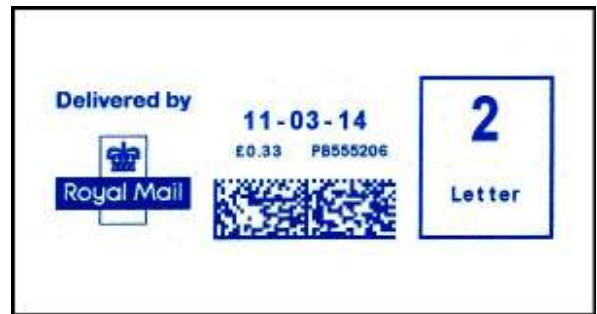


METER NEWS

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Meter of the Month

Well, here we are! Your editor reports our earliest live example of the new Mailmark™ design. This design will, in time, replace our current 'Design H' for all meter franks. The frank is from the Pitney Bowes office in Harlow and the full image is shown below:



The meter franking philatelic world will widely regard this as 'Design J' because 'Design I' was assigned to the 1996 Watford 4-state trial design (see page 123-1 and earlier).

Frama Matrix Machines Re-branded

Frama have re-branded their Matrix machines with some new variants. The models now listed are the Matrix F12, F22, F32, F42, F62 and the F82.

As it happens, your editor has found a meter frank with a new serial prefix "FR2". The item concerned has the new Mailmark matrix coding and is illustrated on page 3. It is easy to jump to the conclusion that this is an example one of the new Frama machines, but "FR" could also indicate "Francotyp-Postalia". Last month we reported a new variant of the PostBase – the Q9, so it is just possible that the "FR2" prefix is associated with that model.

Please could readers report other examples of this machine – particularly if the user return address is shown and their previous machine is known. My money is with this new prefix being a Frama machine as all Matrix models have a "2" in the model type, but time will tell.

Acknowledgements

My thanks this month go to Jon Aitchison, Michael Dobbs, Gwynne Harries, Alan Godfrey, David Jones, Peter Mantell, Peter Huss, Greg Spring, and Peter Wood for their reports, communications or contributions.

Latest Numbers

Below is the list of 'latest numbers' as at the end of March 2014 – with updates shown in red. Please could I have the next reports by 28th April - thanks. In the list below, the part of the serial number that directly relates to the model is underlined.

Unknown

?? FR2000023 21.03.14 Reported by AN

Frama (UK)

Matrix F2, F4, F6 F1003594 12.02.14 See MN 160

Francotyp-Postalia

Optimail 25/35 F04115546 28.02.14 Reported by PM
 Centormail 240/300 FC5110668 05.06.13 See MN 152
 MyMail / PostagePro FM2655540 03.09.13 See MN 155
 PostBase FP6110743 31.01.14 See MN 160
 Ultimail FU3117271 08.07.13 See MN 153

Neopost

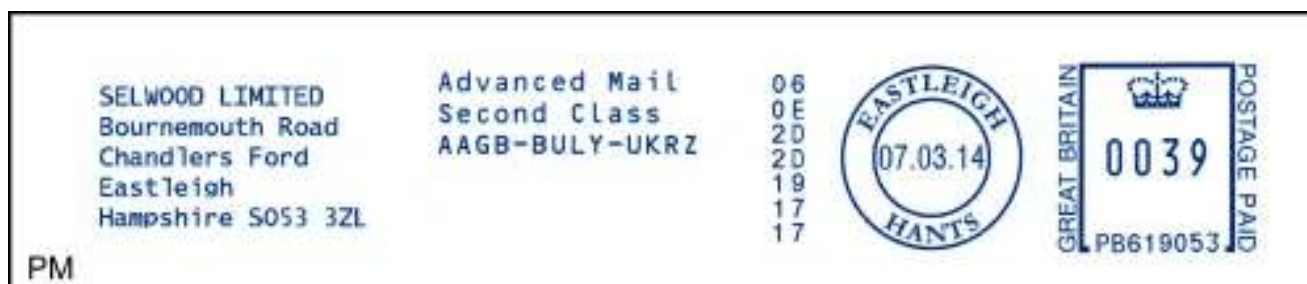
IS-330 N1052705 06.08.13 See MN 154
 IS-350 N1181955 14.02.14 See MN 160
 Various upgraded N1240674 18.11.13 See MN 158
 IJ-80/90/110 N1254487 11.07.13 See MN 158
 IS-460 (Ex IJ-50) N1373678 23.04.13 See MN 150
 IS-420 (Ex IJ-30) N1385456 06.02.13 See MN 148
 IS-440 (Ex IJ-40) N1390685 22.08.13 See MN 154
 IS-480 N3029521 14.02.14 See MN 160
 IS-240 / IS-280 N3318581 24.02.14 See MN 160
 IS-5000/6000 N5001663 04.02.14 See MN 160

