METER NEWS

Issue Number 140 June 2012
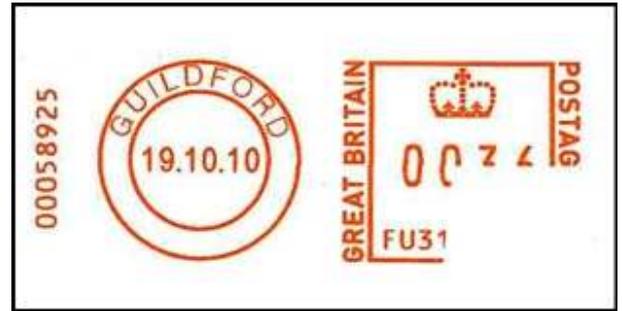
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Meter of the Month

Dave Baker reports an unusual printing malfunction that appears to be occurring on some Francotyp-Postalia Ultimail machines where a chunk of the lower print jet image is missing. In the example here, two vertical bars offset to the far left-hand side of the envelope have appeared instead. The serial number, if it had printed, would have been FU3114731.
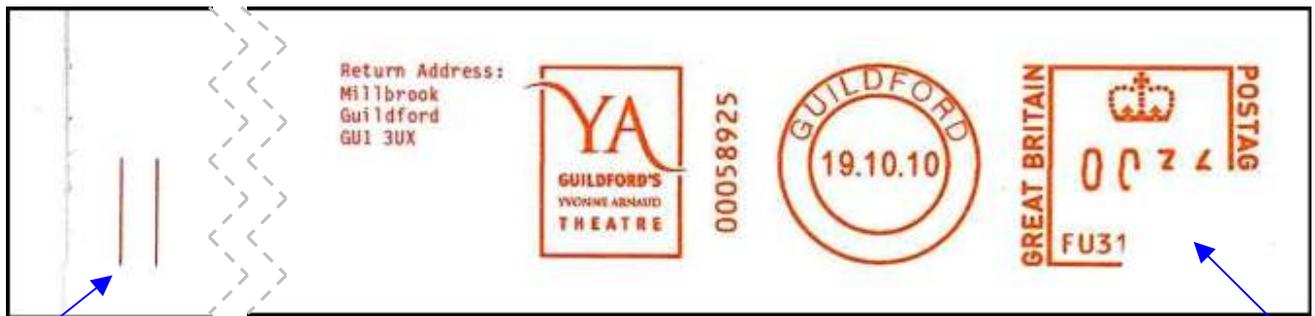
Dave also reports a similar error on this Ultimail machine, serial FU8000061, but without the vertical bars. Your editor wonders whether this could be caused by a common software error that is characteristic of the model and would like to hear from anyone who has noticed any similar occurrences.
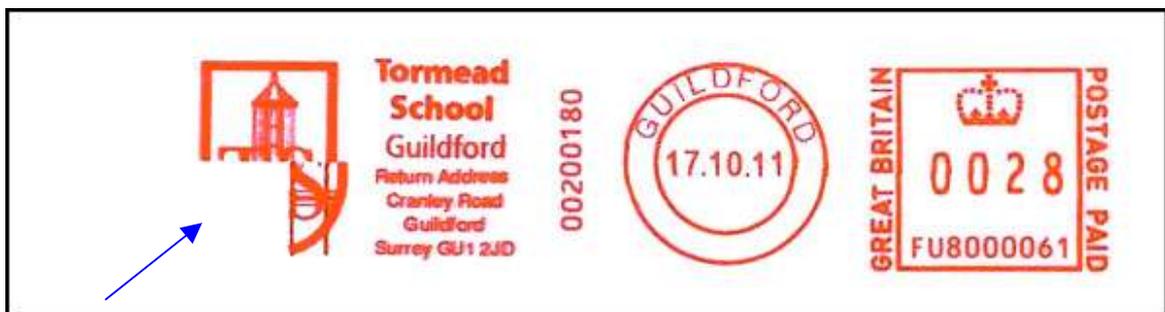
Acknowledgements

My thanks this month go to Jim Ashby, Dave Baker, Peter Mantell, Richard Peck, Robert Petts, and Peter Wood for their reports, communications or contributions.

