

THE
METER STAMP

BULLETIN

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Meter Stamp Study Group

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Editor and Hon. Secretary:-

A. A. Dewey, M.A., B.Sc.(Econ.),
46 Chester Drive, North Harrow, Middx.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1954

It is pleasant to be able to say that 1954 was the most successful of the five years of existence of the Group, both as regards membership and financially. Membership increased from 64 at the end of 1953 to 79 at the end of 1954; we gained 19 new members and two old members were restored to the list, against which 6 resigned (either expressly or by silently allowing their subscriptions to lapse).

Instead of having a deficit of 18s.11½d. on the year's working, we had a surplus of no less than £8.18.10. This change was due almost entirely to an increase in income, arising from the greater number of subscriptions and to an increase in donations, with a small contribution from the sale of back numbers of the Bulletin. Total expenditure was practically unchanged; increased costs of stationery and postage were offset by reduced cost of duplicating the Bulletin (in spite of the issue of two enlarged numbers). Unfortunately the very inexpensive lady who duplicated three of the four numbers in 1954 is no longer able to undertake the work, and expenses under this heading must be higher this year.

Detailed accounts are sent herewith to all members.

When we come to look at the membership figures in detail, however, the position appears much less satisfactory. Although the Group was founded primarily for meter-stamp collectors in Great Britain, there has been no net increase in the number of members in this country: seven new members were enrolled but one has removed overseas and six have resigned. Nine of the new members are resident in the U.S.A., one in Europe and four in other countries. The total of 79 is made up of 37 in Great Britain (under half!), 10 in the rest of the Commonwealth, 8 in Europe, 21 in the U.S.A., and 3 elsewhere.

We received quite a number of enquiries (the result of publicity from articles in the philatelic press), but few of them joined although full information was sent to them. Of course, none of them ever tell us why this is; can any member suggest a reason? Does the subscription seem too high? Is the Bulletin too unattractive? Or what is it? Obviously, if the enquirer takes the trouble to write to us - sometimes, though not often enough, sending stamp for reply - he must have some interest in meter stamps (or is it possible that he was under a misapprehension as to what meter stamps are?) Is it possible - though this clearly cannot affect those who actually write in, - that the designation "Study Group" sounds too "highbrow" and advanced for the average collector, and would we do better if we reverted to the title used by our predecessor, "The Meter Club"?

We are glad that, thanks to Mr. K.F.Jennings, of Cambridge, it has at last been possible to make a beginning in a small way with a regular exchange system, and we hope that more members will soon participate, helping others at the same time as themselves. Some objections have however been raised owing to the high cost of postage on exchange packets, and it has been suggested that a list of members with their addresses would help to promote direct exchanging between them. The

plan hitherto adopted, of publishing names and addresses only when specifically requested, has not worked very well, partly because after publication once in the Bulletin the name becomes "dead", and partly perhaps because some members have been too reluctant to ask for such publication. We have therefore decided to publish a full list of members, giving their full addresses except when either no "record card" has been returned, or when specific request has been made not to publish. We hope to send this out with the next Bulletin.

PERSONAL

We have learned with regret of the death, in October, of Mr. W. Ashby Willmin, of Hove, who became a member in 1952.

Both Mr. S.D.Barfoot (London N.14) and Mr. R. Axer (Cape Town) have been troubled during part of last year by the illness of their wives, preventing them devoting much attention to their correspondence and collections. Mr. Barfoot and his family also have been involved in a car accident with consequences which, though serious, were luckily not worse. Mr. D.R.Burchell (Portobello) met with an accident and broke his right arm, preventing correspondence. Mr. H.O.Meisel (Clintonville, U.S.A.) has suffered much ill-health lately, a recurrence of trouble arising from injuries in World War I.

We are sure that all members will wish to express sympathy with those named.

EARLY CATALOGUE OFFERED

Mr. H.E.Hammond (16 Elton Grove, Birmingham 27) has for disposal an almost spotless copy of the first edition of Harris's Meter Stamp Catalogue. Best offer to Mr. Hammond before ~~30~~ April will 30 secure. (This Catalogue is of great historical value to all serious collectors.)

