

## **Section 6: Codes and coding marks**

This section covers the key coding systems and coding marks associated with modern-day mail items. The topics covered in this section include:

- The Mailsort system for bulk mailing
- First use of Customer 4-state codes at the NRLC, Belfast
- Routing code block formats
- Delivery Point Codes
- Routing code errors
- Meter franking 2D data matrix decoding
- Modern-day OCR capability

## 1989 – Bulk Mailing ‘Mailsort’ System

In March 1989, a new bulk mailing system called ‘Mailsort’ was offered to Direct Mail users who pre-sorted the mail according to a 3 or 5 digit Mailsort code. Such mail is sent to one of 16 Direct Distribution Centres, who then forward it to the appropriate Delivery Office.

Royal Mail gives between 13% and 32% discount, depending on the type of service and the depth of pre-sorting carried out by the user.

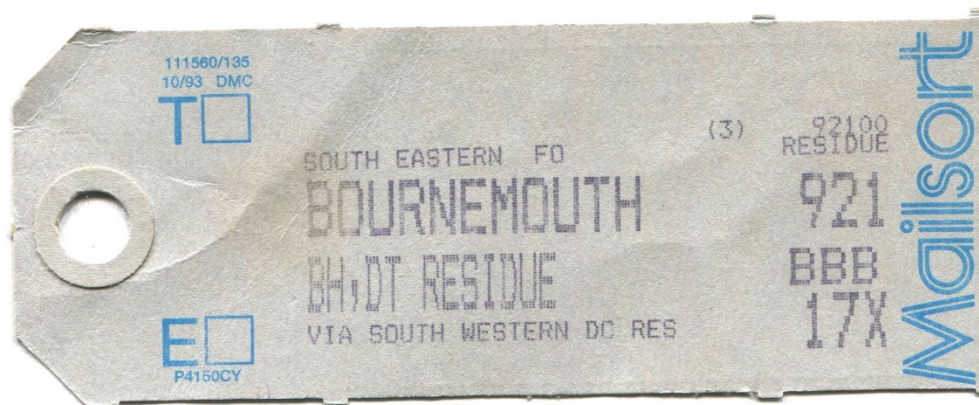
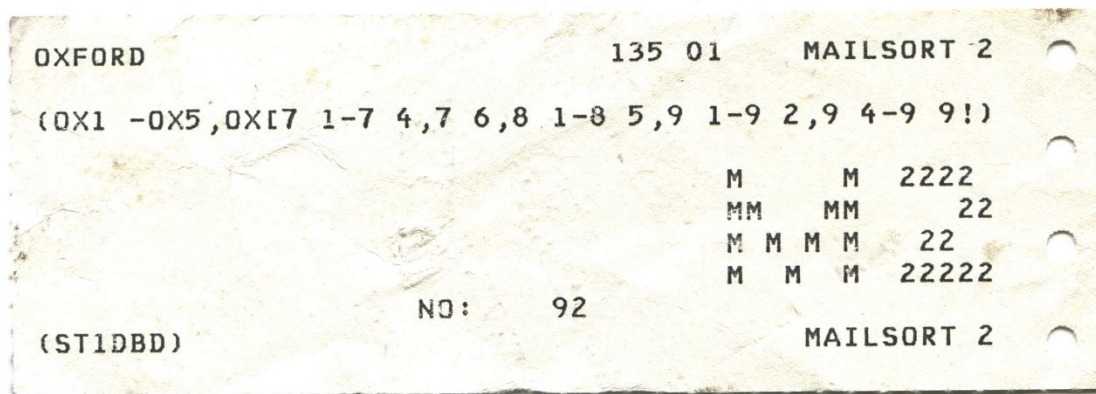
There are three types of service:

Mailsort 1 is delivered the following day.

Mailsort 2 is delivered within three days.

Mailsort 3 is delivered within seven days.

The minimum number of items is 4000 letters or 1000 packets. Each direct selection is bundled together and placed in a bag. The user then tags the bags with bundle labels on white card and Royal Mail add their own labels after further sorting with other bulk mailings.



