could rely on selling at least a thousand copies would the cost come down to a reasonable figure, say 7s.6d.

#### EXCHANGE PACKET

I enclose a copy of a letter from Mr E. Buckley announcing the formation of an exchange-packet system, together with the necessary rules, and it is hoped that all members in this country will do their best to make it run successfully with the minimum of trouble to all concerned. The profit will of course benefit the Group generally.

Owing to the official regulations relating to the export and import of philatelic material, as well as the increased time and risk in transit, the packets cannot be sent out of the U.K., and contributions must not be sent from outside the Sterling Area. For overseas members, the letter is accordingly sent for purposes of information only.

Will all members kindly address all suggestions and remarks about the packet direct to Mr Buckley.

GREAT BRITAIN: "POINTS" VALUES

In Bulletin No.1 was given a scale of "points" values for the exchange of G.B. meter stamps without setting cash values to them, as an improvement on the simple "one-for-one" basis. This was originated by Mr D.R.Burchell, who has since revised the relative valuations (those for GviR types in particular being reduced) and added certain early types. As it may be of assistance to members in pricing their contributions to the Exchange Packet, as well as for direct exchange, I give the revised scale of "points" below.

<u>Key Letter</u> <u>or Make</u>	<u>Type</u> <u>Square</u> <u>(centre no.)</u>	<u>- Royal Ciphers -</u>		
		<u>GvR</u>	<u>Eviir</u>	<u>GviR</u>
H	-	10	-	3
M	14	4	14	1½
N	15	3	10	1
NZ(Univ.):				
tmk(a)	blk 150;red 50	50	-	-
tmk(b)(red)	100	50	-	25
tmk(c)	" 150	100	-	-
P	-	12	25	2
PB	See note	9	20	3
U	-	7	17	1
UA, UB, UC	-	-	-	1

PB square type and all others not listed to be valued according to ident.no., denomination etc. Townmark (a) - wavy lines; (b) - double circle; (c) - double circle with inner circle broken at each side.

The above valuations relate only to the commonest denominations and varieties, others being at a premium by arrangement.

So long as entire covers are exchanged for

entire covers, and cut strips for cut strips, these valuations will serve equally well for either. Mr Burchell himself values strips at only  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the value for corresponding entires, but other members consider that strips (provided they are neatly cut and of adequate width) are as good as entires, and in fact more collectable because of the bulk and "untidiness" of entires and the varying sizes. Occasionally of course - but only rarely with modern types - the entire provides philatelicly-important information which would be destroyed in cutting to a strip, and then, and only then, should it be valued at a premium. Collectors must be left to follow their own preferences, but it is recommended that their duplicates should be retained as entires for eventual recipients to treat as they desire.

As to a standard size for strips, for G.B. types a width of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. or 40 mm. (= 1.57 ins.) is convenient; a greater width is usually impossible with "window" envelopes. The length should be 6 in. or 150 mm. even if there is no slogan.

#### G.B.: IDENTIFICATION NO. SYSTEM

As probably all members are aware, some of the makes of meter franks bear identification nos. allocated consecutively throughout the country irrespective of town, such as the H,P, PB and U series, whereas Midget and Neopost, being far more numerous, have nos. from 1 upwards allocated independently in each town and in each postal district of London.

Mr F. Lloyd Parton however mentions that he has a frank M 198 used from Wolverhampton but he is certain that there are nothing like as many as 198 Midget machines in the town, the next highest no. he possesses being M 26; and he inquires whether the "198" can be regarded as an error.

Several similar cases are found in other places. Some of them are undoubtedly due to the war-time evacuation of the firm from London or another large city to a small country town or village, taking the machine with them; the townmark die had of course to be changed, but when the ident.no. did not duplicate any already in use in the new place there was no need to alter the frank die, and in war-time conditions this was left unaltered. A specific example is (GvR) M 74 used by the Royal Assurance Co., both from London E.C.3 and from Northwood Middlesex.

But this explanation does not seem to hold in all cases; does anyone know the answer ?

