

SELF SERVICE KIOSKS IN THE NETHERLANDS

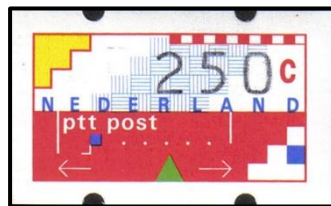
by Hens Wolf (www.postaumaat.nl) 10 November 2017

Self service kiosks (SSK) have been a topic in The Netherlands since 1989. In this article I want to give an overview of SSK-history, as well as a more in depth account on the new Post&Go-automats since 28 January 2017.

History

1. Klüssendorf

The first self service stamp automats in The Netherlands were installed on 22 August 1989. They were manufactured by the German firm Klüssendorf. Over the years a total of 46 automats has been deployed.



In 2001 the Dutch Post decided against the costly conversion of all automats from the Guilder to the Euro, the new currency as of 1 January 2002. All automats were removed in 2001.

During the Klüssendorf 'reign', three other types of automats have been tested. In the Frama, Nagler and Hytech automats a new paper design was used. Notice the three different types of print of the rates.

2. Frama

On 21 May 1996 a test started with automats from the well known Swiss manufacturer Frama. The aerial view shows the Van Brienenoord bridge in Rotterdam. All automats were decommissioned on unknown dates before the year 2000.



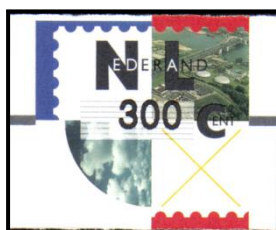
3. Nagler

In the meantime another test went underway. On 20 March 1997 a try out started with some German Nagler automats. This test period lasted until 29 September 1999.



4. Hytech

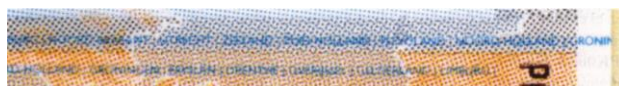
In september 2000 (date unknown) a Hytech machine was tested in three locations. In fact this was not a Self Service Kiosk, as the machine was operated by a clerk. However, the same type of stamps and the same variable rates as used in the Frama and Nagler automats were available. The test period was short lived: the last machine was removed after approximately 2½ months of service on 2 December 2000.



Then it became quiet for almost six years. Still the Dutch Post wanted to promote customer service and try some self service kiosks again. Between 2006 and 2010 three new types of automats were being tested, Wincor-Nixdorf, aCon and Gunnebo. All these automats operated with touch screen technology, a novelty in the Netherlands back then. The stamps show an artist's rendering of the Netherlands.



An interesting detail is the printing of the names of all eleven Dutch provinces, kept from the naked eye.



Notice the three types of Wincor-Nixdorf, aCon and Gunnebo automat numbers to the right on this design.

5. Wincor-Nixdorf

As of 10 November 2006 seven Wincor-Nixdorf automats were installed.



These stamps did not make it either. The last of the seven automat was removed on 18 November 2010.

6/7. aCon and Gunnebo

During the test period of the Wincor-Nixdorf automat, two other types were tested: five aCon automat (19 February 2008 until 30 March 2009) and three Gunnebo automat (18 March 2008 until 1 July 2009), again without success.

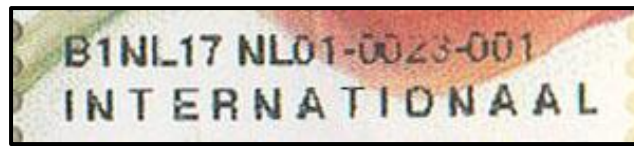


8. Post&Go automat 2017

After another six year 'drought' after the removal of the last automat on 18 November 2010, PostNL took us by surprise by a late announcement of a new British Post&Go automat to be installed at the yearly Philatelic Exhibition in Hilversum on 28 January 2017.



The automat dispensed two different stamps, all with the rate "1", comparable to the FOREVER rate in the USA. Rate 1 on the butterfly stamp is for domestic mail up to 20 grams. Rate 1 INTERNATIONAL on the stamp with the orange tulips is for all countries in the World up to 20 grams. They come on liner paper in rolls of 1,500 stamps. Each stamp has a number on the reverse side, counting down from 1,500 to 0001.



Interesting is the print of several codes with the following meaning:

B1: The “**B**” indicates it is a machine from the B series; the “**1**” indicates January.

NL17 represents Netherlands 2017.

NL01 stands for machine 1.

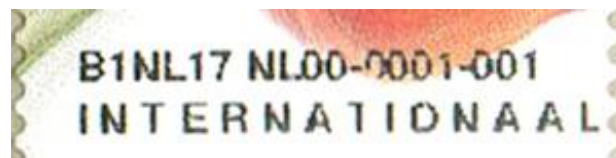
0023 = The session number. Every customer starts with a new session number, so the next person in line would start session 0024, and so on. A session could include multiple transactions, all to be tabulated and then paid for all at once.

