

THE
METER STAMP
BULLETIN

Journal of the
Meter Stamp Study Group

No. 17

(Vol. II No. 8)

Dec. 1953

Editor and Hon. Secretary:-

A.A. Dewey, M.A., B.Sc. (Econ.),

46, Chester Drive, North Harrow, Middx.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The Barfoot-Simon Catalogue. This long-awaited work appeared in October, and it is hoped that all members will obtain a copy, for it is really indispensable to all serious collectors. Consisting of 132 closely but clearly printed pages with very detailed and fully illustrated lists of the meter-stamp types of all countries, it also includes photographs of the principal machines and an introduction giving the history of meter franking, hints for collectors and much other information. The price is 21/- post free from Mr. S.D. Barfoot, 37, Forestdale, Southgate, London, N.14, or (in America) \$ 3 from Mr. Werner Simon, 345 Lundee Place, Memphis 11, Tennessee.

Introduction to Meter Stamps. Articles by our member Mr. F. Lloyd Parton, designed to interest more collectors in the subject of meter stamps, were published in the "Stamp Collectors" Fortnightly" at the beginning of September, and in the "Stamp Magazine" of November. They evoked quite a lot of enquiries, but no new members as yet.

Exchanging. So few members have shown any interest, in spite of the reminder in the last Bulletin, in the proposed lists of members with details of what they collect and have to offer, that it does not seem worth the cost of reproducing the lists at present. However, Mr. Jason T.W. Mann, 63, Dulverton Road, New Eltham, London, S.E.9, has asked me to say that, with the ending of the Import-Export Controls, he can extend his kind offer to send occasional packets of miscellaneous current (mainly G.B.) meters to members abroad, against cost of postage only. Mr. Donald Castle (Cooper St., Greytown, Natal, South Africa) though not himself a meter collector has also very kindly offered to send occasional lots of South African meters to any members, in return for postage and any "spare" stamps available. (Please advise him whether strips or entires are desired).

Bulletin Format. The general format and page-size of the Bulletin have been maintained unchanged since the first issue in January 1950, when they were chosen partly because of neatness and convenience for handling and partly also to match the "Harris" Meter Stamp Catalogue to which it was proposed to publish regular supplements.

Experience has shown however that they give rise to some difficulty, and so to added cost, in duplicating and making-up; the new Barfoot-Simon Catalogue moreover is of larger format, so that less justification remains for the present size.

Unless members raise strong objections, therefore, it is intended to increase the page-size to full quarto (double the present size) beginning with the next issue. The size of type will be unchanged, so that the amount of matter will remain about the same

G.B. NOTES

"E II R" Dies. The "PB" and "NZ" dies have now appeared with the new Cipher, but apparently no definite "First Days" were provided. PB 14 and PB 168, both $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. values (the latter replacing the PB 186" error noted below) have been reported, and all three of the remaining "NZ" machines, London, E.C.4, NZ 13, NZ 16 and NZ 17 (all used by "The Times" Publishing Department) have been changed.

- @ - @ - @ - @ - @ -

Pitney-Bowes. The L.V. series with the GviR Cipher ran to P 100, not to P 99, before starting with the new Cipher and PA prefix. Mr. Barfoot adds that the F.V. die with no. PB 186, stated in the last Bulletin to be the highest no. reached in this series, is actually an error for PB 168, occurring on the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. die when it replaced the 1d. The highest "correct" no. so far is PB 169.

- @ - @ - @ - @ - @ -

New Simplex Model. The G.P.O. decided that the dies of the larger "Major" machines ($\frac{1}{2}$ d. to $1/0\frac{1}{2}$) are to have prefix "SX" to distinguish them from the original model ($\frac{1}{2}$ d to $6\frac{1}{2}$ d.) It is not clear why this should be considered necessary when no distinction has been made between the various models of the Universal multi-value. First day of use of the "SX" was 25 VIII 53.

G.B. : NEOPOST GviR TYPES

Thanks to Messrs. Barfoot, Howard, Jennings, Morgan, Pieterse and de Wailly, a number of additions have been submitted or reported to the table published in the last Bulletin.

With regard to the type "a" figures, it should have been stated that the fraction-bar of " $\frac{1}{2}$ " is horizontal only in the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. and $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.; in the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. itself, the bar is slanting but shorter and more horizontal than in type "b" and "c".

Several types of figures occur in the FV die but are not readily described.

A "x" should be inserted in the following columns of the table against the values shown:

FV: Ia - 2d. (instead of ?)

