

G. B. PERFIN STUDY GROUP NEWS-LETTER

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EXCHANGE PACKET

The Exchange Packet has been running for just over six months now under the new system, and it is, perhaps, time to make a re-appraisal of the situation. To see whether our new method is working, and to see what action is required in future.

The past months have shown that the approval system is sound and, whilst the small profit made by the Exchange was due to the sale of perfins donated to the Group, we have broken, even. At present there are 14 buying members and 3 selling members and the Exchange could certainly do with more of both, particularly buying members.

If you wish to increase your collection without wading through thousands of stamps sorting and re-sorting, the Exchange booklets are ideal. Why not write to Mr Rucklidge and ask to be put on the postal list?

STATEMENT AT 19:3:1960

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Sales from booklets	£2- 9-4	Payment to members	£3- 9-0
Proceeds of a bulk order.	14-0	Stationary _	14-0
		Postage	11-7
		Profit	8-0
	<u>£5- 2-7</u>		<u>£5- 2-7</u>

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CINDERELLA STAMP CLUB

We recently received a circular letter from the Secretary of the Cinderella Stamp Club asking that we draw to the attention of our members to the existance of this Club. This we do gladly for it is well known that many of our members collect these sidelines.

The Club was formed in July last year to cater for the person collecting locals, fiscals, telegraphs, bogus stamps, and all other "non-listad" stamps. Subscription is 10/6 per year. The Club runs an Exchange branch and holds regular meetings in London.

If interested write to D.W. WATERS

PERFIN ILLUSTRATIONS

VERY few members have written in to acknowledge the receipt of the set of G.B. illustrations that they ordered, but those that have seem to be completely satisfied with them. All are agreed that Mr Van Lint has done an excellent job of work.

Already certain members are finding them useful for passing on information when writing to the Secretary. The coding for locating a particular type within the illustrations is very simple, and the fact that both parties have the same picture aids discussion enormously.

It would certainly be most useful to the Group if all members had a copy to refer to. We realise that due to the unrealistic exchange rate between the U.S.A. and this country the price may be a little high (\$7.50) for some. However, if sufficient members are interested Mr Van Lint says he will be able to cut the price on a similar basis as before.

Those of you who would like a copy should write to the Secretary.

NEWS SHEET

This issue contains the first part of another article by Mr Van Lint. Certain parts of it cover old ground but we thought it best not to cut the article since it does present the material in a new light. Similarly, certain of our newer members will not have, necessarily, covered this old ground.

For future issues we have been considering compiling an up-to-date simplified list of the perfins of G.B. Mr Jennings compiled such a list a few years ago and our earlier members will remember receiving a copy. These lists purely recorded all known types in alphabetical form, ignoring such differences as number of holes and heights of letters.

We wonder if such a list would prove of interest and whether anyone could find the time to compile it. Perhaps a member possessing a copy of the illustrations would care to take on this job and use the illustrations as a starting point. A few sheets of the list would be published with each issue of the News Sheet and revisions made when all additions have been gathered in from the membership.

If anyone is willing to take this on, would they please write to the Secretary?

WHO KNOWS THE ANSWER?

Mr Young sends in another probable. Can anyone confirm, by postmark if not by cover? "

TAW/M 2H SIR THOMAS AND ARTHUR WARDLE Macclesfield

Also can anyone complete the following identity?

W.T/L 2H 15,7/6 5½/4 WILLIAM TOOG

COUNTRIES KNOWN TO USE PERFINS

Compiled by : C Carr.

The following list is intended to replace the one given on page No. 8 of issue No. 6. Since then I have received the list compiled by Mr Van Lint and in addition, several new countries have been recorded.

The list has been kept in the original format as it is intended to show the geographical position at the present time for whilst names and sizes of countries change, perfin users still carry on. Thus we find the perfin L/S on issues of New South Wales and subsequently on issues of Australia.

The list does not include 'Specimen' perfins which exist on many British Colonials, nor stamps with a purely fiscal perfin which in most cases is just a method of defacing stamps.

