

METER NEWS

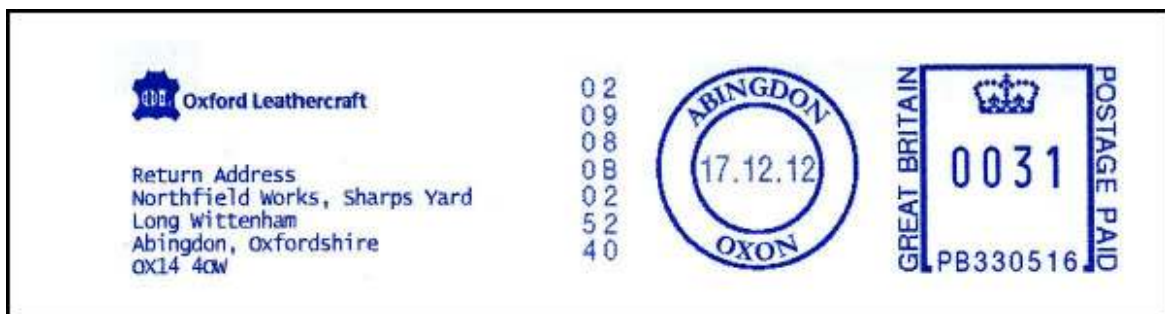
Issue Number 146 Dec 2012



Editor: Alastair Nixon, 7 Bramblegate, Edgcombe Park, Crowthorne, Berks, RG45 6JA. Tel: +44 (0) 1344 775378
Email: nixon48@gmail.com Web site: <http://www.meterfranking.co.uk>

Meter of the Month

Peter Mantel is the first to report this new Pitney Bowes PB33 series, with PB330516 in blue ink. According to their web site, it seems that Pitney Bowes have not launched any new models this month and hence we can only assume that this is a continuation of the PBO series, which was rapidly reaching PB099999. It appears that many, if not all, new Pitney Bowes machines are being supplied with blue ink whatever the intended throughput of the model. The full image is shown below:



Editorial

This issue brings 2012 to a close and it is an opportunity to take stock of the main events during the past year. In April, Royal Mail introduced large price rises and this has had a significant impact on the volume of all types of mail. However, the significant discounts given for meter franked mail have also increased and we have seen the number of franking machines sold continue to rise at a steady rate. This is particularly true for the Small Office / Home Office (SOHO) end of the market. Next month, as usual in our January issue, your editor will be doing a full analysis of new machines that were sold during 2012.

In September, Pitney Bowes launched their new DM 160i/220i model, but the other three manufacturers did not introduce any new models in 2012.

In spite of the lack of new models, there has been much to report during 2012, with over 100 pages of news that has covered all aspects of our hobby.

Acknowledgements

My thanks this month go to Jon Aitchison, Jim Ashby, Patrick Awcock, Michael Dobbs, Peter Huss, Peter Mantell, Richard Peck and Robert Petts for their reports, communications or contributions.

Latest Numbers

Below is the list of 'latest numbers' as at the end of December 2012 – with updates shown in red. Please could I have the next reports by 28th January 2013 - 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	<u>F1002463</u>	03.12.12	Reported by PM
-------------------	-----------------	----------	----------------

Francotyp-Postalia

Optimail 25/35	<u>F04114640</u>	02.10.12	See MN 144
Centormail 240/300	<u>FC5110606</u>	30.11.12	Reported by PM
MyMail / PostagePro	<u>FM2654301</u>	10.12.12	Reported by AN
Ultimail	<u>FU3117033</u>	26.09.12	See MN 144

