

THE
METER STAMP
BULLETIN

Journal of the
Meter Stamp Study Group

No. 19

(Vol. III No. 2)

June 1954

Editor and Hon. Secretary:-
A. A. Dewey, M.A., B.Sc.(Econ.),
46 Chester Drive, North Harrow, Middx.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Although the majority of members in this country and overseas (including quite a good number of new members) have now paid their subscriptions for the current year, there are still some who have overlooked renewal. If you are one of these, please may I have your subscription (still 7s.6d. or \$1) soon? Otherwise, no further issues of the Bulletin can be sent. (It might be mentioned here that stocks of all previous issues except that of December 1953 are entirely exhausted.)

We welcome members in two more countries, - Mr R. Perombelon of Mauritius, and Mr E. Muhr, of Brazil, - as well as several more in Great Britain and the United States.

I have to apologise to a number of members for delay in thanking them for their letters; pressure on my time during the past few months has made it impossible to keep up with correspondence other than acknowledgment of subscriptions etc.

EXCHANGE ARRANGEMENTS

New members often express surprise and disappointment that the Group does not do more to promote exchanging between members. The Hon. Secretary - Treasurer - Editor finds it impossible to take on any more; would some other member be willing to fill the position of Exchange Sec. and introduce some scheme? The high parcel post rates would probably preclude a regular exchange packet, but there may be other ideas. Offers of help will be greatly appreciated. In the meantime, following a suggestion received, a card is enclosed with this Bulletin for members to record their interests, wants, etc. in a uniform style; will every member please complete and return this?

G.B. NEOPOST NOTES

Two more additions to the table of frame- and value-types in the "GviR" dies as given in the Sept. 1953 Bulletin have come to light, both being denominations not hitherto seen. They are 4/-, frame I figures c (London W.1., N 50+ - last figure of No. is indistinct) and 10/-, frame II figs. c (London E.C.2., N 295), and have been submitted by Mr R. Axer (Capetown) and Dr J. Fick (Swaziland) respectively. The only values known to exist but not yet seen are now the 12/6 and £1.

The new type of townmark with narrow, spaced lettering appears to be fairly widespread, and includes another error of omitted county like the Ipswich N 26 already mentioned, - Warrington N 6.

No further examples of the different frame-type of the "EiiR" die noted as occurring in N 62 of London W.C.1. have been reported.

Several additional values have been found or reported in the "EiiR" dies, viz: 7d, 8d, 11d, 1/3 and 1/6.

Both the second and third type of value figures found with "GviR" dies have been noted with "EiiR" dies, and a new type also has been found,

in values 1/- (Dereham - Norfolk, N 3) and 1/3 (Rochester & Chatham - Kent, N 35), having distinctive "1" and tapering stroke "/", while in the 1/3 the 3 is as large as the 1. This last value, which incidentally has the townmark with narrow, spaced lettering, has been submitted by Mr Muhr (Sao Paulo). Whether this type has been used, or can be distinguished, in pence values remains to be seen.

ERROR OF "TAPE"

A very unusual variety recently discovered is a Neopost m.s. printed on a "Frankopost" tape. The stamp is Failsworth - Manchester, N 1 (GviR), with slogan "Ferranti Ltd. Hollinwood, Lancs", the tape having the yellow "Frankopost" background and the imprint "UB.642 FAILSWORTH" repeated along the bottom. The date is -8 II 54. The Universal multivalve machine UB 642 also is used by Ferranti Ltd.

G.B. MIDGET: ABNORMAL NOS.

As is fairly generally known, Midget dies are normally numbered from 1 up in each town or postal district, but "abnormal" Nos. are occasionally found, due either to error or to transfer of a machine from one town to another without alteration of the dies.

An error appears to have occurred recently when the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d die numbered M 179 was fitted to the machine Lincoln M 9 used by Messrs Fisons; a correspondent has sent a piece (dated 23 III 54) bearing 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d M 179 together with 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d M 9 (both are GviR), and an example of the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d dated 20 IV 54 also has been seen. All have slogan "For Farm or Garden It's FISONS for FERTILIZERS".

What is probably a transferred machine is London N.6., M 126 (GviR), used 26 III 54 by the Trade Delegation of the U.S.S.R. in the U.K., from whom information can hardly be expected !

G.B. UNIVERSAL M.V. NOTES

The two distinct types of the "EiIR" frame were described in the last Bulletin; briefly, "Type I" has the crown raised about $\frac{3}{4}$ mm. above the letters "E R" and occurs on dies with prefix letters U, UA, UB, UC and UD, while "Type II", having the crown almost touching the tops of the letters, occurs on dies lettered UE. In addition to the sole exception then recorded, U 621 (London N.18) in Type II, it has now been found that U 988 (Manchester) also is Type II. The former is an "Ordinary" model and the latter a "Junior" model, and both are used by Universal Postal Frankers Ltd. Machines UA 59, UA 63 and UD 870, used by U.P.F. offices at Leeds, Birmingham and London W.1., respectively, are however normal, in Type I.

