

G.B. PERFIN STUDY GROUP NEWS-SHEET

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STUDY GROUP

This being the first of our "News-Sheets" to be issued in duplicated form since the group was reorganized it will not be amiss to explain a little of the groups' activities, both for the new members, and those who are not conversant with the work of the Study Group.

Our main object is to study all aspects of the stamps of Great Britain which are perforated with initials, to discover all that is possible about their history and to record every known type. Eventually it is hoped that a fairly complete catalogue will be compiled listing each type together with the name of the concern using them. Details of the system adopted in compiling such a catalogue are given in later pages of this issue.

Further activities of the group are the circulation of short studies of particular groups of perfins, exchange packets, and this latest innovation of a bi-monthly News Sheet.

The rules and regulations are very few and are confined mainly to the exchange packets, however, in the event of further rules proving necessary they will be put to the vote via the News-Sheet

For the uninitiated perhaps it might be as well to explain the origin of the word PERFIN. It was devised by our American friends and comes from a contraction of "Perforated Initials". We have adopted it mainly because it is easier on the tongue than any other word so far devised.

NEWS SHEET

This and all future issues will carry pages devoted to lists of identified Perfins and as far as possible articles and items of news connected with them. In this number you will find an article by our President on the history of G.B. Perfins, and in the next we hope to include one by Mr D. Muggleton explaining the method he adopted in arranging his prize-winning exhibit.

If any member has offers or wants in the perfin line please communicate them to the Secretary and they will be included in a future issue.

WANTED URGENTLY: Articles, Studies, News-items on perfins. These are required to fill future issues of this YOUR club bulletin. Please let us have anything that you feel might be of interest to your fellow collectors.

THE ORIGINS OF BRITISH SECURITY ENDORSEMENT PUNCTURES

By C. Jennings.

Paper perforation was already a well-established process long before its application to postage stamps. Cheque books, order-books etc., where straightforward perforation was required were already in long use. It was quite an obvious procedure to apply under pressure a number of steel teeth in a row, so arranged to slide into corresponding rows of holes and these two parts quite naturally became known as "male" and "female" parts. Some difficulties arose in keeping the female holes clear of the small discs of paper, which were punched out of the sheets being operated upon. If these holes were allowed to become clogged there was resultant distortion or breakage of the teeth on the male die. A bent tooth, which failed to enter its hole correctly would, of course, break off on subsequent operations of the machine. If not replaced this would lead to "blind" holes appearing in the work. For this reason most of the "teeth" were made to be easily removed, changed or replaced.

The first modification of the simple perforation machine to be required was one which would perforate both horizontally and vertically at the same operation. This was not a great problem, except as applied to the perforation of postage stamps for the purpose of making them readily separable. The very narrow margins between the stamps and irregularities of spacing, due to distortion of the paper by variations in atmospheric humidity, were an added complication. The first imperforate straps had been separated by means of scissors or razors, or, very commonly, by folding the rows along the margins to form a heavy crease which would tear easily and evenly.

In 1847 Henry Archer submitted his plan for a machine, which would apply rouletted incisions between the stamps. His machine was, however, found to be too effective since it caused too much damage to the table upon which the sheets were laid and the resultant cost of upkeep was too high. In 1848, however, he produced a machine, which perforated the sheets, instead of rouletting them, along the tops and sides of the rows. This machine, ideal in theory, proved impracticable in use because the gum clogged the holes and the irregular spacing of the rows caused many stamps to be perforated through the design instead of through the margins. Modifications were made to the machine, which was transferred to Somerset House for use on Revenue stamps.

In 1853 new machines were constructed by Messrs. David Napier & Sons of Lambeth and were brought into use for perforating "Draft" and "Receipt" stamps at Somerset House. The same machines were officially brought into use for postage stamps in 1854. They were steam driven and were capable of perforating 3,000 sheets per day. The gauge first used was 16 but it was found that, the holes being too close together,

the sheets parted too readily and a smaller gauge, 14, was brought into use.