WANTED

Mr. W.G.Amedro (Second Floor, 5 Scott Street, Perth, Scotland) wants copies of Perth M 1 and N 4 to complete his collection of that town. Also to exchange current G.B. for current foreign.

THE "FINDLAY CRABB" COLLECTION

We are happy to learn from Messrs. Robson Lowe that the report that the large collection formed by Mr. R. Findlay Crabb of Aberdeen had been destroyed after his death is incorrect. A buyer was in fact found for it, and Mr. Lowe adds that, to the best of his belief, it is still intact and has been added to considerably in recent years. It would of course be improper for the firm to disclose the name of the buyer, but if by any chance these words should come to his notice, we should be very pleased to learn his identity. The misunderstanding doubtless arose, Mr. Lowe suggests, from the fact that the vast quantities of duplicates amassed by Mr. Crabb, weighing several tons, indeed proved unsaleable and were sent for waste paper.

UNIVERSAL M.V. FOR NEW COUNTRIES

Messrs. Universal Postal Frankers Ltd. have kindly shown us proofs or "essays" of Universal multi-value dies for use in several countries which have not hitherto used these machines; they are Ethiopia, Iran, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Jugoslavia and Kuwait. That for Iran is in the large "all-in-one" type like the Aden Dhow or the Australian Flag designs, showing a portrait of the Shah in the centre. The Yugoslav is similar to its current Francotyp design. The other three are of normal upright rectangular designs with varying frames and double-circle townmarks. Iran and Jordan have not yet introduced franking machines and Ethiopia has not used any since the Italian invasion in 1936.

G.B.: NEOPOST "FIXED-VALUE" DIES

We introduced in the Sept. 1954 Bulletin the subject of the old "fixed-value" machines still in use in this country. Birmingham N 76 was then given as an example. Mr. K.F. Jennings has reported three more apparent examples used in 1954, London E.C.2, N 474; London E.C.3, N 184; Cambridge, N 10.

But in the meantime, an official of Roneo-Neopost Ltd. informed us that according to the company's records, there were now none of this model still in use! This is not absolutely conclusive, since it is possible that the firm's classification does not correspond precisely with that of collectors, and records may of course not be infallible on such a point.

However, very careful examination of pairs of values from a given machine, e.g. the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d and $2\frac{1}{2}$ d from Cambridge N 10, suggests that although the dies conform to both the accepted tests of a F.V. machine (unbroken bottom frame lines, and figures of value higher above the base than in the L.V. dies), the frames of the two values are printed from the same die; the presence on both of the same small flaws and defects indicates this. (Incidentally, all the available copies show very poor impressions, presumably due to the age of the machines.)

If these are in fact L.V. machines, then we have to admit the very important conclusion that there are two distinct varieties of L.V. dies, - the one hitherto recognized, in which the short sections of the straight and indented frame-lines below the value are attached to the figures and movable with them, and a second (and probably earlier) type, in which only the values are movable, the frames being unbroken. Further, the latter variety is not positively distinguishable from the F.V. dies.

G.B. OBSOLETE TYPES

Thanks are due to Messrs. Amedro, Jennings, Simmonds and Stelfox for submitting lists showing the following obsolete-type dies remaining in use during 1954.

Square Design

Pitney-Bowes: 10 (London W.C.2), $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Midget: Erdington Birmingham M 9, $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Cipher GvR

Midget: London E.C.2, M 136 ($1\frac{1}{2}$ d and $4\frac{1}{2}$ d, - the $2\frac{1}{2}$ d being GviR); E.C.3, M 16, M A16; E.C.4, M 65 ($\frac{1}{2}$ d & 1d); Aberdeen, M 5 ($2\frac{1}{2}$ d).

Neopost: London E.C.2, N 156; Edinburgh, N 33.

Pitney-Bowes FV: PB 17, 26, 54; 75 PB, PB 146, 163.

Pitney-Bowes LV: PB 2 (error for P2), P 3.

