

G. B. PERFIN STUDY GROUP NEWS-LETTER

No. 19 July-Aug. 1960

Subscription 5/- per annum.

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PERFIN EXHIBITION

Recently our President won the premier award at an exhibition staged by the PORTSMOUTH PHILATELIC SOCIETY. The actual prize-winning entry was part of a larger collection of pages made up for display purposes.

Space does not permit us to publish details of the entire 'Display Collection' but a synopsis of the prize-winning pages is given below. Any member wishing to see the full description of all pages should write to the Secretary, including a S.A.E., please.

- Page 1- Six examples of O.U.S overprints on 1d reds, including one on cover.
- Page 2- Examples of O.U.S underprints including one on piece with 'Oxford Error' postmark (613 instead of 603), and private printings applied over the gum.
- Page 3- 1d. red postcard with embossed O.U.S arms in corner.
- Page 4- Three official and one private underprints of J&C BOYD & Co
- Page 5- Several official and private underprints of COPESTAKE MOORE.
- Page 6- Further examples of COPESTAKE MOORE with one showing change to COPESTAKE, MOORE, CRAMPTON & Co. One other copy of the latter underprint perforated with C/□/H C, the rectangle of pins intended to cancel out the name MOORE.
- Page 7- Samples of W.H. SMITH & Co. and G.E.R underprints.
- Page 8- Various private overprints and underprints applied over the gum.
- Page 9- Example of Sloper die, R C J with Crown above (Royal Courts of Justice) on 10/- & 1/6 Judicature stamps. Also, copies showing Slopors dies as listed on 1d red Plates in Vallencey's Handbook.

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- Page 43- 1897 to 1902. Board of Trade dies, mainly on piece and illustrating "with" and "without" stop varieties plus forgeries of Edwardians.
- Page 44- Twentyone different Railway Company punctures,
GWR NE/R GNR CAM/RYS TV/R
MB/R LB/ & /SCR GER MJ/R MS&L
M/G.W.R SER SE/CR BD/ & R L.T/S.R
MS/WJ L.D/ & /E.C.R LN/E LS/WR RS/BR
SE/CD
- Page 45- Fancy security endorsements including various Municipal Arms, London, Cheltenham, Leicester, Cambridge etc., also various Trade Mark dies.
- Page 46- Illustrates the use of Full Names in dies and includes many of the lesser known types.
- Page 47- Illustrates the use of Monograms with 14 different types. Also shows the use of Numbers with 7 different examples.
- Page 48- Shows the use of "Dumb" punctures with 17 examples including; Shamrocks, Diamonds, Crosses, Stars, Circles and numerous single, double and triple hole dies. Also an example of a "Carpet Die" in which one die covers several stamps.

Mr Jennings has made an interesting suggestion which we feel should be considered with some thought. He is quite prepared to co-operate with any member in compiling an entry for exhibition purposes. Even to the extent of 'loaning' Display pages from his collection to submit as a Study Group entry. He suggests that we endeavour to get an entry into next years Stampex.

If any member feels he would like to join in such a venture perhaps he or she would contact the Secretary. Failing this we feel that Mr Jennings's exhibit should be nominated to represent the Group. Later in the year the Secretary will try to make the necessary arrangements to obtain frame space at Stampex. The publicity so obtained should increase our membership.

MEMBERS WANTS

Walter C Ayers is interested in Railway Letter Fee and Parcel stamps of Great Britain and would like to hear from anyone who is similarly interested or has such stamps to offer. He requests that one writes first giving details.

SIMPLIFIED LISTS

This issue starts the listing of all G.B. perfins in simplified form. Such a list was compiled by Mr Jennings in the early days of the Group and has been re-compiled by Mr Tomkins

Would members please write to him with any additions they have to offer?

4. A revised and up-to-date illustrated list of Canadian prrfins, edited in 1955, is available at \$1 from the British North American Philatelic Society.
5. A complete illustrated list of Argentine perfins was published in 1952 in an Argentine philatelic monthly. It was edited by Walter B. L. Bose and lists 252 different types.
6. An illustrated list of all 10 Finnish perfins was published in 1953 in a Finnish stamp journal.
7. A complete and illustrated catalogue of more than 800 different Belgian perfins has recently been placed on the market and is available through the author at 8163, Sewell Avenue, Fontana, California.
8. A complete list of Netherlands perfins containing the identities of more than 700 users is also available from the author.
9. An illustrated list of all known Japanese perfins was published privately in 1953
10. A complete list of than 800 Danish perfins with identities is available from the author.
11. A list of all known Brazilian porfins was published in a Brazilian philatelic journal in 1954 by Werner Ahrens.
12. An illustrated catalogue of over 9,000 perfins of the British Isles is also available from the author.
13. The G.B. Parfins Study Group has made a start on the listing of all identified parfins of Great Britain in their bi-monthly bulletin.

