

# METER NEWS

Issue Number 185 Mar 2016



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## Meter of the Month

My Meter of the Month is a 'Received Frank' produced by a DM60 franking machine (model K722) that Peter Mantell has recently acquired. The machine in its present state has rather limited capabilities, unfortunately. It cannot, for example, print any kind of frank with a 2D data matrix without a connection – not even a Test Print. Its capability is further reduced because of the low funds left in the machine by the previous user.

There is, however, an interesting paragraph in the accompanying handbook regarding 'Parcelforce FrankPay'. On page 179-1 we first reported the 'PF Frank Pay' indicia and your editor, at the time, (incorrectly) guessed that 'PF' stood for 'Payment Frank'. We can now correct that statement and safely say that 'PF' stands for 'Parcelforce'.

## 2016 Royal Mail Price Changes

On 29th March 2016 the new Royal Mail postal rates came into force. The prices for the new inland rates are summarised below (the previous rates are included for comparison purposes).

Category (all 100g weight)	29 Mar 2016	30 Mar 2015	31 Mar 2014	2 Apr 2013	30 Apr 2012
Mailmark Frank – 1 Letter	£0.51	£0.51	£0.49	£0.47	£0.46
Standard Frank – 1 Letter	£0.53	£0.52	£0.50	£0.47	£0.46
<b>1st Class Stamp</b>	<b>£0.64</b>	<b>£0.63</b>	<b>£0.62</b>	<b>£0.60</b>	<b>£0.60</b>
Mailmark Frank – 2 Letter	£0.37	£0.36	£0.35	£0.33	£0.33
Standard Frank – 2 Letter	£0.40	£0.39	£0.37	£0.33	£0.33
<b>2nd Class Stamp</b>	<b>£0.55</b>	<b>£0.54</b>	<b>£0.53</b>	<b>£0.50</b>	<b>£0.50</b>
Mailmark Frank – 1 Large Letter	£0.79	£0.78	£0.74	£0.71	£0.70
Standard Frank – 1 Large Letter	£0.83	£0.81	£0.76	£0.71	£0.70
<b>1st Class Large Letter Stamp</b>	<b>£0.96</b>	<b>£0.95</b>	<b>£0.93</b>	<b>£0.90</b>	<b>£0.90</b>
Mailmark Frank – 2 Large Letter	£0.64	£0.63	£0.60	£0.58	£0.57
Standard Frank – 2 Large Letter	£0.67	£0.65	£0.60	£0.58	£0.57
<b>2nd Class Large Letter Stamp</b>	<b>£0.75</b>	<b>£0.74</b>	<b>£0.73</b>	<b>£0.69</b>	<b>£0.66</b>

Prices have also increased by the following average amounts: small parcels 2%, medium parcels 9%, letters / large letters abroad 2.2% and parcels / printed papers abroad by 3%.

## Acknowledgements

My thanks this month go to Jon Aitchison, Jim Ashby, Michael Dobbs, Alan Godfrey, Peter Huss, Mike Jackson, Duncan James, David Jones, Jan Lannoye, Peter Mantell, Robert Petts, Robert Rowe and Peter Wood for their reports, communications or contributions.

## Latest Numbers

Below is the list of 'latest numbers' as at the end of March 2016 – with updates shown in red. Please could I have the next reports by the 28th April - thanks.

In the list below, the part of the serial number that directly relates to the model is underlined. Note that those entries that have a date format with hyphen separators are ones in 'Design J' (matrix) format.

### Frama (UK)

Matrix F2, F4, F6	<u>F1004014</u>	14.12.15	See MN 182
Matrix F12 etc.	<u>FR2002227</u>	29-02-16	Reported by PM

### Francotyp-Postalia

Centormail 240/300	<u>FC5110729</u>	18-11-15	See MN 181
MyMail / PostagePro	<u>FM2658042</u>	27.02.15	See MN 182
PostBase Qi3/4/6/9	<u>FP6110850</u>	04.08.15	See MN 178
PostBase Qi3/4/6/9	<u>FP6115509</u>	15-01-16	See MN 183
PostBase Mini	<u>FP7113215</u>	22-01-16	Reported by PM

### Neopost

IS-330	<u>N1053426</u>	24.02.16	See MN 184
IS-350	<u>N1182674</u>	08.02.16	Reported by PM
Various upgraded	<u>N1240746</u>	31.07.15	See MN 177
IS-480	<u>N3030571</u>	22.07.15	See MN 177
IS-240 / IS-280	<u>N3319858</u>	18.05.15	See MN 175
IS-280c / 350c	<u>NE6008722</u>	02-02-16	See MN 184 & note below
IS-420c / 440c	<u>NE8010417</u>	11-03-16	Reported by PM – see below
IS-480c	<u>NE9000466</u>	07-12-15	See MN 183 & note below