The highest No. with the "GviR" cipher reported - by Mr Wm.A.Keay (Perthshire) - is UE 814 (Dundee, Angus). No other No. above UE 500 (Bellshill, Lanarkshire), notified by Mr W.E. Stribling, has been reported with this cipher.

The first "UF" was reported by Mr F. Lloyd Parton (Wolverhampton) as used in March, and Nos. have already exceeded 100.

PHILATELIC EXHIBITION SLOGAN

It is unusual for the organizers of philatelic exhibitions in this country to recognize meter stamps, and so we may mention that the Isle of Thanet Philatelic Society for the Kent Philatelic Convention held at Ramsgate "borrowed" a Neopost machine from a local firm and provided a special slogan which was applied to envelopes bearing printed pictorial cachets. The frank is GviR N 10 with townmark "RAMSGATE KENT", the slogan reading "ISLE OF THANET / Philatelic Exhibition / 13-15 MAY 1954 RAMSGATE."

UNIVERSAL M.V. MACHINES

By S. D. Barfoot.

By the courtesy of Universal Postal Frankers Ltd., I have been able to obtain much information concerning M.V. machines which has not been published previously. The following notes include the more important facts.

1. The first sixty or so machines were "Francotyps" imported from Germany and, so far as is known, were either Model B or Model C, manufactured by Bafra A.G.

2. The first machine (Makers' No. MV 1) was sold to Argentina on 12 V 31, and MV 2 to Chile on the same date. MV 3 to 12 were sold to Colombia, in VIII 31; MV 13 to 17 to Mexico; MV 18 to Brazil (for revenue use); MV 19 to the G.P.O., Leeds, for telegram use ("Teltax" machine), MV 20 to South Africa, X 31; MV 21 to Peru; MV 22 to Singapore ("Teltax"); MV 23 to Poland.

3. (In what follows, the "U" Nos. are the Post Office identification Nos. shown on the dies while the "MV" Nos. are the makers' machine Nos.) The first British machine for postal franking was MV 28 (U 1), but U 2 (MV 38) was the first to be brought into use, on 11 I 32 though "first day covers" are dated 12 I 32 (Boston, Lincs., Messrs Fisher, Clark & Co.Ltd.) U 1 was first used on 13 XII 32 by Temple Press Ltd., London E.C.1., most machines up to U 36 having been used before this date. This is explained by the fact that U 1 was kept as a demonstration machine by U.P.F. Ltd. until released for use.

U 5, U 6 and U 10 were not used by firms until 1933 (U 10 in May, U 5 and 6 in December). These were MV 155, 156 and 149 respectively, following after U 67 (MV 146). It is not known why these Nos. were not allotted to earlier machines, but it is probable that the frank dies concerned (on MV 41, 42 and 46) were left unengraved on demonstration machines. Their late use explains why U 5, U 6 and U 10 are not known with

18)

Type 1 frank frame (single-lined base) but have Type 2 frame (double-lined base) as introduced first on U 22 (MV 101) in Sept. 1932. U 42 (MV 121) used first on 18 IV 33 has Type 1 frame, but the reason for this is unknown; it is possible that one of the earlier unengraved dies was used for this machine after having the No. engraved.

Only U 3 and U 17 are found with both types of frame, the latter having been used first at Nottingham by Messrs Boots in Nov.-Dec. 1932 with Type 1 and then at Liverpool by Littlewoods Mail Order Stores Ltd. from 18 I 33 with Type 2. In 1936 it was taken over by the P.O. Counter Training Centre for demonstration purposes.

(It is interesting to note that U 1, with GviR die, was in use as late as -1 IV 53 and perhaps even later - a life of over 20 years!

- Editor.)

4. In 1940, U 20 was taken over by the Express Dairy Co. Ltd., London N.5., for revenue purposes.

5. The frank die (GvR cipher) of U 47 (MV 126) is unique in having the outer imitation-perforated border more widely spaced from the double-lined inner frame than on other machines. Impressions are found with both small and large date figures.

6. U 69 is known only with "Specimen" town-mark and was not used except for demonstration purposes. The same applies to U 207 and to U 447 (GviR). U 492 (Eviir) also is known as "Specimen" only and was later sent to Australia.

7. Some confusion has occurred in the past between U 285 (MV 529) and U 286 (MV 530). In the old "Meter Club" list both were recorded as used at Chesterfield, Derbyshire, but in fact only U 286 was used there. U 285 was used at Leicester by John Bull Rubber Co. Ltd., from June 1936, but only one example has been seen, used in May 1944 on a white adhesive label; it may be

that the machine was used exclusively for parcel post franking, which would account for the rarity of impressions. The only other machines known to be used in this way are U 444, by U.P.F.Ltd., and UE 822 (EiiR dies) which has now replaced the former.

