Postage Meter Franking 1922–2022

Exit the Postage Stamp !

THE

NEOPOST

AUTHORISED BY H.M. POSTMASTER GENERAL

The "Neopost" is a compact and exceedingly simple machine which stamps, postmarks, and cancels envelopes, wrappers, labels, etc., with one turn of the handle, and is for all practical purposes a Branch Post Office, sanctioned by the Postmaster-General, and authorised for international use.

Saves the time spent in sticking stamps on letters. Mail can be franked on the "Neopost" in a fraction of the time spent affixing adhesive stamps, thus, in the evening rush, postal connections are caught which would otherwise be missed.

Saves the purchase and control of stamps and the keeping of a postbook. The "Neopost" automatically records each impression it makes, and always registers the exact amount spent on postage.

Saves the money lost on large stocks of loose stamps through pilfering, carelessness and accident. Adhesive stamps are negotiable; "Neopost" impressions are not.

Saves the cost of printing advertising matter on envelopes. The "Neopost" will imprint a neat and conspicuous advertisement, changeable at will, in the same operation as the stamping.

ADVERTISE WITHOUT COST *by* "NEOPOST"

Specimen of the "Neopost" impression showing the advertising slogan

RONEO LTD.,
5-11 Holborn, London, E.C.1
Branches in all important Cities.

1930 leaflet for a Roneo Neopost franking machine with six fixed values

POSTAGE METER FRANKING 1922–2022

A DISPLAY TO CELEBRATE
THE CENTENARY OF
POSTAGE METER FRANKING 1922–2022
GIVEN TO
THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY LONDON
SCHEDULED FOR **10 FEBRUARY 2022**
BY **MIKE JACKSON** FRPSL, **HENRY ONG** FRPSL, AND **MAGGIE THOMPSON** FRPSL

CONTENTS

Front cover illustrations

Great Britain: *Cover with Universal Postal Frankers 'NZ' frank, sent in 1925 with an early type of slogan used by the company itself.*

Saar: *Francotyp 'B' multi-value machine with a well-known illustration of the Saarbruecken Town Hall, used in 1934.*

Malaya: *Cover with Universal Meter U.9 franked with 27 cents for 15 cents Registration Fee and 12 cents foreign rate, sent on 11 Jan 1941. The letter rate had increased to 15 cents on 10 days before, and the shortfall was made up with three 1 cent stamps. A possibly unique combination cover as the multi-value franker could have done it with another top-up 3c frank.*

GREAT BRITAIN METER FRANKING

MIKE JACKSON FRPSL

The collection illustrates the development of meter franking in Great Britain from its introduction in 1922. Initially there were three suppliers of franking machines in the country: Pitney-Bowes, Universal Postal Frankers, and Neopost, a situation which lasted until the 1960s. Throughout the collection commercial leaflets and other ephemera are presented as useful contemporary reference material.

FRAME 1 includes examples of paid impressions from the 1912 experimental coin-operated Wilkinson machine (*Fig. 1*) which is generally regarded to have been a forerunner of meter franking. The frame continues with a Pitney-Bowes essay (*Fig. 2*) and samples of the first type (Design A) meter marks.

FRAME 2 shows covers with Design A Franks Nos 1, 2 and 5 from Pitney-Bowes, including the only known example of the first day of use of meter franking in Great Britain (*Fig. 3*), and the rare separately applied Pitney-Bowes slogans (*Fig. 4*).

FRAME 3 includes items relating to the Leicester stockbroker Arthur Wheeler, including Wheeler's use of a franking machine to pre-cancel envelopes (*Fig. 5*). Also in this frame are the 1940 provisional franks of Design A, where a small number of dies were altered due to changes in the postal rates (*Fig. 6*). Essays and specimens of the Universal franks follow (*Fig. 7*), including examples of the first commercial use of the UPF on wrappers for *The Philatelic Magazine* on 18 Oct. 1922 (*Fig. 8*).

FRAME 4 continues with Universal franks (*Fig. 9*).

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Setting the first meter on 5 Sept. 1922

Fig. 4

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

FRAME 5 includes an unusual proof with a blank town mark (***Fig. 10***), and further examples of the early Universal slogans. Also in this frame are covers and marks from the 1924–1925 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley including examples of the rare Frank X3 (***Fig. 11***).

