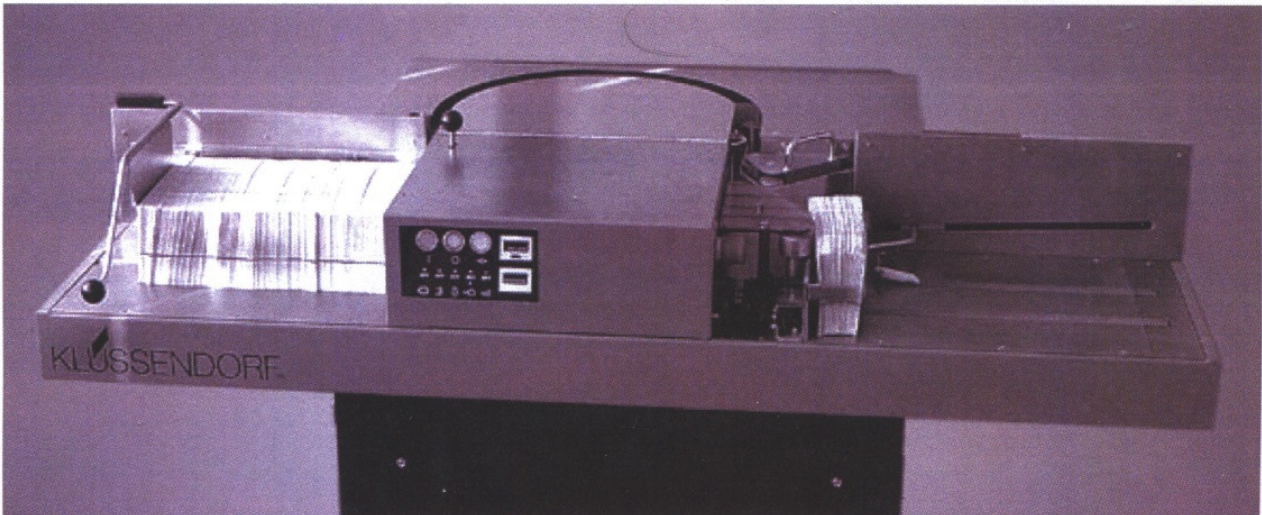


1991 – Klüssendorf Cancelling Machine Trial

During 1991, a German Klüssendorf stamp cancelling machine was trialled at London SE MLO on 1st and 2nd class paid mail.

The trial started on 5 February 1991 and used pink fluorescent ink.

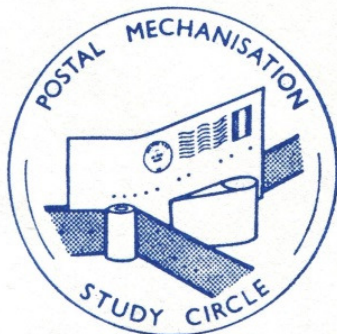


Klüssendorf Model 637 Cancelling Machine

LONDON S.E.D.O.