### Pitney Bowes

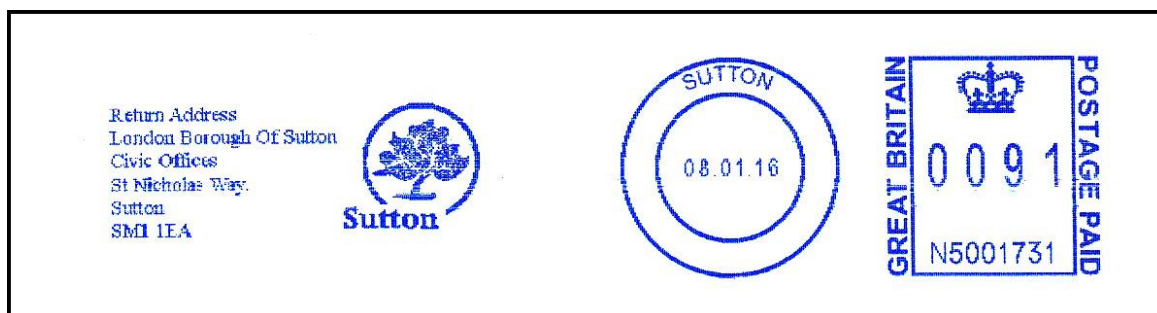
DM160i/220i	<u>PB176741</u>	21-03-16	Reported by PM
DM60 (model K722)	<u>PB2012924</u>	19-01-16	Reported by AG
DM50, 55	<u>PB368265</u>	08.12.15	See MN 182
Connect+ 10FC etc.	<u>PB558118</u>	01-03-16	Reported by PM
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB620820</u>	06.01.16	See MN 183
DM 400, 450, 475	<u>PB6627723</u>	18-02-16	Reported by DJ
DM 110i	<u>PB884566</u>	05.02.16	See MN 184

### Advanced Mail Codes

AAGK-HY	NE9000321	16-04-15	See MN 174
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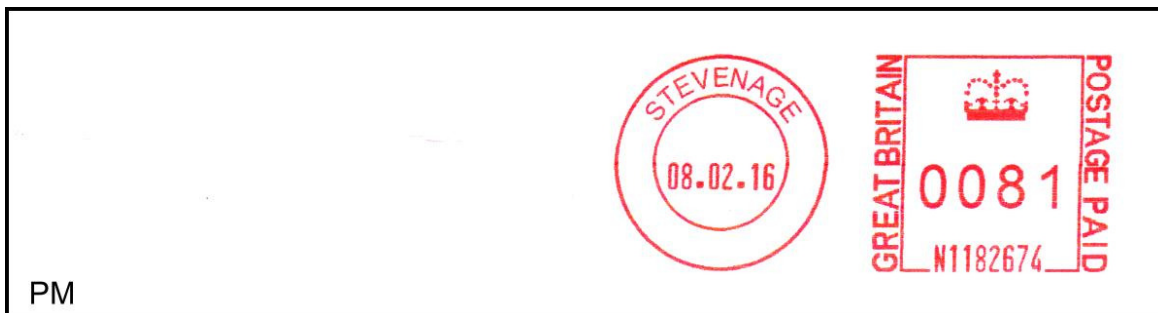
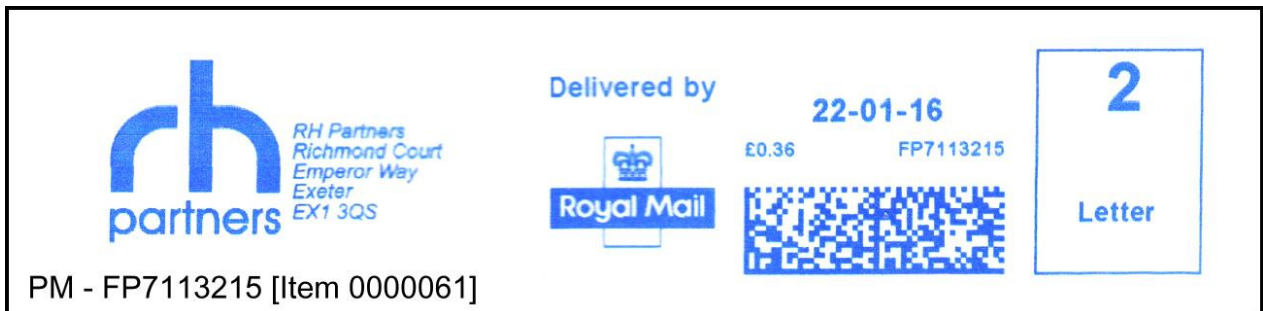
Note: Neopost (UK) have re-branded their Mailmark machines – see page 10 of this issue.

In addition to the above, Peter Mantell reports this highest number from the N5 dead series:

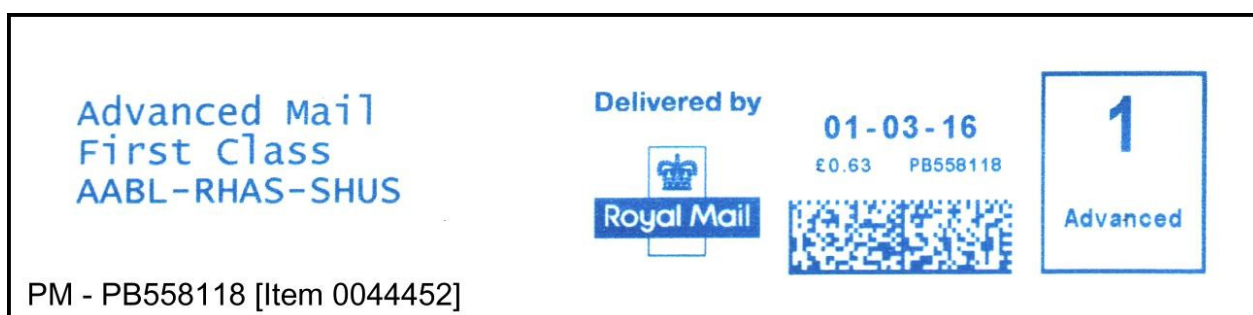


## Latest Number Images

Contributor's initials and other details are shown in the bottom left of each image.