FRAME 6 includes marks from the Universal High Speed machines (*Fig. 12*), some of which are quite scarce, and specimens of slogans and essays from the Universal Special Midget machines (*Fig. 13*). Neopost marks are introduced at the end of this frame with an example of Frank 99 from the so-called Prototype machine (*Fig. 14*).

Fig. 12

Fig. 14

Fig. 13

FRAME 7 concludes the first type (Design A) with the Neopost Vertical Format marks used by two publishers on newspaper wrappers (*Fig. 14*). The collection continues with the second type (Design B) meter marks, and shows the Universal Special Midget mark (*Fig. 15*) which was used by only one company (Anglo-American Oil). Also shown are some attractive original promotional leaflets (*Figs 16 & 17*).

Fig. 14

FRAME 8 shows a selection of specimen covers with Universal Midget marks. The final page contains a Neopost essay for Design B (*Fig. 18*).

FRAME 9 features marks from Neopost machines including examples of Vertical Format marks on newspaper wrappers, similar to those found with

Fig. 15

Design A (Frame 7). Included is a 1928 promotional letter from Neopost (*Fig. 19*) comparing franks with stamps (similar to one from Universal in Frame 7). Pride of place in this frame must go to the first day cover of Design B, posted on 10 March 1927 (*Fig. 20*).

FRAME 10 continues with Neopost specimens, and a sheet featuring postcards with the Watersmeet slogan used by the Lynmouth tourist office (*Fig. 21*). Also in this frame are early examples of the reply-paid service as used by Roneo-Neopost Ltd.

Fig. 16

Fig. 17

Fig. 18

Fig. 19

Fig. 20

Fig. 21

FRAME 11 includes examples of the Design B 1940 Provisional marks from both Neopost and Pitney-Bowes (*Fig. 22*), and covers with the rare Pitney-Bowes slogans which, like the Design A versions (Frame 2), were applied separately.

Fig. 22

FRAME 12 shows covers from Universal Multi-Value machines, Pitney-Bowes Model CV machines, and mixed frankings showing different types of franks on the same cover (**Fig. 23**).

FRAME 13 introduces franks of King Edward VIII, including a set of Neopost covers used on the first day of that frank (**Fig. 24**), a series of specimen cards which appear to be file copies of slogans (**Fig. 25**), and a cover from Selfridge's which was the only company to use a Pitney-Bowes Model A machine with a KEVIII frank (**Fig. 26**).

FRAME 14 features King George VI franks from Neopost and Universal, including what is believed to be a UPU specimen from a Universal Multi-Value machine (**Fig. 27**).

FRAME 15 shows a range of labels from parcel meters (**Fig. 28**) and railway parcel meters (**Figs 29 & 30**). The final sheets describe a link between meter franking machines and the wartime airgraph service, when mailing envelopes were dealt with by modified franking machines which applied a 'POSTAGE PAID' impression. To help explain airgraphs, an unusual sample airgraph is included, which was given to members of a party of MPs on a tour of the General Post Office in 1942.
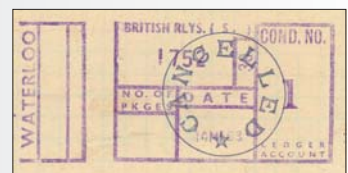

Fig. 23

Fig. 24

Fig. 25

Fig. 26

Fig. 27

Fig. 28

Fig. 29

Fig. 30

MALAYAN METER MARKS 1927–1945

A study of the development of meter marks in Malaya

HENRY ONG FRPSL

INTRODUCTION

The first official records of the usage of postage meters in Malaya was found in the 1927 *Annual Report of the Post & Telegraph Department of the Straits Settlements*. It records that postage meters were first used in the Colony in June 1927 and the figures given indicate that it was also used in the Federated Malay States at about the same time. Three types of mechanical postage meters were used in Malaya from its introduction until the Japanese Occupation. They were the following:

Fixed-Value — Universal Midget 'M' 3-value postage meter was the first to be introduced, in 1927. The second postage meter was from Roneo Neopost 'N' in late 1928 or early 1929.

Limited-Value — An improvement to the 'Fixed-Value' postage meter. Only Roneo Neopost 'N' postage meters with six values have been recorded used.

Multi-Value — A further improvement to the 'Limited-Value' postal franker. Only Universal Multi-Value 'U' postage meters have been recorded in use, from 1934 to 1942.

