

THE  
METER STAMP

BULLETIN

Journal of the  
Meter Stamp Study Group

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES

The membership continues slowly to grow, and we have to welcome new members in Australia, Hong Kong, and Argentina.

Members will receive with this Bulletin a cover, kindly supplied by Mr. F. Lloyd Parton, bearing an impression of the Pitney Bowes meter PB 152 (G vi R), 1d. value.

Local Collections: in addition to the towns listed in the last Bulletin, Birmingham and Wolverhampton machines are being collected by Mr. F. Lloyd Parton, 18 Richmond Road, Wolverhampton, Staffs.

WANTS AND OFFERS

Mr. D. R. Burchell, Eastfield House, Portobello, Scotland, wants G.B. "Wembley Lion" types; early Universal with single-circle townmark of Ellesmere Port; Midget with townmark error "Inchamin" for "Inchinman."

Mr. J. T. Dallimore, Corio, Vic., Australia, and Mr. K. C. Neville, 48 Melbourne Road, Norlane, Vic., Australia, are both willing to exchange (mainly cut strips) with anyone.

HOW TO FORM A COLLECTION (contd.)

The notes in the last Bulletin dealing with what items to include in the collection, and in what sequence to arrange them, have evoked no comments. On the third part, how to store the items, now to be discussed, only one member has written.

There arises here first of all the question of entires versus cut strips. A collection consisting of entires is liable not merely to be excessively bulky but also somewhat unwieldy owing to the inevitable variation in size of the envelopes: some impressions may be almost impossible to acquire except on very large envelopes, while parcel wrappers can hardly be kept entire! In the case of "window" envelopes, there seems little point in keeping the entire. If trimming pieces or covers to strips, however, it is very important that they should be cut neatly and of adequate size. Cutting with a razor blade against a steel straight-edge or with a photographic print-trimmer gives much better results than scissors. In the case of G.B. and impressions of similar size the strips should not be less than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches (or 4 cm.) wide and 6 in. (or 15 cm.) long if possible; 2 in. (5 cm.) would be better but window envelopes do not usually allow this. The full 6 in. should be kept even if there is no slogan, not merely for uniformity but also to prove the absence of a slogan. Also, the full strip often shows the imprinted name and address of the user, which should in any case be preserved. Of course "sub-standard" pieces should not be rejected unless of very common items, because the information they can convey is no less valid - it is merely a question of neatness. Many foreign items have much larger impressions than those of G.B., so that wider strips are there essential.

However, it is often strongly advisable to preserve the entire cover. It may provide definite evidence of actual postal use instead of a proof impression; or it may bear interesting postal markings. In the case of early G.B. Pitney-Bowes meters, the slogan was impressed separately at the foot or on the back of the envelope so that, to show it, the whole must be kept. International use, especially of impressions in colours other than red contrary to U.P.U. regulations, may be interesting.

From a collector's point of view, a great disadvantage of meter stamps as compared with ordinary adhesives, and one which causes difficulty in mounting, is the large size. An album leaf which would take two or three dozen normal adhesives would take no more than half a dozen meter strips or even fewer entires. Mounting a large collection in albums therefore seems out of the question. Mr.H.J.Howard writes that he keeps his collection in folders, with the contents detailed on the outside. An alternative system is to keep them in the manner of a card index in boxes or drawers, with index cards enabling one to keep them separated by types etc. Nevertheless, for display purposes mounting is essential, but only a few selected items should be included. Strips can be mounted with two large-sized stamp hinges and entires with properly-made corner mounts. Owing to the thickness of the pieces, thick paper or card leaves are advisable.

The foregoing do not pretend to be more than casual notes on a wide subject, and might be greatly expanded; but it seems preferable, as already suggested, to leave details to the collector's own tastes. Comments and criticisms will be welcome.

MULTI-VALUE AND OMNI-DENOMINATIONAL

In this country, franking machines are classified, according to the method of providing for different denominations of postage, into three classes: Fixed-value (F.V.), Limited-value (L.V.) and Multi-value (M.V.). In the United States, machines are likewise classified into three classes: Single denomination (S.D.), Multi-denomination (M.D.) and Omni-denomination (O.D.). But the classes do not fully correspond.

