

SEEKING SLOPERS

By Mike J. Burrows.

To speculate what issues would have been available to Joseph Sloper from the Head Office of Inland Revenue at Somerset House, from 13th March 1868, the official beginning of the perfin method of security endorsement, to the end of his monopoly on 31st August 1872, is not an easy task.

It is at this point that one really appreciates the pioneer work already published by researchers of the Charles Jennings calibre. Of course one must not forget the person that offers the small tit-bit of information as and when it comes to hand.

By collating data scattered about the philatelic press, monographs and catalogues, the following is arrived at.

At the beginning of 1868, eleven different denominations of stamps for postal purposes were deemed necessary by the Postal Officials. To meet the daily demand many plates of the 1d value were needed to satisfy the print order. In contrast the 1½d, 10d, 2/- and 5/- required only one plate each.

1d. Plates 71 to 74, 76, 78 to 125, 127, 129 to 158.***	6d. Plates 6, 8, 9, 11.
1½d. Plate (1)	9d. Plate 4
2d. Plates 9, 12, 13, 14	10d. Plate 1
3d. Plates 5, 6, 7, 8.	1/- Plates 4, 5, 6.
4d. Plates 11, 12.	2/- Plate 1
	5/- Plate 1

To meet the requirements of the Newspaper Post Act, which gave reduced rates on newspapers and book-post, a 2d stamp was issued on 1st October 1870.

2d Plates 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9.

Because of the small size of the image, it soon became apparent that a reduced overall perfin pattern was required. Whether this came about before the end of 1872 has yet to be established. Also as plate 9 was only used in emergencies, perfins on this plate are scarce.

Another source for examples of Sloper's work is the range of postal stationery. The earliest recorded die is the full-name CORY on a 1d pink on blu cut-out, posted in London on 25th January 1870.

Yet further Sloper specimens lie with the collection of revenue stamps. Official sanction for private perfin use being given on 27th June 1870. On revenues two reasons for perfins are known. Besides the obvious security perfin, there is the cancellation device. The earliest cancellation device recorded by the writer is date: device, 20 66 11, which it is presumed stands for 20th November 1866, on an Admiralty Court fiscal. Several other different date devices can also be found.

Although fiscals were in use in about sixteen other departments or sections during this time, only those for Foreign Bill have been seen with perfins for private concerns.

*** Plates 71, 73, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 88
& 91 are not as yet recorded as perfins.