Latest Numbers

Below is the list of 'latest numbers' as at the end of June 2012 – with updates shown in red. Please could I have the next reports by 28th July - thanks.

In the list below, the part of the serial number that directly relates to the model is underlined.

Frama (UK)

Matrix F2, F4, F6	F1001954	31.05.12	Reported by PM

Francotyp-Postalia

Optimail	T402913	02.06.11	See MN 129
Optimail 25/35	F04114355	20.06.12	Reported by PM
Centormail 240/300	FC5110555	21.02.12	Reported by AN
MyMail / PostagePro	FM2653081	14.05.12	See MN 139
Ultimail	FU3116825	29.05.12	Reported by PM

Neopost

IS-330	N1052182	01.06.12	Reported by PM
IS-350	N1180773	26.06.12	Reported by PM
IJ-65	N1208331	27.03.12	See MN 138
Various upgraded	N1240607	21.10.11	See MN 132
IJ-80/90/110	N1254447	03.01.12	See MN 137
IS-460 (Ex IJ-50)	N1373581	30.11.11	See MN 138
IS-420 (Ex IJ-30)	N1385374	14.11.11	See MN 137
IS-440 (Ex IJ-40)	N1390543	10.02.12	See MN 137
IS-480	N3022782	21.06.12	Reported by R Petts
IS-240 / IS-280	N3306700	29.03.12	See MN 138
IS-5000/6000	N5001340	08.06.12	Reported by PM

Pitney Bowes

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DM50, 55	PB089668	07.06.12	Reported by PM
DM 810, 900 etc.	PB527622	20.04.12	See MN 139
Connect+ 1000 etc.	PB551419	14.09.11	See MN 131
Connect+ 10FC etc.	PB556070	31.05.12	Reported by DB
DM 400, 450, 475	PB617383	25.05.12	See MN 139
DM100i, 150i etc.	PB867230	27.06.12	Reported by AN
Unknown	PB898932	09.08.11	See MN 134

Advanced Mail

AAEK-CA	FU3116534	03.05.12	Reported by AN
ABCE-GH	PB555386	15.02.11	See MN 128 & 132

Further to page 132-2, it appears that the out-of-sequence Advanced Mail code 'ABCE-GH' is, indeed, an error as no others in this series have been reported. It will therefore be omitted from future reports.
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Latest Numbers – Images