Ib - (new column) - $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

LV: Ia - 4d., $5\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Ib - $4\frac{1}{2}$ d., 5d., $5\frac{1}{2}$ d., 11d., 1/2, 1/3, 2/-,
and two unlisted values, 1/1, 3/-.

Ic - 8d., 9d.

IIa - $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 4d., 6d.

IIb - $5\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1/2

IIc - $3\frac{1}{2}$ d., $4\frac{1}{2}$ d., $6\frac{1}{2}$ d., 11d., 2/-, 2/6.

IIIa - $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.

IIIb - $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 3d., 7d., 1/-, 2/6.

IIIc - $3\frac{1}{2}$ d., 5d., $5\frac{1}{2}$ d., 6d., 8d., 1/6, 2/6,
and an unlisted value, $9\frac{1}{2}$ d.

The values 4/-, 10/- and £1, though known to be used, have not yet been seen or reported.

G.B. : DATE ODDITIES

Further to the note in the June Bulletin (page 64) referring to the Neopost machine London E.C.2, N 269, with date showing month in Arabic figures instead of the normal Roman, Mr. Henry J. Howard has reported dates running from 10 4 45 to 10 10 49 (for the 1d. value) and 24 7 45 though 11 VIII 49, for the $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. As this last is earlier than an Arabic figure date, the user must have had two machines in use. The Editor has a copy dated 2 5 42 and Mr. Barfoot has dates in 5 47 and 8 47, so that (assuming the years to have been set correctly) the variety must have been in use for more than seven years. No other Neopost machine has been reported with this peculiarity.

For the Universal multi-value U 41 with the same peculiarity, no member has reported any other date than that given in June (17 5 44), nor any other machine of this series.

Both the Neopost and the Universal MV referred to have the "Gvir" cipher.

It was incidentally incorrect to say that, apart from these oddities, all machines except the "PB", "P" and "High-Speed" series have the month in Roman figures. As Mr. D.R. Burchell has pointed out, the first Universal N.Z. (1922) and the pre-standard Midget (1924) both show month in letters, having one-line dates in the form "18 OCT 22". There was one machine only of each type.

G.B. : TWO CURIOUS SLOGANS

Slogans used with British franking machines show very great diversity, ranging from simple name or address of the user to lengthy (and, alas, often illegible) inscriptions or quite elaborate pictures, but they do not usually call for mention here. Exception might however be made for the two described below.

The first, shown us by Mr. Barfoot, is remarkable in having a manuscript alteration in black ink, evidently by the user of the machine. Originally reading "W.H.WILKIE'S MAMMOTH CIRCUS SEASON 1952", the "2" has been altered to "3"; it was used in August 1953 on the machine Wallasey Cheshire, M.l.

The other, noticed by the Editor, used with Leeds N 248, includes the machine identification no. in its design; this consist of the words "IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO / NORTH EASTERN GAS BOARD / HEAD OFFICE / BRIDGE STREET.LEEDS 2" in a double-lined rectangular frame, and in a break at the right of the base of the frame is inset "N.248" in small type. It is difficult to see what purpose is served by this. It was in use in 1951 and may still be current.

Have any members seen any similar cases?

AUSTRALIA: MULTI-VALUE MACHINES

The "Flag" type described in the article in the last bulletin has, in the more recent dies, the flag appreciably smaller.

AUSTRALIAN ERRORS

Two curiosities of die-engraving have been shown us by Mr. K.C. Neville (W. Geelong, Vic.) Neopost old type (value in circle) no. 784 has the no., in colourless letters on a solid oval tablet, scarcely legible and it appears from examination under a glass that the engraver had first engraved "748" and then superimposed "84" on the "48". This is confirmed by the fact that Mr. Neville, with Mr. Dallimore, possesses all other dies in the "700 to 799" group. The town is Brunswick, Victoria.

The second, also a Neopost but in the more recent "Kangaroo & Map" design, no. N - M20, has the "Z" of the town-name "FITZROY - VIC.", reversed (almost like "S"); the "V" and "Y" also have the thicker strokes on the right instead of on the left, while the right-hand star is lower than the left-hand one.

KENYA-UGANDA-TANGANYIKA: UNIV. M.V.