# Nationwide Mailsort Codes (each postcode area sampled)

Mailsort Code	Postcode	Town
30436	BT48 7UD	Londonderry
30710	G74 3HY	Calderwood
30838	KA1 5AB	Kilmarnock
30842	ML1 1BA	Motherwell
30957	PA6 7HF	Houston
31074	AB32 6TQ	Westhill
31079	AB21 0GS	Aberdeen
31228	ZE2 9DP	Baltasound
31303	IV6 7XR	Mur of Ord
31307	HS1 2SF	Stornoway
31309	KW1 4BS	Wick
31424	EH7 4AA	Edinburgh
31429	EH17 8QF	Edinburgh
31548	EH22 3EU	Dalkeith
31549	EH20 9RA	Loanhead
31550	TD1 1BJ	Galashiels
31674	FK1 1AA	Falkirk
31678	KY1 1ED	Kirkcaldy
31704	DD6 9NJ	Tayport
31713	PH17 2QD	Pitlochry
31824	CA7 0NQ	Wigton
31830	DG1 3RN	Heathhall
31958	PR8 3HZ	Southport
31960	FY5 3RY	Thornton Cleveleys
32071	BB5 4RZ	Accrington
32085	LA1 3PU	Lancaster
32209	M3 3AQ	Manchester
32358	SK3 0JP	Cheadle Heath
32473	BL1 3JY	Bolton
32487	OL11 2AX	Rochdale
32506	CW2 5ET	Crewe
32523	WA5 2RN	Warrington
32528	WN5 0BA	Wigan
32648	L33 8XR	Kirkby
32712	CH5 3RT	Deeside
32727	LL17 0AE	St. Asaph
32961	NE23 7BF	Cramlington
32970	NE1 7DE	Newcastle upon Tyne
32983	SR4 9RW	Sunderland
33010	DH7 9AB	Esh Winning
33020	DL7 9TL	Northallerton
33023	TS12 2XN	Saltburn By The Sea
33246	YO3 4BG	York
33311	BD6 2BE	Bradford
33319	HX5 9ER	Elland
33322	HD7 1NL	Huddersfield
33448	HG1 3AG	Harrogate
33469	LS15 7ED	Halton
33477	WF4 4AD	Wakefield
33509	HU4 6SS	Hull
33627	DN4 9AF	Doncaster
33750	LN2 4TW	Lincoln
33890	S12 3EA	Sheffield
33915	DE7 8TZ	Ilkeston
33937	NG34 7QP	Sleaford
34054	LE5 4EH	Leicester
34286	NN3 2TP	Northampton
34308	MK2 3QL	Bletchley
34319	CV8 1EG	Kenilworth
34443	B2 4BG	Birmingham
34461	B31 4TG	West Heath
34504	HR6 8HF	Leominster
34505	WR13 6QS	Malvern
34604	DY5 2UZ	Brierley Hill
34612	WS13 8AL	Lichfield
34624	WV12 5HA	Willenhall
34744	ST18 0NS	Stafford
34866	LD2 3PN	Builth Wells
34980	SY1 4DU	Shrewsbury

Mailsort Code	Postcode	Town
35062	TF2 6BL	Telford
35292	PE12 0PQ	Spalding
35536	NR28 0EJ	North Walsham
35653	CB6 2TY	Ely
35773	IP3 0PZ	Ipswich
35826	SG18 8QB	Biggleswade
35828	WD23 2DU	Bushey
35831	EN2 0TQ	Enfield
35839	HP12 3DB	High Wycombe
35968	AL5 1QN	Harpenden
35974	LU2 8UX	Luton
36017	E17 9JX	Walthamstow
36234	RM12 4QT	Hornchurch
36235	IG1 2XT	Ilford
36364	CM0 7AL	Southminster
36375	CO10 6SA	Sudbury
36491	SS9 5EP	Leigh-on-Sea
36505	DA1 4HA	Dartford
36632	ME12 3JZ	Sheppey
36759	TN2 5RD	Tunbridge Wells
36880	CT8 8HS	Westgate
36909	N9 9EJ	Edmonton
37033	EC1M 3JB	Islington
37035	WC1V 7RL	High Holborn
37451	W3 6AX	Acton
37573	NW1 4BU	London NW1
37587	HA4 0RT	South Ruislip
37607	SL6 6SL	Maidenhead
37609	UB5 4TW	Northolt
37767	SW6 7BW	Fulham
37841	TW13 6BE	Hanworth
37858	KT13 9RX	Weybridge
37973	GU16 9RE	Frimley
37975	GU14 6NX	Farnborough
37984	GU32 3EY	Petersfield
38049	SE25 4JY	Croydon
38410	CR0 6JQ	Addiscombe
38414	BR5 2PW	Orpington
38418	SM2 6BS	Sutton
38501	BN9 9RU	Newhaven
38509	RH11 8EB	Crawley
38663	PO7 8LU	Waterlooville
38776	GL51 5QT	Cheltenham
38806	SA14 8TR	Llanelli
38942	CF5 3TZ	Cardiff
39067	NP6 4EN	Caldicot
39313	PL12 4NB	Saltash
39434	TR27 5DZ	Hayle
39546	TA6 3JB	Bridgwater
39666	BS14 8PG	Bristol
39706	BA3 3NP	Bath
39831	OX4 3QQ	Cowley
39844	SN5 9RL	Swindon
39904	RG12 0XP	Bracknell
39905	RG5 3LQ	Woodley
39906	RG6 1HE	Earley
39907	RG9 1RA	Henley-on-Thames
39911	RG2 9EJ	Shinfield
39912	RG4 8SP	Emmer Green
39913	RG45 6DB	Crowthorne
39914	RG18 0XT	Yattendon
39917	RG40 1PY	Wokingham
40262	BH1 1RG	Bournemouth
40267	DT1 1PB	Dorchester
40313	SP4 7PD	Amesbury
40317	SO40 2QY	Calmore
40435	EX21 5BX	Beaworthy
40454	TQ11 0BQ	Buckfastleigh