Universal MV: U 76, 142, 287, 307.

Cipher EviiiR

Neopost: London E.C.3, N 181; Belfast, N 8;

Perth, N 2; Rochdale, Lancs. N 2; Stoke-on-Trent, N 10.

Pitney-Bowes LV: P 22.

Universal MV: U 368, 409, 446, 476.

Doubtless there are a good many more, and further reports will be welcomed.

G.B. UNIVERSAL M.V. NOTES

A new "highest" No. with the GviR cipher is reported by Mr. H.E.Hammond, - UE 830, Motherwell, Lanark; thus, like all the other Nos. above UE 500, used in Scotland. We believe that political reasons lie behind this; members in this country will be aware that Scottish Nationalists object to the designation of our present Queen as Elizabeth the Second, on the ground that the 16th-century Elizabeth did not rule over Scotland so that the present Queen is the first Elizabeth of the United Kingdom; they therefore object to the use of the Cipher E II R. It appears that in order to placate firms who hold this view - or whose clients may do so - the issue of GviR dies is being continued, at

any rate for the time being. This applies equally to Neopost dies, though the continued issue of these is not so apparent. We have heard that some requests for the provision of dies showing the cipher as "E R" only were, as was to be expected, turned down by the Post Office.

The highest No. in the "EiiR" series so far reported is UF 654 (Cambridge), which came into use on 31 I 55, Mr. Jennings reports. It replaces the Neopost machine N 10 mentioned on page 61.

The highest Simplex Nos. reported by Mr. Lloyd Parton are SA 937 (Birmingham) and SX 346 (Rugeley, Staffs.) Doubtless the SB series will have begun before this note appears.

UNIVERSAL M.V. MACHINES LOST OR DESTROYED

Further Notes derived from the records of
Universal Postal Frankers Ltd.,
by S. D. Barfoot.

12. Several of the early machines are still in use with GvR dies, e.g. U 101, 122, 301, and therefore cannot be found with EviiiR or GviR dies. Others are not known with EviiiR or GviR dies as they were destroyed by enemy action during World War II. These are: U 19 (London E.C.1), U 23 (London S.E.1), U 108 (Birmingham), U 111 (London W.C.2), U 149 (Croydon, Surrey), U 169 (London E.C.2), U 245 (London E.C.2), U 248 (Sheffield), U 265 (London E.C.2), U 300 (Birmingham), U 305 (London E.C.4), U 374 (London E.C.3).

U 496 with cipher EviiiR, first used at Stafford in 1937, was lost on the railway in 1940 and was replaced by U 656.: U 496 was incidentally limited to $0/11\frac{1}{2}$.

The following machines having GviR dies were also destroyed by enemy action: U 50 (London E.C.2) U 518 (London E.C.3), U 531 (London E.10), U 553 (Portsmouth & Southsea), U 612 (London E.C.1), U 616 (Portsmouth & Southsea), U 618 (London S.E.10), U 628 (Liverpool), U 655 (Hull, Yks), U 728 (Bristol) U 758 (Liverpool), U 777 (London W.C.1).

U 93 (machine MV.208), Portsmouth & Southsea,

was stolen in October 1946 and replaced by U 93 (machine MV.3887) in March 1947. U 517 (MV.1141), Tadcaster, Yorkshire, was lost in transit in May 1944 and was replaced by UA 213 (MV.2832). U 714, Northwich, Cheshire, was destroyed by fire in May 1944.

13. As already mentioned, U 17, after being used at Nottingham and at Liverpool in 1932-33, was in 1936 taken over by the Post Office Counter Training Centre for demonstration purposes, and U 20 was in 1940 taken over by the Express Dairy Co. Ltd. for revenue purposes. U 373 was used by the Postal Services Dept. of the G.P.O., London, E.C.1, for demonstration purposes from 5 X 36 to 9 XII 38, before being used at Belfast in Feb. 1939; hence this machine is not found with GvR frank die. U 399 was used for postal franking by Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds Ltd., Birmingham, until 1943 and was then converted for internal franking of bills etc.