A fifth type has to be added to the four given in the last Bulletin (page 82), and Mr. Barfoot gives the full list of Nos. issued in each type, as follows:-

<u>Frame</u>	<u>Figs. of Value</u>	<u>Nos. Issued</u>
Narrow	Star & 2 angular	U 18 only
"	Star & 2 oval	U 19 to 22
Wide	Star & 1 large & 2 small, angular	U 23 to 28
"	1 large & 2 small, oval	U 29 to 36, 39, 40, etc.
"	Star & 1 large & 2 small, oval	U 37, 38, 41 to 51, 75, &c

COMMONWEALTH "E II R" DESIGNS

The only meter stamps besides those of Great Britain which show the Royal Cipher are the Neopost types of Fiji, Jamaica and Southern Rhodesia, and the Midget of Fiji. Jamaica issued its New Reign type early this year, before G.B.; it is a wholly new design, showing the

Cipher with crown above flanked by palm trees. No new type has yet been seen from Fiji or from Southern Rhodesia, which possibly will not appear until the introduction, next year, of a unified series of stamps for the new Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

LIECHTENSTEIN'S FIRST ISSUE

The story behind the very rare first meter stamps of Liechtenstein was told by Ruprecht Glasewald in the "Deutsche Zeitung fur Briefmarkenkunde" not long ago.

To help overcome the financial difficulties after the inflation of 1923, the German Finance Minister proposed a tax on lotteries; to escape this, one of the lottery-companies moved its office to Liechtenstein. Wanting to send out some hundreds of thousands of circulars from there, the company found that the tiny Principality was unable to provide so many stamps - which were designed more for collectors than for business ! It therefore obtained a postage meter from Berne (the Liechtenstein postal services being administered by Switzerland), and was allotted a frank no. 386 in the Swiss series, in the oval F.V. type like Switzerland but with the name at the top changed to LIECHTENSTEIN.

The firm however went bankrupt, and through some hundreds of thousands of pieces of mail were despatched, all but a very small proportion were destroyed as "they had no stamps on them". Before the war, the remaining copies known could be counted on the fingers; with the destruction of Glasewald's and other collections in the war, it is said that the fingers of one hand would probably now be sufficient!

Only the values 10 rp. and 30 rp. are known from the above-mentioned machine, but there has also been used another machine with the same type of frank, no. 176, which exists in values 5, 10, 15, 20, 40, 65 and 90 rp. and 1 fr., and

has been reported with the strange and unexplained slogan reading "Where there's a will there's a way" in English in an upright rectangular frame.

A multi-value machine with frank in the rectangular design (Crosses and Posthorns) of Switzerland, no.4124, is also catalogued; like the others, examples are rare.

THE METERS OF CHINA

by Henry G. Morgan

From time to time meters from China have been reported in this Bulletin, and the present writer hopes to complete a study of the various machines. This note is no more than a brief survey of the history and present state of meter franking in China.

Essays were prepared of a Midget die in 1928, and of a Neopost LV in 1931, both being rejected. In 1936, a Universal multi-value ($2\frac{1}{2}$ f. of v.) was sent to China (illustrated in the 2nd edition of Harris's Catalogue) and was actually used. In 1947, this machine was rebuilt to 4 f. of v., returned to China and put into use. Subsequently 36 more Universal and one "Teltax" telegram machine, all 4 f. of v., were sent out, though it is doubtful if all have been used.

At least three Pitney-Bowes Model R ("streamlined" design) machines (3 f. of v.) are also in use, and there are three other machines of unknown make, probably local or Russian. It has been said that some Hasler machines were sent to China, but none have yet been reported in use. All machines at present are Post-Office machines, used for franking public mail.

The original dies of the Pitney-Bowes and Universal machines had the machine nos. in Western characters and the figures of value prefixed by a ¥ sign. Most of these dies were altered before use to a more or less standard

form in which the ¥ sign was replaced by a star and the machine no. expressed by two Chinese characters, the first being a one-character abbreviation of the name of the City and the second, in parentheses, a Chinese numeral referring to the number of the machine, regardless of make, within each City. The designation of the unit of value follows after the fourth f. of v. and is a combination of zeros and Chinese characters. During the course of the inflation, the value designations ranged from "li", a tenth of a cent, to "wan", ten thousand (dollars), and the dies on each machine were changed several times to keep up with current postal rates.

When the Communists took over control, the inscriptions on the dies were altered on many machines. The original dies had the "Republic of China Postal Service" inscription, in four characters of which the first (right-hand) is a horizontal rectangle with a vertical stroke running through it. Some Shanghai machines were altered to the interim "East China Postal Service" still expressed in four characters, the first now being a complicated "criss-cross" character. In some places, the Communists continued to use the Republican dies with the value expressed in Communist currency. The final stage has the "Chinese Peoples' Republic Postal Service", in six characters, the goose being removed from the upper right hand corner of the Universal dies to make room, and four characters instead of two being squeezed into the upper right corner of the Pitney-Bowes dies.