PERFIN ALBUMS AND PAGES

1. The Peerless Album Co., of Aurora, Illinois has put on the market a very neat standardised album page consisting of a number of black squares on a white background. A space is also provided beneath each squaro for the users name.
2. Filing Cards are a very neat way of collecting perfins. The stamp is mounted in the upper left hand corner and where available a return address cut from the Company's envelope is placed alongside. Underneath there is space left for whatever other information about the company that one cares to record. Filing alphabetically in standard boxes makes a compact system.
3. An illustrated album spacially designed to hold all known official perfins of the world has been placed on the market. It has 60 loose-leaf pages and spaces for approximately 1,000 stamps.

DIFFERENT OBJECTS OF PERFIN COLLECTING

The entire field of perfin collecting has become so vast that just as in stamp collecting it has become practically impossible for a collector to embrace it all. The perfin collector, therefore, also has to specialise and choose some section of this immense field as his particular area of operation.

Basically there are 5 fields of operation; stamps, strips, revenues, officials, and semi-officials; and one has the choice of these on the stamps of many countries.

One can choose between collecting types only, that is, one of each kind of perfin regardless of the stamp on which it is found, or one can collect issues, in which case the attempt is made to obtain one stamp of each issue for every type of perfin known. Alternatively, one can collect strips. This a strip of an envelope containing a perfin and a return address identifying the user.

Also interesting are so called "topical" collections, such as perfins of Banks, Shipping Companies, Oil Companies, Railways, Insurance Companies, Colleges and Schools etc.

Under special collections can be listed;

1. A worldwide collection of perfins of one company such as Kodak which has perfins on stamps of Holland, Denmark, Spain, Austria, Belgium, France and Germany. A similar collection can be made for the American companies, International Harvester and the United Shoe Machinery Company.
2. A collection of perfins of one company with all the variations of its different branches, like Credit Lyonnais for instance, of which 38 different branches are known in France.
3. A collection of identical perfins of different countries. U.S perfins appear on the stamps of Canada and Finnish perfins on stamps of Sweden and Russia.
4. A collection of all the issues of one country, all perfined, regardless of the type of perfin, or a collection of one particular stamp with as many different types of perfin as can be found.
5. A collection of single letter perfins.
6. A collection of perfins_ on pre-cancelled stamps.
7. A collection of oddities housing such items as se-tenant perfin, tete-beche perfins, mirror perfins, double and triple prints, blocks etc. One should note, however, that a stamp has four edges, each of which can be fed into the machine first in addition to the fact that it can be fed in face up or face down. Thus, there are theoretically 8 different ways that the perforation can face, not to speak of angles. Such a collection can become so cluttered up, cumbersome, and oversize that all proper proportions are lost.

Going over the above list one cannot but wonder at the surprising variety of collections that can be formed with perfins.

MOUNTING PERFINS

If it is a type collection that is being composed then there is some ground for mounting the stamps face down on dark paper so that the design of the, perfin will show up to good advantage. Name and address of the owner can be written underneath each item.

In an issue collection the stamps are of course mounted face up, one type to a page. It is a good idea to use a second copy of the illustration catalogue and cut out the appropriate design to be pasted at the top of each page. Alongside this can be recorded the name of the user and the code for the perfin design, and one could even consider making room for a return address card cut from the Company's envelope.

A very satisfactory method, if both sides of the perfin are desired to be readily available for inspection, is mounting the perfins on glassine sheets.

WHAT TO DO

Now we will outline what a collector should do when he becomes interested in perfins.

1. Choose the particular perfin field which attracts you and concentrate on this. Decide whether it will be a types or issues collection.
 2. Gather an accumulation of perfins by contacting dealers and by informing stamp collecting colleagues of your new-found interest.
 3. Acquire those catalogues and lists which can be of help.
 4. Decide upon an album from those commercially available or design your own layout of an album page.
 5. Start developing contacts and exchanging information.
 6. Buy a good clear millimetre scale and magnifying glass.
- Later on you may rig up some sort of reproduction equipment to make prints of perfins for exchanging information with others.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

When examining perfins and especially when selecting from among several duplicates the one to be mounted in his collection, a perfin collector most of all desires a clear and well centred perfin design. Next in line of importance is a readable postmark showing name of town and if possible the date. This is often helpful in identifying the user of a perfin with the aid of a business index, a telephone directory, or other such listings. The date is important to give a clue as to the length of time this particular machine has been in operation. After these the normal stamp criteria come into the limelight, i.e., tears, thin spots, perforations missing, straight edges etc.

The collector of strips will go after an envelope with perfin attached and showing a return address which identifies the user. As only those two items are of importance to him there is little use of saving the entire envelope, often therefore, a 2" wide strip of the front side of the envelope is cut off and saved for reference.

Often, especially in Britain, a perfin can be identified through a fiscal stamp containing the perfin design and stamped

with the owners name as cancellation.

OFFSET PERIODS

If a company has several branch offices and desires to use one basic perfin design in all of them, the problem of distinguishing between the different offices can be solved in many ways.