T.I.M. PARCEL-POST STAMPS

Although the response to Mr. Stitt-Dibdin's article in the "Philatelic Magazine" was very small, and only six of our members (including myself) have sent in lists, we have altogether a record of 54 offices (including the special "Festival of Britain" type). Owing to probable removals of machines from one office to another, this is not likely to be more than 50% completeness.

Space does not permit the list to be reproduced here; there are 10 in the London Postal Region, 38 in the rest of England, 4 in Scotland and 2 in Northern Ireland. None have been reported in Wales, the Isle of Man or the Channel Is.

All denominations from 9d to 2/4 inclusive have been reported at one or other office, with the exception of 2/3 for which there has so far

been no postal need.

With one single exception, the latest date reported anywhere for the red colour is 28 DE 53 and the earliest for the magenta 4 AU 53, which seems to define the change-over fairly closely as occurring in the autumn of 1953. The exception is a copy from Luton, Beds., dated 18 NO 54 in a pale red colour which may be the result of "watering" the inking roller or the use of unofficial ink.

Further reports from members who have not so far sent them will be welcomed, - even if only one example.

INDIA'S FIRST METER STAMP

The earliest meter stamps of India were produced by the Moss "Model D" machine as introduced in New Zealand in 1910 and also used experimentally in Egypt in February and March, 1922, and, as in those countries, no date-stamps were printed. The Barfoot & Simon Catalogue gives the date of issue in India simply as 1922, the exact date evidently not being known. In an article in the "Philatelic Magazine" of April 14, 1939, the late A.H.Harris illustrated a cover bearing two impressions of the 1 anna from machine No.2, to which he attributed the date March 28, 1922, but he did not indicate how this date was determined. Presumably there was a postmark on the (unillustrated) back of the cover. This would make the issue more than five months earlier than introduction of meter stamps in Great Britain and the earliest in what was then the British Empire apart from New Zealand.

I have just acquired a wrapper (addressed from Calcutta to Rangoon) bearing an impression of the $\frac{1}{2}$ A. from the same machine, on the back of which is the postmark "ENGLISHMAN PRESS R.M.S./CALCUTTA/27 AUG.22/4.30 P.M.", which still antedates Great Britain by more than a week. What is the earliest date of this type that other members possess?

- A. A. Dewey.

RHODESIAN "UNIVERSAL M.V." DATES

The suggestion in our New Issue Chronicle in December that the variety showing month in letters (as OCT) had not been noticed in South Africa and Rhodesia prior to the Rhodesia & Nyasaland "U 10" then reported, was mistaken. We had forgotten that this variety is catalogued by Barfoot & Simon both for Southern Rhodesia (M.No. U 333) and for South Africa (M.Nos. U 334, 336, 337, 341); and we find it occurs also on Southern Rhodesia U 332. U 332 (Bulawayo) and U 333 (Salisbury) are both used by branches of the Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd., who are also the users of the new U 10 (Bulawayo); it seems likely that this latter is the same machine as the S.R. U 332. Has any member the missing U 335?

U.S.A. "SECTION" NUMBERS

Collectors of U.S. meter stamps will be familiar with the indications such as "SEC.435 $\frac{1}{2}$ P.L.&R." (with also other numbers) which are often shown in various positions in the meter impressions to indicate the section of the Postal Laws and Regulations under which a reduced rate of postage is claimed for certain classes of bulk mailings, catalogues etc. The numbers have been changed from time to time with revisions of the P.L.& R., the most recent No. for third-class mail being 34.66. However, from 1st July 1954, the Postal Laws and Regulations were superseded by "Title 39 of the Code of Federal Regulations" and so the indication became "39 C.F.R. 34.66". This method of designation proved to be short-lived, and from 1st Dec.1954 it has been superseded by the simple indication "BULK RATE".

