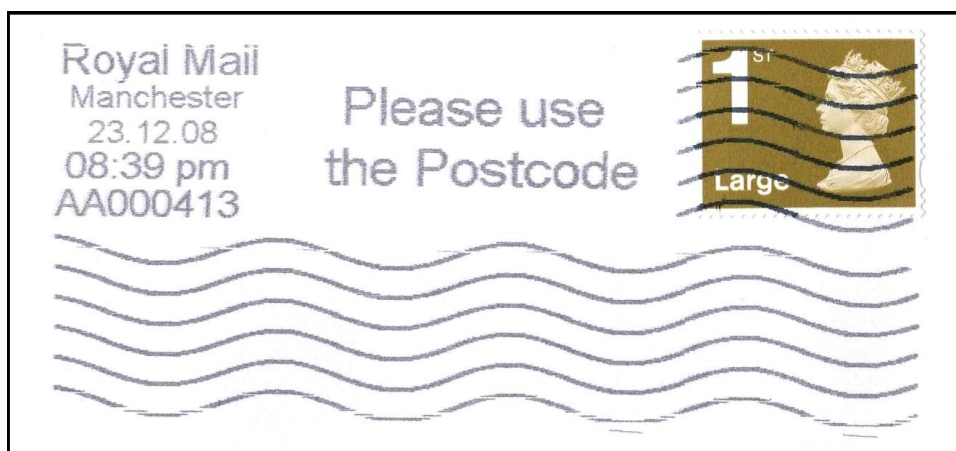


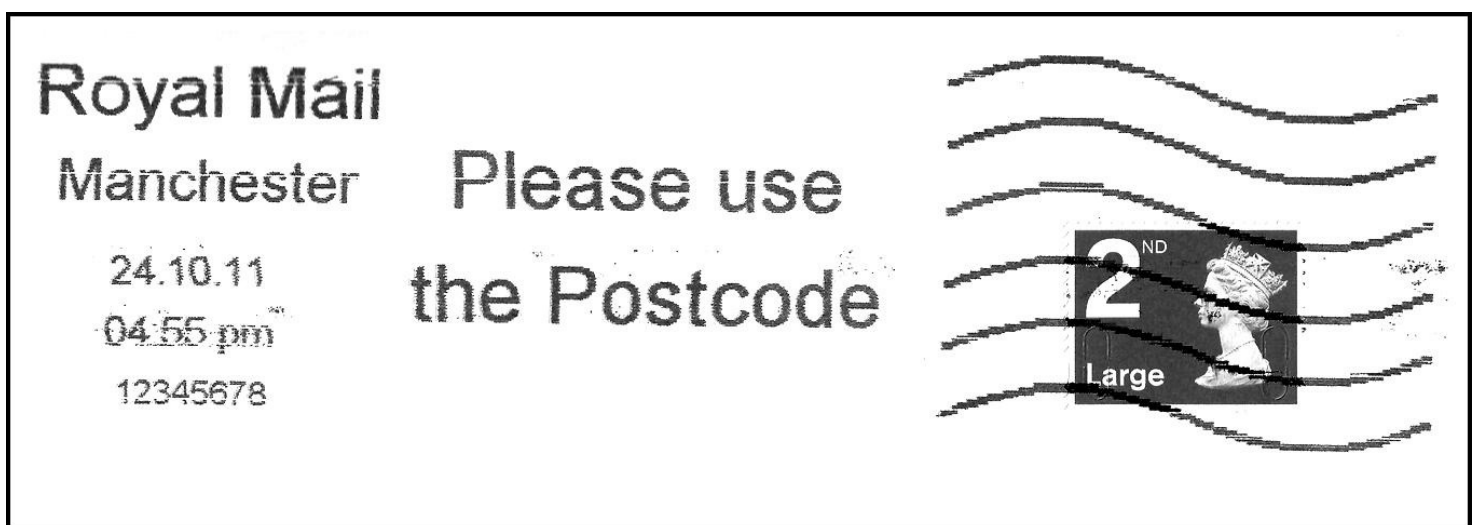
## 2008 – Manchester Flats Cancelling Machine

A NEC (Nippon Electric Company) Flats Cancelling Machine was introduced at Manchester Mail Centre in late November 2008. Its purpose was to cancel all 'Flat' items that had been rejected by the IMPs as too large to handle. It is thought that the machine is still in use today.