Pitney Bowes

DM50, 55 PB099074 15.03.13 See MN 149
 DM160i/220i PB164165 18.03.14 Reported by AN
 DM50, 55 PB351151 11.03.14 Reported by PM
 DM 810, 900 etc. PB527641 18.03.13 See MN 151
 Connect+ 1000 etc. PB551781 26.11.13 See MN 157
 Connect+ 10FC etc. PB556984 18.03.14 Reported by PM
 DM 400, 450, 475 PB619833 13.03.14 Reported by AN
 DM100i, 150i etc. PB879833 21.02.14 See MN 160

Advanced Mail Codes

AAGB-BU PB619053 07.03.14 Reported by PM, see below
 AAGJ-HH HQ25668 PPI no date See MN 160



Latest Number Images

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



Analysis of Mail Items (January - March 2014)

Your editor has performed an analysis of 776 mail items collected from the same source over the same 7-week period (January to March) as the analysis made in recent years. This represents a 25% drop in volume compared with the figure of 1030 last year. However, the overall proportion of meter items compared with other mail types has remained constant compared with last year.

The following table shows the breakdown of the 776 mail items into the main categories of Meter Franked Mail, Stamped Mail and PPIs + Others. It also shows the percentage breakdown compared with the previous four years (in black text). Note that these figures include mail from overseas.

Category	Total 2014	2014%	2013%	2012%	2011%	2010%
Meter Franked Mail	458	59.0%	59.4%	55.9%	55.3%	59.4%
Stamped Mail	169	21.8%	23.5%	22.3%	23.0%	23.6%
PPI & Others	149	19.2%	17.1%	21.8%	21.7%	17.0%

The next table gives the breakdown by size of envelope.

Size	Total 2014	2014%	2013%	2012%	2011%	2010%
C4 or larger	24	4.4%	2.3%	3.7%	4.1%	4.8%
C5	190	18.9%	18.5%	23.3%	19.6%	13.7%
DL	812	76.1%	78.9%	73.0%	75.9%	80.7%
C6 or smaller	3	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.7%

The next table shows the proportion of 1st class to 2nd class mail (UK mail only)

Type - Class	Total 2014	2014%	2013%	2012%	2011%	2010%
Stamped mail – 1st	65	40.1%	37.3%	43.6%	40.1%	38.6%
Stamped mail – 2nd	97	59.9%	62.7%	56.4%	59.9%	61.4%
Metered mail – 1st	206	46.0%	45.4%	48.8%	50.8%	50.6%
Metered mail – 2nd	242	54.0%	54.6%	51.2%	49.2%	49.4%

The next table shows the volume of meter-franked mail broken down by manufacturer. Note that these figures exclude overseas mail.

Manufacturer	Total 2014	2014%	2013%	2012%	2011%	2010%
Frama	19	4.2%	3.4%	3.7%	4.2%	5.4%
Francotyp-Postalia	36	8.0%	6.4%	7.3%	8.8%	7.3%
Neopost	166	36.9%	42.3%	40.9%	42.6%	41.9%
Pitney Bowes	229	50.9%	47.9%	48.2%	44.5%	45.4%

Analysis of Mail Items Continued

This table shows the actual number of items for each main meter series.

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Frama					
F1	14	3	6	7	2
FSC20-22	0	0	1	4	6
FSC25-29	1	2	4	7	8
FSC3	1	1	3	7	5
FSC7	0	0	0	0	2
FSC9	3	14	9	10	25
PB					
PB0	29	45	49	53	50
PB13	2	2	3	2	1
PB16	8				
PB2	4	4	3	3	12
PB30-32	0	0	0	4	7
PB33	13	4	-	-	-
PB37-38	0	0	1	2	12
PB4	1	2	7	11	35
PB50-52	22	31	40	59	74
PB550/1	4	7	8	5	-
PB555/6	11	6	3	2	-
PB6	32	45	52	52	39
PB7	0	0	1	14	10
PB8	102	134	133	150	148
PB9	1	3	2	10	8

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
F-P					
F04	6	12	15	16	7
FC	1	0	1	2	
FM	3	5	6	6	3
FP	5				
FU3	3	2	3	13	3
FU8	4	6	5	14	15
FU9	5	6	11	8	11
T	5	7	5	15	19
Neopost					
N105	1	3	2	0	0
N11	6	34	38	61	72
N120	4	6	8	9	26
N124	3	5	3	4	2
N125	7	14	16	19	19
N129	0	0	0	1	0
N130-131	5	7	11	31	30
N135	10	22	26	42	64
N137	2	0	5	13	15
N138	4	19	20	23	22
N139	0	1	1	2	2
N3	101	134	114	111	72
N33	15	5	8	0	
N5	8	1	0		

Finally, the following table shows the percentage of franks that were applied in blue ink.

