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# Counter News

The operations publication for post offices

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10 - 16 February 2000

week **47**



*.... Stop Press ~ all offices in the Edinburgh area*

## **Lost in Transit order books ~ Operation Majestic**

Over the last 4 weeks numerous books which were lost in transit in the London area have been presented for payment at various post offices in the Edinburgh area.

The printed details on the books have been changed to suit the post offices at which they are being presented.

The orders in the books are normally over £200 each, and two or three orders are normally due.

The alterations to the front cover of the books and the dockets are very good, and you will have to be particularly vigilant to spot them.

**If one of these books is presented:**

- **impound the order book and make a note of any identification presented**
- **obtain a detailed description of the presenter**
- **if possible, make a note of any vehicle registration number, together with a description of the vehicle**
- **telephone [GRO] after the presenter has left and quote 'Operation Majestic'.**

Under no circumstances should you attempt to detain or question the presenter, or call the police. Do not take should any unnecessary risks in attempting to obtain the requested information.

**Contributor: Isobel Hall**

# Operational information

## 1 Bank of England. All offices

### Government Stock (Gilts) applications

Since July 1998 Government Stock (also known as Gilts) has only been available by direct application to the Bank of England and is no longer the responsibility of National Savings.

If you require application forms to purchase and sell government stock:

■ please order these from Swindon, and not from The Bank of England, quoting the following reference numbers:

Application to purchase . . . . . BOE Purchase

Application to sell . . . . . BOE Sale.

**Contributor: Jim Williams**

## 2 BT. All Automated offices

### BT bar-coded bills

The number of errors caused by offices incorrectly recording the total amount paid by customers towards their bill is increasing.

The two most common types of errors are:

#### *The miskeying of the total value of the bill paid*

This can be avoided by checking the value displayed on the screen and/ or by checking the value printed on the receipt **before** you hand it to the customer.

Always ask customers to check the value on their receipts before they leave the counter position.

#### *Value of redeemed stamps not recorded*

The value of BT Savings Stamps redeemed as part payment of the BT bill (in addition to any cash/ cheque payment) is frequently not being recorded as part of the total value of bill payment.

When stamps are offered as payment or part payment towards a BT bill, **they must be recorded as cash.**

**Contributor: Phil Jeary**

## 3 BT. All offices

### BT bills ~ customer enquiries

Customers who claim they have paid their bills at post offices, but whose accounts have not been credited, are sometimes advised to return to the office of payment with their receipts to check that the post office has processed them.

If a customer asks you to do this:

■ check your BT Daily Summary, or undercopy of automated payments receipts, for the date of the transaction to ensure the transaction is recorded correctly

■ confirm with the customer you have processed it

■ contact the BT duty in Chesterfield on **GRO** (manual transactions only), or (automated payments transactions only) and give the following transaction details:

date of transaction

value of transaction

BT customer reference number, or 24 digit bar-code number, or 19 digit magnetic swipe card number

your office name

your office code

**Contributor: Phil Jeary**



**Operational information****4 Camelot. All National Lottery offices****National Lottery 'Instants' ~ game end**

The following games will end on Monday  
17 April 2000:

Game name	Game number
'Squids In'	70
Money Spinner (2)	56

- Do not activate any further packs of these games
- Please make every effort to sell all remaining activated stocks of these games before 11.00pm on Monday 17 April 2000.

**Acceptable stock**

Stock of these games will not be accepted if activated after the following dates:

**'Squids In' (game 70)**

15 September 1999 (Counter News week 25 refers)

**Money Spinner (2) (game 56)**

14 July 1999 (Counter News week 16 refers)

**Unacceptable stock**

If you have unsold stock activated after the dates shown, you will be liable for the value of the stock and must not return it.

**Please remember:**

Instants activated before the Post Office Counters game end date will not be accepted for credit if the relevant activation slip is not attached to the envelope in which they are returned.

Keep your activation slips until all Instants from the pack have been sold.

Disposal instructions will be issued in a future edition of Counter News.

- Do not return activated scratchcards to your Stock Centre until instructed to do so.

**Contributor: Julie Sharp**

**5 Girobank. All offices****Transcash fee increase**

From Thursday 17 February 2000 the standard fee for Transcash payments will increase from 97p to £1.00.

The standard fee must always be collected unless:

- the Transcash slip states that no fee or an alternative fee is payable
- customers are making payment to a 'Freepay' account
- a fee change for a particular client has been notified in Counter News.