Below are images of the latest numbers reported this month, reduced in size by 60%. In order to fill the page, this month I have also included images of those that didn't quite make the list on page 2. The initials of the person who made the report are shown in the bottom left-hand corner of each item. Note that the image of PB556070 is shown on page 7.
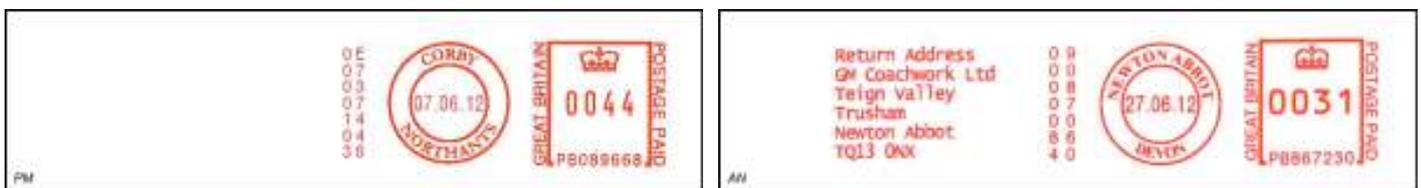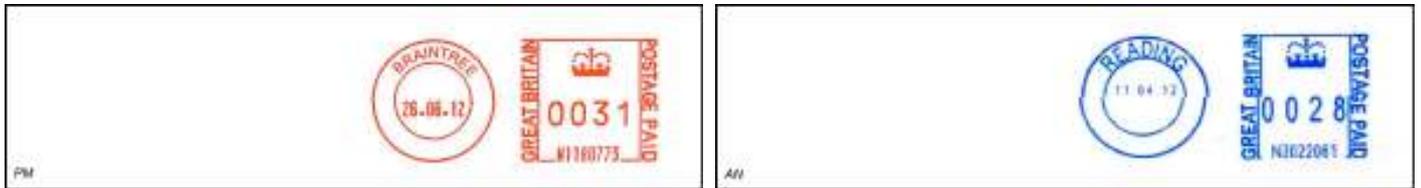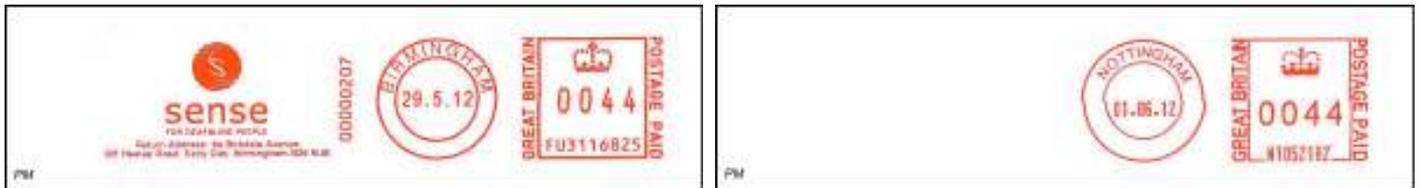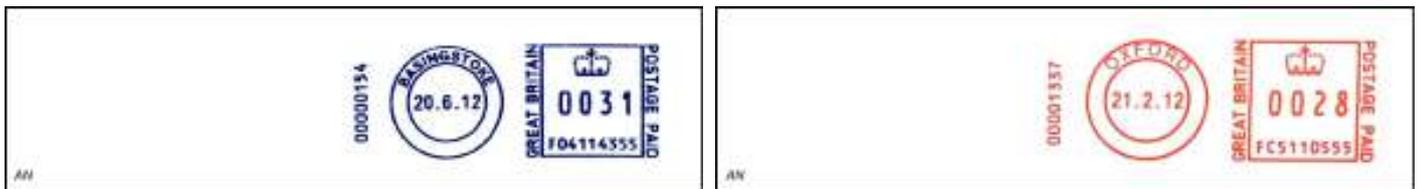
Advanced Mail

On page 134-5, Neopost's own machine being used at the Chesham office, N1253519, was illustrated with "Return Address: 118 Information / PO Box 15003 / Sutton Coldfield B73 9QT". Your editor can now report that this same message was used at their Romford Office on machine N5001011 earlier this year, as shown below. However, what is very strange with this frank is that their first class Advanced Mail code "AAAA-BH" has been used on this second class item in conjunction with the correct Reed-Solomon error correction code for their second class code postings, i.e. "RE-USUA".   For the record, the full code for their first class postings should be "AAAA-BHKC-SBTT".

Your editor has only recently noticed that the illustration on page 134-4 shows Neopost's own machine, N5001011, at Romford on 09.09.11 using a completely different code "AACL-SJ" from their originally allocated "AAAA-BK" code. Your editor has also found two further examples dated 26.08.11 and 03.10.11 (shown below), so it appears that this code was in use for at least 5 weeks. Further reports that extend the use of this code or any use of the equivalent first class code "AACL-SH", would be welcome. As can be seen from the above examples, Neopost have since reverted to their normal Advanced Mail code.