Neopost

IS-330	<u>N1052182</u>	01.06.12	See MN 140
IS-350	<u>N1180808</u>	08.08.12	Reported by PM
IJ-65	<u>N1208331</u>	27.03.12	See MN 138
Various upgraded	<u>N1240627</u>	11.10.12	Reported by PM
IJ-80/90/110	<u>N1254480</u>	28.11.12	Reported by PM
IS-460 (Ex IJ-50)	<u>N1373581</u>	30.11.11	See MN 138
IS-420 (Ex IJ-30)	<u>N1385377</u>	24.05.12	See MN 142
IS-440 (Ex IJ-40)	<u>N1390617</u>	31.07.12	Reported by PM
IS-480	<u>N3024516</u>	30.11.12	Reported by PM
IS-240 / IS-280	<u>N3310903</u>	23.10.12	See MN 144
IS-5000/6000	<u>N5001401</u>	04.10.12	Reported by PM

Pitney Bowes

DM50, 55	<u>PB099054</u>	14.12.12	Reported by PM
DM160i/220i	<u>PB160504</u>	29.11.12	See MN 145
DM50, 55	<u>PB330516</u>	17.12.12	Reported by PM, p146-1
DM 810, 900 etc.	<u>PB527633</u>	02.07.12	Reported by PM
Connect+ 1000 etc.	<u>PB551659</u>	01.11.12	See MN 145
Connect+ 10FC etc.	<u>PB556320</u>	06.11.12	Reported by AN
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB617982</u>	11.12.12	Reported by PM
DM100i, 150i etc.	<u>PB871036</u>	05.12.12	Reported by PM

Advanced Mail Codes

AAEU-LR	<u>F1002463</u>	03.12.12	Reported by PM, p146-3
----------------	-----------------	----------	------------------------

Peter Mantell also reports an increase in the FSC91 and N1318 dead series – the details are given on page 146-11.

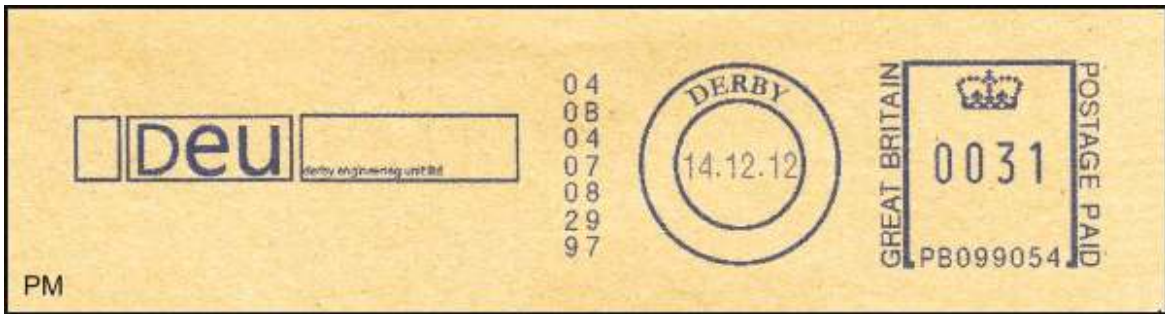
Latest Number Images

Below are images of the latest numbers reported this month – with contributor's initials shown in the bottom left of the image.



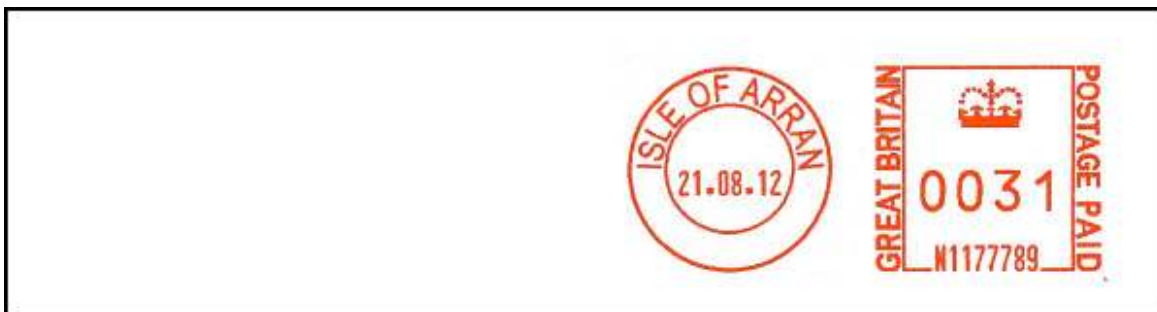
Latest Number Images continued

Note that the image for PB330516 is shown on page 146-1.