The stamps are cancelled using a two-head Post Jet printer and, in the 'normal' format, the serial in the Id block is always 'AA000413'.



The cancel has also been reported in a second format where a 'double-height' impression was used:



## 2009 – The Integrated Letter Sorting Machine (iLSM)

The iLSM is Royal Mail's latest and most sophisticated letter sorting machine and the first one became operational on 24 March 2009 at the Jubilee Mail Centre. There are now over 50 such machines installed at 19 Mail Centres and they are manufactured by Solystic Ltd.

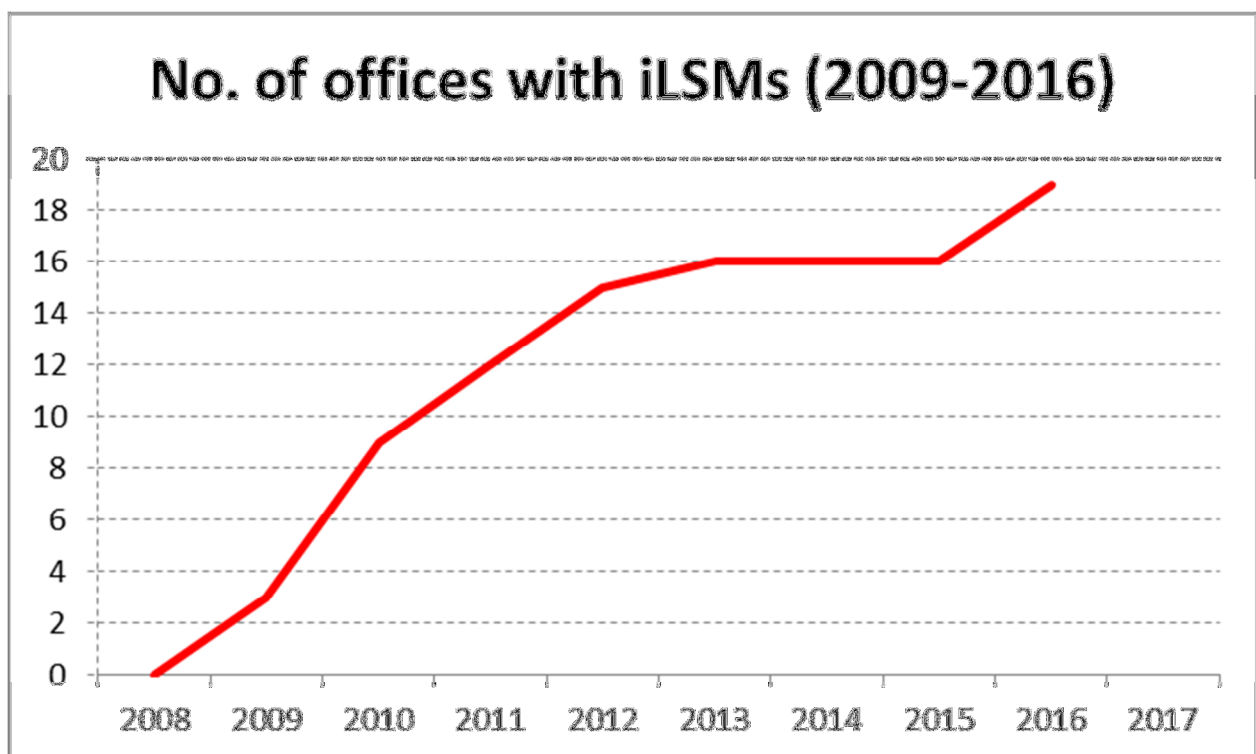
The photographs below were taken by me during a visit to Swindon Mail Centre on 11 May 2012. The control station is shown below left and the sorter trays below right. The speed indicator is registering 40569 items per hour.