## Latest Number Images continued



## Recent Interesting Items

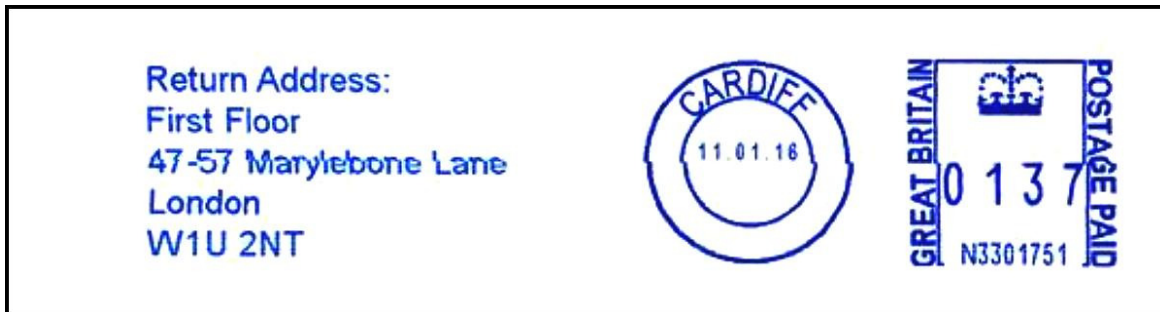
Alan Godfrey sends this Neopost Specimen from an IS-350 model and used on live mail. The machine itself would have been new in about October 2009 which raises the question as to whether it has always been printing in this way for over six years, or whether some event has somehow left it in this state. It is possible that Royal Mail are not particularly concerned if the town name is not present – after all, no town name is present on Mailmark machines!





## Recent Interesting Items Continued

Peter Huss reports this item where the town die (Cardiff) does not match that shown in the return address details. The name of the company is unknown.



There are two possible explanations for this. The first is that it is the same company that has its head office in London and a provincial office in Cardiff – a situation that is often observed on UK mail. A Google search for the address given reveals that at least 10 companies reside on the First Floor of 47 - 57 Marylebone Lane, London and it could be any one of these.

The second explanation is that it is a completely different company shown in the return address. It is possible, for example, that the employment process for the company in Cardiff is handled through a specialist recruitment company. In this particular case, there is such a company called 'Leaman Consulting' - whose office is based in London at the above address. If this is true, the company in London is likely to be acting as an employment agency for the one based in Cardiff who may be sending out the job application forms in response to job application enquiries. The latter would have posted the mail item locally but agreed to include Leaman Consulting's details on the return address for all correspondence associated with recruitment, so that everything thereafter gets routed through them.

Peter Mantell has found these franks processed on the same machine on the same day with different slogans. Furthermore, the item numbers are just two apart!



## Analysis of Mail Items (January - March 2016)

Your editor has performed an analysis of 445 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 massive 35% drop in volume compared with the figure of 683 last year. Also, the overall proportion of meter franked items compared with other mail types has fallen slightly compared with last year.

The following table shows the breakdown of the 445 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. Note that these figures include mail from overseas.

Category	Total 2016	2016%	2015%	2014%	2013%	2012%
Meter Franked Mail	227	51.0%	55.3%	59.0%	59.4%	55.9%
Stamped Mail	102	23.0%	23.6%	21.8%	23.5%	22.3%
PPI & Others	116	26.2%	21.1%	19.2%	17.1%	21.8%

The next table gives the breakdown by size of envelope.

Size	Total 2016	2016%	2015%	2014%	2013%	2012%
C4 or larger	12	2.7%	4.4%	4.4%	2.3%	3.7%
C5	104	23.4%	21.1%	18.9%	18.5%	23.3%
DL	329	73.9%	74.5%	76.1%	78.9%	73.0%
C6 or smaller	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%

The next table shows the proportion of 1<sup>st</sup> class to 2<sup>nd</sup> class mail (UK meters & stamps only)

Type - Class	Total 2016	2016%	2015%	2014%	2013%	2012%
Stamped mail – 1st	22	21.6%	39.5%	40.1%	37.3%	43.6%
Stamped mail – 2nd	80	78.4%	60.5%	59.9%	62.7%	56.4%
Metered mail – 1st	110	46.8%	47.5%	46.0%	45.4%	48.8%
Metered mail – 2nd	125	53.2%	52.5%	54.0%	54.6%	51.2%

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

Manufacturer	Total 2016	2016%	2015%	2014%	2013%	2012%
Frama	6	2.5%	3.3%	4.2%	3.4%	3.7%
Francotyp-Postalia	22	9.4%	7.1%	8.0%	6.4%	7.3%
Neopost	98	41.7%	36.1%	36.9%	42.3%	40.9%
Pitney Bowes	109	46.4%	53.5%	50.9%	47.9%	48.2%

## Analysis of Mail Items Continued

The following table shows the actual number of items for each main 'Design H' meter series.

