

In the last week of March 2004 I paid a visit to Cyprus. At that moment the developments were still unfolding, which should lead to the reunification of the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot parts. Between these two areas is a bufferzone, which is being guarded by UNCIVPOL (the United Nations Civil Police). The capital Nicosia originally was built as an almost perfect circle. In many places the walls of the citadel are still intact. The bufferzone runs exactly through the middle of the circle and therefore right through the centre of town.

I had the opportunity to go to the Post Office in Eleftheria Square in the Greek-Cypriot part of town. On the outside wall hangs a yellow automat type Amiel SIMA 1020 (Pic. #1). By using pre-programmed buttons, it produces self adhesive postage labels on transparent paper. The automat also produces receipts.



(Pic. #1).

Inside the Post Office is a yellow Amiel automat type TOP STAMP with a connected scale and touch screen (Pic. #2). By tipping the menu on the screen, this automat provides self adhesive postage labels with the correct value for a piece of mail to be put on the scale.



(Pic. #2).

This automat also produces receipts

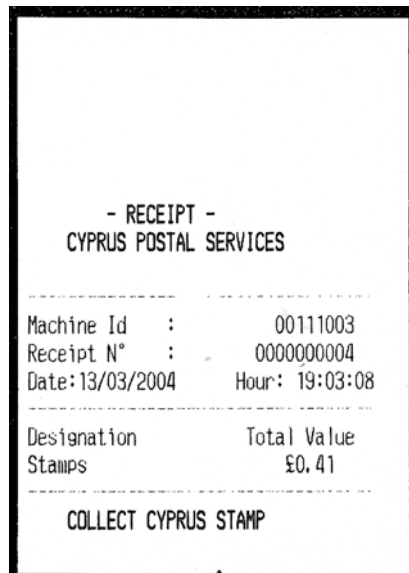
Some of the products asked for special attention, as they were a bit out of the ordinary.

1. The outside automat still produced the set of 5 postage labels with the endemic flowers, which should have been withdrawn already. Every now and then the automat cut a small strip off the next label on the roll, as a result of which the value was printed too high on the label. The print sometimes even touched the transparent paper (Pic. #3).



(Pic. #3).

2. The receipts of the outside automat showed the deep black text CYPRUS POSTAL SERVICES (Pic. #4). On the receipts of the inside automat the text reads: CYPRUS POSTAL SERVICE (without an S) (Pic. #5). Moreover on the receipts of the outside automat the word - RECEIPT - was printed, whereas this was not the case on the receipts of the inside automat. Besides English, one could select Greek in the menu on the screen. I hoped that the automat would also produce receipts with Greek text, but only English receipts came out.



(Pic. #5).

(Pic. #4).

3. The inside automat produced the new postage labels with the post-horn. The value should be printed in the upper left of the label. On my labels the print is in the middle left (*Pic. #6*).

(*Pic. #6*).



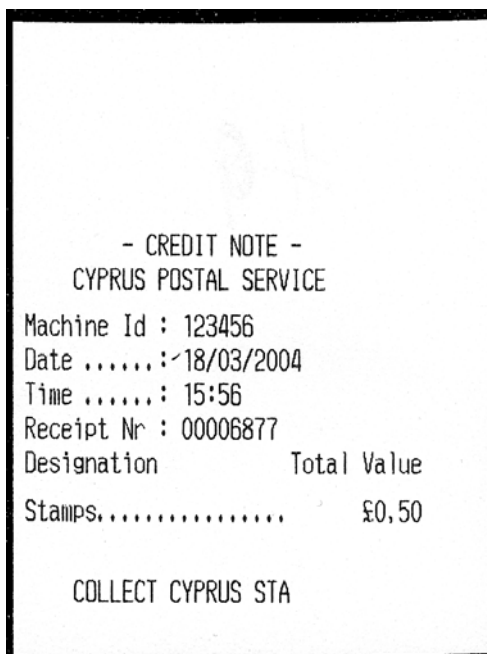
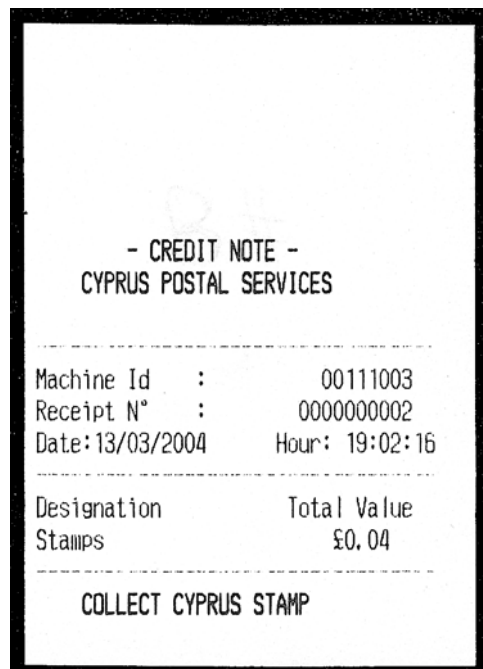
4. Another difference concerns the automat number. The outside automat prints nr. 003 right underneath the value. The inside automat does not print the automat number on the label.

5. I was lucky enough to find the receipt roll almost at the end. Usually a strong curl in the paper indicates that the end is close. Nevertheless it may take quite a lot of labels and receipts before the end is really there. For the avid collectors of receipts the joy is always indescribable when suddenly receipts with end markings come out of the automat. In my case the receipts had two pink vertical end markings on the left and the right. I had never seen these before (*Pic. #7*).

(*Pic. #7*).



6. Both automats normally produce change if the customer doesn't pay the exact amount. If the automats are out of change however, they produce a CREDIT NOTE, which can be exchanged for the remaining money in the post office. The credit note in *Pic. #8* is from the outside automat. On the credit note from the inside automat the word STAMP is only partially printed (*Pic. #9*).



(*Pic. #8*).
left

(*Pic. #9*).
right

When I left the Post Office, I felt like a rich man. Somehow it adds something extra to that collector's feeling, when one is able to get these items by chance when visiting an automat. Moreover I acquired some nice philatelic souvenirs of my visit to Cyprus right before the intended reunification.