*iLSM control station*



*iLSM sorter trays and speed indicator*



# How to distinguish between IMP & iLSM postmarks

IMP postmarks typically have the following characteristics:

- 1) A Royal Mail 'Cruciform' logo is incorporated in the postmark
- 2) The block identifying the Mail Centre is to the left of the slogan
- 3) Dots are used as date separators
- 4) Year in '2-digit' format
- 5) 7 wavy lines cancel the stamp



Whereas, iLSM postmarks typically have these characteristics:

- 1) No Royal Mail 'Cruciform' logo is included
- 2) The block identifying the Mail Centre is to the right of the slogan
- 3) Hyphens are used as date separators
- 4) Year in '4-digit' format
- 5) Normally 9 'squashed' wavy lines cancel the stamp, but on C5 size envelopes it is either 11 or 12 wavy lines.



## IMP - Failure to recognise 2<sup>nd</sup> class stamps

Since 2013 (?), some the IMPs have had a problem recognising blue 2<sup>nd</sup> class stamps.

When this occurs, only the 7 wavy lines are printed (without any date or other information). See example below.

There is an on-going investigation by Royal Mail into this issue as to the cause of this as the iLSMs don't have this problem.



Kate Ashbrook,  
Open Spaces Society  
25A Bell Street  
Henley-on-Thames  
RG9 2BA

## 2010 – Compact Sequence Sorting Machine (CSSM)

In 2010, Royal Mail began the rollout of Compact Sequence Sorting Machines (CSSMs) to Delivery Offices and Mail Centres.

The machines, manufactured by the French company Solystic, simplify and standardise the sorting process and have enabled Royal Mail to automate a major part of its delivery operation.

The Walk Sequencing Project enables mail to be automatically sorted to the sequence of a delivery route, right down to each specific customer address. Today, over 650 such machines are now thought to have been installed at more than 200 site locations across the country.

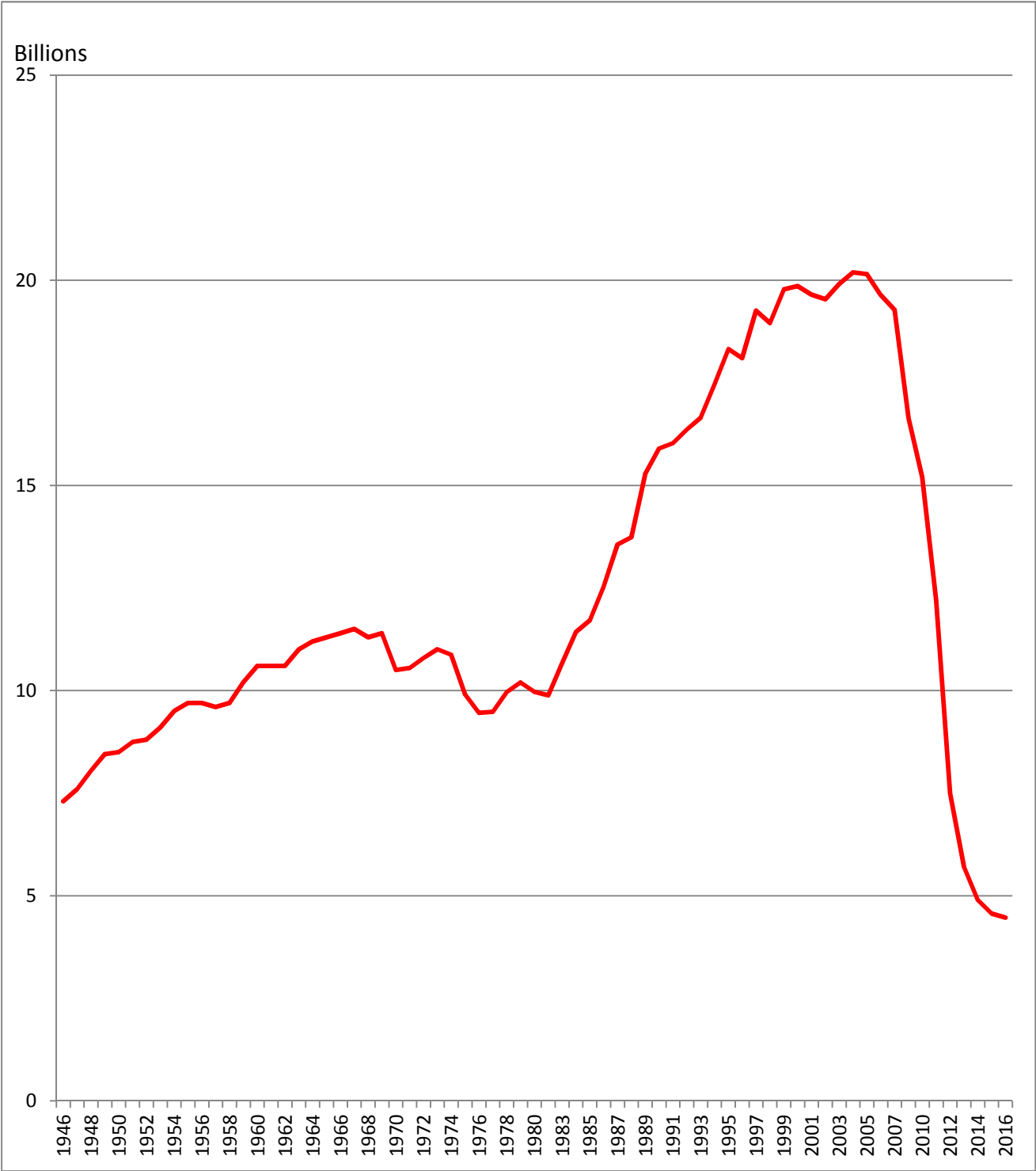
The CSSM is able to read the Delivery Point Code (DPC) information encoded within the 64-bar routing code that would have previously been printed on mail items by the IMPs or iLSMs.