The Japanese Post Office stopped the use of commercial postage meters after their occupation. However, they continued to use the Universal multi-value franking machine in the Stamp Office to collect stamp duty.

CONTENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

Universal Midget 'M' Postage Meter Marks (Sheets 2–79)

Featuring the different types of Midget Postage Meter Marks and the introduction of early slogans, and highlighting the limitation of the fixed-value franker as well as how the required postage was achieved with the limited values. The study focuses on the John Little & Co. trial usage of M8 and M9 before settling on the M11 meter.

Type 1A – Federated Malay States

Type 1B – Straits Settlements

Type 1C – MPU modified from Type 1B

Type 1D – MPU unified design

Roneo Neopost 'N' Postage Meter Marks (Sheets 80–111)

Featuring the different types of Roneo Neopost Postage Meter Marks, and the various modifications of the existing frank design in order to conform to the requirement of the newly formed Malaya Postal Union. This section also looks at the change from the Fixed-Value Franker to a Limited-Value Franker, by studying the evidence of franking values to determine the introduction date.

Type 2A – Federated Malay States

Type 2B – Straits Settlements
(Type 2B-1 is without 'S.S.' in town mark)

Type 2C – MPU modified from Type 2A

Type 2C-1 – MPU modified from Type 2A

Type 2D – MPU modified from Type 2B

Type 2D-1 – MPU modified from Type 2B

Type 2E – MPU unified design

Type 2E-1 – MPU unified design

Universal Multi-Value 'U' Postage Meter Marks (Sheets 112–163)
Featuring different types of Universal Multi-Value Postage Meter Marks. The multi-value meters provide ease of franking different values required in line with the development of airmail routes in the mid-1930s and changes in postage rates during the late 1930s war-time period.

Type 3A – Federated Malay States

Type 3B – Straits Settlements

Type 3C – Malaya Postal Union

**Franking Machines for Other Uses** (Sheets 164–181)

Featuring different types of meter marks from Universal Multi-Value Meters for use as Postage Due Stamps, U19 and U52 25 cents franks for Forces Envelopes, up-rating of Postal Stationery with a double-ring frank of 2 cents for Postcards and 3 cents for Prepaid Envelopes. A meter was also used to produce Johore Postage Labels for use on parcels, and lastly, used in the Stamp Office for the collection of stamp duty.
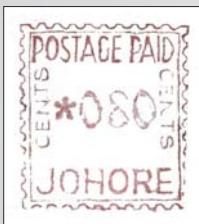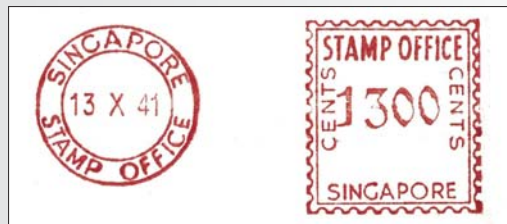

Type 4A – Malaya Postage Due

Type 4B – U19 & U52 Franks for Forces Envelopes
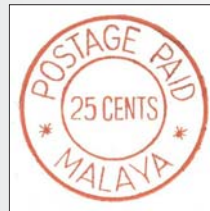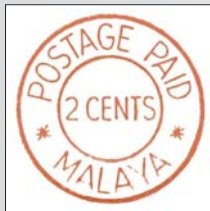
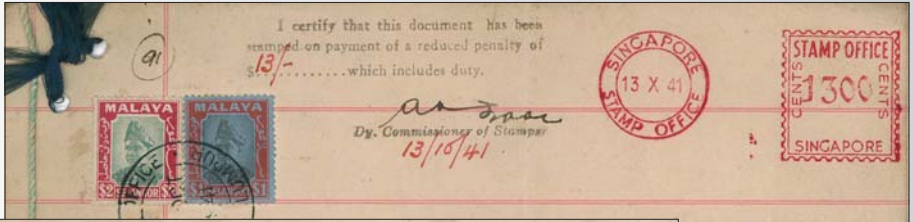*Type 4C – Double Ring Postage Paid Franks for Postal Stationery and Forces Envelope*

Type 4D – Johore Postage Label

Type 4E – Stamp Office Fiscal Revenue

Licensees of Postage Franking Machines (Sheets 182–204)

This section showcases the commercial firms that adopted postage franking after it was introduced in Malaya, with a brief introduction of the company business activities with details of the various products illustrated in the slogans.