The O.D., like the M.V., machine prints any desired denomination which is a multiple of the basic unit ( $\frac{1}{2}$ d.,  $\frac{1}{2}$ p. or 1p. in most cases) up to a certain maximum, each separate digit printing from a separate type unit (though 10 and 11 each form a single unit in British-currency machines.) The S.D. machine must be F.V., but F.V. machines are not always S.D.; likewise, M.D. and L.V. machines are not the same thing. A M.D. machine is one which can print a limited number of denominations, commonly five or six though the British "Simplex" can print up to 25 and the American Pitney-Bowes "DM" 21. If only the value figures are printed from separate type with a frame die common to them all, the machine is classified as L.V., but if each denomination (as in the Midget and earlier Neopost) is printed from a completely separate die then it is F.V.

The M.V. (and O.D.) machines are further described according to the number of digits in the maximum value possible. However, there are certain peculiarities to be mentioned. When an optional " $\frac{1}{2}$ " is provided, this is indicated as a " $\frac{1}{2}$  figure" so that a machine printing by  $\frac{1}{2}$ p. units up to ₹9.99 $\frac{1}{2}$  is described as a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  figure machine though there are of course actually four digit wheels. The Universal machines used in India record in annas and pies, though it is probable that only 3, 6 and 9 pies can be shown, i.e.  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  anna (besides of course "-"); whether a machine printing up to 99a.9p. should

be described as a "2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" or a "2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" figure machine has not yet been settled.

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A further complication has arisen from the drastic depreciation of some currencies, notably the Chinese dollar and the French franc. If all postal rates become a round multiple of \$ 10 or \$ 100 or 100 centimes (1. franc), it is unnecessary to provide movable digits for the last one or two figures, and sometimes one or two fixed zeros have been included on the frame dies. Thus a machine printing up to 999.00 francs with the last two zeros fixed is in reality a 3-figure machine, not a 5-figure as it would be if the zeros were changeable. This might be described as a "3 + 00" figure machine. A difficulty is that it is not always easy to decide whether the zeros are fixed on the frame die or are ordinary movable figures.

#### METERED POSTAL STATIONERY.

When the postcard rate in the United States was increased from 1¢ to 2¢ at the beginning of this year, the Post Office Department overprinted its large stock of cards bearing the impressed 1¢ stamps "Revalued 2c P.O. Dept." by means of a Pitney-Bowes "Tickometer," - a machine primarily intended for counting tickets etc. - but smaller post offices were instructed to affix 1¢ adhesives to their stock. However to save themselves labour, several post offices passed their cards through an ordinary Pitney-Bowes postage meter, impressing them with an extra 1¢ paid. Several offices in various States have been reported. At first the meters were used showing the town and date but subsequently these were omitted, leaving a blank circle. Private mailers also were allowed to use a meter in the same way, provided that town and date were shown.

This is however by no means the only time that a similar expedient has been adopted. Harris's catalogue lists under Netherlands Indies, 1937, a postcard with an impressed 5-cent stamp surcharged by means of a Hasler meter with the reduced value

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of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents in figures and words; but this differs from the U.S. case both in that the metered impression shows the new value instead of the difference and also it does not resemble any meter stamp design. (This suggests that it is not strictly correct to include it in a meter-stamp catalogue.)

Even in Great Britain, the same thing has been done, though not by the post office. When the printed-paper rate was increased from  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1d. in May 1940, some firms possessing stocks of envelopes bearing embossed  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamps passed them through meters to show the additional  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. paid. Probably the same will have been done in June 1951 when the rate was further increased to  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., though none have been seen by the writer.

Meter-stamp impressions also have been used instead of printed stamps or adhesives on air letter forms. During the War, air letter sheets of Kenya & Uganda were franked by a Neopost (N 4) 25c. Recent and current sheets of Spain are franked by meters of the usual current Spanish "Hasler" type without townmark or identification no. but with a panel inscribed "VENTA DE SELLOS" below the frank. On 1st January of this year, the varying rates of postage on these were replaced by a uniform rate of 4 pts. and to use up the earlier sheets, an additional meter impression was applied, usually upside down at bottom left. To begin with, the 2.50 pts. sheets were provided with a 1.50 pts. impression, and subsequently the sheets of 0.60, 0.90, 1.00, 1.30, 1.55, 1.65, 1.90, 2.15 and 2.75 pts. were to be provided with an additional impression to make up the total of 4.00 pts. As there are a number of varieties of the basic sheets and the meter impressions may be found in various positions, a large number of varieties is possible. Whether there are any varieties of the meter-stamp impressions in themselves is not known. More recently the same practice has been reported

from Iceland, but whether it is official or not remains to be established.