Meanwhile the problem of date-stamping railway tickets, in particular, in such a manner that the endorsement could not be removed had been worrying the railway companies. Joseph Sloper of London, a printer was intrigued by the possibilities of using a perforation machine for this purpose. Instead of merely straight rows of perforations, however, he had to surmount the difficulty of producing a machine capable of punching figures and letters through the tickets, and which could be readily changed with the date.

In 1858, Sloper produced and patented a machine (Patent No.1985/58), consisting it is believed, of a roller carrying projecting pins which coincided with holes in the bed to which was attached, at one side, a stripper to enable the sheets, which tended to stick at the points of puncture, to be detached from the bed. This machine was intended to be employed as a cheque-protection device in much the same way that postal Orders are perforated today.

This machine was, however still a long way from Sloper's main ambition. It is curious to note, however, that he was not entirely absorbed in this project for in 1866 we find that he patented a ventilating system for mines, ships and factories. In fact, 10 years elapsed before his aim of a machine for perforating railway tickets was achieved. This patent (No.2741/68) appeared in 1868 and was modified and improved by a subsequent patent (No.643/69) in 1869. This last machine had interchangeable heads to permit the choice of dates, designs, etc. The stripper plate was attached to the bed at both ends instead of one end only, as in his cheque-protection machine.

There is no doubt that this is the machine which was first employed for the perforation, with endorsements, of postage stamps for it is at this time that Sloper first applied for official recognition of his machine for that purpose. The earliest known examples were probably perforated on his 1868 machine but the majority of his work would be carried out on the 1869 modified version. The earliest example bearing a date in my own extensive collection is dated September 1869. I should be interested to hear of any earlier dated specimens.

Hitherto, as is well known, the endorsement of postage stamps had consisted in the overprinting on either back or front of the stamp and I have soon two examples of the 1d. black of 1840 which have been pen-cancelled, both on cover, with the obvious intention of safeguarding the stamps against removal from the cover before being handed to the post-office. This system had obvious disadvantages since a heavy postmark would obscure any overprint on the face while an endorsement

on the back could not be detected without removal of the stamp from the cover. It was only natural, therefore, that the punctured endorsement should quickly receive the blessing of the Post Office. This is proved by the fact that within twelve months of the authorities instituting a service through Perkins Bacon & Co., for the overprinting of stamps on the reverse, they were advising enquirers to contact Sloper with a view to employing the more efficient method. Furthermore, it is also obvious from dated copies that Sloper's machines were also being used by Somerset House for fiscal stamps at quite an early date,

Unfortunately no record is available to show which was the first die to be used on postage stamps and, alas, Sloper's records were destroyed in the 1939-45 war by enemy action. It is known, however, that at some date he compiled a record of users in alphabetical order. Hugh Vallancey (late Editor of Stamp Collecting) has noted a few of the better known and more interesting firms and has given their corresponding number in the records, but there are immense gaps. It will be a colossal task, but one in which I hope to succeed, to reconstruct these records. The obvious difficulty is, of course, in ascertaining the actual year in which they were first compiled.

Since the days of Sloper's early machines many improvements have been made and electricity is now the motive power for many models. Sloper's machine of 1869 was improved in 1872 to employ interchangeable dies, with corresponding "female" parts, and again in 1893 when his son, Edward Sloper, patented a machine bearing a number of dies on a horizontal wheel so that the operator could choose any die he desired.

The Sloper perforation machines had not, however, completely superseded the overprinting method, which is still in use today for Receipt stamps, and many stamps of the values currently required for receipt purposes may be found with these overprints. These are mainly privately printed but an interesting exception, which does not seem to have gained very great popularity has come to my notice. This consists of a roller, like a photographer's "squeegee" roller, bearing some thirty rubber dies arranged in five horizontal rows around the roller. Above the roller and in contact with it is a second inking roller. This small hand instrument was rolled down the sheet of stamps leaving a violet impression of the die. The only example I have seen is applied to the back of the stamps and accompanied an advertisement for the machine which was manufactured by Messrs, W. H. Everett & Son, Ltd., of London at the price of £1. It is their initials which appear on the only known examples. This invention appeared at the early part of this century but, quite evidently, was not a popular one.