Algeria	Czechoslovakia	Kenya Uganda and
Angola	Bohemia & Moravia	Tanganyika
Argentina	Slovakia	Brit. East Africa
Australia	Denmark	Lebanon
New South Wales	Ecuador	Luxemburg
Queensland	Egypt	Madagascar
South Australia	Fr. P.O, in Alex.	Malta
Tasmania	Finland	Manchuria
Victoria	France	Mauritius
West Australia	Alsace-Lorraine	Mexico
Austria	French West Africa	Monaco
Barbados	Germany	Netherlands
Belgium Congo	Bavaria	New Zealand
Belgium	Saar	Nicaragua
German Occupation	Schleswig	Nigeria
Bolivia	Upper Silesia	Norway
Brazil	Wurtemberg	Panama
British Guiana	Gibraltar	Papua
British Honduras	Gold Coast	Persia
Bulgaria	Great Britain	Peru
Burma	Greece	Philippine Islands
Canada	Austrian P.O. in	Poland
British Columbia	Crete	Danzig
Newfoundland	Guatemala	Polish P.O. in Danzig
Canal Zone	Haiti	Portugal
Ceylon	Hong Kong	Funchal
Chile	Hungary	Rhodesia
China	India	Southern Rhodesia.
British P.O's.	Cochin	Roumania
German P.O's.	Hyderabad	Russia
Kiatschou	Travancore	Latvia
Sinkiang	Indo-China	Memel
Colombia	Indonesia	South Africa
Costa Rica	Dutch East Indies	Cape of Good Hope
Cuba	Iraq	Natal
Curacao	Irish Republic	Orange Free State
	Italy	Transvaal
	Trieste	Spain
	Jamaica	Sudan
	Japan	Sweden

Switzerland_	United Nations	Uruguay
Trinidad & Tobago	U.S.A.	Venezuela
Tunisia	Hawaii	Yugoslavia
Turkey	Puerto Rico	Bosnia
		Fiume

The following are listed separately because of their peculiar geographical position.

1. The former Turlkish Empire :-
Austrian, British, French, German, Italian and Russian
Post Offices.
2. Morocco(none recorded) but the following sub-divisions
have been recorded:-
British P.O.'s (Morocco Aggencies)
French Morocco
Spanish Morocco
Tangier- Spanish P.O.
3. Palestine - now divided into Israel and part of Jordan but
none recorded for these two.
4. Malaya:-

Federated Malay States	Penang
Kelantan	Perak
Malayan Federation	Singapore
Malacca	Straits Settlements

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Whilst this Group was formed solely for the study of G.B. perfins, if any member is interested in any country other than G.B. or U.S.A., I would be pleaaed to hear from him or her.

Chris J. T. Carr.

By : Victor J. Van Lint.

It is fruitless to argue about taste and it is just as useless for stamp collectors to criticise each others collecting peculiarities.

Does the orthodox collector have valid reasons for looking down upon the perfin collector as 'peculiar', as a 'square', or as a 'junk collector'? I do not think so.

COLLECTING STAMPS WITH HOLES IS ALSO PHILATELIC WORK

Let us consider the die hard collector of mint stamps. To him, only a stamp without the least speck of ink on its surface is worthy of being collected. Stamps, in order to have a place in his collection, must have the original gum on the back.

Now, some postal administration decides to overprint an issue or surcharge it with a different value. As a result of this, the face of the stamp is badly marred by ink spots and lines. Yet, this collector will accept these specimens and grant them a space in his album. If an issue is placed on sale without gum, he will gladly and without hesitation welcome it in his collection.

Why this obviously contradictory attitude? Probably because the overprint, the inkspot, and the omission of gum were officially sanctioned. These stamps, although not meeting his usual minimum standards, were produced by the government and this fact makes them acceptable to him.

With this reasoning in mind, let us now make a study of the attitude of this same collector towards a stamp with a little round hole in it. He will reject it of course and call it a damaged stamp. But, if this hole was produced 'by the government', if this hole was 'officially sanctioned', if this hole has an 'official significance', why does he still object to adding it to his collection? It does not deviate from his basic minimum standards anymore than the overprinted item did. Basically, the hole is not different from the inkspot or the surcharge discussed above.