**MECHANISED
LETTER OFFICE**

**Klüssendorf Cancelling Machine
Trial 1991**



**Mr J.L.L. Burgess
18 Pigott Road
WOKINGHAM
Berks.
RG11 1PY**

PMSC188

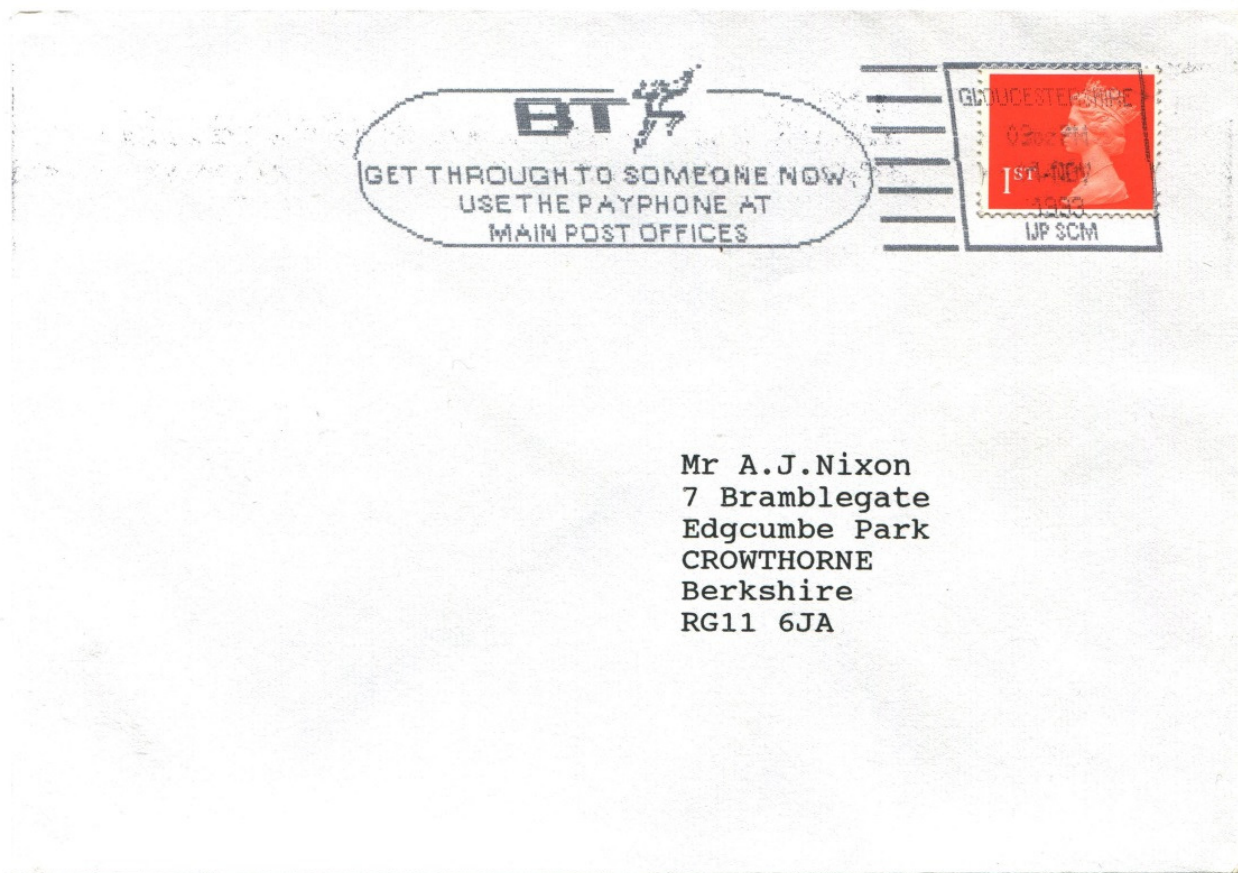
PMSC cover 188: Klüssendorf "2ND PAID" Cancel London SE1 – 21st May 1991

1993 – Gloucester IJP postmark trial

Following some early internal development trials that took place between 1986 and 1991, the Post Office produced a prototype stamp cancelling machine fitted with a droplet-on-demand ink jet printer.

The first trial involving live mail was carried out at Gloucester MLO using a BT slogan in November 1993 when approximately 800,000 items were cancelled.

The machine was transferred to Darlington in December 1993 where a trial of self-adhesive stamps was taking place. Trials of this SCM also took place at Birmingham, Milton Keynes and Swindon in 1994.



SCM with an IJP cancel at Gloucester MLO – 1 Nov 1993

1995 – Slough ink-jet printed desk idents

From July 1995, the 2nd Generation coding desks at Slough MLO were fitted with Sauven rotary ident printers to apply three evenly-spaced desks ident numbers across the envelope.

Nominally, the spacing between the idents was 80m but slippage often occurred, resulting in the distance being much smaller. The trial was intermittent and finished in January 2001.