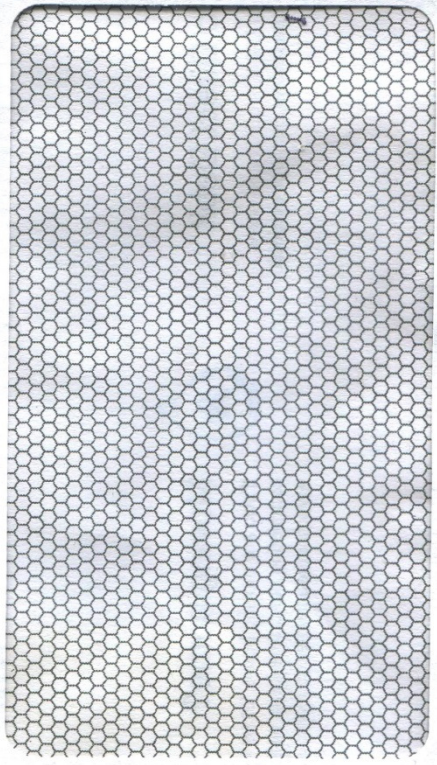
# Mailsort codes on Printed Postage Impression (PPI) mail

This item, from TNT, contains a black 65-bar 4-state code incorporating the Mailsort code '399' (Reading).

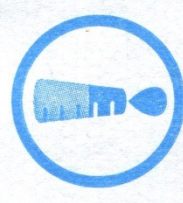
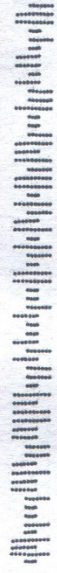


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## 1992 – The National Return Letter Centre, Belfast

Mail items that bear addresses that cannot be deciphered by sorting equipment or by staff at MDEC are returned to the sender. If there is no identifiable return address, then the items are taken to the National Return Letter Centre (NRLC) at Belfast for a final attempt to determine the sender by opening the mail item.