First, this can be done, if the design has an ampersand in it, by varying the ampersand. There are four basic sizes of ampersand, each having four sub-types. This allows 16 different variations.

Another method is by using various periods behind the several letters of the design.

A third method, often used in the case of numerous branches, is the method of off-set periods. The classic example of this method is New York Life Insurance, more than 170 branches have been recognised by painstaking research on U.S. stamps. One or two periods opposite different holes in the basic design make the difference, and many variations are thus possible.

Johns Manville uses still a different method by simply varying the design of the letters in the perfin together with their arrangement. Their perfin consists of the two letters J and M, which can be arranged horizontally, vertically, diagonally up and down, and letters with and without serifs or periods after them.

Differences between similar perfins can also be obtained by varying the height of the key letter and by varying the number of holes composing those letters.

Quite an original method of differentiating between several offices was initiated by the Crane Company where their basic C perfin encloses a number indicating the branch office.

The most complicated method of distinguishing between many offices is found in the French perfins of the Credit Lyonnais CL, Credit National CN, and the Italian perfin CI for Credito Italiano.

A very careful study has disclosed that the differences are accomplished by an intricate system of variations in size of letters, number of holes per letter, and the use of serifs and periods.

PRECANCELS

Precancels already give a large mailer protection against theft and there is really not much reason for making perfins out of them. Yet, many companies have done this and perfin-precancels have drawn a special interest. More and more pre-cancel collectors are adding perfin-precancels to their collections thereby widening their field of activity considerably.

PERFINS SHOW NATIONAL MIND

When we study the perfins of the different countries of the world we come to recognise evidence of typical national characteristics in them. We find we can draw conclusions as to the national

attitude and the ways of living and thinking of their people from the observations we make when studying those perfins.

For instance, we will generally be able to see that perfins from European countries are nicely centred and seldom have missing perforations. They are almost always applied the proper side up. We find very few splits. All these observations lead us to the conclusion that there is strict control in the offices, that attention is being paid to whatever task has to be done, even such small tasks as perforating stamps. Work is getting attention and done with proper care. When however, we go through a batch of U.S. perfins we find very many inferior ones, splits, broken pins, obverts, and inverts. In general, it can be said that very little attention was paid to the task of making them. It must have been done hastily, sloppily, and without proper care.

No country, to judge by its perfins, however, is as bad as Australia. Among 1,000 Australian stamps one can hardly find a dozen good ones. Almost every perfin from Australia has one or several holes missing, and a batch of Australian Perfins is really a mess. One must be in an awful hurry down there and really racing through life, if the observations made from their perfins are any indication.

ODDITIES

Then one gets really involved in perfins there are some anomalies which are really baffling at first. There is not space enough to discuss them all, but we would like to point out a few.

First there is the perfin of the National Bank of the Republic in Chicago. Its machine has 10 different dies each having one letter of the word, N B Republic. The first three letters are 12½mm., and the rest only 8mm. Only by getting the very rare strips of this company can one be sure he has some of their perfins. And if by chance you should get a pair se-tenant with R and E, the R being 12½mm. and the E only 8mm. you may be baffled at first but you will have obtained a real collectors item.

There are a few more machines around that perforate a word across several stamps instead of letters in each stamp. An example is the American Appraisal Company which has more than one letter of each word per stamp. It is, therefore, somewhat easier to recognise.

Rare also are examples of two perfins of different companies on one stamp. A possible explanation could be that one company sends the other a perfinned stamp for a prepaid reply. When the stamp arrives at the company office, as a matter of routine, it is channelled into the stamp affixing room where again as a matter of routine it is re-perforated.

There are several examples to be found of stamps of certain companies on the envelopes of other companies. Here again, we probably have an example of postage handed out for prepaid replies and the false return address should not be allowed to mislead one into doubting the ownership of the perfin. Such examples can also

be created after two companies merge and still keep using their original perfin machines.

A real teaser are the perfins S and K on Dutch stamps. One can find these on envelopes with all sorts of return addresses. For the beginner this is more than just confusing, but the perfin collector soon finds out that these perfins belong to companies which operate newspaper stands at different places where the public often asks for stamps. In order to protect themselves against pilfering these companies perforate their stamps with their well known perfin design which is then used by people all over the country.

Once one becomes familiar with perfins they can indulge in the fun of guessing at the origin of splits and perfins with many missing holes. This is not a very easy game. By matching them with a good perfin and holding them thus against the light one can ascertain whether the guess was right. However, this demands a great ability in recognising perfins.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the days of maximum perfin production have passed. The meter mail machines are seeing to that. They are slowly but surely encroaching on the perfin domain. Yet there are still enormous quantities of perfins around and being made every day. If we can just put a stop to these being destroyed and being thrown away by collectors and dealers who have no use for them, we will still have enough material for many, many a perfin collector.

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NOTE : The three hole puncture in Hungarian stamps mentioned by Mr Van Lint earlier in the above article was, so we are told by Mr F.H.B Smith, to represent national mourning for the three lost Provinces.