

A POLISH FORGER

By Magnus Werner.

It is gratifying to know that perfin collectors have so far been spared the scourge of forgeries. Of course, there are a few well known examples, such as the faked Board of Trade "Crown over B.T" of Great Britain, the forged "OFFICIAL" stamps of Guatemala and the "E" of Bavaria. However, these are well documented and described. Occasionally "accidental" perfins turn up on stamps with forged overprints. Examples exist on the first issue of Sudan, overprinted stamps of Egypt, as well as the first issue of Danzig, overprints on German stamps. There may be others. In those cases the forgers probably acquired a quantity of cheap stamps, among them some perfinned ones, and applied the fake overprint. The intention was not to fake perfins.

Sadly enough, I have now discovered that a forger of perfins has been operating in Poland recently. Maybe he still is.

This is the story so far:-

During the past three years I have been buying worldwide perfins in bulk lots from a stamp collector in Poland. He has been paid in German DEM at prices of mutual satisfaction. A higher price for stamps of certain countries, such as Danzig, Finland etc was agreed upon.

In September of last year I received a mixture lot of about 600 perfins. While sorting them I found two stamps of Finland with a perfin "I", an up to now unknown pattern. It was too good to be true. Furthermore, a stamp of Aden perfinned "HL". Yes, Aden!! A closer examination produced patterns not previously recorded from Danzig, Hong Kong and Jamaica. There was no question in my mind - many of the perfins were fakes. Now the detective work began.

I decided to wait a while before confronting my Polish supplier. Maybe there was more to come. Sure enough - there was. Characteristic of the fakes turned out to be as follows. The forger had used a single punch to produce the various patterns. It had been applied to the back side of the stamp (it is easy to tell under a magnifier), but with the letters in reverse. As most perfin collectors know, the perforating needles are very, very seldom

arranged in such a manner. The forger has obviously used his duplicate stock of stamps. Most of these bear the Michel catalogue number in pencil on the upper right hand corner of the back.

There was other evidence to show that the forger does not know much about perfin. His line of action was, at least to begin with, to trace a genuine perfin pattern on to the back of another stamp, using a red pencil, remnants of which can sometimes be seen. He then clamped a number of stamps together and punched the holes. This resulted in a pattern exactly in the same position on a number of stamps of various denominations and most often with different cancellations. An impossibility, and unlikely even if derived from a POKO machine or equivalent.

At a later stage the forger got carried away and, as an addict of some kind, began to apply fake perfins on common German stamps. It is certain he would not harvest much profit from it, at about 5p each. Checking the lots I had received prior to September 1992 I found no fakes.

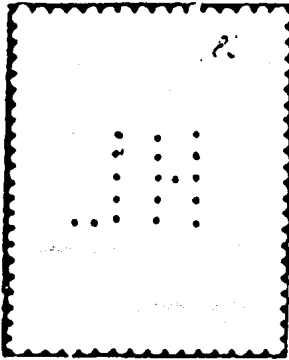
With enough evidence on hand, I eventually confronted my supplier in Bydgoszcz, Poland, who claimed to have been shocked by the disclosure and hastened to protest his innocence. He declared that he had bought these perfins from a collector/dealer in Gdansk. I returned some of the forgeries to him. He claims that he has reported the matter to the Polish Philatelic Society and forwarded the faked stamps. I am not sure of the outcome. My supplier has refused to tell me the name of the alleged forger. I can only hope that I was the only victim, and that no more fakes have been spread. He has been warned, I am told.

A total of 107 fakes were discovered, half of which were on German stamps. I have made photostat copies of all and kept about 50% of them, some as reference and the rest to be turned over to the ARGE Lochungen in BDPH e.V., Germany.

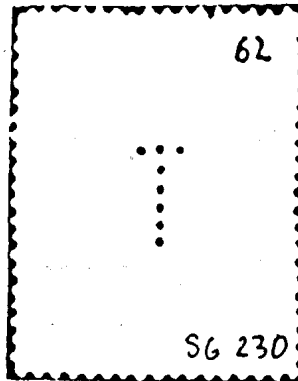
Attempts to follow up this matter has not been met with much success owing in part to my ignorance of the Polish language.