(Further notes will be given in our next issue.)

TWO MORE "NEW" COUNTRIES

Mr R. Perombelon (Mauritius) informs us that franking machines were authorized in that colony in August last year, and Universal MV and Simplex machines are now in use. He and also Commdt de Wailly (France) have sent us examples of the Universal MV, which is one of the most attractive designs of that make; the frame shows a sugar cane at each side, with an aloe flower in the bottom corners. Those we have are 3-figure machines, the "Rupee" digit being larger than the two "Cents" digits.

We have also received the first meter stamps of the new Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which are particularly noteworthy in appearing before the Federation's first adhesives! The franks, of Neopost make, resemble those of Southern Rhodesia but have the "EiiR" cipher and are inscribed in two lines at top "RHODESIA NYASALAND" also having "POSTAGE" at each side instead of "POSTAGE REVENUE" like Southern Rhodesia. We have so far seen N 18 (townmark SALISBURY only) and N 20 (BULAWAYO - S. RHODESIA), in values 2d, 6d and 1/-. The earliest date we have is 11 IV 54.

METERED AIR-LETTER SHEETS.

Reference was made in the philatelic press in Feb.-March to a provisional Air-Letter Sheet of Singapore, having besides the ordinary 25 cents orange King George VI stamp a 5 cent "meter stamp" to make up the new rate. From copies shown us by Mr Harold Cocker (Bolton), however, it appears that the 5c. stamp, having a large ornamental numeral in an oval, is in fact letterpress

20)

printed and not metered. Though inscribed "POST PAID" and printed in red, which doubtless gave rise to the misunderstanding, the design does not resemble any meter stamp used in Malaya or elsewhere.

So far as we know, the only Air Letter sheets (now officially termed Aerograms) franked by meter - apart from privately-produced ones - are the war-time issue of Kenya & Uganda (Neopost die N 4, 25c.) and recent and current issues of Spain franked by Hasler machine in numerous combinations of values due to changed rates. The British Roneo-Neopost advertising leaflet illustrates an A.L.S. franked by a G.B. m.s., but we have not seen any actual example.

DECIMAL ERRORS

The Neopost m.s. of Aden, Kenya Uganda and Tanganyika, and Malaya all show a similar error in the shilling or dollar denominations. The frames are inscribed "CENTIS" but a decimal point is inserted in the figures, making the Malayan dollar value for example read "CENTIS 1.00" instead of "CENTIS 100" or "DOLLAR 1.00". For Aden, though not for the other two territories, the lower values also have a zero and a decimal point, e.g. "CENTIS 0.05" for 5 cents.

AUSTRALIAN "FLAG" TYPE

The two sizes of flag occurring in this new large "all-in-one" type have already been briefly mentioned, but we had not space to add that in the larger flag, the stars all (except the smallest) have seven points whereas in the smaller flag they are all incorrectly shown with five points. The staff of the large flag ends between the "R" and "A" of "AUSTRALIA", and that of the small flag between the "A" and "L".

ROYAL VISIT METERS

Mr J.T.Dallimore (Australia) informs us that a special meter, of the Universal MV "Flag" type, was used at the Queen's Headquarters while in Australia. In place of the town name is "ROYAL VISIT H.Q." and the identification No. is "RV.1". Examples will no doubt be very scarce.

We have a Canadian item, Pitney-Bowes meter, small square design, No. 8--38 (partly illegible), Montreal Quebec, with slogan "ROYAL VISIT TO CANADA" in scroll above a large crown, "1939" below, "CR" at left and "ER" at right. The date is JUN 5 '39. This however is probably a private commemoration, as the envelope bears the corner-card of the Armstrong Cork & Insulation Co.Ltd., and is addressed to another firm in Montreal.

SOUTH AFRICAN NOTES

As recorded in the Barfoot-Simon Catalogue, one Neopost machine (owned by the British Thomson Houston Co. (Pty.) Ltd., Johannesburg) has the unusual denominations of 9d, 1/6, 2/3, 4/6, 9/- and 18/-, and we have recently received covers showing all these values except the 1/6 (all except this and the 18/- on one commercially used cover !) The identification No. appears clearly to be N 1574 rather than N 574 as stated in the Catalogue, though normally Nos. do not run above 1000, having, unlike G.B. Neoposts, recommenced with prefix NA after (?) N 999.

Mr R. Axer has shown us a copy of N 699 with townmark circle inverted, reading "PORT" at top right and "ELIZABETH" starting upside down at bottom and finishing at top left. The date is 19 II 54.

A number of examples of the NCR Parcel Post labels have been found with only the value and record No. visible (in violet), the whole of the remainder of the impression being "albino".