**ECCO offices**

On the BOP at close of business on Wednesday 16 February 2000, use the 'Amend Local Product Data' function to make the following change:

- amend price of PLU 426 (Trnsc Fee) to £1.00.
- Take Software and Data backups and label 'After Transcash Increase', date and time.

Once these changes have been made at the BOP, do not allow any autoloading unless the SU/CTD will not be used for any more counter serving on that day. (Autoloading may be switched off to control this if necessary).

- Autoload all CTDs to pick up the changes before the start of business on Thursday 17 February 2000 (Switch autoloading back on if you switched it off).

**Contributor: Arthur Harvey**

## 6 Moneygram. All Moneygram offices

### Moneygram ~ service restriction to Spain

With immediate effect, the maximum amount that can be paid by a bank in Spain using the Moneygram service is the equivalent of 3000 Euros.

Banks in Spain will not pay more than this to any one customer on the same day.

However, there are a number of other agents who may pay up to a maximum of £5,000.

When sending money to Spain ask the customer whether the recipient will be collected at a bank. If the answer is yes:

- telephone Moneygram on 0800 783 3221 to confirm the amount you are sending does not exceed 3000 Euros.

**Contributor: Dave Leyshon**

## 7 National Savings. All offices

### Cash Value chart

National Savings regularly receives complaints from customers who are told at post offices that the Cash Value chart is no longer available.

Please remember:

You must keep the Cash Value chart behind the counter and show it to customers upon request.

From January 2000 the format of the Cash Value chart will change, and it will be produced in black and white.

**Contributor: Jim Williams**

## 8 National Savings. All offices

### Daily Despatch envelopes (DNS 16R)

National Savings is experiencing increasing problems caused by offices failing to despatch National Savings daily summary forms in envelope DNS 16R.

- Please ensure you use envelope DNS 16R to despatch all daily summary forms.

Failure to do so will result in delays to the processing of these documents, and may result in inconvenience to customers.

Please ensure you have an adequate supply of envelopes DNS 16R. Stock can be ordered from Swindon as required.

**Contributor: Jim Williams**

**Operational information****9 National Savings. All offices****Individual Savings Accounts ~ top ups**

The annual tax-free allowance for customers investing in ISAs will be reduced to £1,000 from Thursday 6 April 2000.

National Savings will be writing to around 40,000 existing ISA customers that have not yet invested the full £3,000 to encourage them to make the most of the £3,000 tax free allowance for the 1999/2000 tax year.

There will also be a POPOS campaign from Monday 14 February 2000 to increase awareness.

Please remember:

When customers make a NS ISA deposits, remind them to make the most of their tax-free allowance before Thursday 6 April 2000, as the limit will be only £1,000 from Thursday 6 April.

**Contributor: Jim Williams**

**10 Parcelforce Worldwide. All offices****Parcelforce Worldwide inland services ~ a guide to compensation (error)**

Counter News week 45, article 4 contained a misprint. In the 'Cover included' column, the entry for Parcelforce 48 should read '£150 (loss or damage) per consignment'.

To avoid confusion the whole table has been repeated below.

PFWW service	Cover included	Enhanced cover	Delivery
Parcelforce by 9	£250 (loss or damage) per consignment	Up to £2500 (loss or damage)	Next working day by 9.00am
Parcelforce by 10	£250 (loss or damage) per consignment	Up to £2500 (loss or damage)	Next working day by 10.00am
Parcelforce by noon (12)	£250 (loss or damage) per consignment	Up to £2500 (loss or damage)	Next working day by noon (12.00)
Parcelforce 24	£250 (loss or damage) per consignment	Up to £2500 (loss or damage)	Next working day, usually by 17.30 pm
Parcelforce 48	<b>£150</b> (loss or damage) per consignment	Up to £2500 (loss or damage)	Within two working days
Parcelforce Standard	£20 (loss or damage) per parcel	Up to £500 (loss or damage)	Normally within three working days

The Counter News team apologises for any inconvenience caused by this error.

**Contributor: Ria MacQueen**



**11** Post Office Network. All offices**Bogus Cash Remittance staff**

Counter News week 42, article 4 refers.

Due to an error in transcription in the original article there has been some confusion as to what identification must be produced by CashCo personnel when collecting a remittance.

All offices must follow this procedure when a remittance collection takes place.