Today, of course, perforation machines are made by many firms throughout the world and, since the principal is the same as Sloper's in all cases it is almost impossible to differentiate between them.

TABULATING PERFIN DESIGNS

Introduction

For the purposes of recording perfin types in the best, possible manner and without actually illustrating each individual type, a system has been adopted which enable a details of the letters comprising a design to be written down in catalogue form. This system is based on the method used by the Perfin Club of the U.S.A., but has been extended to cover the further differences which appear in the perfins of Great Britain.

Method Employed.

Perfin types are listed horizontally across the catalogue pages in columns in the order shown below.

- 1 : The letters forming the perfin.
- 2 : The type of Ampersand.
- 3 : The pattern formed by the letters.
- 4 : The number of holes in each latter.
- 5 : Heights of each letter.
- 6 : Name of concern using the perfin.

1. Letters.

The letters are written in one line with oblique strokes separating the letters of any distinct rows. For example, a perfin listed as HB/&Co would appear on the stamp in two lines with the HB directly above the &Co.

Serifs or fancy letters will be underlined.

2. Ampersand.

There are four different types of Ampersand each having four possible sub-types.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| I | Straight top, square cut beck. |
| Ia | Straight top, rounded back, |
| Ib | As type I with tail on foot, |
| Iab | As type Ia with tail. |
| II | Triangular shaped top, square cut back. |
| IIa | Triangular shaped top, rounded back. |
| IIb | As type II with tail. |
| IIab | As type IIa with tail. |
| III | Diamond top, square cut back. |
| IIIa | Diamond top, rounded back. |
| IIIb | As type III with tail. |
| IIIab | As type IIIa with tail. |

IV Rounded top, square cut back.
IVa Rounded top, rounded back.
IVb As type IV with tail.
IVab As type IVa with tail.

3. Pattern.

A coding is used for this as follows,

H = 1 horizontal line.
2H = 2 horizontal lines.
3H = 3 horizontal lines.
D = Diagonal.
S = Sideways.
B = Badge.
M = Monogram.

4. No. of Holes

The number of holes comprising each letter are written down in a similar manner to the letters themselves.

5. Heights

The height of each letter is measured to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ millimetre from the centre of the lowest hole to the centre of the topmost. Where letters have a dot beneath them this is included in the measurement.

6. Name of Concern.

Where it is known the name of the firm is given, in the final column. If the identity of the user is not known then any relevant information, such as postmarks, which might lead to the ultimate identification, is included.

Conclusions.

Thus the mythical concern of HB/&Co given on the preceding page might appear in the catalogue pages as follows,

HB/&CO IIa 2H 12,13/13,6,6 5½/5½,5½,6 H BROWN & COMPANY
Erewon, Beds.

MEMBERSHIP LIST
G.B. PERFIN STUDY GROUP

<u>NAME</u>	<u>INTERESTS OTHER THAN PERFINS</u>
BARTLESON. A.S.	Not known.
BLYTH. J.G.	Everything connected with the registered post of G.B.
BOWMAN. R.J.	France, Czechoslovakia, Fiscals, Pre-cancels.
BUTLER, B.A.	France, Malta, Q.E.II(used).
CARR. C.	Fiji, Mauritius, St. Helena, Polar Regions, Pre-cancels, Reg. & Air Labels, Over-printed Names, Postmarks.
CLARKSON. H.	Leeds Postal History and General.
DAVIDSON. D.	Registration Labels, Postal Slogans.
EADES. E.	. Russian Zemstvos and , Local.Stamps.
EDGAR. W.A.	. Early G.B. Plate Reconstruction.
FOSBERY. J.	All G.B. - Particularly Plate Numbers.
GOODIER. J.	, General
HOGGETT. R.A.	All issues of Great Britain & Australia.
JENNINGS. C.	None.
JONES. J.A.	Israel and Slogan Postmarks of Great Britain.
LUCAS. B.	General