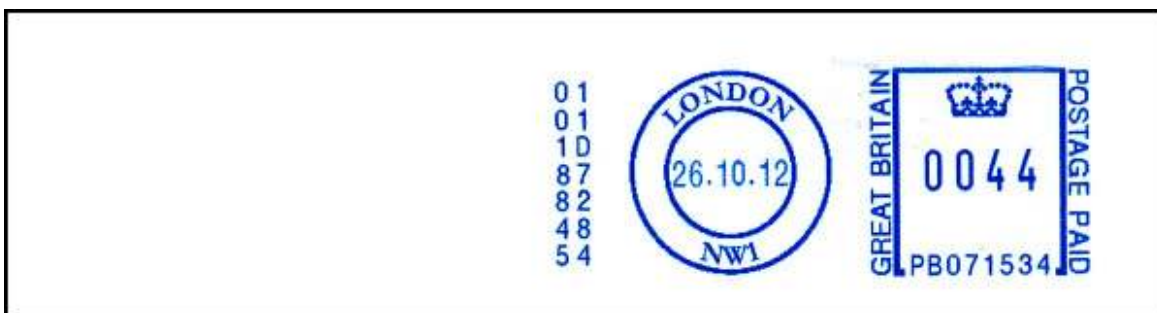


Recent Interesting Items

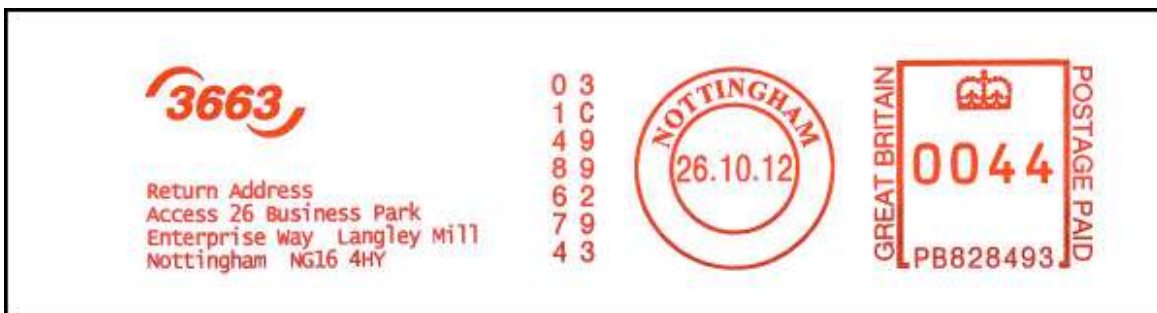
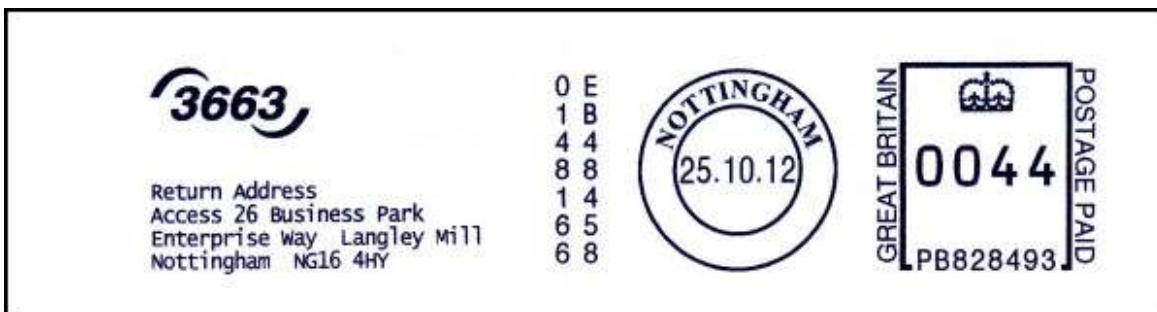
Peter Mantell has kindly sent all of the reports for this section this month. The first is a rare townmark from the [Isle of Arran](#). According to the Wikipedia web site, the island has an area of 167 square miles but only has a population of just over 5000.