Design H	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>Frama</b>					
F1	3	6	14	3	6
FSC2	2	0	1	2	5
FSC3	0	0	1	1	3
FSC9	0	1	3	14	9
<b>Neopost</b>					
N105	1	1	1	3	2
N11	1	8	6	34	38
N120	1	5	4	6	8
N124	1	2	3	5	3
N125	1	2	7	14	16
N130-131	2	3	5	7	11
N135	0	0	10	22	26
N138	1	3	4	19	20
N3	43	62	101	134	114
N33	9	10	15	5	8
N5	1	0	8	1	0

Design H	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>F-P</b>					
F04	3	8	6	12	15
FC5	0	0	1	0	1
FM	2	0	3	5	6
FP	0	2	5		
FU3	2	2	3	2	3
FU8/9	0	6	9	12	16
T	2	6	5	7	5
<b>PB</b>					
PB0	8	22	29	45	49
PB2	1	3	4	4	3
PB3	8	10	13	4	-
PB4	0	1	1	2	7
PB50-52	4	17	22	31	40
PB550-1	1	4	4	7	8
PB6	6	24	32	45	52
PB8	29	68	102	134	133
PB9	1	0	1	3	2

The following table shows the actual number of items for each main 'Design J' meter series which started in March 2014 (after the 2014 analysis was carried out).

Design J	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>F-P</b>					
FC5	4	1	-	-	-
FP6	8	1	-	-	-
FP7	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Neopost</b>					
NE6	5	1	-	-	-
NE8	31	31	-	-	-
NE9	1	4	-	-	-

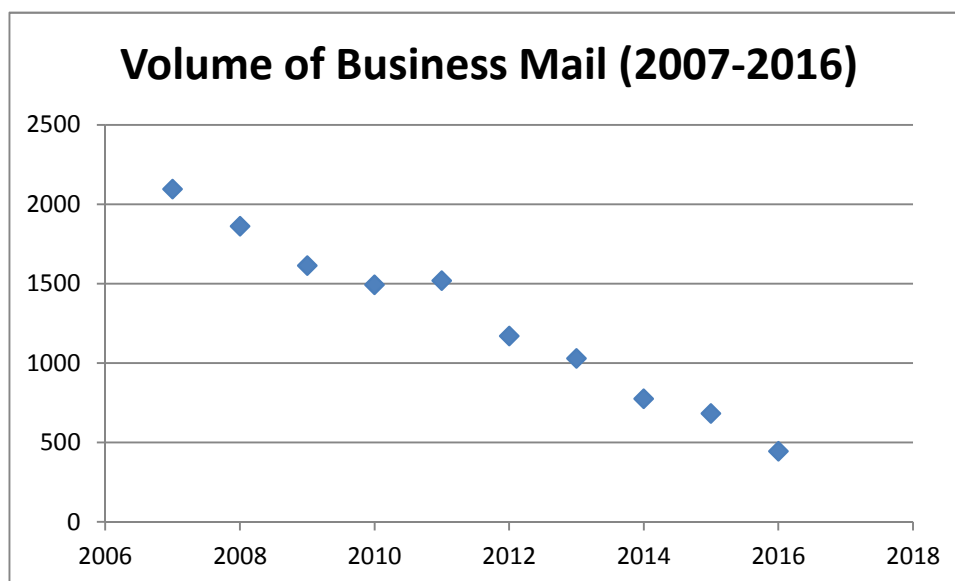
Design J	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>Frama</b>					
FR2	1	5	-	-	-
<b>PB</b>					
PB1	28	27	-	-	-
PB2	8	1	-	-	-
PB5	8	13	-	-	-
PB6	7	6	-	-	-

## Analysis of Mail Items Continued

The final table shows the percentage of franks that were applied in blue ink.

Manufacturer	Total 2016	Total Blue	% 2016	% 2015	% 2014
Frama	6	4	66.7%	100.0%	84.2%
F-P	22	19	86.4%	69.2%	65.6%
Neopost	98	91	92.9%	81.8%	49.4%
Pitney Bowes	109	104	95.4%	84.7%	52.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>92.8%</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>53.6%</b>

Your editor has now been carrying out his yearly analysis for the last 10 years. The source of the analysis is a business that is understood to be currently doing well. However, in that time, we have seen the volume of postal mail to that business fall dramatically. Undoubtedly, this has been due to more and more invoices being sent electronically each year. The worrying decline of mail since 2007 from this particular source is shown graphically below. If that trend continues, and the same is happening across the country, this would tend to suggest that 'business mail' will have all but disappeared in two years' time - a worrying prospect for meter franking collectors!



## Last of breed

One of the items in this year's analysis was this 'last of breed' item. The Pitney Bowes machine (model B921) serial PB919552 would have been new in 1999.





## Coloured Slogans

Duncan James sends this colourful frank from the 'One Answer Insurance' company.



Peter Mantell sends this frank from Metropolitan (a housing association based in Nottingham) with their logo and return address in black.