*This photograph shows a CSSM being installed at a customer site*

# The decline in UK Mail Volumes

The graph below shows the recent decline in mail volumes due to the impact of electronic communications (emails and on-line invoicing):



# The Growth and Decline of Mechanised Offices

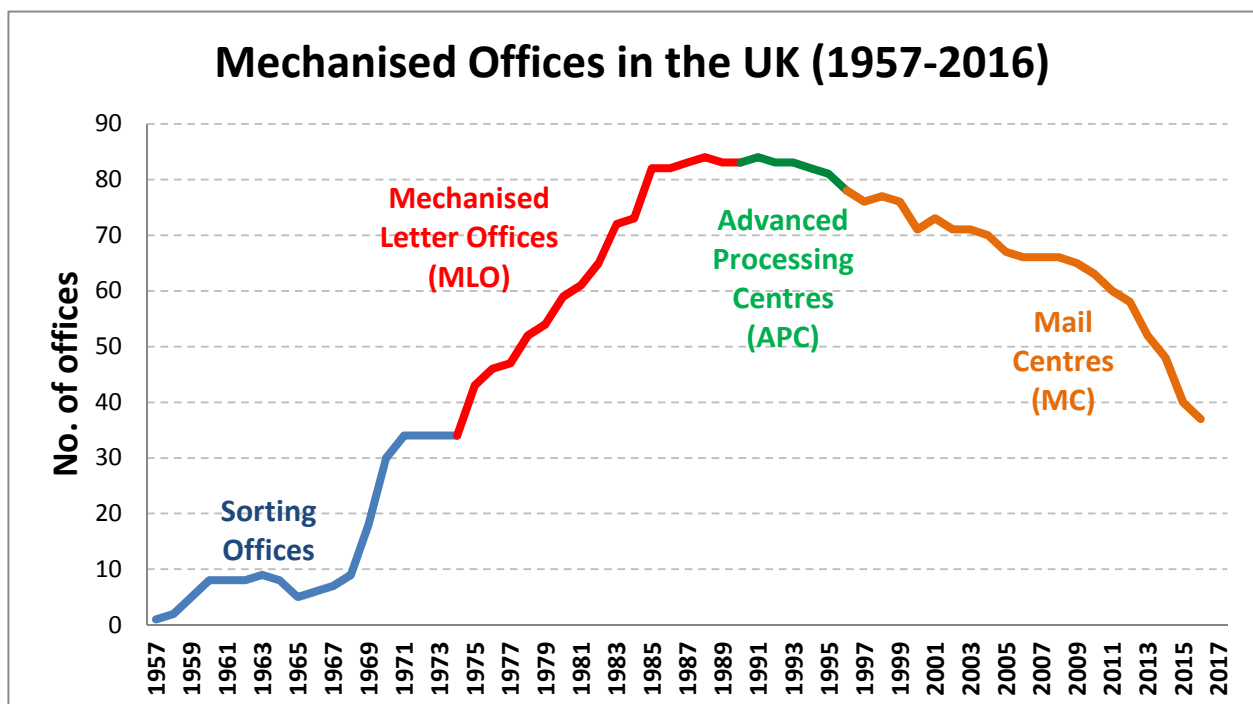
From 1957, the number of offices that had mechanisation equipment installed, rose steadily to a peak in the late 1980s / early 1990s. Since then, significant 'mail concentration' has taken place, resulting in the closure of a number of the mechanised offices. This has allowed Royal Mail to achieve significant cost savings, without the loss of quality of service.