#### BERMUDA AND CHINA

It was suggested in the last Bulletin that Bermuda was the first country to refuse permission for the use of franking machines; Mr Henry G. Morgan says that this is not so. The Chinese Government in 1936 "declined to sanction the use of all and individual franking machines" - on what grounds is not stated. But since 1949 or earlier, meter machines have come into use there. Up to the time of writing Mr Morgan had seen only illustrations and details were lacking. The astronomical inflation of the currency, together with Chinese numerals would appear to make things difficult!

As regards Bermuda, Mr Barfoot adds that a "Midget" machine was sent there in 1933 but was returned to England without being put into use.

#### INDIA AND PAKISTAN

In Bulletin No.2 descriptions were given of new "Neopost" designs for these two countries to conform to their altered national status. These were taken from specimens submitted by

the makers, and it now appears doubtful whether they have yet come into use.

An apparently new machine taken into use in Calcutta about the end of July, ident.no.C-577 (used by the Central Tea Board) still shows the old "GRI" design, and other users continue to employ this type though it is obviously inappropriate to the new Republic.

Mr S.D. Barfoot reported the receipt in January of a cover from Pakistan with Indian meter stamps having the word "PAKISTAN" printed in violet over "INDIA POSTAGE". He did not know whether this had been done by the Post Office or by the users of the meter, but in either case it is probably the first overprinted meter stamp!

#### PARCEL POST METER MACHINES

( by S. D. Barfoot )

Most meter enthusiasts will know that the G.P.O. has now introduced about 100 postage label machines at parcel acceptance counters at various large post offices throughout the country, following experiments conducted at Cambridge and Romford in 1947-48.

In CANADA such machines have been in use since 1925, so that our G.P.O. has lagged far behind in exploiting their possibilities. Canadian "N.C.R." machines produced labels of Harris's types P1 - 2 and NCR 1 - 3 with similar sub-types. Later, certain Pitney-Bowes machines of models JD (94,000 series) and R (140,000 series) were employed by the post office, and can be distinguished by the letters "P O" on either side of the date-line. These are however not used exclusively for parcels. The NCR machines cannot be distinguished in most cases from those used by private firms.

The UNITED STATES now have several thousand machines in use for franking public mails.

These are almost entirely Pitney-Bowes "R" machines (100,000 series) but a few larger offices have employed "JD" machines (Harris's types 10 and 11) since 1934. There are also a few NPM post-office machines (Harris's type 15). Only one or two of the P.B. machines are used exclusively for parcel postage.

SOUTH AFRICA has now employed parcel-post machines made by the National Cash Register Co. since 1935 (or possibly earlier). The first type is rare; it is a rectangular label of size similar to Harris's NCR 1-- 3 but inscribed in three lines: PARCEL POST / PAKKETPOS / PRETORIA with a panel below containing date, PAID / BETAALD / ASS'T / No. and is printed in violet on bright green paper. The type is known only from Pretoria.

The latest type has "PAKKETPOS / PARCEL POST" in small serif lettering and the town-name horizontally at the base. Some machines produce labels on white paper instead of the usual orange. The P.O.'s known to use these labels are Bloemfontein, Durban, Johannesburg, Kaapstad-Capetown, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria.

#### GREAT BRITAIN.

The experiments conducted in this country started on April 28, 1947, when machines manufactured by "T.I.M." (Ticket-Issue Machines) Ltd. of Cirencester, modified from their bus-ticket machines, were introduced at Cambridge and Romford. A notice concerning their use appeared in the "Post Office Circular" of April 23, 1947. The machines had a finger-hole dial (like that of an automatic telephone) and issued labels of twelve values, of "fixed-value" type, from 6d. to 1/5, printed in carmine ink on white gummed paper, measuring about 29 mm. wide and 60 mm. long, imperforate horizontally and zig-zag rouletted at each end. Their design has "PARCEL POST" in a rectangle vertically at left; in the centre, town-name

between horizontal lines at top, date in middle, and "POSTAGE PAID" between horizontal lines at base; at the right is an ornamental rectangle with small crown at top, value in centre, and GviR at base.