Since the introduction of the Cleanmail Advance service in 2007, Royal Mail have never used the letters 'D', 'F', 'I', 'M', 'N', 'O', 'P', 'Q', 'V' and 'W' anywhere in the Advanced Mail Code. As with most rules, there has to be an exception! Here, your editor has found the letter 'V' being used, which is almost certainly a keying-in error. Further reports of any of the 'banned' letters would be appreciated.
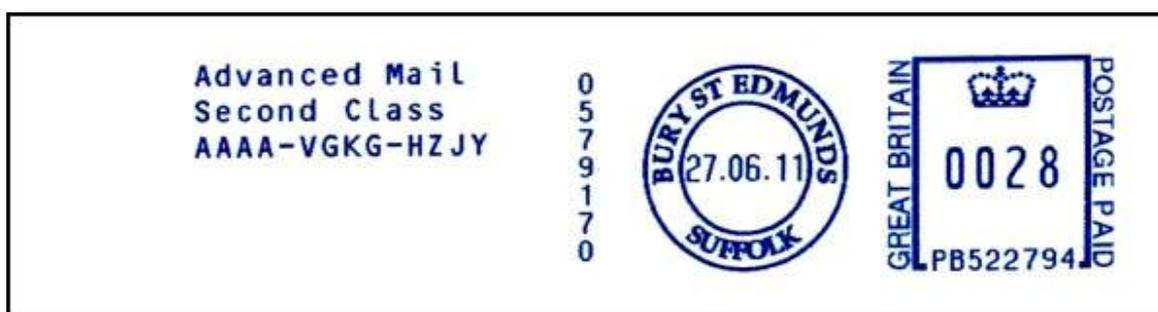
Advanced Mail

When Advanced Mail codes are assigned to a user, they are allocated sequentially in 'pairs'. In the case shown below, the codes for this user are 'AAAS-GS' and 'AAAS-GT'. Normally, the 'first' code of the pair is assigned to First Class mail and the 'second' code is assigned to Second Class mail. However, in this case, your editor has noticed that the assignment is the other way round – with the Second Class code being assigned the 'second' code. It is not known whether Royal Mail supplied these codes incorrectly or whether they have been entered into the franking machine incorrectly. This is the first time this 'inverse' allocation has been noticed and any similar reports would be welcome.

Your editor has found this Second Class Advanced Mail item being used on a first class PPI mail item.

However, unlike the items shown at the top of this page, there is no 'code inversion' in this case, the real Second Class Advanced Mail code is correct (see below):

Royal Mail Branding Trial – Condition 9 PPI

Peter Mantell reports a new format to the indicia on a Docmail C9 10034 Printed Postage Impression (PPI). It is in black and white and bears the Royal Mail Cruciform logo and the words 'Delivered by' instead of the normal 'S Postage Paid GB' format (shown alongside). It is not known at this stage whether this will eventually become the new format for 'Condition 9' PPIs or whether it is an experiment as part of the Royal Mail Branding Trial.

Errors

Robert Petts kindly sends a scan of this frank, from this Frama machine serial 'FSC221926', that has the year '21'. From the 28p rate applied, it would seem likely that this should have read '11'. Such errors used to occur fairly regularly before the turn of the century, but they are impossible on modern digital machines. Nowadays, there are very few pre-digital machines left in use, so errors like this are seldom seen.

With reference to page 110-3, Robert also sends a nice example of where an item missed the collection on a Friday (8th June) and the date was then corrected on the Monday (11th June) via a label being affixed. This course of action (almost) aligns with Royal Mail's Franking User Guide which states: "If you frank your mail with the wrong date, put a line through the incorrect date in black ink, adjust the date on your franking machine and set the postage to £0.00. Then re-frank the envelope with the correct date on the reverse. Alternatively, frank a label with zero postage and the correct date, and place it on the envelope to the left of the original impression, covering the date but not the postage paid.

PB Connect+ Coloured Slogans

This month we have 5 reports of new coloured slogans from Pitney Bowes Connect+ machines from your editor, Dave Baker, Peter Wood, Peter Mantell and Dave Baker respectively. In Peter Wood's report, 'HE' stands for Higher Education.

Return Address
Royal Albert Hall
Kensington Gore
London
SW7 2AP

04 26 75 43 60 F 91 2

LONDON 07.11.11

GREAT BRITAIN
POSTAGE PAID
0039
PB555225

Arthritis Research UK
Copeman House
St Marys Court
St Marys Gate
Chesterfield S41 7TD

Arthritis Research UK
Providing answers today and tomorrow

00 08 82 79 38 B1 91 1A A7 78

CHESTERFIELD 17.02.12

GREAT BRITAIN
POSTAGE PAID
0039
PB555359

CITY OF WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

Come and visit on our
HE OPEN DAY
Wednesday 16th May
15:00-19:00
Paddington Green London W2 1NB