Today, the number of Mail Centres has fallen to just 37 from a peak of 84 in 1988 and 1991, although some have remained open as Delivery Offices.

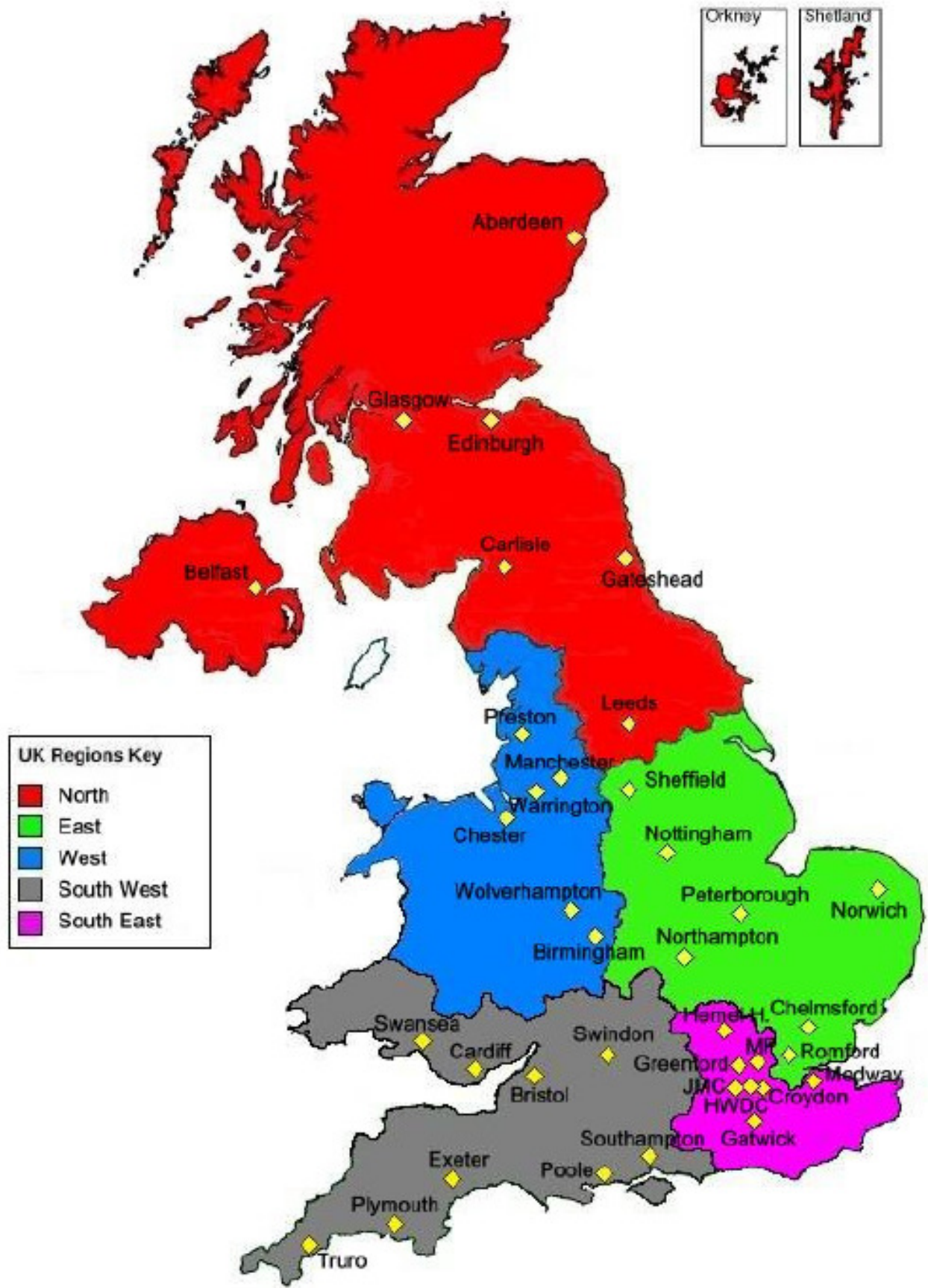


Swindon Mail Centre

The graph below shows the growth and decline of the number of operational Mechanised Offices between 1957 and 2016.



# Royal Mail Regions and Mail Centres 2016





## 2016 – Mail Concentration

Whenever a Mail Centre closes, mail from the postcode areas covered by that office has to be re-assigned to a different Mail Centre.

Below is a list of the Mail Centres that are currently operational in 2016 and the associated postcode areas covered. Additional variations may exist for 'Saturday' and Christmas mail.

<b>Mail Centre</b>	<b>Postcode areas covered</b>
Aberdeen	AB, IV, KW, ZE
Belfast	BT
Birmingham	B, HR, WR
Bristol	BA, BS, GL, TA
Cardiff	CF, LD, NP
Carlisle	CA, DG
Chester	CH, LL, SY
Croydon	BR (Mon-Fri), CR (1 <sup>st</sup> class), SE2-28, SM