001 = stamp one from a strip of five. If you order for example 15 stamps, the machine delivers three strips of five stamps each. On each of these the number is either 001, 002, 003, 004 or 005.

Currently there are **four** of these machines in operation in the Netherlands:

NL00 = Collectclub

(www.collectclub.nl), not accessible for patrons. All stamps from this automat have the same print: B1NL17NL00-0001-001



NL01 = Only operated at bourses/shows

1-28/29, 2017 Filabeurs in Hilversum

5-11/13, 2017 International Stamp show in Essen (Germany)

8-25/27, 2017 Multilaterale Stamp Show in 's-Hertogenbosch

9-20-22, 2017 Postex in Apeldoorn

On all these occasions a separate text is printed on the stamps.

The print on the Essen (Germany) stamps is a bit peculiar, because for this occasion NL17 was replaced by DE17 (for Duitsland = Germany). A special cancellation was available at the PostNL stand. Unfortunately, all letters posted on the stand for delivery from the Netherlands arrived at their destination with an additional mechanical postmark of a mail center in

's-Hertogenbosch.



A remarkable error occurred on the receipts in 's-Hertogenbosch on 25 August 2017. The text read “Nertherlands”, showing an r too many. This was reset in the afternoon: Netherlands.



NL02 = Collectclub Store in Bussum.

On the first day of the Hilversum-automat NL01 (28 January 2017), word was that another automat had started operating on that same day in the nearby town of Bussum. Other than the one in Hilversum, it appeared to be a machine with a scale connected to it. The “C” on the stamps indicates it is a machine from the C-series.



If one used the normal program of the automat, stamps came out with the print Bussum on them. If one put a letter on the scale, a different program applied. Mistakenly, the name Bussum did not appear on the stamps. This was corrected later that day by the British technician, who was present for the introduction of the automats.



NL02 = removed to The Hague

The Bussum automat was shut down on 4 October 2017 and subsequently put into operation on 19 October 2017 in the Readshop, Theresiastraat 23, 2593 AC, The Hague (Den Haag). The imprint on the stamps is "Den Haag THS".



It was interesting to find out how the numeration would turn out in the month of October. After all there was only one position available for the month digit, which ended with 9 for September. The manufacturer's British ingenuity resulted in an O for October (therefore the print CO on the stamp from Den Haag THS). On the first day, one of the receipts showed a rarity: the one with Session # 0523 missed part of the text (sessions 0522 and 0524 were correct).



NL03 = The Hague concept-store (previously Main Post Office)

Kerkplein 6, 2513 AZ, The Hague (Dn Haag)

This automat is identical to NL02. It started operating on 30 January 2017, surprisingly with the same printing error as two days earlier in Bussum: so stamps exist with Den Haag and without Den Haag printed on them.



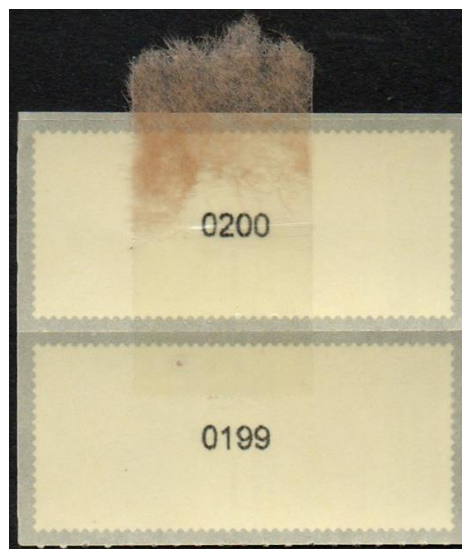
The stamps without Bussum and Den Haag can be identified by their automat number on the stamps: NL02 for Bussum and NL03 for Den Haag.

Again a printing error occurred on the receipts on the first day (30 January 2017). In the morning the text read Den Hagg. It was corrected in the afternoon: Den Haag.



Other types of stamps

The stamps with these designs were also available on a preprinted roll at two stores in Amersfoort in the center of the Netherlands. These ‘Amersfoort’ stamps do not come from a kiosk. They are sold ‘over the counter’, although the pre-printed text on them (B1NL17 NL00-0001-001) might make you believe that they too came from a kiosk, but that is not the case. Between the stamps is a perforation, so that the clerk can easily tear them off. They come in rolls of 200. It took a while for us collectors to determine that the numeration on the reverse side is not counting down (as the ‘real’ automat stamps), but counting up from 0001 to 0200, see end of the roll



Epilogue

The initial intention of PostNL is to try these Post&Go automats out for a year and then evaluate. So at this moment it is uncertain if and how this test period will get a follow up. In any case the year 2017 provided some nice philatelic items during the long quest of the Dutch Post for a suitable network of Self Service Kiosks in the Netherlands.