Last month, on page 145-3, we asked whether it was possible that 'blue' has now become the default standard colour for all new machines produced by Pitney Bowes. This has yet to be confirmed but, thanks to Peter Mantell, here is another example of a user applying blue ink on an entry-level DM 50/55 machine.



Continuing this topic, Peter Mantell also reports this dark blue ink being used on a low-throughput DM 100/150i machine. It is interesting to note that the following day the user had changed the ink back to the standard red colour.



Recent Interesting Items Continued

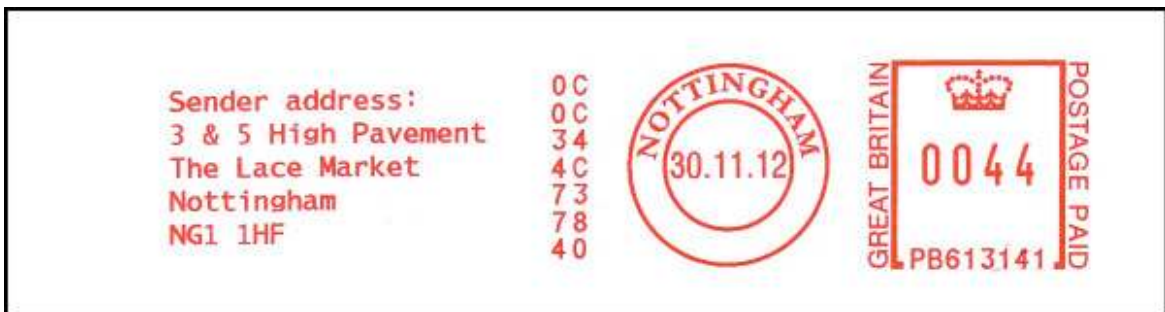
It is rare to find oriental characters on British meter franks but Peter Mantell has sent this rather nice example. According to [Google Translate](http://www.google.com/translate), the characters are Chinese and, unsurprisingly, translate as “SeeWoo”.



Meter franks bearing zero values are often seen on mail, but this one is rather strange as it is accompanied by a ‘First Class’ slogan in die 3. My thanks go to Peter Mantell for the report.



Royal Mail regulations for the Return Address Block (see page 67-5) state that the words “Return Address” are included in the address details. Peter Mantell reports an example where this rule has been broken – with the words “Sender address” included instead.