Peter Huss sends this frank from Infor (a computer consultancy company based in Solihull) with their logo and return address in black.



Alan Godfrey sends this frank from Blackburn Borough Council with a black return address.



## Neopost – Model Re-branding

Your editor has recently re-visited the Neopost (UK) web site where there are five models currently listed. All of these models have been assigned a ‘c’ suffix and all are stated to be ‘Mailmark Enabled’ according to their brochures. The models listed are as follows:

Low-volume: IS-280c and IS-350c

Mid-volume: IS-420c and IS-440c

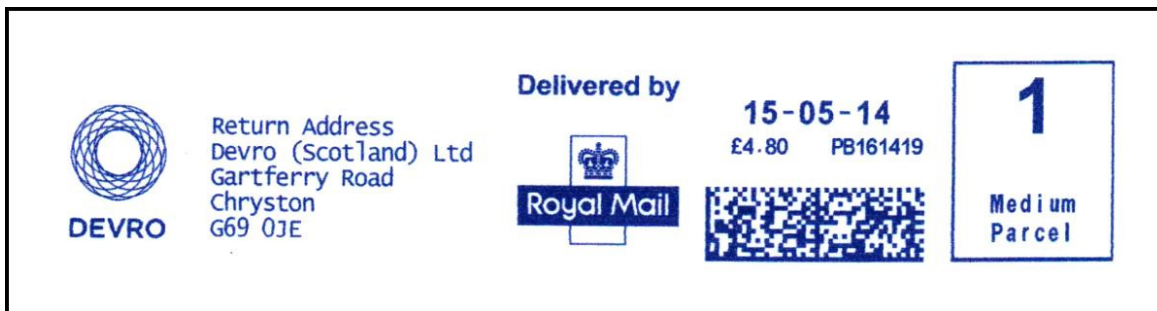
High-volume: IS-480c

My initial conclusion (which may be incorrect) is that the old ‘standard’ technology machines are no longer being sold and that all Neopost machines now sold get assigned the serial prefix ‘NE6’, ‘NE8’ or ‘NE9’.

So, how do these five models map to the three ‘NE’ prefix serials? The high-volume ‘NE9’ is clearly assigned to the IS-480c model, but the other mappings are not quite so obvious. For the time being, your editor is making an assumption that the low-volume models produce ‘NE6’ serial prefixes and that the mid-volume models produce ‘NE8’ serial prefixes. Until further information comes to light, this assumption will be reflected on page 2 of the newsletter. Your editor would be pleased to hear from anyone who can help in this respect.

## Mailmark™ News

Peter Mantell reports a ‘1 Medium Parcel’, with Mail Type ‘0301’ that has not previously been recorded.



This enables the ‘Class 1’ table to be updated as follows (changes in red). Note that for ‘Parcel’ entries (where the weight of the item is not included in the indicia), the amount of postage paid at the time is shown because this is related to the item weight.

Class	Mail Type	Visible Type	N/L report	Comments
1	0001	1 Letter	161-3	
1	0101	1 L Letter 100g	162-4	
1	0102	1 L Letter 250g	163-5	
1	0103	1 L Letter 500g	164-6	
1	0104	1 L Letter 750g	-	Not yet reported
1	0301	1 Medium Parcel (£4.80)	185-10	Assumed code for 1kg
1	0302	1 Medium Parcel (£7.50)	170-8	Assumed code for 2kg
1	0303	1 Medium Parcel (£15.85)	170-8	Assumed code for 5kg
1	0304	1 Medium Parcel	-	10kg weight not yet reported
1	0305	1 Medium Parcel	-	20kg weight not yet reported
1	1111	1 Small Parcel (£2.65)	161-7	Assumed code for 1kg
1	2221	1 Small Parcel	-	2kg weight not yet reported

## Mailmark™ News continued

Further to page 184-1, your editor reports that all franks produced since the new postal rates came into force have had a Tariff Rate '8', as expected. There have not yet been any reports of franks with the indicia '2 Advanced Letter' since the postal rate increases.

On page 170-9 we reported a (2kg) Small Parcel with Mail Type '2221' which is the code normally seen for Small Parcels with £2.50 postage paid. Now your editor reports an example on a Pitney Bowes item with the same postage but with a Mail Type of '2222'.



Furthermore, Peter Mantell has similarly found a Frama example with Mail Type '2222' rather than '2221' - again with £2.50 paid.



In total, Peter and I have seen 18 examples of '2 Small Parcel' with Mail Type '2221' at Tariff Rate 6 and £2.50 paid. Your editor is unable to explain why we should now be seeing these two with a different Mail Type and I would welcome further reports of Small Parcel franks (both 1st and 2nd class) – particularly any at the new tariff rate. This discovery enables the 'Class 2' table to be updated below.

Class	Mail Type	Visible Type	N/L report	Comments
2	0001	2 Letter	161-1	
2	0101	2 L Letter 100g	161-7	
2	0102	2 L Letter 250g	161-7	
2	0103	2 L Letter 500g	184-7	
2	0104	2 L Letter 750g	162-3	
2	0301	2 Medium Parcel (£4.40)	170-9	Assumed code for 1kg
2	0302	2 Medium Parcel	-	2kg weight not yet reported
2	0303	2 Medium Parcel (£13.75)	181-6	Assumed code for 5kg
2	0304	2 Medium Parcel	-	10kg weight not yet reported
2	0305	2 Medium Parcel	-	20kg weight not yet reported
2	1111	2 Small Parcel	-	1kg weight not yet reported
2	2221	2 Small Parcel (£2.50)	170-9	Assumed code for 1kg
2	2222	2 Small Parcel (£2.50)	185-11	Conflict with code '2221'?