All three of the following items must be produced by the collecting officer:

- a smoke and dye box
- a badge affixed to their uniform
- a photo identification pass with a serial number which corresponds with the uniform badge number.

If the collecting officer cannot produce **all three** of these items:

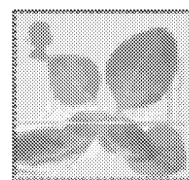
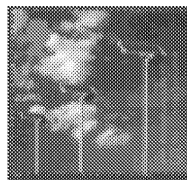
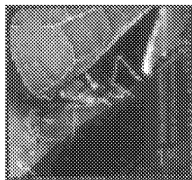
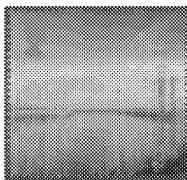
- do not hand over any money
- contact the security team immediately via the helpline.

**Contributor: Liz Doherty**

**12** Post Office Network. All offices**‘Life & Earth’ special issue****Periods of sale**

Special Stamps and Presentation Packs for this issue will go on sale on Tuesday 4 April 2000.

First Day Envelopes and Royal Mail Stamp Cards should be available for sale at least 7 days before this date.



	Stamps	Presentation Packs	Royal Mail Stamp Cards	First Day Envelopes
On sale:	Tue 4 April 2000	Tue 4 April 2000	Tue 28 March 2000	Tue 28 March 2000
Price:	1st NVI, 2nd NVI, 45p, 65p	£1.95 each	25p each	25p each
Withdraw from sale at close of business on:	Mon 5 June 2000	Mon 5 June 2000	Mon 5 June 2000	Tue 4 April 2000

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**Operational information**

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**Requisitions**

■ Use issue code 'LIFE'.

Stamp	Design	Item code	Sheet value
2nd NVI	ECOS/ Ballymena	NVIS	£19.00
1st NVI	Web of Life/ London Zoo	NVIF	£26.00
45p	Earth Centre/ Doncaster	P45	£45.00
65p	Project SUZY/ Teeside	P65	£65.00

You will need to refer to the Counter News Workaid for Royal Mail Special Issue and Philatelic Items, which was issued in week 30 (14 October 1999).

**Stock Centres, Philatelic Counters, Collections and Post•Shops+**

Please refer to page 7 of the Workaid.

■ Order the above items immediately.

**All other offices**

Please refer to page 7 of the Workaid.

You will receive a standard supply.

■ Keep a small supply of stock for each of the Millennium issues to meet customer requirements throughout the year.

**Accounting instructions for stock receipts**

■ Please refer to pages 8-12 of the Workaid.

**ECCO offices**

For 1st class stamps . . . . . select Spl 1st

For 2nd class stamps . . . . . select Spl 2nd

For 45p and 65p stamps . . . select Stmp Spl other

**Horizon offices**

Please note:

Until the icons are visible on the system, enter the 45p and 65p special stamps onto the system using the 'Special Other' icon.

**Withdrawal instructions**

■ Please refer to pages 13-16 of the Workaid.

If you keep any stock of this issue and need to return it at a later date, you must send it as a normal stock return and **not** with future Millennium returns

Returns forms VSW/ 63 and P2613(a) will be provided for this withdrawal:

If you do not receive your returns form VSW/ 63 or P2613(a) by Tuesday 23 May 2000, please contact your regional stores.

■ Please ensure you enter your office code on the appropriate part of the returns form

■ Do not include any other items.



**Offices served by Hemel Hempstead SSO except Stock Centres**

■ Return stock during the Cash Account week shown in the table below:

Office FAD code	week number	week ending
002 003 004 005 006 009 010 020 026 033 104 113 114 131 140 202 230 422 424 427 432 434 939 946	12	14 June 2000
201 205 206 207 208 210 217 227 238 242 246 247 306 309 313 320 321 323 327 328 329 337 343 349 420 508 518 542 546 549 807 818 820* 824 830 844 868	13	21 June 2000
001 007 008 011 012 013 014 023 025 102 106 109 112 116 124 126 128 129 130 134 136 137 226 311 324 340 401 405 406 407 410 418 504 508 511 519 523 539 548 549 552 555 702 704 705 709 711 713 714 715 817 832 855 858 859 900 904 907 908 909 912 923 925 935 937 940 941 948	14	28 June 2000

\* The following offices are still served by Aberdeen Stock Centre and should therefore continue to return stock to Aberdeen:

129/820, 131/820, 141/820, 161/820, 162/820, 166/820, 171/820, 173/820, 176/820,  
177/820, 178/820, 179/820, 180/820, 185/820.

