

TWO BROTHERS - FIVE PERFINS!

Roy Gault

The G.B. Perfin “**CB**” (C0460.06) has been written about copiously in the last decade or so, usually in isolation relating to a particular country, or noting a specific discovery, but never (as far as I’m aware) as a ‘complete’ study. Most unusually, the Perfin is known on the postage stamps of *FIVE* different countries - initially *Great Britain*, and then from c1910, *Canada, France, Belgium, and South Africa*. In all of these cases I’ve checked, and they all come from the *same perforating press with one pattern*, but more of that later.



The G.B. Perfin itself has been known about from the very beginning, appearing on plate 17 (r9:c4) of Van Lint (*1959*), then as C46.6 in Tilles (*1975*), becoming C0460.06 in Edwards (*1986*), and staying as that in all subsequent G.B. catalogues.

The *user* of C0460.06 was reported in March/April 1981 by *Peter Day* (our Auctioneer at the time), although precise details weren’t recorded then regarding cover/receipt/stamp details etc.

46.6	CB	8,13	6,5½	Curzon (International Tailors) of London & Paris.
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From the entry above, we can see that they were ‘International Tailors’, but ‘*who were the Curzon Brothers*’? A quick search of the Internet tells us (from the National Archives) that the two brothers were called *Jack David Curzon* (1870-1940), and *Theodore Curzon* (1880-1956). Their dates have been taken from various Census and BMD records available on *FindMyPast*.

Curzon Brothers, tailors, 93 Aldersgate street EC

The earliest London trade directory I can find them in is *1902* (published December 1901) - there was no mention of them in 1899.

However, we know they were in business a little before then as this advertisement in the 'Weekly Dispatch (London)' for the *30th June 1901* shows, calling themselves '*The World's Measure Tailors*', with their aim '*not to sell you one suit, but to be your tailors for life*'!



By early 1903, the company had moved to *60 City Road* (London EC), and their 'journey around the world' had begun!

Their 'mail-order' process was simple - they sent you a tape measure with instructions on how to measure yourself!



Merely fill in a postcard, and address same to us as below, asking for our selection of materials. By return you will receive our latest assortment of patterns, together with latest fashion-plates; instructions for accurate self-measurement, tape measure, all free and carriage paid. We dispatch your order within seven days from receipt, and if you do not approve, return the goods, and we will refund your money.

Advertising formed a significant part of their sales strategy, usually with a 10% discount on offer. However, I'd not heard of this next method of advertising before ...

Here we see a railway ticket issued by the '*London, Midland & Scottish Railway*' with a 'Curzon Bros' discount '*inset*' dating to the early 1930's. The 1931 contract between 'Mones-Cross' (the promoters of the idea), and the 'LMS' was not renewed.



The G.B. die “CB” (C0460.06) - known used as early as 24th January 1903, and as late as 22nd April 1913, it was in use 1902-1915. It can be found on twenty-five DDF, including a single, central strike on a 10/- Seahorse (Type ‘A’ - De la Rue printing from Dec 1915 to Dec 1918).

1902-1915



C0460.06



c1915



Larger holes

Interestingly, *Maurice Harp* discovered that the company was involved in a bankruptcy submission in 1914. Soon after the outbreak of the Great War (October 1914 - November 1918), creditors seized the company assets in both Berlin and Paris, and all their premises in Belgium were closed down. Fortunately the bankruptcy was released on the 31st January 1916 and the company continued trading, in the UK at least. The following addresses were listed in their submission.

England - 4 Bell Yard, 58, 60, 62 City Rd, and 251-253 New Oxford St, London.

France - 130 Rue de Rivoli, Paris.

Germany - 185 Friedrichstrasse, Berlin.

South Africa - Sacke’s Building, Johannesburg.

Belgium - 10 Place de Meir, 2 Rue de Leo, and 33 Point d’Arvoy, Antwerp.

In March 1929 ‘Curzon Bros’ and their competitors ‘Maxims (Tailors) Ltd’ of Leeds, and four other companies combined as ‘Curzon Brothers & Maxims Ltd’, but the name changed almost immediately to ‘*C B & M (Tailors) Ltd*’. It became part of ‘Lockwood & Bradley Ltd’ on the 31st December 1929, although they traded under the ‘Curzon Bros’ name for a short while afterwards (e.g. 1933 Trade directory).

Theodore Curzon became a journalist with the Daily Mirror (the 1939 England & Wales Survey records him as a journalist), and later a magazine editor e.g. ‘Sound Waves’ (Jack’s Probate says ‘editor’), with the older brother, *Jack David Curzon*, dying in Brussels in 1940.

CURZON Jack David of 7 Place Jean Jacobs Brussels **Belgium**
died 18 April 1940 Probate **London** 11 June to Theodore
Curzon editor. Effects £728 8s. 4d.