The Cambridge machine was withdrawn on Sept. 28, 1948, and no doubt the Romford machine was withdrawn at about the same date.

A second experiment, with a single machine, took place at Cambridge between Dec.12, 1947, and Nov.2, 1948. This was a Westinghouse model, producing a label about 57 mm. wide and 38 mm. high, imperforate vertically and finely zig-zag rouletted horizontally. The design has "CAM-BRIDGE" at top in rectangle, "POSTAGE / S D" and "PARCEL POST" in a narrow panel below, then value, date, "1234" with vertical dotted lines between, and "A GREAT BRITAIN A" in panels at the base. All the labels seen have "1234" at the right centre, the significance of which is unknown.

The new "T.I.M." machines now in use produce labels differing slightly from the experimental models. They have "PARCEL POST / PAID" vertically at left and town and date only in the centre. The crown at the top of the right panel and the "D" of the value are smaller.

At least one Westinghouse machine also is in use, at Birmingham. The only difference from the original one is that the inscription reads "POSTAGE PAID" in place of "POSTAGE / S D", and "GREAT BRITAIN" is narrower. Again it has "1234" at the right centre.

#### OTHER COUNTRIES

The IRISH REPUBLIC (EIRE) is now using five "T.I.M." machines, producing labels similar in type to the British experimental models. At the left is a harp in a rectangle; in the centre are town name, date (as 4 MR 50), and "POST NA MBEART"; the panel at right has "POSTAS" at top, value in centre, and "IOCTHA"



at foot. They were introduced at the G.P.O. and College Green Post Offices, Baile atha Cliath (Dublin), on Dec.14, 1949, and at the Head Post Offices at Corcaigh (Cork), Luimneach (Limerick) and Port Lairge (Waterford) on Apr. 17, 1950.

Another "T.I.M." machine was in use experimentally for six months at Trondheim, NORWAY, until May 30, 1950. The labels produced by this machine are of the larger size of the bus tickets, about 38 mm. wide and 74 mm. long, and are interesting in that they were issued double, the left-hand label of each pair having "-PORTO / BETALT" in large letters vertically in the right-hand panel, while the right-hand label has instead "Porto / value, as e.g. 1:80 / betalt". Presumably the right-hand (?) label was given as a receipt. At the left of each label is "PAKKEPOST" vertically between lines, and in the centre is "TRONDHEIM", serial no., "APPARAT : DATO" with large "1" below "APPARAT" and date (as 22NO49) below "DATO". (The specimen seen is not gummed, but it is not known whether this applies to the issued labels. - A.A.D.)

Parcel labels from "N.C.R." machines have been used by the L. & N.E. Railway or British Railways at King's Cross and Liverpool Street stations in London, but these are not strictly postal.

Machines manufactured by Universal Postal Frankers are in use in SOUTHERN RHODESIA and in SINGAPORE; (a description must be held over until the next Bulletin - A.A.D.)

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CATALOGUE SUPPLEMENT

GREAT BRITAIN (contd.)

Type 3 (Pitney-Bowes). The separately-printed slogans may occasionally appear on the front of the envelope.

Type 4. (g) Midget. Add /B44-g/ 4d. (Known on London E.C.2., M 14.)

(h) Neopost. Towmark below frank: add also /B49-h/ 2½d. (London E.C.3., N 10.)

Type 5. (d) Neopost. Add /73-A2/ 2½d.; /81-B1/ 9d.; /84-B2/ 1/3.

(dd) Neopost, tmk at right and frank at left. Insert /92, 93, 94/ 1d., 2d., 2½d. (all var. A1). (For use on wrappers in succession to 89 and 90 - tmk below frank. 1d. occurs on London E.C.3., N 10; 2d. and 2½d. on London E.C.2., N 6. Note that transposed tmk and frank can occur by accident on normal machines, but these are specially fitted in this way.)