MEMBERSHIP LIST

-Continued-

<u>NAME</u>	<u>INTERESTS OTHER THAN PERFINS</u>
MOUNT. B.	Canada, Fiscals of G.B. and Canada, Precancels of France, Belgium & Canada, Flowers on stamps.,
MUGGLETON. D.	Specialising in G.B.
MUNRO. J.W.	Australia, Canada, India, and Great Britain.
MILLETT. P.J.	Great Britain and Booklets.
NELSON. J.	None
SMITH. F.H B.	Great Britain, Switzerland, U.S.A., Belgian Congo.
STITT-DIBDEN.W.	All Great-Britain Postal History.
TOMKINS. B.C.	British Africa and Aerogrammes.
WELCH. M.O.	Precancels and Foreign Perfins
WEST. W.	Precaneels, Registration Labels, G.B. Overprinted Receipts, Charity Seals, Business Reply Envelopes.
WHARTON. P.T.	General and Specialising in U.S.A. Bureau and Texas Local Precancels.
WHICHELOW. A.S.	Great Britain and Postal History.
YOUNG. K.RYMER	Precancels (U.S.A. and Belgium

"A" IDENTITIES

AA	H	8, 8	4½	AUTOMOBILE
A/A	2H	8/8	4½	ASSOCIATION
AA/Co.	2H	10, 10/8, 6	5/5½, 4½	ALLIANCE
AA/CoLd	2H	10, 10/8, 4, 7, 7	5/5, 2, 5, 2½	ASSURANCE
AA/CoLd	2H	8, 8/7, 4, 6, 6	4½/4½, 1½, 4½, 2½	COMPANY
AAO/Co	2H	10, 10, 10/8, 4	5/5, 2	ANGLO-AMERICAN
AAO/Co	2H	10, 10, 10/8, 4	4½/4½, 1½	OIL
AAO/Co	2H	8, 8, 8/7, 4	4½/4½, 1¾	COMPANY
ABC	H	10, 15, 8	4½	ABC STEAMSHIP
AB/&Co(Ia)	2H	8, 11/12, 7, 4	4½/4¼, 4½, 1¾	LINE. Yarmouth
A&B/Y(IIIa)	2H	10, 12, 12/7	5½, 5, 5½/5½	ARTHUR BROWN &
AE	H	10, 10	4½	Co Ltd. London
AEC	H	8, 9, 7	4½	ALPIN & BARRATT
AG	H	8, 9	4½	Yeovil, Somerset
A/&G (Ia)	3H	10/12/10	4¼/4/4½	ANGLO-EGYPTIAN
A.H	S	10, 11	5½	BANK LIMITED.
A&H/Ltd..	2H	10, 11, 11/7, 5, 6	5/5	AMERICAN EXPRESS
A/L	2H	8/6	4½/4½	Co. London S.W.1
AL/M	2H	10, 7/13	5½/5½	ALFRED GRAHAM &
A..M	J	8, 11	4¼	Co. Halifax
AN	H	8, 11	4½	ABSTAINERS AND
A/N	2H	8/11	4½/4½	GENERAL INSURANCE
A&N/C.S.L(III)	2H	10, 14, 13/8, 10, 7	4½/4½	COMPANY.
A&R/T (III)	2H	10, 13, 11/7	6¼/6¼	ALFRED HERBERT
AS/Pco	2H	8, 9/8, 7, 4	4½, 4½/4¼, 1¾	Ltd. Coventry
<u>AUX</u>	S	10, 10, 9	5½	ALLEN & HANBURYS
AWG/Ld	S	10, 14, 10/7, 7	5¼/5¼, 2¾	Ltd. London.
		Three type are known with		ASSOCIATED LEAD
		7, 9, & 11 holes forming the bars.		MANUFACTURERS
				Ltd. Chester.
				ASSOCIATED LEAD
				MANUFACTURERS
				EXPORT Co Ltd.
				ADDRESSOGRAPH
				MULTIGRAPH Ltd.
				London NW.2
				ARGUS S.AFRICAN
				NEWSPAPERS Ltd
				London
				ARMY & NAVY
				CIVIL SUPPLY Ltd.
				A&R TOD
				ANGLO-SAXON
				PETROLEUM Co.
				ARMY AUXILIARY
				CO-OPERATIVE
				SOCIETY. London.
				A.W.GAMAGE Ltd
				London. E.C.1