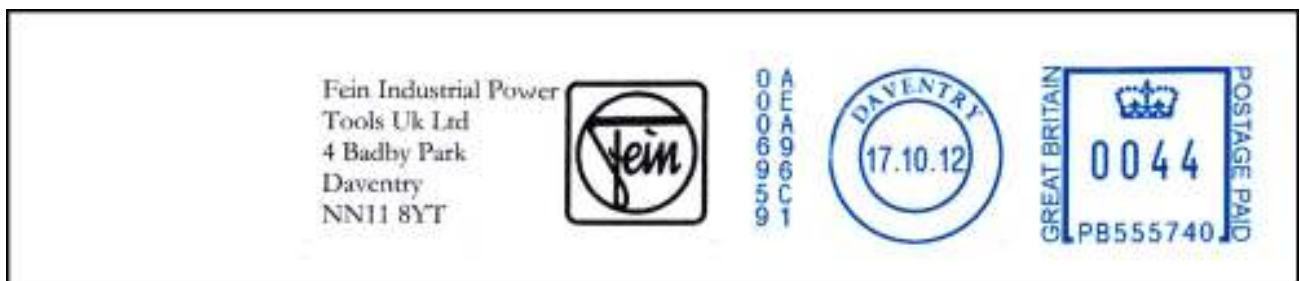


On page 134-3 we reported the out-of-sequence serial PB898932. As no other reports of numbers starting PB898 were received, this was withdrawn from the list of latest numbers in October and it was regarded as a one-off. Now Peter Mantell reports the existence of PB898930 - thus confirming that there was, after all, a mini-series in this range.



PB Connect+ Coloured Slogans

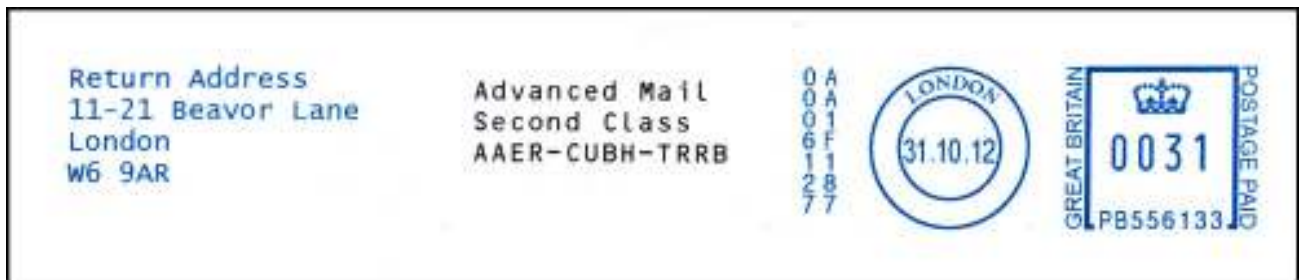
Peter Mantell provides all of the images in this section, starting with this stunning '3-D' frank from Accolade Wines. The previous 'Ginger Joe' one from the same company was shown on page 142-5.



PB Connect+ Coloured Slogans continued



The next frank was illustrated on page 144-6 with the same Advanced Mail code, but this example bears a different return address.



Franking Errors

Peter Huss reports this T1000 meter from 2004 - serial number T 033682. The T series is known with numbers beginning with, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7, but this is the first time one has been seen beginning with '0'. Your editor is unable to say whether this is a genuinely allocated number or an error - similar to the reports on p.139-1 that had an additional '0' at the end.



Peter Mantell reports this unusual printing error on this IS 5000/6000 machine. In the first illustration below, there appear to be five almost horizontal lines - level with the town mark in the frank and extending right across the length of the frank. In the second example (one week later) the frank had seven lines, again extending across the length of the frank, but going below the town mark and now in a wave formation.



Further to page 116.5, here is another example of a MyMail frank where the top of the print has become increasingly separated from the lower half. The user later superimposed a second impression. The machine in question is FM2118505 (see the normal impression on page 134-11), whereas previously the error occurred on machine FM2118730. It appears, therefore, that a whole batch of machines may have been affected by this software error.