The Canadian die “CB” (C2) has also been known for some time, but it was *Ron Whyte* in 2011 who spotted that the die was a match for the G.B. Perfin C0460.06. This had an identified user - Curzon Bros, International Tailors, *London & Paris* - which also led him to the French Catalogue (edited by Robert Dedecker) and the French Perfin C28. Montreal and Toronto postmarks are known, along with a partial ‘Canadian National Exhibition’ slogan cancel used 9th September 1913. *Bob Traquir* found this cryptic entry in a 1912 *Toronto* directory under

Curzon Bros - Alex Telfer, mgr. tlrs, 156 Yonge.

1910-1915



C2



c1915

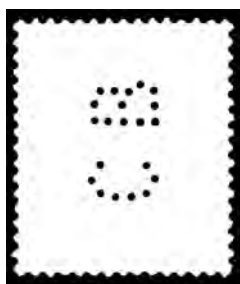
Larger holes

Scans courtesy of *Mike Behm*.

Note - London was still handling queries from Canada in June 1908 (Perfins Bulletin p143, July/Aug 1986).

The French die “CB” (C28) has also been ‘on the books’ for some time, but it was *Ron Whyte* who made the connection in 2011 with the G.B., French, and Canadian dies. The current French Catalogue records a 1910 date, along with ‘Paris’ and ‘Seine’ postmarks perhaps for ‘Seine et Oise’ (part of metropolitan Paris)? Sorry, my French knowledge is ‘pas bon’! The Perfin is known on five French ‘Sower’ stamps (solid background) issued in 1906 ... **5c, 10c, 20c, 25c, 30c**.

1910-1915



C28

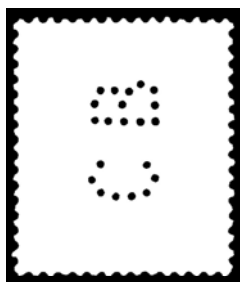


Scans courtesy of *Robert Dedecker*.

The Belgian die “CB” (C19) - a match with the GB Die C0460.06 was reported by *Jeff Turnbull* in 2015 after *Jim Graham* had reported offices in Johannesburg, *Antwerp*, and Berlin. The postmarks reported in the Belgium Catalogue are Heyst sur Mer (on the coast near Zeebrugge), and Brussels/Bruxelles, and a date of 1905 or later.

Scans courtesy of *Robert Dedecker*.

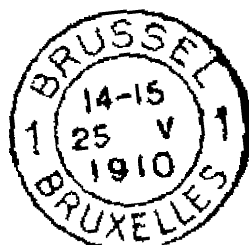
1910-1915



C19



The first two stamps were issued from 1907 onwards. Note that the tall 25c stamp shown above has a perforated ‘Do not deliver on Sunday’ label at the bottom still attached, as would the first two originally - a feature of Belgium stamps from 1893 until 1914. If left attached on the postal item, it told the postman *not to deliver the letter on a Sunday*.

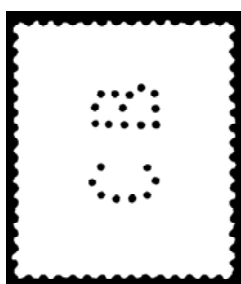


The last two stamps shown above have a characteristic postmark, the so-called ‘Flame’ machine ‘Flag’ cancel used in Brussels, Leige, and no doubt elsewhere in Belgium during the ‘*Brussels International Exposition*’ held in 1910. This World’s Fair was held in Brussels from 23rd April 1910 to the 1st November 1910.

The 3rd stamp was issued in 1912 - I can see the engraver’s name below the design, later printings omit it. Late use of a ‘Flame’ cancel?

The South African die “CB” (C3) was discovered by *Peter Maybury* after a prompt from *Jim Graham* that the company had an office in Sacke’s Building, Johannesburg (Bulletin N°. 393, Dec 2014). Further details appeared in the BNAPS newsletter (Jan 2015) that *three* examples were known, presumably all on the same 1d Cape of Good Hope stamp, one of which bore a Johannesburg postmark. As you can see, Pete’s copy is dated *1910*. This is the rarest of the five Perfins.

c1910



C3

Australia & Germany - Tantalizingly, this advertisement in *German* lists the overseas branches in Paris, Brussels, Liège, Antwerp, as well as Canada, *Australia*, and Africa. Could there be a *sixth* or even a *seventh* “CB” awaiting discovery - there’s no match in either the Australian Private Perfins Catalogue or the German Catalogue at the moment, but watch this space ...



All the World knows it's Curzon's for Clothes

In conclusion - undoubtedly it was the impending bankruptcy in 1914, along with the military conflict (WWI) that precipitated the collapse of the ‘Curzon’ mail-order empire c1915, taking the Perfins with it.