The example below shows an item dated Feb 1996 from Desk 18.



PMSC Cover 217: Slough MLO Sauven desk idents '18' – 12th Feb 1996

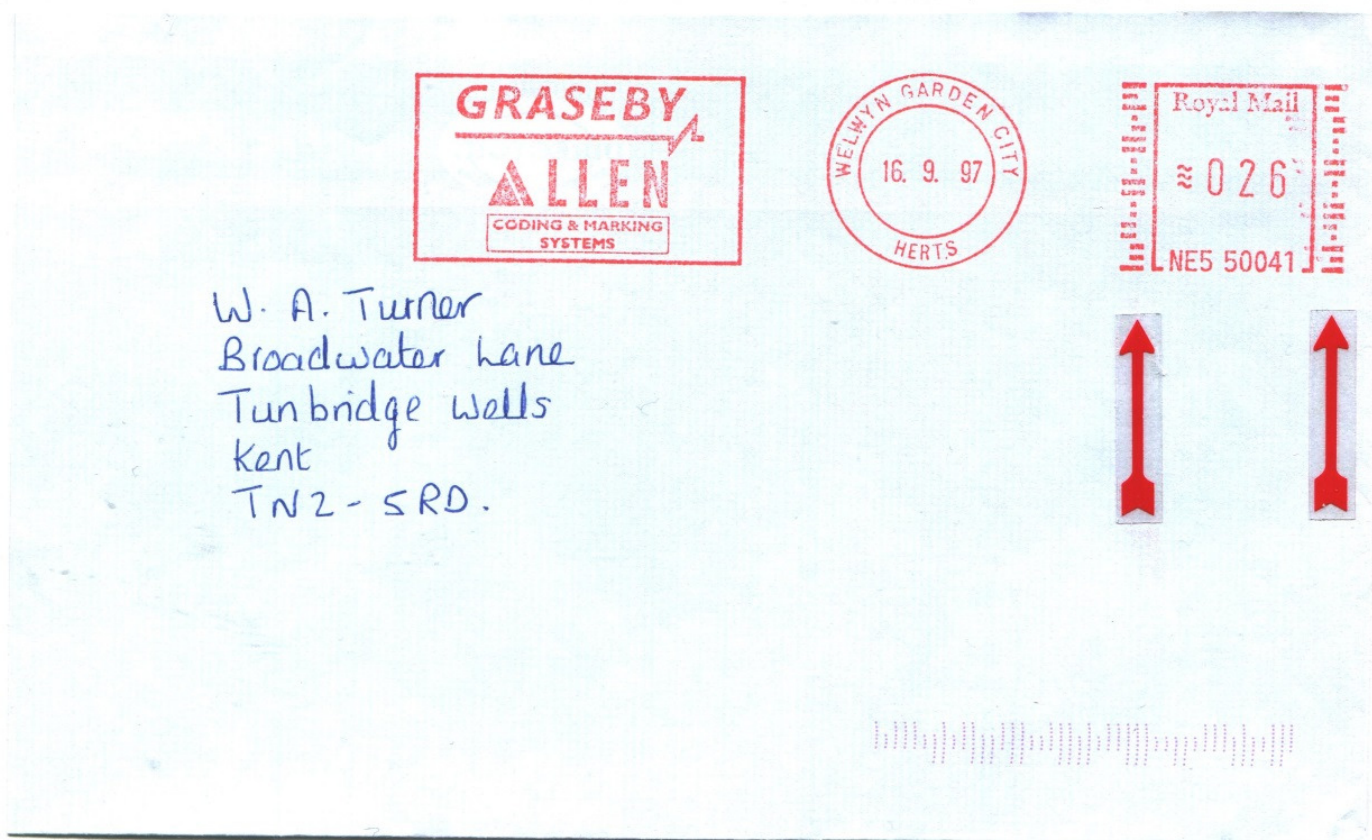
1996 – Watford 4-state Meter Franking IMP Trial

In 1996, exactly 100 meter franking users in the Watford area were invited to be involved in a Royal Mail trial to evaluate the reading capabilities of the Integrated Mail Processor (IMP) at Watford APC.