I certify that this document has been stamped on payment of a reduced penalty of $13/- ....which includes duty.

Dy. Commissioner of Stamps
13/10/41

SINGAPORE STAMP OFFICE
13 X 41

STAMP OFFICE
CENTS 300 CENTS
SINGAPORE

ENTRUST YOUR
THIRST
TO
F. & N.

SINGAPORE
31.VIII.35
S.S.

STRAITS
CENTS *008 CENTS
SETTLEMENTS
U 8

CHIANG QUEE KEE
W, CHINA, Merchant,
No. 34 Arab Street,

Messrs. W.R. Carter & Co.,
Aberdeen House,
524, Collins Street,
MELBOURNE.

SINGAPORE
7 XII 41

MALAYA
CENTS *009 CENTS
POSTAGE DUE

POST CARD
SELANGOR, MALAYA

POSTAGE PAID
2 CENTS
MALAYA

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

ON ACTIVE SER

F. FIELD
CENTS *025 CENTS
U.52
STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

Major J. W. Dent
Salvation Army H.Qtrs
69 Bourke St.
Melbourne   Vic
AUSTRALIA

PASSED BY CENSOR
No. 2675

METER MARKS FROM THE SAAR AREA OF GERMANY 1926–1988

MAGGIE THOMPSON FRPSL

Saargebiet was created in 1920 by the treaty of Versailles. It was an area of just under 750 square miles containing a lot of heavy industry with its natural resources, and the supporting population of approximately 700,000 inhabitants. The area was put under French administration for 15 years to allow the French to take some compensation for the war damage they had suffered during the First World War. In 1935 the Saar people voted to return to Germany, then after the Second World War an area about 30% larger was returned to French administration, but only for 10 more years. The result of another vote in 1955 was as before and the Saar people returned to Germany.

The Saar meter marks illustrate the effects of the changes in administration, currency and social pressures. Although meter marks had been used in Germany since 1921, and were invaluable during 1923, the early ones were not attractive and are not usually seen as collectable. However Saar meter marks are both attractive and interesting as they effectively tell the story of the recent turbulent history of the Saar area.

1. The German connection

The first machine was put into use at the post office at Saarbrücken main railway station in 1926. The mark was the traditional German 'Red Octagonal' style, but inscribed 'Saargebiet'. As in Germany no currency is specified, but in the Saar, of course, the values were in (French) 'cents'. (*Fig. 1*)

2. Saargebiet 1926–35: The French Influence

The French had been forced to accept the Germanic name 'Saargebiet' for the territory, instead of their preferred 'Sarre'. So they were determined that

Fig. 1 — 3.9.28 Printed Matter card, rate 20c+COD fee 50c

businesses should have a distinctive 'non-German' meter mark, and the unique curved value frame was approved.

But the main supplier of franking machines was the German firm **Francotyp** which was formed from the amalgamation of two businesses: Anker, in Bielefeld and Bafra in Berlin. Both businesses had an internal reference card system which kept details of each machine with notes of any repairs or changes made. All machines had a counting facility and printed a serial number at each strike, initially in very large figures by Bafra, but from 1930 all were printed in small figures. The joint operation developed a Type C machine in 1930 to replace their individual products. But the first machines in private hands were from Bafra, as seen on the record card for machine B146 (*Fig. 2*). Another manufacturer, **Komusina** of Karlsruhe, was permitted to offer its compact hand machine in Saargebiet
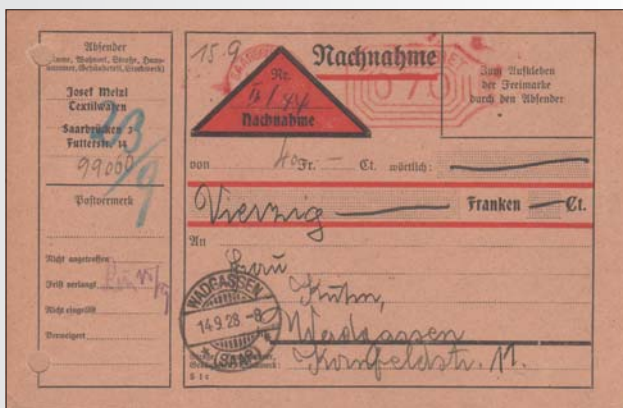
from 4 September 1929. These marks have a town mark (datestamp) beside a smaller value frame and a number at the left that records the total postage printed by the machine. Production ceased in 1931 and only 18 were used in Saar.

