

## UNRECORDED UNDERPRINT

**Maurice Harp**

One of the joys of researching companies who used perfins is that you are never quite sure where the search will lead. This story starts with a new previously unrecorded private underprint and ends with a new provisional identity for a floor covering company. Let's start at the beginning with the underprint.

This private underprint, shown below, appeared on ebay in November. The 4d vermilion plate 12 has the underprint M. S. & D / CHEAPSIDE. The cancellation is indistinct but is probably London EC. To any collector of line engraved perfins they will instantly know there is a perfin die MS/&D – M5150.01 which is known used by Moses, Son & Davis, 107/108 Cheapside, London EC. They also had a second London outlet at 8 Honey Lane Market, EC and an outlet in Glasgow at 84 Oswald St. So undoubtedly the underprint was used by the same company probably preceding the company's adoption of perfins.

c1870



Plate 12

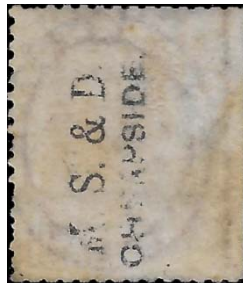
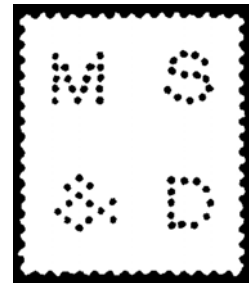


Plate 181

1870 - 1877



M5150.01

Moses, Son & Davis are shown as wholesale Clothiers and warehousemen in our catalogue but in an 1865 directory the entry is rather more impressive. Here we see a strong link with rubber goods.

Moses, Son & Davis, wholesale clothiers & warehousemen, manufacturers of the patent vulcanized & sincalor india rubber waterproof clothing, vulcanized india rubber machine belting, hose, tubing, mats & goloshes &c. & every description of india rubber manufacture; makers of the superior oiled waterproof clothing, souwesters &c. & macintosh cart & waggon covers, India rubber depôt, 107 & 108 Cheapside, EC, & Honey lane market EC; steam works, Bow common E

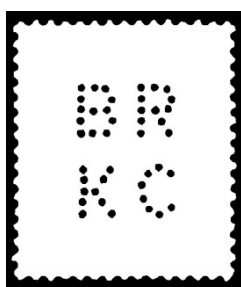
The company was dissolved in August 1878 and here the story takes a twist. Below is shown the entry from the London Gazette for the dissolution. As you can see the partners of the company were associated with two companies – Moses, Davis and the Britannia Rubber & Kamptulicon Company.

**N**OTICE is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between us the undersigned, Samuel Moses, Elias Davis, Frederick Elias Davis, and Charles Montagu, trading at 107 and 108, Cheapside, in the city of London, as Wholesale Clothiers and Woollen Warehousemen, under the style of Moses, Son, and Davis, and also trading at 32, Cannon-street, in the same city, and at Bow Common, in the county of Middlesex, under the style of the Britannia Rubber and Kamptulicon Company, has been dissolved as from the 1st day of April, 1878, by mutual consent.—Dated this 7th day of August, 1878.  
*Samuel Moses.*                      *Frederick E. Davis.*  
*Elias Davis.*                              *Charles Montagu.*

Going back to the directories we find that although Moses, Davis had originally been set up for both clothing and rubber goods by 1873 the rubber goods operation had taken over and had been spun off as a separate company – Britannia Rubber & Kamptulicon. We will come to what kamptulicon is a little later.

At this point I turned back to the Gault Catalogue and was delighted to find two BR/KC dies. So we have two new provisional identities.

c1885

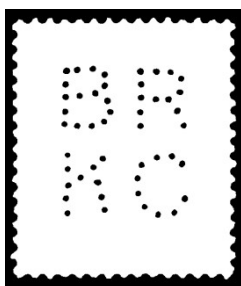


B6247.02



This rare die was first reported by **Melvyn Green** in January 2024. Can anyone add a second copy?

1885 - 1890

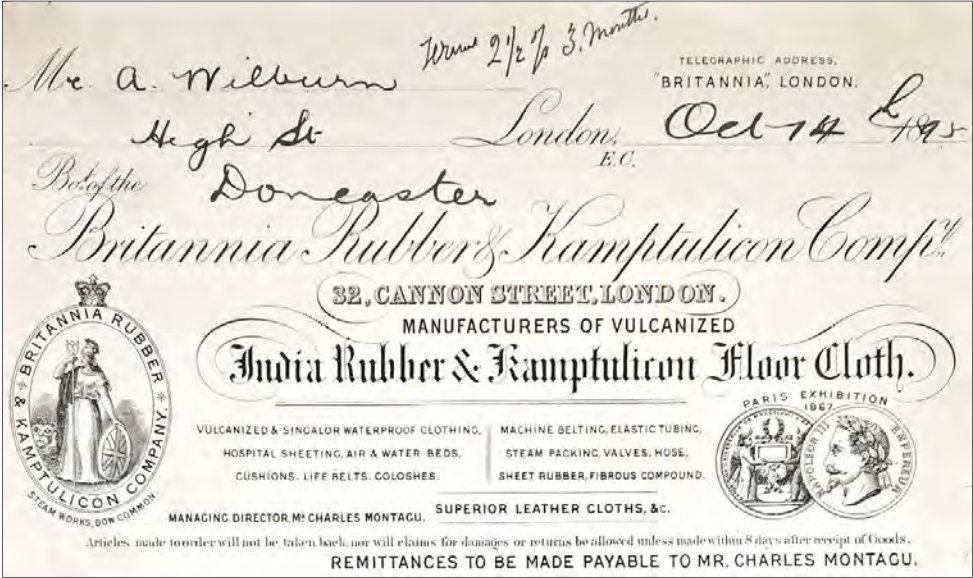


B6247.01



Although Moses, Davis failed in 1878, the Britannia Rubber & Kaptulicon company grew to be a very successful company, but unfortunately they seemed to have abandoned using perfin.

Kamptulicon, whose name was derived from the Greek *kamptos* ("flexible") + *oulos* ("thick"), was a floor covering made from powdered cork and natural rubber and it was patented by Elijah Galloway in 1843. Kamptulicon was first launched in public at the 1862 International Exhibition in London, where it caused a sensation. It's promoters compared it to thick, soft leather, and lauded it's ease of cleaning, water resistance, warmth, and sound-deadening qualities. Critics, however, pointed out that its grey-brown colour was unattractive.



Kamptulicon was manufactured by sprinkling powdered cork on to thin bands of rubber, which was then rolled and rerolled until thoroughly mixed. It was then coated on one, or both sides, with linseed oil varnish or oil paint. Powdered sulphur was also sometimes mixed in, and the material then heated to produce a form of vulcanized kamptulicon.

Kamptulicon was not a great success and the company diversified into electrical insulation and all manner of other rubber goods. Surprisingly they retained their name until the end in 1955 when they became a part of J. Mandleberg & Co. of Manchester. Mandleberg were also perfin users with J.M./&/Co.Ld. – J5330.01 and J.M&Co./Ltd. – J5335.01 to their name. But that's another story for another day.