

THE MUNICIPAL ARMS TYPE PERFINS

By J. Nelson.

1. CITY OF LONDON

Several arms type perfins appeared in the eighteen-nineties, one of these being that of the City of London (Fig 1.) of which the earliest example in my own collection is on a Q.V. Penny Lilac with circular London postmark dated 12th November 1898. The arms of the City, the origins of which date back to 1381, represent the cross of St. George of England with the sword of St. Paul the patron saint of the City in the first quarter, i.e. the top left hand side.

Reversed and inverted varieties of the perfin are often found (a reverse has the effect of transposing the sword to the right hand side) as also are missig pins. The most common of the latter are one or both pins immediately below the hilt of the sword and to the right. My own view, which is quite uncorroborated, is that the actual perforating was done on a hand machine in one of the Corporation's departments. I cannot see that any firm supplying stamps perforated to order would have had the effrontery to produce so many "reverses" and "inverts" on behalf of so august a body as the Corporation of the City of London.



Fig 1.

Whatever the true source of the earlier City of London perfins the die was scrapped about 1930 and a new one came into being (Fig 2.). This contained the same number of pins made up in the same formation, but differently spaced so as to increase the overall height of the shield from 13½mm. to 14½mm. More particularly noticeable is the wider spacing of the five pins forming the lower part of the sword which on the earlier die tended to merge to form a complete cross when too many stamps were placed in the machine at one time.



Fig 2.

The stamps used by the City Corporation today, which are supplied by J. Sloper & Co., Ltd., exactly superimpose on those which came into use during the latter part of the reign of King George V, and I have yet to see an inverted or reversed variety. I would be interested to hear if any exist. Several different missing pin varieties are, however, to be found on Q.E.II stamps and since these sometimes appear in strips with normals, it seems that they are not intentional.

2. CITY OF CARDIFF

Another of the Arms type of perfin which appeared before the turn of the century was that of the City of Cardiff (Fig 3.). The earliest of my own examples being on a Q.V. Penny Lilac postmarked 23rd September 1899.

(Arms 1)

The perfin is a representation of the Arms adopted by the City Corporation up until 1906, namely, three red chevrons on a gold background which was formerly the Arms of the Clare Lords of Glamorgan (1217-1317).



In 1906 Cardiff received an official grant of Arms, these being a red dragon rampant supporting a red banner bearing three silver chevrons, which link the arms with those used previously.

Fig 3. I have only seen the Cardiff perfin on the Penny Lilac and Jubilee Q.V. issues and on K.E.VII. In all probability the use of the die was discontinued when the new Arms were granted.

One missing pin variety is to be found. The missing pin is the one forming part of the shield set centrally between the top and centre chevrons on the left hand side.

3. CITY OF LEICESTER

The Arms of the City of Leicester, a red shield bearing a cinquefoil (a flower with five petals) were recorded by the Heralds in 1619. The cinquefoil was the device of Robert Fitz Pernel, Earl of Leicester who died in 1204, and it is suggested that this was intended for a pimperl in allusion to his surname.

The first perfin of the City of Leicester (Fig 4.) like the two already mentioned came into use during the eighteen-nineties, and like that of the City of London was superseded by a reconstructed die in the nineteen-thirties. A missing pin is frequently found on the earlier type, this being the second pin in from the right of the four pins along the bottom of the cinquefoil.

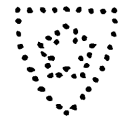


Fig 4.

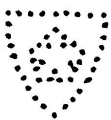


Fig 5.

I have not come across many of the second of the Leicester Corporation types (Fig 5.). Those I have seen have all been on early K.G.VI stamps. The main differences between the two types is that the first is 13mm. wide at the top and the second 12½mm. wide. On the latter, the three pins forming the V at the bottom of the shield are placed more widely apart.

4. CITY OF DUBLIN

The Arms of the City of Dublin, three silver castles with flaming red towers on a blue shield, date back to 1607. The perfin originally used by the Corporation (Fig 6.) is, in my view, the finest example of detailed work in the construction of perforation dies that exists, containing as it does no less than 152 pins which must surely be a G.B. record. Apparently the large number of pins put a considerable strain on the machine and poor examples of the perfin are far more often found than good ones.

(Arms 2)