(Information from the Bulletin of the American Metered Postage Society, 25 Dec. 1954)

NEW ISSUES AND DISCOVERIES

Mr. Barfoot and Messrs. Universal Postal Frankers Ltd. have informed us that the publication of regular supplements to the Catalogue has unfortunately proved impracticable. We will therefore do our best to provide them here; but it will take a little time to catch up with the arrears. Some of the items we have mentioned before, but we now list formally for convenience. For reasons of space, the Id. Nos. are not generally noted, and mere additions or amendments to the list of Id. Nos. in the Catalogue will be ignored.

"Type" refers to the type no. in the Catalogue and numbers between / / to the list nos. therein; for convenience of future reference, we have allocated provisional type and list nos. to new items.

AUSTRALIA. Type 1 (Neopost): /3a/, also 1½d, 3d. /4/, date should be 1949 or before.

Type 2 (Midget): /7/, also 3½d, 6½d.

Type 3 (Universal MV): /A16/ "£sd" model, value as 0/-0/3½ (v-bank).

Type 4 (Neopost): /17b/, as /17/ but TM as /3a/, 3d. /18/, also 3d.

Type 5 (Universal MV): date should be 1949.

Type 6a (Simplex): /21a/, frank 26 x 27 mm., adapted from type 5, with small "POSTAGE PAID".

Type 7 (Univ.MV, Flag design) in Cat. Addenda has large flag with seven-pointed stars.

Type 7a: Similar to type 7 but smaller flag with five-pointed stars. "POSTAGE PAID" in one line. /25/ IV-bank model; /26/ V-bank model, with £:s:d below "POSTAGE PAID".

BURMA. Type 1 (Neopost): /2/, also 4a. Type 2C: /6a/, TM DC, 1½a., 5½a.

CEYLON. (Cancel the previous Supplement.)

Type 1A (Univ.NZ): /2a/, variety TM (Colombo) inverted except for date. 1c., 3c. (No.19, 1945)

Type 2B (Neopost): /5/, also 1c., 10c., 25c.

/7/, also 2c., 3c., 6c., 9c. (Note - No.N 23 not mentioned in the Cat., is type 2C.)

GOLD COAST. Type 2 (Neopost): similar to Nigeria type 1 but palm trees omitted and scrolls extended. /3/ 3d., 1/-.

INDIA. Type 3 (Neopost): /5/, also $1\frac{1}{2}$ a.; /7/, also R $1\frac{1}{2}$ R.

Type 5 (Neopost): /11/ also R $1\frac{1}{4}$ R.

JAMAICA. Type 3 (Neopost), new design, palm trees at sides flanking Crown over Royal Cipher "EiiR" in script letters. Issued 18 XI 52. /5/ 1d, 2d, 3d, 6d, 8d, 1/-, 1/3, 2/- (Some machines show straight and "perf." lines below the value, some have no line below.)

Type 4 (Universal MV): new design, large "all-in-one" type with cipher "E II R" (as for G.B.) in centre. Issued 23 X 53. /6/ ? IV-bank.

KENYA UGANDA & TANGANYIKA. Type 1 (Neopost) /1/, also 30c.; /3/, also 2.50c.

Type 2 (Universal MV). /A8/ Value as 0000; /B8/ R.No. AT, Simplex date-figures, value as 0000.

KUWAIT. Type 1 (Neopost), similar to type 1 of Bahrain but without posthorn. L.No. in TM. /1/ 6a.

MALAYA - SELANGOR. /5/, U 67 is still in use.

MALAYA (GENERAL ISSUES). Type 3 (Neopost): /7/, also 4c., 20c.

MAURITIUS. Type 1 (Universal MV), frame showing sugar canes at sides. /1/, value as 000.

NIGERIA. Type 1 (Neopost); /1/, also 2/-.

SOUTH AFRICA. Type 10 (Francotyp Cc): /A33/, wider frame and value as 0/00/1- (V-bank).

Type 12 (Mercury), new design, straight-line frame, name horizontal above and below value, "POSTAGE PAID" in two lines upwards at left and "POSTGELD BETAAL" in two lines downwards at right; value as in type 11; slogan or name of user below bottom frameline. /36/, 1d, 2.