In this trial, the indicia of the meter frank was temporarily modified and the words “GREAT BRITAIN / POSTAGE PAID” at the sides of the indicia block were replaced with four-state code marks that reflected the meter franking machine serial number.

The vast majority of these machines were from businesses based in Watford itself and nearly all of these also had the town die modified to read “UNITED KINGDOM” in the lower half of the town die. The trial was deemed unsuccessful and was abandoned in 1997.

The following ‘4-state’ meter shows an exception to the above rule as it bears the town die “WELWYN GARDEN CITY / HERTS”:



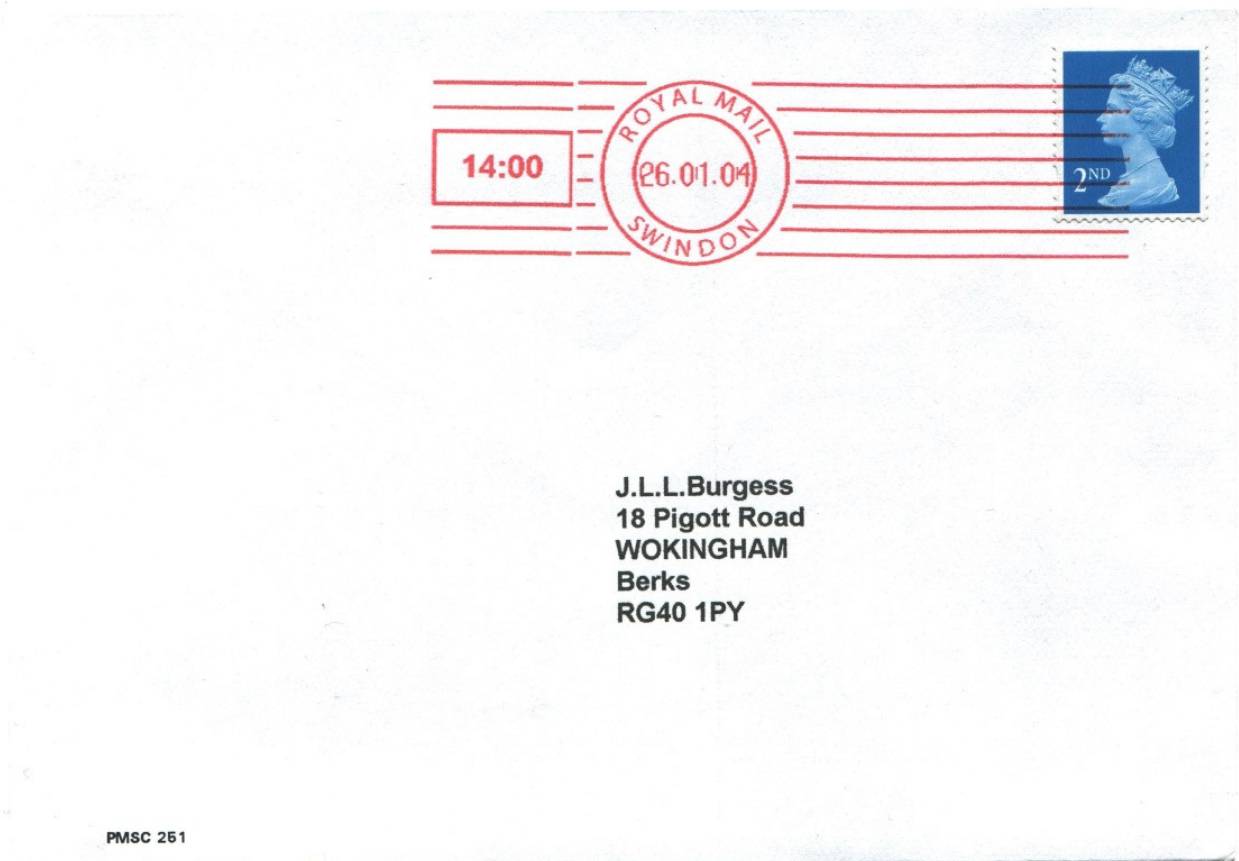
Watford “4-state” meter frank, Welwyn Garden City, 1997

2004 Swindon – IJP Cancellation Trial

For a short period, in January 2004, a trial took place at Swindon to evaluate the use of an Ink Jet printer to cancel bulk stamp mailings.