## UPU Regulations on the use of Ink Colour for Franking Impressions

Further to page 184-5 regarding present day UPU regulations driving use of ink colour, Jim Ashby has kindly located three relevant references on the internet.

The first reference is from the UPU: Postal Operations Council (POC) 2000 Annual Meeting:

The POC approved these other changes in regulations:

- Article 306, eliminating the need to use a particular ink color for meter postage imprints (franking marks). It was argued that the current regulation requiring red ink in such instances was a barrier to distribution of new, more secure postage meter technologies, including the USPS "PC Postage," in which postage can be downloaded from the internet with standard (black) ink jet and laser printers

The second is from the UPU Letter Post Manual, Berne 2013:

- 2 Franking machine impressions
  - 2.1 Designated operators may use themselves or authorize the use of postal franking machines reproducing on items the name of the member country of origin and the postage value, as well as the name of the place of origin and the date of posting. However, the last two items of information shall not be compulsory. For franking machines used by designated operators themselves, the postage value may be replaced by an indication that postage has been prepaid, for example in the form: "Taxe perçue" (Charge collected).
  - 2.2 Impressions produced by postal franking machines shall, in principle, be bright red. However, designated operators may permit that the impressions produced by franking machines may be made in a colour other than bright red. The impressions of any publicity slogans used with the franking machines may also be produced in a colour other than red.
  - 2.3 The names of the member country and place of origin shall be given in roman letters, which may be supplemented by the same information in other letters. The postage value shall be shown in arabic figures.

The third reference is from the UPU Document S44-1 "Colour and Durability Attributes of Franking Marks" 2015:

Historically, the colour of franking marks was defined to be bright red in UPU Letter Post Regulations, Article RE 306. Recent new franking machines (postage meter) are digital and use either ink jet or thermal transfer printing. Most commercial office ink jet printers are presently using black dye- or pigment-based inks. In 2000, a proposal was adopted by the Postal Operation Council to allow for colours other than red. Elimination of this restriction was intended to provide more flexibility to postal administrators and reduce costs, particularly for customers. It gave postal administrators additional opportunities for brand protection and to improve the readability of the marks, and facilitated the introduction of 'PC Postage' products enabling customers to generate franking marks on standard office computer and desktop printer systems.



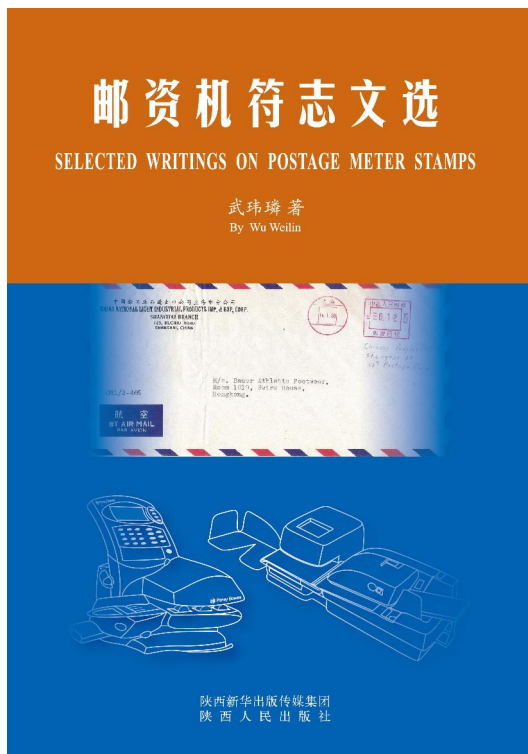
## PPI News

Peter Huss sends this Postage Paid Impression printed on a label to Germany that bears a large 'LX' code. It is unknown whether or not this has been produced by a franking machine. Your editor has not seen one of these before and, from the 'INS (GBP)' in the text, believes the code to be associated with the Royal Mail Parcelforce 'International Tracked and Signed' service. For what it is worth, the 2D barcode decodes as 'MHI-188 23425570'.



## Meter Franking Literature

A reader from China, who goes by the name of 'SSX', has brought to my attention this book called 'Selected Writings On Postage Meter Stamps'. It has been written by a friend of his and contains several hundred pages. If anyone would like to know more, please contact me.