■ Despatch following the instructions given in the Workaid

■ Mark the grey one trip pouch 'Life & Earth'.

**Stock Centres**

Instructions for the withdrawal and destruction of 'Life & Earth' special issue stock items will be issued to all Stock Centres.

All stock should be received from offices by Monday 3 July 2000.

■ Keep a small amount of supply stock and destroy the rest by Monday 10 July 2000

■ Use the specially designed Local Destruction Certificate

■ Enter the total of stock destroyed in the Cash Account Payment Table at line (10)03 'Locally Destroyed Stock'

■ Despatch the Destruction Certificates with the Cash Account during the week in which the stock is claimed

■ Send a copy of the reconciliation form to Transaction Processing, Chesterfield by Monday 31 July 2000 at the latest.

**Contributor: Jas Panesar**

# 13 Post Office Network. All offices except offices issuing Devon Countywide tickets

## Travel Ticket and Meals On Wheels ~ accounting forms

Weekly Summary form (LS1) is the only post office form that should be used to account for local Travel Ticket and Meals On Wheels schemes.

With immediate effect:

■ please **destroy** all other post office accounting forms used for local Travel Ticket (Bus and/ or Rail) and Meals On Wheels schemes.

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**Operational information**

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Do **not** destroy any supplementary summary forms (eg. those for Centro, London Boroughs Freedom Passes (P4342, P4396 and BD1 etc.). You should continue to use these as required in addition to the Weekly Summary forms (LS1).

## Devon Countywide scheme

Please note:

Exceptionally, offices that issue travel tickets for the Devon Countywide scheme should continue to use the existing accounting form (CW4) until further notice.

**Contributor: Andy Pike**

## 14 Post Office Network. All offices

# Post Office Security Team identity cards

The Post Office Network Security Team has been issued with new identity cards which include the following security features:

*Front of card:*

expiry date 31 December 2002

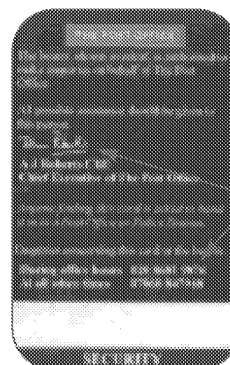
the holder's name printed under the photograph



a serial number opposite the expiry date, which is repeated on the photograph

the cards are blue, and as an added security feature, when they are tilted the words 'genuine' and 'secure' can clearly be seen

*Back of card:*



a signature and a telephone number for enquiries on the back

The cards do not prove identity, and do not allow automatic entry into the secure area. Visits by the Security Team must be arranged in advance, and the name of the visitor and nature of visit must be supplied.

There may be exceptional circumstances where visits cannot be arranged beforehand. In these instances, if you are in any doubt or you are suspicious of any visitor, confirm the reason for the visit with the Security Team via the helpline.

**Contributor: Liz Doherty**



## 15 Royal Mail. All Philatelic offices

# 'Botanic Gardens of Wales' stamp book

On Tuesday 4 April 2000 a new variety of stamp book containing 4 Millennium 1st class NVI definitive stamps, will go on sale.

These books printed by Walsall, will contain a special label celebrating the National Botanic Garden of Wales.

### Period of sale

Stamp book	
On sale	Tuesday 4 April 2000
Price	£1.04
Withdraw from sale	Tuesday 3 April 2001

### Requisitions

#### Philatelic offices only

Item	Item code	Requisition in multiples of:	UOM	Price
Stamp book	SB4F BOTAN	Packets of 50 books	PT	£52

#### Please note:

The price of this book **does not** reflect the proposed tariff change in April 2000. Instructions for uprating these books will be supplied with other details of the tariff changes if necessary.

**Contributor: Jas Panesar**

## *Local issues*

**16** Post Office Network. All ALPS offices in London area

### **Keyboard covers on ALPS equipment**

Due to the high level of keyboard failures in ALPS offices, and resultant engineer charges, keyboard covers are being fitted by the engineers when the ALPS equipment is electrically tested.

We have received reports that some offices have removed the covers after the engineers have left.

These covers have been fitted, at a cost to the business, to prevent keyboard failures as a result of fluid spillage, or paperclips and coins lodged between the keys.

The covers **must not** be removed once fitted.

If you remove a cover and the keyboard fails for one of the above reasons, this will be viewed as wilful damage to post office property, and the costs will be charged back to your office.

