

Your Letters

Vending query

In my photograph collection I found one of a stamp vending machine, now removed, that was in Old Town Post Office, Stevenage. It does not seem to match any of the illustrations in the article by Glenn Morgan (*Cross Post*, Spring 2007). Perhaps someone can tell me which version it is.

*Barry Jackman,
Walkern, Herts.*

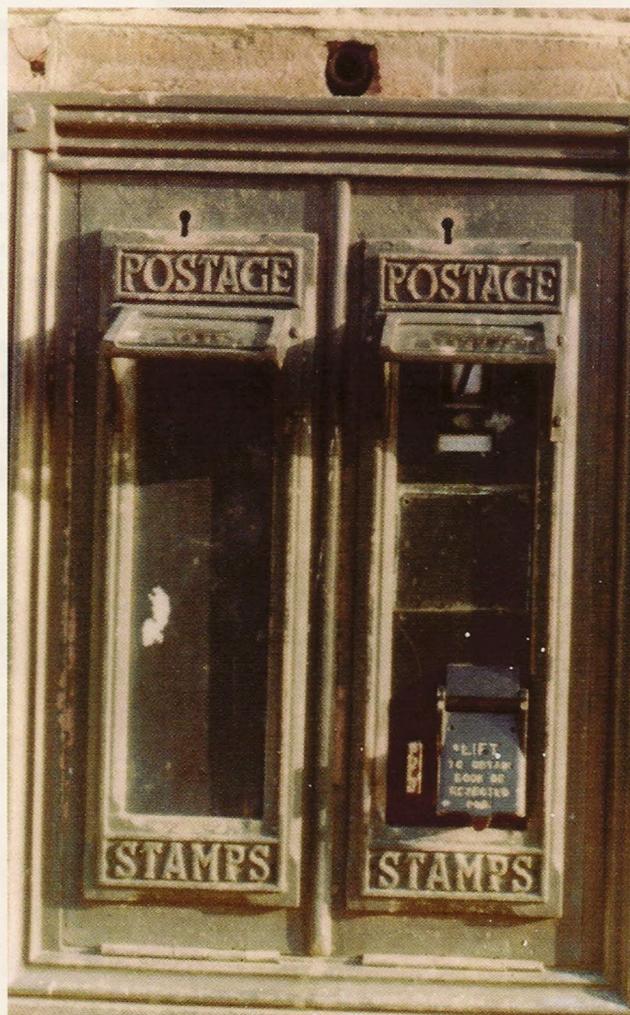
Glenn Morgan replies:

Barry has identified one of the difficulties that Graham Eyre and I experienced while compiling the article, namely that there is a number of subtle or major variations that exist for machines that were, very often, in use for decades in one modified form or another.

The photograph depicts a casing known as 'Case CI Type K Mk1' that would have been used in the wall of a main post office and would often have been painted red, despite them not requiring any paint to maintain a pristine appearance. Incidentally, these casings also exist without the decoration at top left and top right and often have the protective rain hood(s) missing, as they were only screwed on and were prone to theft by collectors of such items.

The left-hand SVM has been removed and replaced with a blank plate, while the right-hand SVM is still present. Note that the NOT IN USE plate is clearly visible in the photograph, but that the centrally placed plate describing what it vended has been removed, although the screw holes that would have retained the plate are still to be seen.

It is a machine that would, depending on its date of installation at Old Town Post Office, Stevenage, at one time have dispensed one shilling, then two shilling pre-decimal booklets, followed by 10p, then 50p decimal booklets after various modifications down the years. This machine type is Image 4B in the article and was designated the code E originally, then F, F1 and F2. This



assumes, of course, that it was one of the original batch of machines installed back in 1951, which is quite possible.

Reggie Dingwall

I was interested to see the envelope in the article on Stamp Vending Machines (*Cross Post*, Spring 2007, page 15) addressed to the first wife of the late Reggie Dingwall. Through the sale of stamps, postal history, postcards and associated material on behalf of The Sudan Church Association, he probably supplied and satisfied more collectors than many dealers achieve.

Born in 1908, Reggie entered the Sudan political service in 1931, becoming District Commissioner. In 1939 he caught yellow fever, and while recuperating in

Cairo, began his interest in philately. A significant decision was to buy a collection from a stranded Frenchman who was desperate to raise money for his return fare to France.

He returned to Sudan, subsequently becoming Commissioner of Prisons in Khartoum, until independence in 1951, when he came to England. He fulfilled his ambition to run a farm, and it was while he and his wife Daffodil were at Higher Oakshott Farm near Liss in Hampshire that the envelope illustrated would have been sent. Daffodil died in a tragic accident in 1980.

Reggie helped with the Sudan Church Association, raising £310,000 during his life heading a team of supporters raising funds through the sale of stamps. He never allowed stamps to be removed from envelopes: every envelope was examined for some saleable attribute, such as cancellation, handstamp or instructional marking. Very few failed that test.

Reggie died in 2003, aged 95. He was a Fellow of The Royal Philatelic Society London.

*Tom Norgate,
Petersfield.*