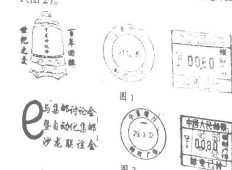
### 上海必能宝 DM300 型邮资机符志宣传戳研讨

#### 一、背景

21 世纪初, 中国邮政与美国必能宝 (Pitney Bowes) 公司合作, 发展适合我国使用的新型邮资机品种——DM300 型邮资机。从 2003 年 4 月起, DM300 型邮资机陆续在上海、云南、河南、安徽等 7 个省市投入使用, 其数量近千台, 上海拥有半数以上。

DM300 型邮资机是一种小型数码邮资机, 适合于邮局营业窗口使用。上海所有邮政支局及大部分邮政所均设置了此种邮资机, 为一般用户服务, 很受邮资机爱好者的青睐。

在邮资机符志上设广告宣传戳, 我国邮政一向对其持否定态度, 多次重申不许在符志上设置宣传戳。在 1999 年 6 月颁布的国邮 [1999] 346 号文件, 虽然在其符志图例中留有宣传戳的位置, 仍然宣称“宣传戳记部分……暂不允许使用。”因此直至 20 世纪末, 我国带宣传戳的邮资机符志零星出现, 即使出现也往往被叫停。长期持续启用的很少, 一个特例是宁夏银川邮政广告部门在 1998 年至 2003 年的 5 年间刻制了约 50 种带有宣传戳的邮资机符志 (图 1、图 2)。



打破这种僵局的必能宝 DM300 型邮资机宣传戳的推广使用。为何 DM300 型邮资机担负这一重任, 笔者认为有以下几个原因:

其一, DM300 型邮资机体积小, 置于邮局

营业窗口使用, 集邮者看得见, 摸得着, 与其零距离接触, 一些人甚至亲手操作过, 对其有亲切感。加上其符志设有数字码, 这引起了集邮者的极大兴趣, 故而收集研究必能宝邮资机戳成风。

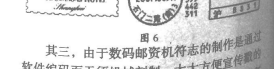
其二, DM300 型邮资机符志在日戳左侧留有设置宣传戳的位置, 并在机内预设了“信函”、“印刷品”等 10 种邮件属性副戳 (图 3、图 4)。用户租借的商业邮资机也被允许使用个性



化的副戳以宣传企业形象 (图 5、图 6)。这在当时是其他类型邮资机所未有的。此类副戳客观上提供了使用副戳的典范。

其三, 由于数码邮资机符志的制作是通过软件编码而无须机械刻制, 大大方便宣传戳的使用, 这也促使了使用 DM300 型邮资机制作宣传戳的热潮。

最后, 必能宝公司对宣传戳的使用给予了积极推动作用。2002 年 10 月 9 日 DM300 型邮资机还未启用, 必能宝公司上海分部借用石门二路邮局“沪 B52”邮资机组, 使用其一台商



路邮局“沪 B52”邮资机组, 使用其一台商

## Historic Items

Your editor has found this UPF specimen from 1931 with a slogan advertising the Midget 3.



## Easter Thematics from Germany

Peter Huss has kindly sent a selection of Easter-related thematics on German franks, depicting Easter eggs and Easter bunnies.



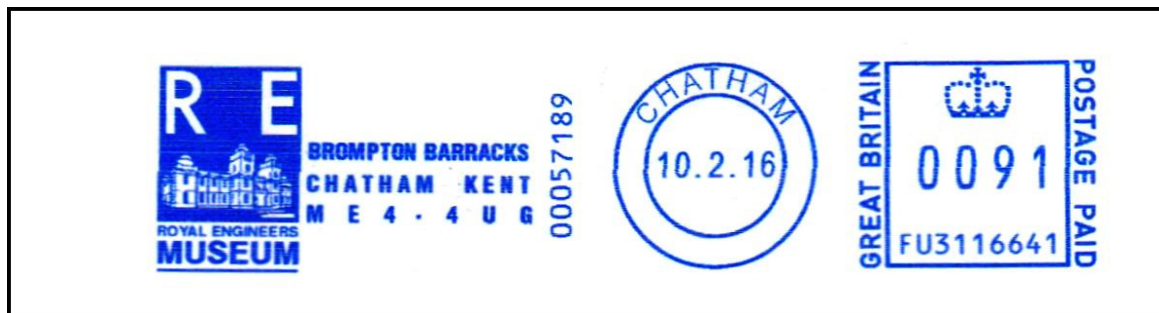


**Meter Thematics**

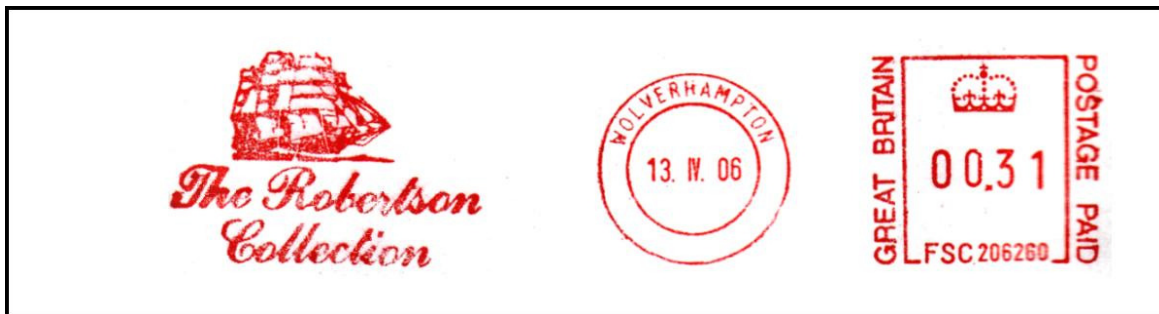
On page 125-8 this frank from the Historic Dockyard in Chatham was illustrated in red ink. Now Peter Mantell reports it appearing in blue ink.