Catalogues are sometimes just as inconsequential. Take 'Scott's' for instance. Nowhere do we even find mention of the perforated officials. But lo and behold, Paraguay No 37, a stamp, only issued with a large hole in it, is listed and space is provided for it in the specialty albums. Isn't that silly? Michel mentions some official perfins in footnotes. Yvert goes farther and lists many official perfins but it does not try to be complete.

Our hats off therefore to Minkus and his new world-wide set of catalogues. They are excellent and a stimulating experience after what we have been accustomed to for years. And these new Minkus catalogues list in picture and by issue all official perfins wherever issued. A commendable attitude of the editors.

REASON FOR HOLES.

What are these stamps with holes? Where do we find them? Where do they come from? What was their purpose? Why are they so

interesting?

- Holes have been put into stamps for many reasons, such as,
- 1- to change ordinary into "official" stamps, such as the O S perforated in Australian stamps.
 - 2- to change ordinary stamps into "postage due" stamps, as in the case of the T perforated in Tunisian stamps.
 - 3- to clearly mark stamps as having been issued by the postal authorities for information purposes only, such as those marked "SPECIMEN".
 - 4- to make ordinary stamps out of official stamps, such as the 12 hole perforation in official stamps of Salvador.
 - 5- to make stamps worthless for philatelic purposes and thus force collectors into buying special unmutilated items at a premium over face value. This is said to be the origin of the 3 little holes quite often found in Hungarian stamps of the 1920-1924 period. However, another explanation of these three holes is, that they were a secret communication between members of an underground movement.(?)
 - 6- To make half a stamp usable for postal service at a lower value. This could be done by a vertical, a horizontal, or even a diagonal line of perforation, such as is found on some stamps of Portugese India and Guatemala.
 - 7- to lower the value of a stamp. Done in lieu of overprinting.
 - 8- to cancel high value postage stamps used for bulk mailing of newspaperws, as "INUTILIZADO" punched through entire sheets of Argentine 5 & 10 pesos stamps of 1916 and 1917.
 - 9- to indicate_the use of postage stamps for other than postal services such as telegraphic use, vide the single large hole found in Spanish stamps.
 - 10- to cancel stamps attached to bank cheques in payment of certain governmental fees, such as part of the word PAID in Canadian stamps.
 - 11- to demonetize stamps withdrawn from circulation but still being sold by private firms for welfare purposes, such as the crown and lwtters found on Belgian stamps.
 - 12- to identify stamps as having been demonitized, as found on some Mongolian stamps
 - 13- to identify the original purchaser of the stamps and to protect him against pilferage of his stamp box by his staff.
 - 14- to prevent fraudulent use of a stamp; such as Paraguay (Minkus 79) issued punched only to prevent it being used to counterfeited Paraguay(Minkus 73).
 - 15- to prevent counterfeiting, e.g. "SPECIMEN" perforated in stamps of British Guiana (Minkus 82-83) which was locally printed.

- 16- to celebrate a special occasion, such as EIPA 30 perforated in the French airmail stamp.
- 17- to mark a stamp sold by the post office in large quantities to certain organisations, which in turn sold them at par, an example of which can be found on some Italian stamps.
- 18- to facilitate the use of half a stamp as a receipt to be left to the Stub, such as Sudan stamps used for telegraphic purposes.
- 19- to differentiate between stamps sold by the post office and those sold by private organisations, such as the wavy line found on stamps of Belgium.

BIRTH OF PERFINS

It seems that our fear that the ethical standards of the world today are much lower than in times past is not supported by the facts. Almost as soon as postage stamps came into use we find complaints were made about employees stealing them. In those early days stamps were often used to make payments by mail. Money orders were not yet in use, and the post-offices not only sold stamps to the public, but also, bought them back from whoever had received them in payment of a debt. This gave the thieves a very easy way to dispose of their loot. It is ironic that we find a governmental agency here acting as a fence for the lawbreaker.

As a countermeasure, buyers of large quantities of stamps began printing their names on the face of the stamps. This was not altogether a satisfactory solution because postal employees had difficulty in distinguishing between mint and used stamps. It also opened the door for some advertising on stamps which is something frowned upon by the authorities.