Edinburgh	DD, EH, KY, PH, TD
Exeter	EX, TQ
Gatwick	BN, BR (Sat), CR (2 <sup>nd</sup> class), DA (Sat), RH
Glasgow	FK, G, HS, KA, ML, PA
Greenford	HA, SL, UB
Home Counties North (Hemel Hempstead)	AL, EN, HP, LU, SG, WD
HWDC (Heathrow)	Incoming mail from abroad only
Jubilee Mail Centre (Hounslow)	KT, GU, TW
Leeds	BD, HD, HG, HX, LS, WF, YO
Manchester	BL, M, OL, PR (Sat), SK
Medway (Rochester)	DA (Mon-Fri), CT, ME, TN
Mount Pleasant	E, EC, N, NW, SE1, SW, W, WC
North West Midlands (Wolverhampton)	DY, ST, TF, WS, WV
Norwich	NR (Mon-Fri 1 <sup>st</sup> class), IP (part)
Nottingham	DE, NG
Peterborough	CB, NR (Sat & all 2 <sup>nd</sup> class), PE
Plymouth	PL
Poole	BH, DT
Preston	BB, FY, LA, PR (Mon-Fri)
Romford	IG, RM
Sheffield	DN, HU, LN, S
South East Anglia (Chelmsford)	CM, CO, IP (part), SS
South Midlands (Northampton)	CV, LE, MK, NN
Southampton	PO, SO, SP
Swansea	SA
Swindon	OX, RG, SN
Truro	TR
Tyneside (Gateshead)	DH, DL, NE, SR, TS
Warrington	CW, L, WA, WN