#### G.B. IDENTIFICATION NO. SYSTEMS

It is well known that the system of numbering the dies on Universal N.Z., Midget and Neopost machines differs from that on all other series in this country in that the nos. are allotted independently (normally beginning at "1") in each town. (To avoid repetition, it should be mentioned that for this purpose each of the 118 postal districts in London is considered as a separate town.) It is probably not so well known that there is an important difference between the system used for Universal N.Z. and Midget on the one hand and for Neopost on the other. Incidentally, both Universal N.Z. and Midget machines are now obsolete though a few of the former and many of the latter remain in use, and the Simplex machines which have superseded them have gone over to the system used for all other series.

For Midget, the no. on the die is regarded somewhat like a machine no., and if a machine is transferred from one town to another and the no. has not already been used in the "new" town, it is often not changed. But for Neopost, the no. is regarded as a permit no., and when a machine is transferred to another town the no. has to be changed (unless of course by a coincidence it is the same as the next available no. in the "new" town.) This explains why abnormally high nos., much higher than the likely number of machines in use in that town, are occasionally found on Midget dies but practically never on Neopost.

A further consequence of these differing systems is that when a Midget user has two or more machines at one office, the dies on the second and third have the letters "A" and "B" prefixed to the no., thus providing effectively different nos. for each machine. But a Neopost user has the same no. on the dies of all his machines, so that there are many cases of two or more machines having the same

dic no. and town name in use simultaneously. (The impressions are often distinguishable by small details of the size and position of the no. and by the townmark.)

But in this as in most features of meter stamps, there are exceptions to every rule. In the early days, Midget (and Universal N.Z.) nos. were sometimes apparently allocated to machines in small towns not independently but in the series of an adjacent larger town, e.g. Bootle, Liverpool, M 65 from the Liverpool series.

Other anomalies, such as a Midget user having two machines with different nos. and some abnormally high Neopost nos., remain unexplained. The abnormally high Neopost nos. in London W.5. are due to the inadvertent inscribing of "118" instead of "18" on the dies of the machine after 17, with 119 etc. then following, so that nos. 18 to 117 do not exist in this district.

#### "SIMPLEX" MACHINES.

In Great Britain, nos. have now reached S 999 and, in the same way as the Universal MV. of the same makers, have started again with SA 1. Some of the intervening nos. may however not yet be in use owing to the allocation of the nos. in batches to the firm's district agents.

In Australia, these machines print values up to 1/- instead of only  $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. as here.

The design of the frank used in the Irish Republic is rather more elaborate and attractive than other Irish types. "EIRE" is in a rectangular panel at top and the value in a large circle; "S" is in a square at bottom left, the no. similarly at right, with "POSTAGE" between. There is a vertically-lined frame at each side and the whole as usual is surrounded by "perforations."



GREAT BRITAIN: UNIVERSAL M.V.Check List - contd.

A few further "missing" nos. have now been reported, thanks to Messrs Hammond, Jennings, Rydings, and Stelfox :-

U 841 (Junior); UB 202 (Ord.), UB 462 (Ord.),  
UB 596 (Int.), UB 798 (?).

There are still too many missing nos. to make it worth the space to publish a list for the UC series. The UD series is now almost completed, and UE should soon be looked for.

CHANNEL ISLANDS: ADDENDA & CORRIGENDA

Mr. O. J. Simpson reports that he has the 1d. value of Jersey N.8 used by itself, with date 24 XII 40, and the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. value used with a pair of the 1d. Jersey "Arms" type adhesive (the meter towmark being off the left of the cover.) He also has the Jersey St. Helier M 1, 1d. value used on 3 VI 42. These are all additions to the items recorded on page 7 of the March 1952 Bulletin. The "M 1" and "N 8"  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. franks mentioned there all have "GviR" cipher.

The date of the closing of the British Post Office on the island of Herm, given on page 17 of the last Bulletin as 1838, should have read 1938.

SOUTH AFRICAN NOTES

A new locally-made machine, designated the "Mercury," is being introduced. A proof shown us by Mr. R. Axer resembles the design of the Universal M.V. but slightly smaller and with key-letter "X"; It has no towmark, and it is understood prints only a single value (2d.)

The Francotyp machine has been reintroduced, now with a frank similar to the original Neopost (value in centre) and key-letters "FR".