3. Saar in the Third Reich

On 13 January 1935 the Saar people decided they wanted to return to Germany. And on 1 March that year, after only just over six weeks, everything changed. The Saar was in Hitler's Third Reich.

All marks changed the country name immediately, and the currency is now RM, the numbers being pfennigs. Some users simply replaced Saargebiet with Deutsches Reich, like Credit Reform, in its Komusina machine (**Fig. 3**). However, many firms immediately replaced their French-style value frames with 'Good German' Swastika ones as seen in the adapted Type A mark for Saarbrücken Sparkasse (**Fig. 4**). Also in the German system, all marks had to gradually clear any advertising from below the value frame.

Some patriotic users decided to add old German handwriting or mock Gothic script to their marks as well, like the local health insurance office. But the record card shows they dropped it during the 2nd French occupation. (**Fig. 5**)

However, after a few years Swastika marks were seen as rather provocative and a new style of mark was introduced with a German Eagle, no bands of oak leaves down the sides, and the inscription 'Deutsche Reichspost'.
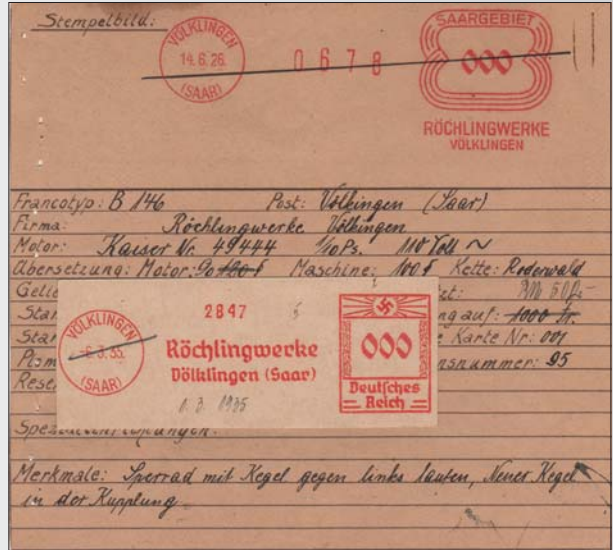

Fig. 2 — Record card for an early Francotyp B machine

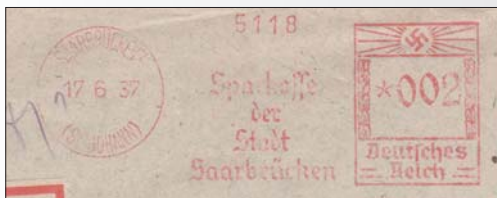Fig. 3 — 'Saargebiet' replaced with 'Deutsches Reich'
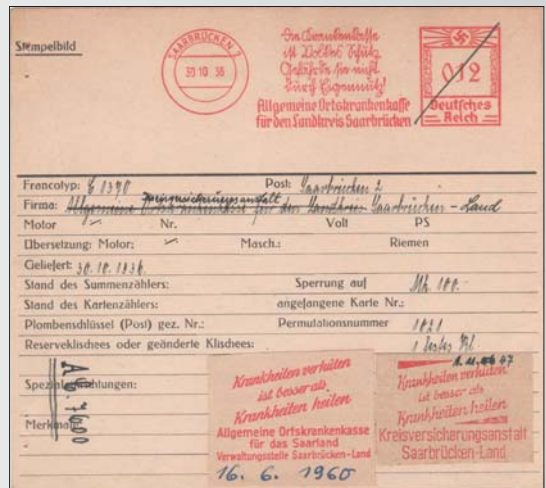

Fig. 5 — Record card for a Francotyp Type C machine

Fig. 4 — Adapted Francotyp Type A mark

4. Saar after the Second World War

In 1945 there was a repeat of the situation after the First World War, although the Allies agreed on an increased area of occupation, this time it was only for 10 years. A skeleton postal service was reinstated before suitable stamps were available. So for businesses, the return of the meter mark was the obvious solution.

However *all* symbols of the Third Reich had to be hurriedly removed. So Saar meter marks now had not only no currency designation, but no country name either. Also Jean Gläser's meter mark used to include his address, but that too had to be removed because it was 'Adolf-Hitler-Str. 23/25' (**Fig. 6**). But then Mannesmann's workshops had to *add* that it was then 'under Military Administration', as were most of the valuable heavy industry businesses.