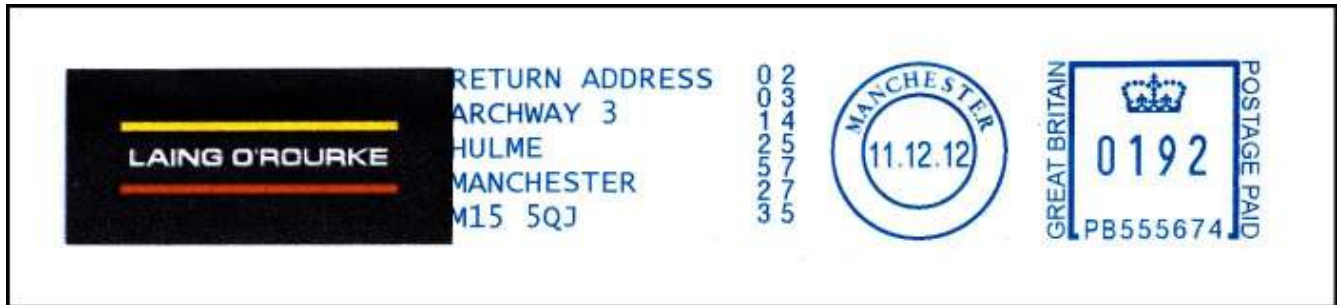


Franking Errors continued

Here is an unusual printing error on a label produced by machine N1354996. From records kept, the user is '3663' from the village of Newbridge - to the West of Edinburgh.



Peter Mantell has found this Connect+ frank from Laing O'Rourke where the user logo has encroached onto the return address field. This is likely to be purely a user error as the exact positioning of the logo is adjustable from the control panel of the machine. Note that on page 134-6 we illustrated a similar (correctly positioned) slogan from the Dartford office of the same company and this is shown below for comparison purposes.



Peter Mantell has found this slogan error on a MyMail machine, which reads "mymail / good for me / and my m". Presumably, the last word should read "mail". Your editor is uncertain whether this is due to a software hiccup in the machine, a user error or whether there is actually a limitation on the total number of characters allowed for the slogan text.



Dead Series Update

Peter Mantell sends highest number reports for two of the Dead Series - namely FSC910701 and N1318196:



Instructional Markings

Peter Mantell reports the use of a Meter Control handstamp at Birmingham Mail Centre on a stamped mail item. Presumably this was either simply being used as a convenient handstamp to cancel the stamp or because the item in question had been placed in a meter pouch in error by the sender and spotted by one of the machine operators.



BFPO Meters

Peter Mantell noticed this N3002683 frank with a town mark of RUISLIP with just 5p of postage and then spotted an almost illegible handstamp with 'BFPO 125'?

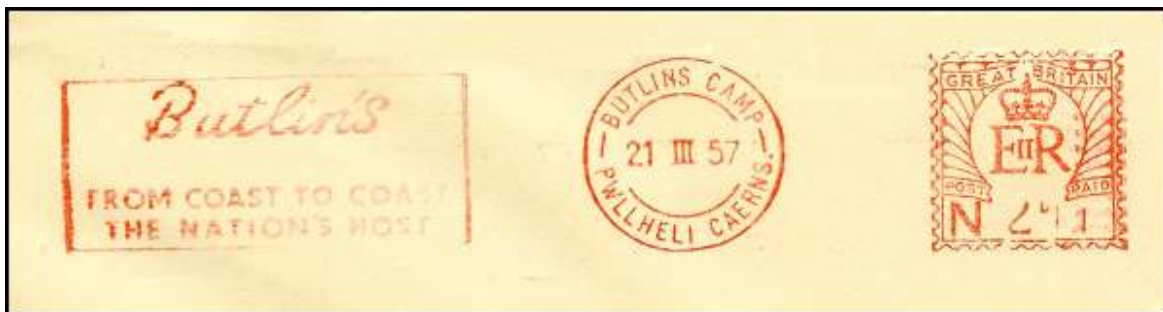
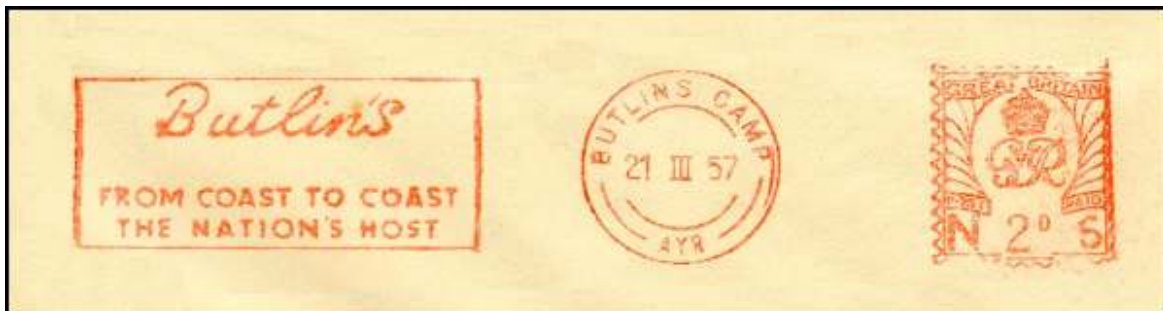
The reverse bears another handstamp which appears to read "SERVICES UNSON OFFICE / 19 FEB 2009 / OSNABRUCK BFPO 36 / CERTIFIED OFFICIAL". This raises the question of what discounts are given for armed forces meter franked mail? Also, what is the connection with Ruislip, Middlesex?