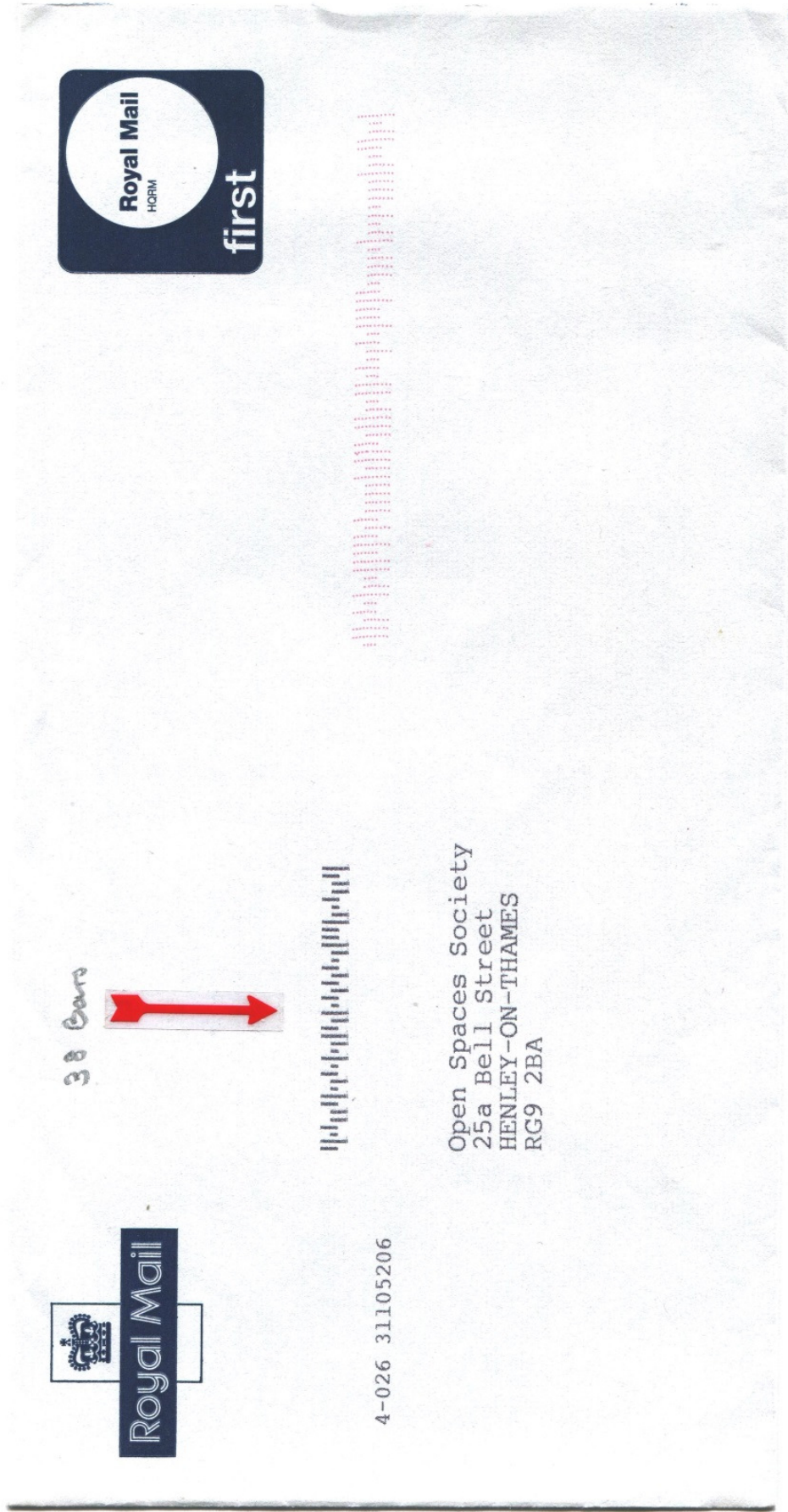
*Operations at the NRLC in Belfast soon after it opened in 1992*

The NRLC started operations in March 1992 and currently employs about 160 staff to carry out this work. The Centre currently handles upwards of 30 million mail items each year, of which about 30% are successfully identified and sent on their way.

The remainder, about 20 million items, are shredded!

# 1992 – First use of Royal Mail Customer 4-state code at Belfast RLO

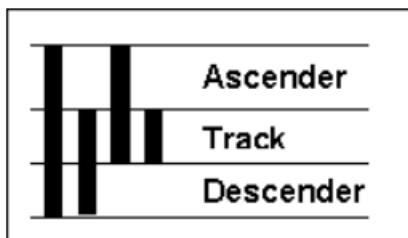
From November 1992, the Return Letters Office in Belfast has applied the Royal Mail Customer 4-state codes on all returned mail items. This cover is an example, where the code reads “RG92BA2W\$” to reflect the postcode and extension of the written address, ‘\$’ representing the checksum ‘character’.



## 1992 – The Royal Mail 4-State Customer Code

Royal Mail developed a '4-State Customer Code' (RM4SCC) so that Mailsort users could include a 'direct print' code (i.e. not encrypted) as part of the destination address in order to speed final walk-sorting.

The code is so called because it uses four bars of different height for the character representation.



0	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	A	B
C	D	E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L	M	N
O	P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y	Z
				I	I
				Start	Stop

Between November 1991 and March 1992, a trial took place involving a number of companies in the Swindon area – including the meter franking company 'Addressing Systems International' Ltd. The trial required that all mail with Bath addresses to have this code included in the address.

The first live use, however, was at the Belfast Return Letters Office in November 1992.

*Note that this code is different from the encrypted 'Royal Mail Internal 4-state code' – used for tag and routing codes on mail items from 1995.*