Fig. 6 — The removal of offensive items!

Fig. 7 — 15.12.47 Inland letter rate to 20g: 6f = 600 cents

5. 'POST SAAR' marks

1947–56   New meter marks were introduced with the inscription 'POST SAAR', and the currency changed again. The change was made on 17 November 1947, *but* no thought had been given to the problem of identifying the units for the French currency this time. The cost of a basic Inland Letter was 6Fr, or in the usual minor units 600 (cents) (**Fig. 7**), and a few letters are known from before the practical decision was taken to use the Franc as the unit and add a small 'F' for Francs after the figures in the frame. Many old machines just had their value frames changed. But also Gothic numerals from the Third Reich era were phased out.

Two other major manufacturers built machines for the Saar during this period: **SATAS** was a French company whose machines had no circular town mark (**Fig. 8**). Popular with the French official agencies, the Ministry for Culture even included the official badge (as seen on the official stamps of the time) in its meter mark. For these machines a registration card was held at the post office responsible for accounting for the franking value printed by each machine. They show similar information to the Francotyp cards.
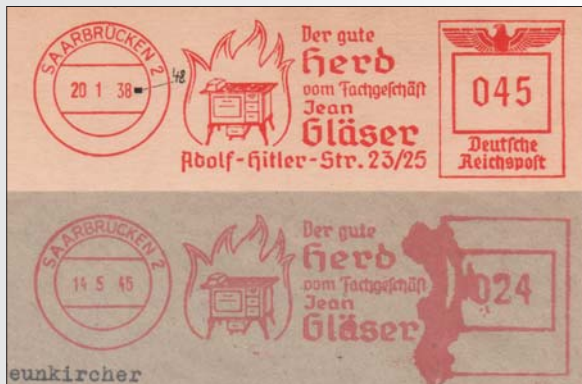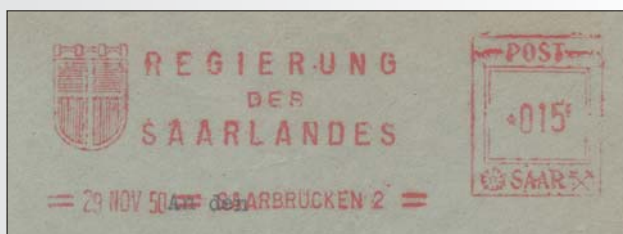

Fig. 8 — '29 NOV 50' SATAS machine mark with no circular town mark

The other brand was **Postalia**, developed by Erich Komusin, but the marks were in the traditional style, most with a large 'F' set into the inner frame (**Fig. 9**).

Fig. 9 — Postalia mark with large 'F' on inner frame

6. Saarland, OPD Saarbrücken After another referendum, with the same result as before, from 1 January 1957 'Saarland' was part of the Federal Republic of Germany, but it continued to use the French currency. The postal services were run by OPD Saarbrücken (Oberpostdirektion: Regional Directorate of Posts), and meter mark value frames were changed again, to a simple one with a German post horn (**Fig. 10**). 'Within 3 months' was the instruction, but the Saarbrücken Post Office had not changed by the beginning of May. But the rules did lead to some strange marks during April, with the value the only element remaining at the right of a mark from one of the Saarland's oldest banks (**Fig. 11**).

Fig. 10 — Mark with German post horn
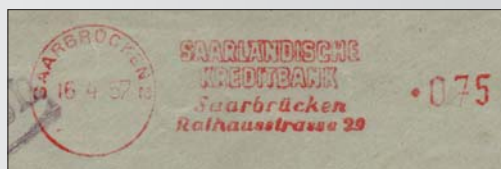
Fig. 11 — Mark showing only the value!

7. Saarland, West Germany
On 6 July 1959 the return of the Saar to Germany was complete, Saarland became the 11th 'Bundesland' in West Germany with 1% of the area and 2% of the population, and her currency was now the DM. And very little change was needed to adapt the OPD meter marks — just remove 'Saarland' and the 'F' for French Francs.