UNITED NATIONS: NEW SLOGANS

A new slogan has been seen used with meter PB -2-, reading in five lines: UNITED NATIONS / EXHIBITION / NATIONAL PHILATELIC MUSEUM / PHILADELPHIA / MAY 22nd through JUNE 28th. The first two lines are enclosed in a rectangular box, and likewise the last line. It was probably in use for only a short time, though the Exhibition was extended to August 1st.

Another new slogan reported in the "Philatelic Magazine" has the U.N. emblem with "UNITED / NATIONS / FOR A / FREE WORLD" in four lines at right.

U.N.E.S.C.O. SLOGANS.

(by H.A. Rydings)

Following on the recent information regarding meters used by the United Nations in the U.S.A., a few notes on French machines used by "UNESCO" may be of interest.

The nos. so far noticed are;- G 1252, G 4467, G W83 and SC 1345. All of these have a rectangular frank with denticulated border, to the left of which appears the slogan under which appears the information normally given in the townmark, in one line in the form "18 x 50 =PARIS-75=" (all the machines have "Paris 75").

With machines	}	{	Propagez et defendez
G 1252 and G W83			LES DROITS DE L'HOMME!
the slogan reads	}	{	Propagate and defend
as follows:			HUMAN RIGHTS!
			U N E S C O

The other two	}	{	PAIX PAR EDUCATION
machines have			SCIENCE
the slogan:	}	{	PEACE THROUGH CULTURE
			U N E S C O

At some date between 19 111 51 and 22 1V 52, the frank on G 1252 was changed from the type having "POSTES FRANCAISES" at the top and a "flying envelope" between the value and the no. to the type having "REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE" at the top and "POSTES" in place of the "flying envelope."

UNITED STATES: POSTAGE DUE METERS

Meter machines of the Pitney-Bowes "Model R" are being used at certain post offices experimentally to indicate postage due, and examples have kindly been submitted by Mr. Walter M. Swan.

The meter-stamp itself is of the usual "stream lined eagle" type now designated HAA, the town circle containing the letters "P O" at left and right of the date like other machines used in post offices, and the special usage is shown by a slogan at left. At New York in 1948 and San Francisco in 1949-52, this read "POSTAGE DUE / PAID" horizontally in a large box with arrow-head at right; Chicago in 1951-52 used a similar type with smaller lettering and differently-shaped box. These were replaced early in 1952 by a much smaller box containing "POSTAGE DUE" only vertically. At Washington, the box is slightly smaller (10 x 17 instead of 10 x 20 mm.) and the print is orange instead of red as usual elsewhere though New York also uses violet.

Mr. Swan says that the first test occurred in Feb. 1941 at Brooklyn, N.Y., the slogan then used reading "COLLECT / POSTAGE DUE".

A U. S. METER CATALOGUE.

The old-established Chicago dealer, Joseph Whiteborough, who became interested in meter stamps - which he calls "philometers" - some six years ago and is now Treasurer of the Philometer Society of Chicago, has spent over 12,000 hours in research for and compilation of what he has named the "JW Philometer Compendium" soon to be published.

This volume of approximately 336 pages (9 x 6") with over 550 illustrations, lists and prices

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3,650 different "philometers" of the U.S.A. and possessions in twenty main categories, with an additional 5,000 denominations within the main classifications.

Mr. Whitebourn has generously given all his time and labour, and advance orders (up to 1st August) were charged at cost price of £ 7. Subsequently, up to publication date, 15th Sept., the price was advanced to £ 8 and afterwards to £ 10, as there could be no reprint. These prices will unfortunately be far too high for most collectors here (if indeed the exchange control would sanction the remittance), and perhaps also for many in the U.S.A., but of course the cost of printing such a work is very heavy.

#### OUR AMERICAN CONFRERES.

Since the notes in our last Bulletin, we have received the "Monthly Bulletins" of the Meter Stamp Society up to No.41 (dated simply "1952") and "The Philometrist" Nos.38 to 40, dated April to June 1952 (in a single issue.) No.37 of the former contains an account by Walter M. Swan of the first meter machine tried in the U.S.A., in 1903-04, and Nos.39 and 40 contain a classification by Werner Simon of the Canadian types on the same system as the recent U.S.A. booklet. There are many other interesting notes, mainly on the U.S.A. "The Philometrist" contains an account of the "Philometer Compendium" referred to above.

We also continue to receive "The Sentinel" containing the American Metered Postage Society's regular section, which is illustrating in actual size representative types of various countries with brief notes. The Society has now more than one hundred members.