Manufacturer	Total in period	Total Blue	% Blue
Frama	19	16	84.2%
F-Postalia	32	21	65.6%
Neopost	166	82	49.4%
Pitney Bowes	229	120	52.4%
Total	446	239	53.6%

Recent Interesting Items

Your editor reports our first examples of the Francotyp-Postalia T1000 series in blue ink.



Mailmark™ News

Francotyp-Postalia have published a Savings Guide for use of Mailmark. The web page can be found at <http://www.fp-franking-machines.co.uk/assets/mailmark-savings-guide.pdf> but an extract for standard mail is shown below:

		1st Class					2nd Class				
		Stamps	Franking	Mailmark	SAVING stamps v's franking	SAVING stamps v's Mailmark	Stamps	Franking	Mailmark	SAVING stamps v's franking	SAVING stamps v's Mailmark
Letter	0-100g	£0.62	£0.50	£0.49	£0.12	£0.13	£0.53	£0.37	£0.35	£0.16	£0.18
Large Letter	0-100g	£0.93	£0.76	£0.74	£0.17	£0.19	£0.73	£0.61	£0.60	£0.12	£0.13
	101g- 250g	£1.24	£1.06	£1.04	£0.18	£0.20	£1.17	£0.87	£0.85	£0.30	£0.32
	251g-500g	£1.65	£1.40	£1.38	£0.25	£0.27	£1.48	£1.15	£1.13	£0.33	£0.35
	501g-750g	£2.38	£1.96	£1.95	£0.42	£0.43	£2.01	£1.61	£1.59	£0.40	£0.42
Small Parcel	0-1kg	£3.20	£2.90		£0.30		£2.80	£2.50		£0.30	
	1-2kg	£5.45	£5.15		£0.30		£3.80	£3.50		£0.30	
Medium Parcel	0-1kg	£5.65	£4.80		£0.85		£5.20	£4.40		£0.80	
	1-2kg	£8.90	£7.50		£1.40		£8.00	£6.85		£1.15	
	2-5kg	£15.85	£15.85		£0.00		£13.75	£13.75		£0.00	
	5-10kg	£21.90	£21.90		£0.00		£20.25	£20.25		£0.00	
	10-20kg	£33.40	£33.40		£0.00		£28.55	£28.55		£0.00	

All prices exempt from VAT

Peter Huss reports that Framatank UK were granted a licence by Royal Mail on 16 Jan 14 to use Mailmark™ technology.

Mailmark™ News Continued

Further to the examples of “1 Letter” and “2 Letter” shown earlier, we can also report the following different types of Mailmark seen on live mail: Your editor supplies the first three examples and Peter Mantell the last two.

Advanced Mail
First Class
AAGA-LUGL-XGRJ

Delivered by

13-03-14
£0.57 PB556581



1
Advanced

Advanced Mail
Second Class
AAAA-ACYB-JTKT

Delivered by

24-03-14
£0.39 PB556670



2
Advanced

Return Address
Wokingham B Council
Offices
Shute End
Wokingham RG40 1WH

Delivered by

26-03-14
£2.65 PB556763



1
Small Parcel

Return Address
Lexham Insurance
Consultants Ltd.
Gilray Road, Diss
IP22 4NG

Delivered by

27-03-14
£0.58 PB556849



2
L Letter
100g

Return Address
Lexham Insurance
Consultants Ltd.
Gilray Road, Diss
IP22 4NG

Delivered by

28-03-14
£0.82 PB556849



2
L Letter
250g

Mailmark™ News Continued

To date, 27 reports of the new matrix codes have been recorded. Your editor has, using the xzing web site referred to on page 160-8, been able to decode 26 of these. Having said that, it has not always been easy and sometimes several attempts have been made before the decoding was successful. For what it is worth, the following appears to work best:

- Only scan and submit the matrix code itself
- Make the image sharp, dark and with as much contrast with the background as possible
- Have a significant white border around the image that you submit
- Get the image straight
- Don't make the image too large or too small

My provisional interpretation is that there are 10 fields in the 41-character 'Parsed Result', as detailed in the table below:

Field	Posn.	Length	Interpretation	Comments
1	1	4	Country code	Always set as "JGB " (note the space). The meaning of the "J" is not known. I would like to think that the "J" stands for Design J but, sadly, that is not the case as SmartStamp matrix examples always start with the code "JGB " as well.
2	5	1	Design code	Always set to "B" for Mailmark coding. SmartStamp matrix examples use code "A".
3	6	1	Supplier code	0 = Not assigned / Frama / Francotyp-Postalia? 1 = Pitney Bowes (Neopost examples have not yet been reported)
4	7	2	Mail Class	11 = 1st Class Letters (also used for Small Parcels) 18 = 1st Class Advanced 22 – 2nd Class Letters (also used for '2 Large Letters') 28 – 2nd Class Advanced Note: This may actually be two separate fields
5	9	4	Mail Type	0001 = Letter (1st or 2nd Class) 0101 = Large Letter (up to) 100g 0102 = Large Letter (up to) 250g 1111 = Small Parcel 1403 = Advanced Mail (1st Class) 1503 = Advanced Mail (2nd Class) (PPI examples not yet seen)
6	13	9	M. Serial No.	Where the serial number is only 8 characters the last character will be a space – e.g. for all Pitney Bowes machines.
7	22	7	Item Count	
8	29	5	Postage	The amount paid in pence. The allocation of five characters has been assigned to allow for values greater than £100.00 in future.
9	34	2	Unknown	All items seen so far have "01" in this field.
10	36	6	Date	Day Month Year format

Your editor would be pleased to receive reports that add to (or conflict with) the information in the above table.

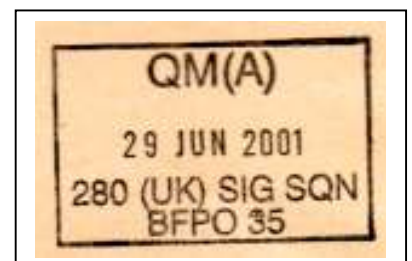
BFPO Meter Franks

On page 46-1 we illustrated this frank which showed a meter franking machine (3NE41076 dated 8.11.01) being used as a stamp cancelling machine. The meter value was zero and the town name had been omitted. It was stated that the address on the reverse side indicated that it came from a BFPO address in Germany.



Michael Dobbs has recently found three similar examples of this machine from the same era. – all with the same meter serial number with 4p postage paid on each. All three covers appear to be official mail sent to German civilian addresses and had “BRITISH FIELD POST / ERMÄSSIGTE GEBÜHR” cachets applied as well as unit datestamps.

The first, dated 3.7.01, also has these unit datestamps on the front of the cover:



The second, dated 2.4.02, has the cachet on the front and the unit date stamp on the reverse:



The third, dated 23.5.02, has a Blackwell packet datestamp Forces Post Office 2xx dated 22 APR 2002 on the front.



Michael believes that at this time official mail from Garrisons in Germany was concentrated on one or more post offices for franking but doesn't know why the meter mark has no town die. Michael would like to know where this machine was used and is after more examples of this franking machine (3NE 41076), possibly with the town name intact - reports please!

Pitney Bowes Connect+ Coloured Franks

Apart from the PB556849 return address in black ink on page 7, David Jones reports our only new coloured frank this month with this one from the Royal Society of Chemistry.

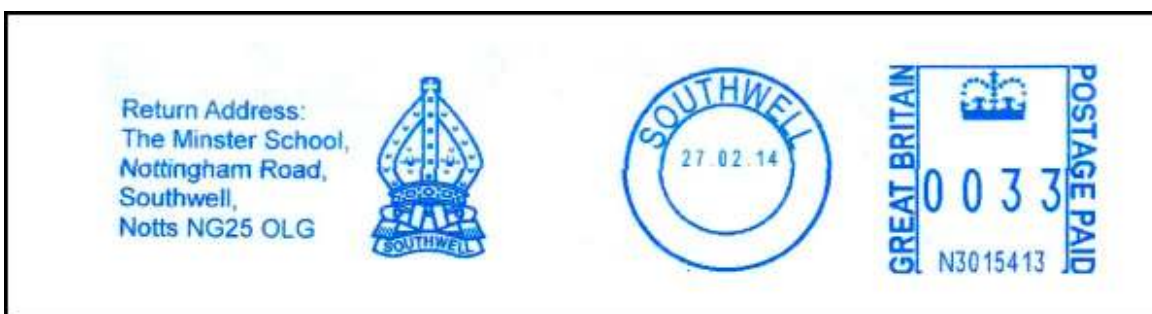


Meter Thematics

Peter Mantell reports a fearsome griffin living at an unknown address in Birmingham!



Peter Mantell has also found this attractive bishop's mitre design from the Minster School in Southwell, Nottingham.



Finally, Greg Spring has supplied our Meter Thematic of the Month with this attractive E2R design. It is believed that the item has been applied by a franking machine operating in PPI mode and is the first time a 'WINDSOR CASTLE' townmark has been seen on a frank.