By some strange co-incidence, Michael Dobbs has found this frank from the Royal Engineers Museum that is also based in Chatham.



Duncan James sends this attractive clipper sailing boat.

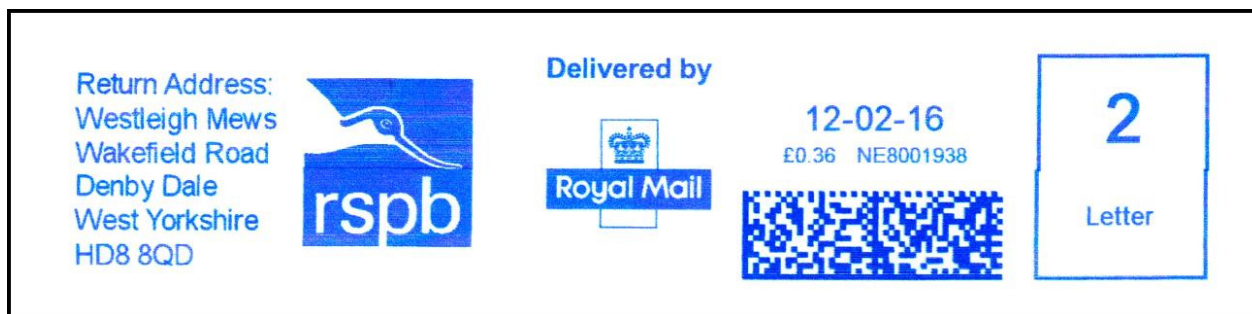


Duncan also sends this frank from 'JudoScotland' – Scotland's governing body for Judo.

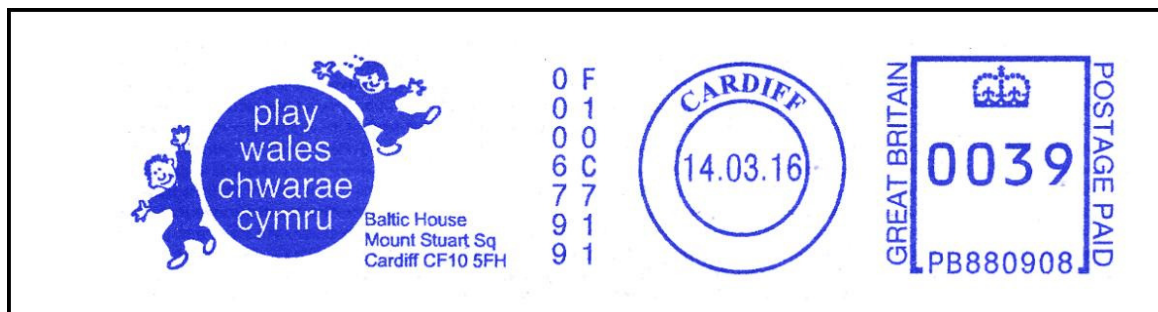


### Meter Thematics continued

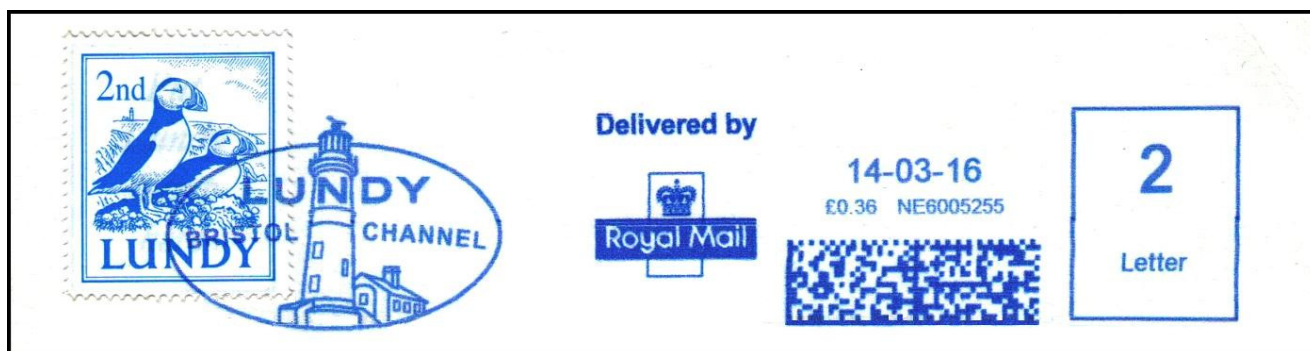
On page 87-8, we showed a frank from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) from their headquarters at Sandy, depicting an Avocet. Peter Mantell now reports a Mailmark version from their base in West Yorkshire.



Peter Mantell sends this attractive frank from 'Play Wales' which is an independent charity funded by the Welsh Government.



Back in 2007, on page 86-8, we showed a meter frank PB929744 from the Lundy Island. Peter Mantell now sends the latest Mailmark version, NE6005255. Further information regarding the use of the Puffin stamp can be found at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lundy>.



Finally, my Meter Thematic of the Month is this most attractive dolphin logo from a company called Pump Action Ltd. My thanks go to Duncan James for sending this.