Next, printing the name of the purchaser on the back under the gum was tried, but here also difficulty was encountered for the printing as a means of identification was hard to recognise after the stamps were affixed to letters.

At one time it was proposed by a group of business men that the government should issue a special set of non-negotiable stamps to alleviate the evil of stamp-box pilfering. However, about this time Joseph Sloper of Liverpool, whose firm was established in 1858 and is still in business today, entered into the picture. Mr Sloper already had a patent on a machine for perforating cheques and documents and for dating railway tickets. By slight alterations he managed to produce satisfactory equipment to punch initials and designs in stamps.

The postal services of Great Britain gave authorisation for the use of these machines in 1868 and issued specific rules to be followed in this matter. Size of holes should not exceed the size of the perforations separating stamps and, originally, it was also ordained that the Monarch's head should not be touched by the perforations. This, however, was later rescinded. Advertising was not permitted but some companies got round this by using their trademark or a special design in their perfins. This, then, is the

Page 8.

Earliest date of official recognition of perfins.

Originally, Mr Sloper perforated the stamps for those desirous of using perfins. Later he began producing machines with which others could do their own perforating. The first such order came from T. J. Allman, a publisher in London. His perfin reads TJA/463.

At present there are more than 9,000 different perfins known on the stamps of Great Britain alone.

Talking about the design of perfins, a very interesting one is "HENNY" on Dutch stamps. This perfin belongs to the large Life Insurance Company of 1845, 'The Netherlands' which chose the name of its beloved President for the protection of its stamps.

As we see already, Great Britain was not the only country where the postal authorities sanctioned the use of perfins. Belgium, Austria, and Denmark followed in rapid succession. So did Holland, France, and Germany. Today a total of nearly 130 countries are known at one time or another to have permitted the use of perfins for postal prepayment.

Close to 216,000 firms and persons all over the world are known to have used the protection afforded by perfins. It is estimated that a complete worldwide collection of all issues of all these different perfins would possibly contain nearly two million stamps. This figure alone is proof enough of the enormous possibilities available to collectors in this specialised field of philately.

EXPLANATION OF THE WORD PERFIN

Perfin is a word coined for these stamps from the two words PERForatod INitialS. In older literature it is also explained as a contraction of the words Perforated, Identifications.

The British at one time called theirs "Spifs" and give as the origin of this word the initial letters of Stamps Perforated with Initials of Firms. But again, in older literature we find spifs explained to be the initial letters of "Stamps Perforated for Insurance against Fraud".

FORERUNNER OF U.S. PERFINS : SCHERMACK

In 1906 the U.S. post office, at the request of manufacturers of stamp selling machines began to make available imperforated stamps sheets of 400. The manufacturers made coils out of these sheets and sold them to the owners of their special stamp vending and stamp affixing machines.

The Schermack Company had a special attachment for their machines which at the same time as one stamp was released perforated the next one with a set of small identifying holes. These stamps can be recognised by two large rectangular holes instead of the customary round perforations along each side. They are known to collectors as Schermacks III. The small round holes through the stamps were arranged in a pattern of a square of 3 x 3 holes. Some were omitted and the 'left-outs' were the key to the

identity of the owner of each particular machine. With these 9 holes a total of over 250,000 different patterns are possible. However, no Schermacks are known with less than 4 holes, which reduces the total possibilities to about 40,000.

The Schermack Company was later bought out by Mailometer Co. which in turn merged into the present Pitney-Bowes Company. Very rare indeed are Schermack stamps with private perfin designs upon them.

U.S. PERFINS

Not until 8th May 1908 was a postal regulation issued in the U.S.A., officially permitting the use of perfins. It was determined that the holes could not be larger than one 32nd of an inch. Also, the entire design could not be over one half inch square, or a quarter of a square inch.

Although British regulations allowed larger holes than the American, we find in actual practise that perfins of G.B., are usually made with much smaller holes than their American counterparts. This is probably due to the fact that the enormous amount of perfins in Great Britain creates quite a lot of duplication of the same initials. For instance, there are 29 known varieties of perfins with the letter 'S'. In order to differ even slightly between each one of these similar types the perforating machines have often used letters of the same size but with varying number of holes. This can only be accomplished with pins of a very small diameter.