(i) Pitney-Bowes "H". Add /B117, A118/ 4d., 5½d. (Both on London E.C.2., H 54.)

Type 10. (a) Neopost F.V. Add /174-A, /175-A/, 2d., 2½d.

(b) Neopost L.V. Add /A182-B, A184-B/, 7d., 1/2.

(d) Pitney-Bowes "H". Add /182-D/ 6d. ( ? narrow or wide "H", not reported.)

((((( The above should have been included in the previous instalment.))))

Type 11. (Value in centre, GviR at foot.) Universal M.V. Id.Nos. run from U1 to U 999, then (1940) UA 1 to UA 999; 1948) UB 1 to UB 999; (1950) UC 1 upwards. There are several different styles and sizes of the letters "U" and nos.

A few machines have capacity up to 99/11½d instead of 29/11½d (identifiable only with

values 30/- and upwards.)

Pitney-Bowes L.V. (Key letter "P".)

- (a) Small die. Add /195-a, 199-a/,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 5d.
- (b) Large die. Add /196-b, 200-b/ 3d.,  $5\frac{1}{2}$ d.
- (c) Large die modified; smaller and more arched crown, POST PAID smaller, etc. Add /192-c, 195-c/ ld.,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. (Nos. P 47 upwards except P 68, also a few lower nos. in replacement of earlier types.) (Note: the small die has POST PAID above the ident. letter and no., whereas the large dies have these words above the value.)

Omit nos. 194-a (2d.), 198-a and 198-b ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.) which are not known.

1940 Provisionals. Pitney-Bowes dies with altered values necessitated by the increase in postal rates from 1st May 1940.

- Type 3. /201/ ld. adapted from  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. (Var.2) (Figures "1" in centre of corner squares, upper semicircle blank - no words of value.)
- /202/ ld. adapted from  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. (Vars. 1<sup>u</sup> and 2.) (Figures "1" to left in each corner square, upper semicircle blank.)
- /203/  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. adapted from ?. (Vars. 1 and 2.) (Upper semicircle blank.)

Type 5-e ("PB" at right, wide setting.)  
/205/ ld adapted from  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. (Space between "1" and small "D".)

- Type 5-g ("PB" at left, wide setting).  
/206/ ld. adapted from  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. (As above.)
- /207/  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. adapted from  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. (Nos. PB 53, PB 60.)
- /A207/  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. adapted from  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. (No die no. and single-circle townmark - READING.)

Type 10-e (GviR, wide setting.)  
/208-e/ ld. from  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. (As above.)

Type 10-f (GviR, narrow setting.)  
/208-f/ ld. from  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. (As above.)

Type 10 (Royal Cipher GviR). Neopost L.V. Design redrawn; frank wider, crown flatter at top, "G R" broader, figures of value altered and thinner. /172, 174, 175, 176, 178, 182, A182, C182, 184, A184, 185, 187 - each followed

by "H"/ 1d., 2d., 2½d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 6½d.,  
8d., 1/-, 1/2, 1/3, 5/-.  
(Values of 2/-, 2/6, 4/-, 10/- and £1 have been  
reported but it is not yet known whether they  
are in the redrawn or the old type.)

At least one machine exists with the old type  
of figures in the new frame, and several with  
the new type of figures in the old frame, but  
information is at present insufficient for  
formal listing.)

#### PARCEL POST STAMPS

Used at post-office counters, and printed on  
gummed labels.

(((( Four types, see article on pages 34-37. A  
formal list will be given in the next  
Bulletin.))))

#### OFFICIAL STAMPS

Post Office Savings Bank Dept. Pitney-  
Bowers double-circle tank as in type 3, with or  
without slogan at left but no separate frank.

/SB.1/	Inscribed	LONDON W.14	PAID A <sup>D</sup>
/SB.2/	"	LONDON W.14	PAID B <sup>D</sup>
/SB.3/	"	HARROGATE YORKS	PAID S <sup>B</sup>