ANTI-FORGERY DEVICE.

Although meter impressions would obviously be far easier to fake or to forge* than adhesive stamps - it would not need a Sperati to produce a good imitation ! - such deceptions seem rarely to be found. No doubt this is because the absence of a ready philatelic market would make it unprofitable to try to deceive collectors, while the strict control exercised by the Post Office in almost all countries would make it useless to try to deceive the postal authorities.

In his regular column in a recent issue of "The Postage Stamp" (Bethany, Miss), Walter M. Swan mentions a rubber-stamped counterfeit of the U.S. meter No. 90001 in the second design (Pitney-Bowes experimental model of 1934), printed however on pink "tape" instead of the correct yellow "tape"; and the early expert A.H. Pike warned against counterfeits of the Chicago experimental meter stamps (Shield type) of 1914.

These were to deceive collectors, but an ingenious method of forgery to defraud the P.O. would appear to have been sufficiently prevalent (or perhaps only feared) in France to justify a special device to obviate its practice. This is described in the Catalogue of Meter Stamps of France etc. by MM. Michel and de Wailly.

It appears that some users of franking machines discovered that by passing two envelopes or wrappers through the machine together with a piece of red carbon paper between them, a duplicate impression of the genuine print on the upper envelope or wrapper was obtained on the envelope or wrapper underneath. Thus they would obtain two meter-stamp impressions for the price of one recorded on the meter.

*Note: A "Fake" is a fraudulent alteration of a genuine print, whereas "Forgery" is a completely fraudulent print.

The first device to prevent this was a ribbed plate fitted in place of the discontinued Record No., arranged not to be inked; this would produce no visible impression on the top envelope, but through the carbon paper it would produce a series of eight vertical red bars, enabling the forgery to be shown up.

Subsequently, a plate bearing the letter "F", likewise not being inked, was inserted in the break at each side of the frame of the frank die so that although there was no sign of this on the top envelope, red letters "F" would appear on the forgery. (This is of course not to be confused with the "F" for Francs.) Sometimes however on a thick envelope or through maladjustment, uninked and even occasional inked impressions of the bars or the "F" show on genuine impressions.

The Catalogue does not state whether the device is still used, nor on how many machines it was or is provided.

PANAMA CANAL ZONE

Pitney-Bowes Model "R" machines were placed in use here on 6 August 1953, according to a recent Bulletin of the American Metered Postage Society which illustrates first-day examples of P.B. 2 and P.B. 13. Both have townmark "CRISTOBAL CANAL ZONE" but P.B. 2 has the date indicated as "AUG-6'53" while P.B. 13 has it as "-6VIII'53". Mr E. Muhr (Sao Paulo) has shown us a P-B Model "DM", No. P.B.15 with townmark similar to P.B. 2. All have as central design a ship passing through the Canal, apparently adapted from the 1931 Air Mail stamps.

PROPOSED INTRODUCTORY BOOKLET

The Editor has written and hopes to bring out before long an introductory booklet on the subject of meter-stamp collecting, for the benefit of the many potential collectors from whom enquiries have been received in consequence of the articles by our member Mr F. Lloyd Parton published in the

24)

philatelic press, and any others who may be interested. It includes a much simplified list of types and values of the M.S. of Great Britain and a list of all countries using M.S. It will be published on behalf of the Group: the question of printing is now under examination, but the price should not exceed 5s. Further details will be announced as soon as possible.

WANTS AND OFFERS

Mr D.R. Burchell, Eastfield House, Portobello, Scotland, requires a copy of our Bulletin No. 2 and offers 2s.6d. for it.

Herr Ruprecht Glasewald, Hellbrookstrasse 14, Hamburg 33, Germany, will send 50 different m.s. to any member sending him 50 different.

Mr Harry A. Jansen, 401 East 142nd St., Bronx 54, N.Y., U.S.A., wishes to exchange "tapes" of all countries.

Mr E. Muhr, B.Sc(Eng.), Caixa Postal 523, Sao Paulo, Brazil, is interested to hear about Brazilian meters in order to complete his numerical list, and seeks information about Ident.No. with corresponding B-S Cat. No. Will supply Brazilian meters in return.

Prof. J.M. Watt, University of the Witwatersrand, Milner Park, Johannesburg, South Africa, will exchange m.s. of South Africa, U.S.A. etc. for wanted items of those countries and Indonesia.

A U.S. correspondent has sent approx. 250 U.S. m.s. on small pieces, mostly current Eagle ("R" and "DM") types in various colours and with "Sec. -- P.L.&R." slogans etc.; a few earlier types and Canadians are also included. Best offer over 2s.6d. to the Hon. Sec. before 3rd July will secure the lot. (Payment only on delivery, please, to avoid difficulty of refunding to unsuccessful bidders.)