06 00 24 79 83 E0 E8 81 11 95

LONDON 30.04.12

GREAT BRITAIN
POSTAGE PAID
0031
PB555519

Be Humankind Oxfam

RETURN ADDRESS
OXFAM
John Smith Drive
OXFORD
OX4 2JY

0F 08 81 17 70 2A 44 88 32 08

OXFORD 15.06.12

GREAT BRITAIN
POSTAGE PAID
0044
PB555541

CHAMBERS
Chambers Waste
Management Plc

Chambers Waste
Clay lane
Jacobs Well
Guildford
GU4 7NZ

02 06 00 85 97 34 5A 6D 05 D7 74

GUILDFORD 31.05.12

GREAT BRITAIN
POSTAGE PAID
0044
PB556070

Meter Thematics

Your editor provides all the thematic franks this month. On the item below some detective work had to be employed to find out the user. The London W4 region covers the Chiswick area and my first Internet search on "Chiswick House" worked! One of the images within the revolving banner on the main page of the web site http://www.chgt.org.uk/ shows this amazing piece of architecture at the top of a column within the main building.
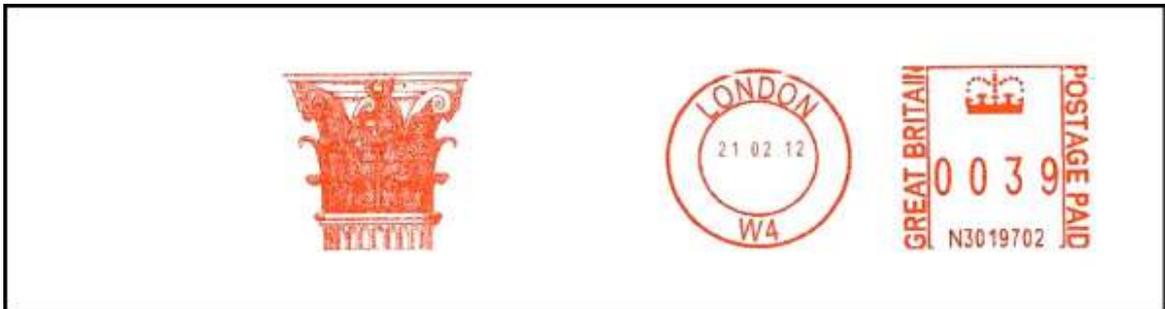
Here are two attractive bird designs – the first is an owl from a company called Chemring Countermeasures and the second is a hawk from Hawkstone Park, Shrewsbury.
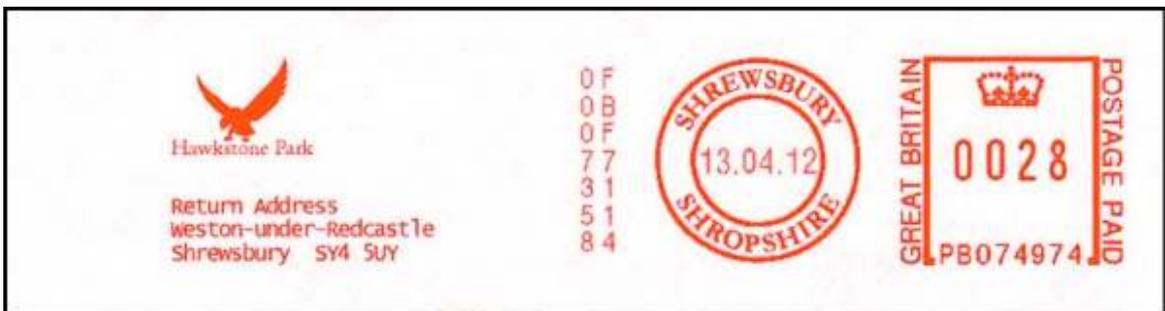
My 'Meter Thematic of the Month' this time goes overseas. Germany often produces some of the best designs of all - and this one is no exception. This mighty fine specimen of a grasshopper comes from the Deutsches Entomologisches Institut. Stunning!