

End of Dummy Books, 2007

For some time it has been unclear to us whether the manufacturers of stamp vending machines still use dummy stamp books. Recently, I had the opportunity of asking a current Royal Mail machine supplier for the answer.

He was able to confirm what we had suspected, namely that Royal Mail now supply them with normally packaged first and second class issued stamp books. It would appear that from the first post-trial books of ten onwards, this has been the case.

Apparently, the books do not appear to be defaced in any way - either by pen, rubber stamp or pre-printed bars or wording. These days it is probably cheaper to allow a relatively few packets of stamp books to be used in this way, rather than have to go to the expense of designing, producing and stock-managing unique dummy equivalents. (It always used to be that live stamps were deemed to be accountable paper, i.e they had a value greater than the unprinted paper used, and so needed to be returned to Stores after use. Whether they now need to be returned is unclear.)

I have yet to ascertain what type of stamp book the field engineers use to test the machinery sited at local Post Office(TM) premises. Could it be that Romec still undertakes this repair / installation work, or has it perhaps been out-sourced to a private supplier?

So, it now seems unlikely that our album pages will be graced with any British dummy self-adhesive books. However, Royal Mail policies tend to change as frequently as the staff and so details of any finds that contradicts the above information, either now or in the future, would be welcomed.

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