Meter Franks form the Past

Your editor has re-discovered these four franks from his collection. All have the name "Butlins Camp" in upper part of the town die, with the town itself in the lower half. Butlins Camp town dies are known to have been recorded on live mail, but these particular ones have obviously been philatelically produced as they all have the same date of 21 III 57.

The first two are from Ayr and Pwllheli respectively and each have a slogan which reads "FROM COAST TO COAST THE NATION'S HOST":



The third is from Clacton-On-Sea but does not include a slogan.



The fourth is from Skegness and has the slogan "THE ONLY HOLIDAY OF ITS KIND!":



Your editor would be pleased to hear from anyone who has earlier or later date information.

Meter Thematics

The US-based [Meter Stamp Society](#) discussion group has recently posted this rather attractive kangaroo, which is worthy of inclusion here.



Further to page 79-9, Peter Mantell reports the latest version of this coat of arms from Fettes College where the Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, amongst other famous people, was educated. The original (stretched) version is included beneath for comparison purposes.



Michael Dobbs sends this frank from the Workspace Group PLC that provides business premises tailored to the needs of new and growing companies across London. This slogan, depicting two circles is, perhaps, the start of a new 'shapes' theme?



Meter Thematics continued

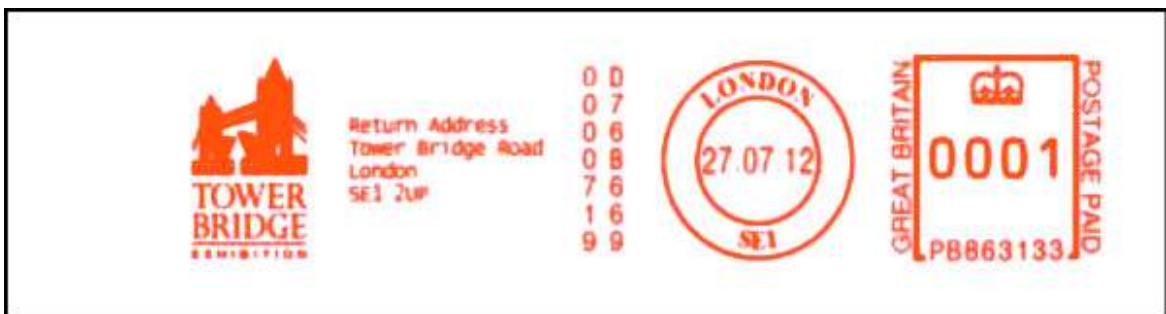
Peter Mantell reports that some London 2012 Olympic-related meter franks have been recently posted on eBay. Three of these franks are shown below but, unfortunately, none of them include the London 2012 logo, though. The first illustration is a meter frank from the [British Olympics Association](#) based in London.



The second item comes from the [British Cycling](#) team based in Manchester:



The third item advertises the [Tower Bridge Exhibition](#):



Finally, Peter Mantell provides my Meter Thematic of the Month award for this rather splendid parrot from the wildlife sanctuary [Paradise Park](#) in Cornwall.