The oldest U.S. perfins are found on stamps of the 1902 series.

Each perfin issuing country had its own peculiar regulations for the use of them. For instance, we find that in Holland a rule states that a sample of the perfin shall be filed in the post-office of the town where the company using the perfin is situated so that all postal employees may familiarize themselves with its design.

FIRST PHILATELIC INTEREST

The oldest known reference to perfins in philatelic literature is of 1933. At that time the English writer Hugh Vallencey published a little pamphlet with the results of several years of careful study and research in this matter.

It was around 1930 also that the late Warren Travell started his large collection of perfins. He was one of the founder members of the PERFINCLUB in the U. S. A. ,which now has well over 200 members and a subscription of \$2.00 per year.

'WHY COLLECT PERFINS?

Not only does perfin collecting open up an enormous field of operation for the, stamp collector but the material is relatively cheap. Through it one obtains a very excellent insight into the industrial activities of the country. Stamp collecting and

industry became connected. Above all however, perfin collecting allows for all kinds of research and sleuthing, which for many is the fascinating part of this hobby. One has always to be on the look-out for minute differences which may lead to the discovery of new types.

PERFIN MACHINES

The older machines usually have 5 dies in a row. Later on machines with as many as 10 dies were made. In some countries machines with only one die are in use and at least one case is known of a machine which 'perfinned' an entire sheet in one go. All older machines are hand operated, but the newest machines are electrically driven.

The amount of stamps in layers which can be perforated by a machine at one time depends on the number of letters in the die and in practice varies from 2 to 6. Overloading in this respect causes pins to break off and perfins to have missing holes. Another cause of broken pins is the failure to clean the die holes regularly.

British perfins, very seldom show evidence of broken pins. In view of their characteristically very small pins, this is proof of the excellent quality of their machines and of the good care they receive.

Nearly all British machines were manufactured by Messrs, Sloper & Company. American machines were produced either by Cummings Company or American Perforator Company of Chicago.

Although these companies undoubtedly have an excellent and up-to-date record of all machines ever placed in operation, (Sloper's were destroyed by enemy action during the last war :Ed.) they will not divulge, any of this information to the perfin collector, feeling that to do so would constitute a break in business etiquette. This gives hunting for perfin identification a special charm and challenge.

PERFIN COLLECTORS AIDS

The following is a summary of catalogues and lists available to the perfin collector to facilitate his collecting activities

1. The Perfinclub in U.S.A., Secretary D. Stump, 310, South Wayne Avenue, Wayne, Pennsylvania, has produced a complete U.S. perfin catalogue text, unillustrated and describing by standard code over 4,000 different types, and listing the names of a great majority of their users.
2. A complete set of illustrations of U.S. perfins is available from the author at 8163, Sewell Avenue, Fontana, California. It is on standard loose-leaf three ring binder sheets and contains over 4,000 illustrations.
3. A complete illustrated list of Canadian perfins since 1951 is available from the Collectors Club in New York. It contains about 148 different types.

To be concluded in next issue

TABULATING PERFIN DESIGNSIntroduction

For the purpose of recording perfin types in the best possible manner and without actually illustrating each individual type, a system has been adopted which enables details of the letter 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 the order shown below;

- 1) : The letters forming the perfin.
- 1a) : The type of Ampersand is given in column 1 directly above the type to which it refers.
- 2) : The pattern formed by the letters.
- 3) : The number of holes in each letter.
- 4) : Heights of the letters.
- 5) : Name of the concern using the perfin.

1. Letters

The letters are written in one line with an oblique stroke 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".

Fancy letters or these with serifs are underlined.

1a. Type of Ampersand.

There are four different types of ampersand each having four possible sub-types:-

I	Straight top., square cut back
Ia	Straight top, rounded back
Ib	As type I with tail on foot
Iab	As type Ia with tail on foot
II	Triangular top, square cut back
IIa	Triangular 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 hack
IIIb	As type III with tail.
IIIab	As type IIIa with tail.