**Contributor: David Arnold**



**17** HM Forces. All offices**HM Forces Mail ~ BFPOs update (24)**

■ Please cut out and keep this information for reference and destroy any previous tables.

**BFPOs**

The following BFPOs are currently in operation:

BFPO no.	Dates	Letters		Parcels		HM Forces Aerogrammes Free of Charge
		Air	Surface	Standard Zone/ Weight	Economy Zone/ Weight	
12	04 Jan - 03 Dec '00	Outside Europe	Yes	12/ max 30kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
51	02 Jun - 07 Oct '00	Outside Europe	Yes	10/ max 30kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
500	17 Jan - 19 March '00	Europe	Yes	9/ max 20kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
507	15 Jan - 1 March '00	Europe	Yes	9/ max 20kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
510	8 Nov '99 - 31 Mar '00	Europe	Yes	9/ max 20kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
538 541 543 544 545 546 548 550 551 553	Ongoing	Europe	No	9/ max 20kg	Yes. UK/ max 20kg	Yes
555 559 561 564	Ongoing	Europe	No	No	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	Yes
567	Ongoing	Europe	No	9/ max 30kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
569 571 573	Ongoing	Europe	No	8/ max 20kg	Yes. UK/ max 20kg	No
575	11 Jan - 11 Feb '00	Europe	Yes	9/ max 20kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
591	05 Feb - 24 March '00	Europe	Yes	9/ max 20kg	Yes. UK/ max 30 kg	No
598	Ongoing	Europe	No	No	Yes. UK/ max 20kg	Yes
629	04 Jan - 01 Mar '00	Outside Europe	Yes	12/ max 30kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
632 633 634	Ongoing	Outside Europe	Yes	12/ max 20kg	Yes. UK/ max 20kg	No
635	Ongoing	Outside Europe	Yes	No	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
679	31 Mar - 28 Apr '00	Outside Europe	Yes	12/ max 30kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No
680	04 Jan - 28 Apr '00	Outside Europe	Yes	12/ max 30kg	Yes. UK/ max 30kg	No

Operational updates



**Operational updates****HM Forces Free Aerogrammes**

In addition to those listed in the table overleaf, the following BFPOs are also entitled to receive HM Forces Aerogrammes free of charge: 655, 801-825, 492 and 494.

**Temporary Forces Aerogramme service**

In addition to the usual HM Forces postal services, a temporary free Forces Aerogramme transmission service is available for the following BFPOs:

215, 228, 259, 274, 309, 327, 375, 379, and 433.

Please note:

Forces Aerogrammes (Misc. 54) must be issued to customers free of charge upon request. Postage must be paid at the time of posting, unless they are posted to one of the BFPOs entitled to receive the free transmission service (see list above).

**Contributor: Steven Lambert**

**18 Post Office Network. Bureau de Change pre-order offices****Bureau de Change Pre-order ~  
indicative rates sheet**

This rates sheet is for information only and gives an indication of Post Office Counters Ltd exchange rates on Friday 28 January 2000. Daily rates can also be obtained by contacting First Rate on 0845 30 10 100.

Currency	We sell notes at	We sell Travellers Cheques at	£100 Sterling equals (approx)
US dollar	1.5895	1.5953	159 US\$
French franc	10.4533	10.4858	1045 FRF
German mark	3.1104	3.1120	311 DEM
Greek drachma	526.6327		52663 GRD
Irish punts	1.2541		125 IEP
Turkish lire	865046		86504650 TRL
Portugese escudos	319.0853		31909 PTE
Spanish pesetas	264.9838		26498 ESB
Italian lira	3084.0261		308403 ITL
Dutch guilders	3.4917	3.4881	349 NLG

**Contributor: Raj Kalsi**



# Horizon procedures

## 19 Horizon. Selected Horizon offices

### Horizon ~ information update

#### **All Horizon offices due to go live week commencing 14 February 2000**

You should by now have received a Counter News 'Horizon supplement' and a copy of the Horizon System User Guide.

The Horizon supplement gives details of changes on the system and information about transactions which are not included in the Horizon System User Guide.

If you have not received the Counter News 'Horizon supplement' or the Horizon System User Guide **and you are due to go live in the week commencing 14 February**, please contact the Network Business Support Centre on 0845 601 1022.

Please read the Horizon section in Counter News in future for updated information about the Horizon system and procedures.

**Contributor: Tim Vause**