The impressions were usually struck direct on the cover, but some were also used as adhesives. The P-B used at first their standard "Metered Mail" tape with pink underprint and zig-zag roulette all round, and later a plain white tape of rather poor quality paper, separated by zig-zag roulette at the ends only. These tapes were used only for convenience in franking bulky packets. The Universals were at first struck on

plain gummed paper, either cut out or perforated. Later, a safety paper, probably locally produced, was used with an underprint in white (sic), pinkish buff or pale green, of zigzag lines and ovals containing the "Chinese Postal Service" inscription.

Some of these adhesives, both on plain and on safety paper, were sold over the counter. They can usually be recognized by the values being in "round numbers" and the date often omitted, or the day and year figures printed only as square blocks. They may be found used in combination with ordinary adhesive stamps, and sometimes they are used at an office different from that at which they were sold; Canton adhesives have been seen with postmarks of Naam Hoi and King Shan. One of the adhesives may well be unique in meter history, in that it has been surcharged! The impressions, used at Changsha, were struck on safety paper and bore the value designation in dollars, but an additional handstamp corrected this by means of two characters meaning "silver cents".

A check list of the major types will be given in the next Bulletin.

OUR AMERICAN CONFRERES

Our "opposite number" in the U.S.A., the American Metered Postage Society, has made remarkable progress since it was re-established in January 1952; its Secretary, Mr. Henry O. Meisel, (of Clintonville, Wisconsin) mentioned in September that they had reached a membership of 367 - over twice as many as our Group in proportion to population! We are sorry that Mr. Meisel has suffered poor health lately, and wish him a good recovery.

Recent numbers of their Bulletin (issued at frequent intervals) have included photographs and details of a number of early American Machines (these being additional to those shown in

the Barfoot-Simon Catalogue.) They can be lent to members on request, against postage (2½d.)

Incidentally, Mr. Meisel has himself a franking machine for his Society's correspondence.

UNITED STATES: POSTAGE DUE METERS

In Sept. 1952 we gave some notes on the use of meters at U.S. Post Offices for indicating Postage Due. Mr. Walter M. Swan (who gave the information) has now produced a full report on the tests of 1941-1953, with illustrations and detailed check list, in "The Postage Stamp" published at Bethany, Miss. This can be lent to members interested (postage 2½d.).

P R I C I N G

As there are no dealers in this country interested in the regular buying and selling of meter stamps, nor any other form of market in them, there can be no established standard prices, whether for individual rare items or for common material in bulk. The late A.H. Harris in his Catalogue first published in 1935 gave prices for each type, ranging from 1d. (which he took as a minimum because, he said, he considered nobody could afford to sort, select and supply single stamps for less) up to 60/-, though many rarer items remained unpriced. These prices however, were admittedly no more than Harris's idea of what collectors ought to pay for single specimens, and without the backing of actual stocks for sale could only be regarded as tentative. Although a number of the prices were revised in the subsequent editions of the Catalogue (the maximum went up to £5 for a New Zealand item of 1922), the basis remained the same. In these conditions, it would most likely have been totally impossible to obtain the N.Z. item (for example) by offering to pay £5 for it, yet if a copy were located, the owner might willingly part with it for 5/- !

This absence of that "commercialism" in buying and selling meter stamps which is now so universally prevalent in connexion with ordinary stamps is probably to many collectors one of the attractions and advantages of meter stamps. But it has sometimes considerable disadvantages, as for instance when a non-collector wishes to sell a lot, or a collector to dispose of duplicates or part of his collection. How can one settle on a price fair to both parties?

With a view to establishing a framework of accepted prices, it would be helpful if all members of this Group would advise the editor of what they would consider a fair price to pay for the following G.B. items (or as many of them as possible). All are assumed to be good collectible examples; clean and clear impressions. In the case of (2) to (5), it is also assumed that all are of ordinary low values without any specially scarce varieties.

- (1) Entire bearing the 1912 "Wilkinson" frank;
- (2) Midget 1926 square type frank (B-S cat. type A4) - per ten strips all different;
- (3) Neopost 1927 "GvR" frank (B-S Cat. type B3) - per ten strips all different;
- (4) Universal multi-value "GviR" frank (B-S Cat. type D5) - per ten strips all diff't;
- (5) Pitney-Bowes LV "P" frank (B-S Cat. type D6) - per ten strips all different;
- (6) Current mixed material, with a small proportion of duplicates - per hundred.

It will be appreciated if all members (both in Great Britain and overseas) will reply - a postcard will do - no matter how inexperienced they feel themselves to be; the more opinions obtained, the better will be the average result. It should be needless to say that no one will be obliged to buy or to sell at the prices they suggest.