Fig. 12 — Postcode '66'

The new post code system for Germany was introduced in 1961. Saarbrücken, with the area sorting office, was allocated '66' (**Fig. 12**), and then three- and four-figure codes, all starting with '66', were allocated to smaller towns in the Saarland. So the new town marks no longer need to contain the word 'SAAR'. But Homburg Saar, one of several Homburgs in Germany, managed to keep 'SAAR' in its meter mark by using the town badge as its advertising (**Fig. 13**).

In the mid-1960s, the Francotyp A9000 model, with four-digit values, was developed and with the economy growing, some previous good customers were considering upgrading to new machines. Francotyp made specimen marks

Fig. 13 — 'SAAR' in town badge

available, for example, for the German Railways (Deutsche Bahn) (**Fig. 14**). And several examples of brand loyalty were seen among Saar businesses.

Fig. 14 — Specimen mark from a Francotyp A9000 model

In the 1970s and 1980s customers were expecting more from their machines, in particular ones which could print extras which were previously added using a handstamp, e.g. 'Drucksache' (**Fig. 15**) or 'Gebühr bezahlt'. And in 1981 Saarbrücken hosted the European Consumer Exhibition (**Fig. 16**).

Fig. 15 — 'Drucksache' incorporated in meter mark

Finally, 1988 was the last full year in which the 'Deutsche Bundespost' was a state-owned operation with a single Government minister in charge; so as the business was prepared for privatisation, this period in the history of the postal service comes to an end. And these meter marks have illustrated very effectively the story of the Saar area surviving all the turbulence to emerge a strong, successful and stable unit.
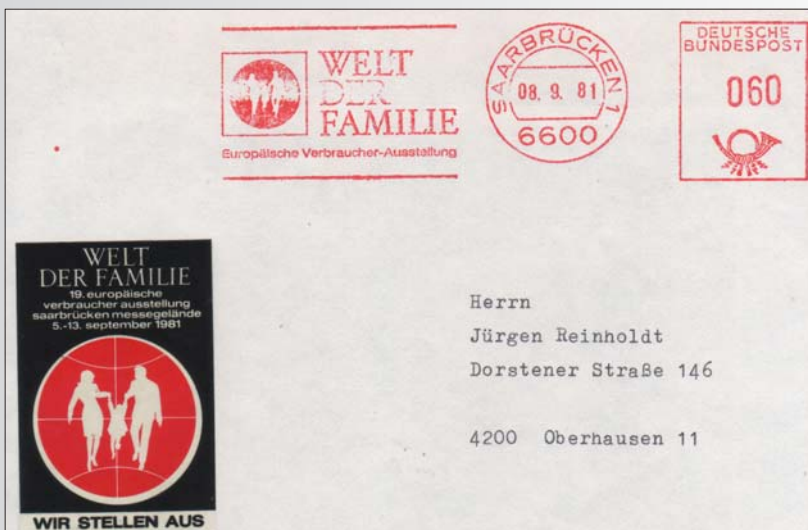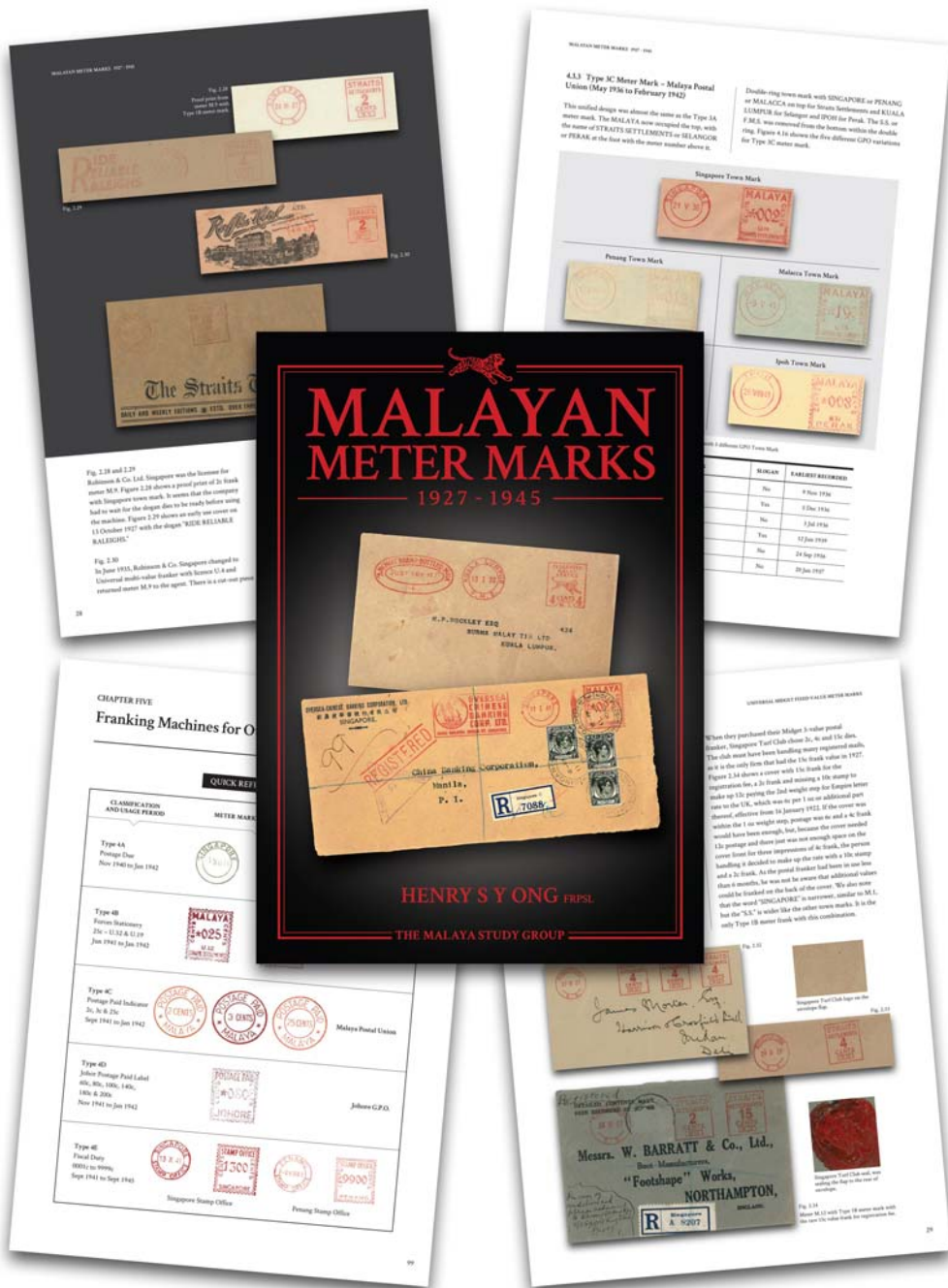