The printer used was manufactured by Pitney Bowes and was similar to the one used for meter franking. Although the result produced very clear cancels, the trial was deemed unsuccessful because it was unable to meet the speed requirements.

The example below shows an example from this short-lived trial.



IJP trial at Swindon for bulk stamp mailings – 26 Jan 2004

2008 – The ‘Automatic Catalogue Recognition’ Trial

In 2008 a secretive trial took place to check the validity of postage stamps being used. An image of each stamp was held in a database which enabled unrecognised stamps to be rejected. The trial was abandoned because of the time it took to do the processing.



uk_2007_16_08
first

8



uk_2007_16_09
first

8



uk_2007_16_10
first

8



uk_2007_17_01
first

8



uk_2007_17_02
first

8



uk_2007_17_03
first

8



uk_2007_17_04
78

8



uk_2007_17_05
78

8



uk_2007_17_06
78

8



uk_2007_18_01
first

8



uk_2007_18_02
first

8



uk_2007_18_03
54

8



uk_2007_18_04
54

8



uk_2007_18_05
78

8



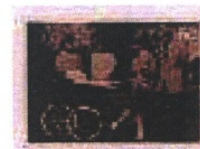
uk_2007_18_06
78

8



uk_2007_19_01
first

8



uk_2007_19_02
69

8



uk_2007_19_03
first

8



uk_2007_19_05
78

8



uk_2007_20_01
first

8



uk_2007_20_02
first_large

8

2008 – The Beaumann Stamp Cancelling Machine

In November 2008, as part of the Royal Mail postmark improvement programme, a Beaumann ATB cancelling machine was trialled at Swindon Mail Centre.

During 2009, similar machines were trialled for short periods at the following Mail Centres:

Carlisle ("Cumbria, Dumfries & Galloway")

Aberdeen ("City of Inverness" and "Aberdeen Mail Centre")

Teesside Mail Centre (Middlesbrough)

Poole ("Dorset & S W Hants")

Tonbridge Mail Centre



J.L.L.Burgess
18 Pigott Road
WOKINGHAM
Berks
RG40 1PY

Beaumann Stamp Cancelling Machine postmark – Swindon, 6 Apr 2009

2011 – Royal Mail Branding Trial

In preparation for the application of the 'cruciform logo' being applied to all mail items handled by Royal Mail, various trials were conducted in 2011/12 to test the new software installed in IMP machines. These trials involved the printing of special symbols on mail items, as follows:

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
# (hash mark)	Mail item correctly processed & recognised as valid
+ (plus sign)	Mail item not recognised
o (small circle)	No indicia detected
u (lower case 'u')	Underpaid item – for revenue protection
m (lower case 'm')	Mis-sorted mail
. (dot)	Branding software in operation

The trial was conducted in secret – with little public awareness.



Cover showing a dot in the postmark indicating "Branding software in operation"

2015 The Banbury Stamp Cancelling Trials

In 2015 it would seem that some secretive trials were conducted at Banbury to evaluate a new device to be used at Delivery Offices to cancel any stamps that have not been postmarked during the earlier handling at a Mail Centre.



It appears that these devices are, effectively, sophisticated self-inking date stamps. It remains to be seen whether they are eventually rolled out across the country but examples of the trial postmarks have been seen and these two types have been reported:



Wavy lines with Maltese cross



Wavy lines with no cross

The postmarks may not be ideal from a collector's point of view, but they are certainly an improvement on the biro cancel, I would say!