Fig. 16 — 08.9.81 Inland Printed Matter, 'reduced rate' to 100g: 60pf.
Promoting a world class consumer exhibition to be held in Saarbrücken

MALAYAN METER MARKS 1927–1945

Henry S. Y. Ong FRPSL

This book is the result of many years of careful and enthusiastic collecting, diligent research and delving into history. It goes a very long way to explain the importance of Meter Marks, their origin and development from single value machines to multiple value ones and the early inclusion of advertising which helped to make them so popular in the commercial world. Throughout the book illustrations are lavish and numerous and add enormously to the use of this book as a guide and reference to the collector.

Size A4, 187 pp., hardback, price £28. Available from the Malaya Study Group's Publications Officer, Peter Cockburn FRPSL, High Garth, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe, West Sussex RH17 6LG, United Kingdom (pfcockburn@aol.com).
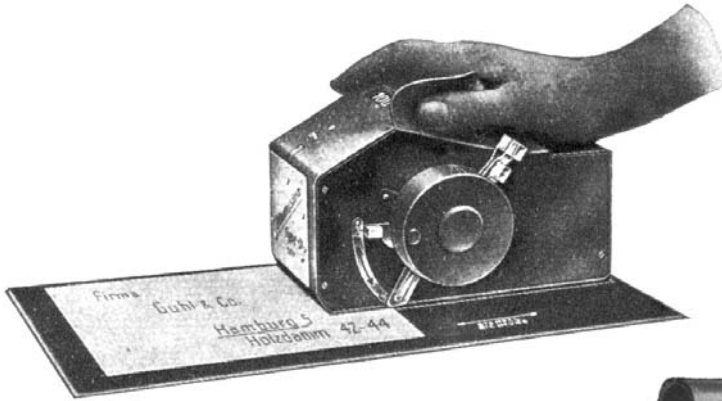
Universal Postal Frankers

Pitney-Bowes

Komusina

Neopost

Frankotyp