The following pages show photocopies of all the different fakes I have discovered.

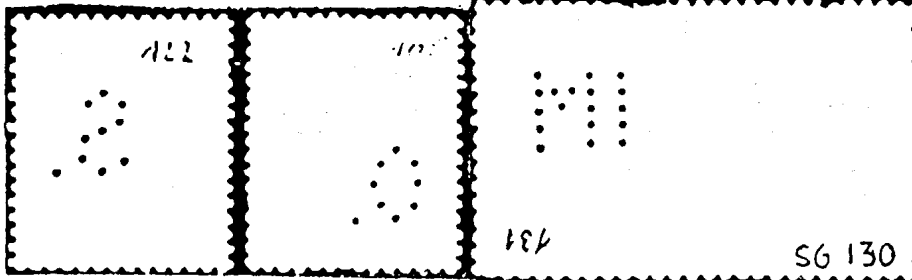
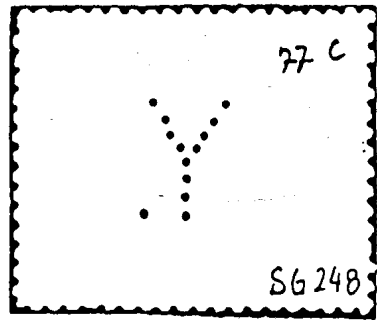
BOGUS PERFINs OF BRITISH COMMONWEALTH STAMPS



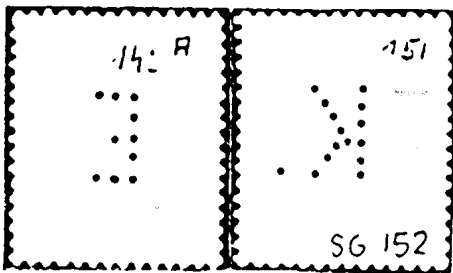
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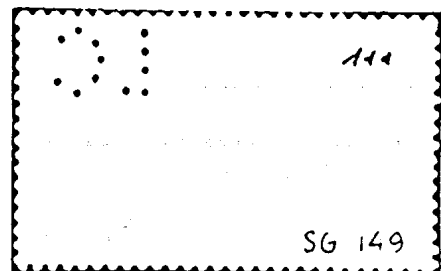
TASMANIA



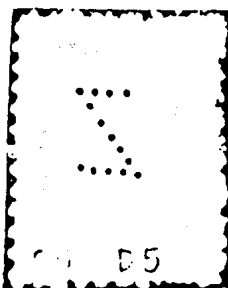
JAMAICA



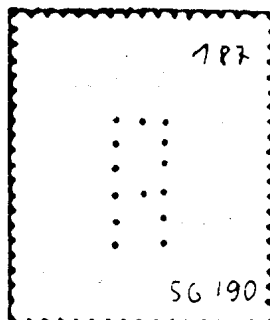
HONG KONG



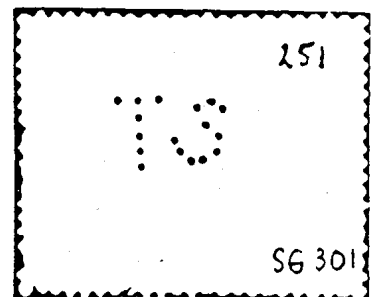
BRITISH HONDURAS



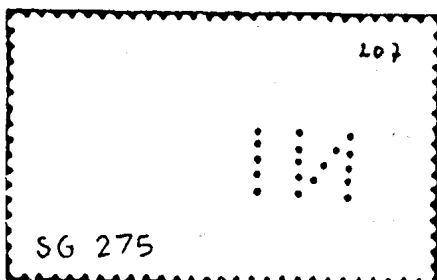
N.S.W.



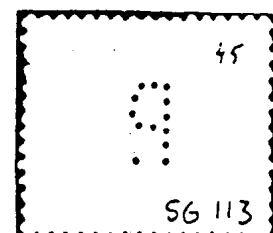
ST. VINCENT



MAURITIUS

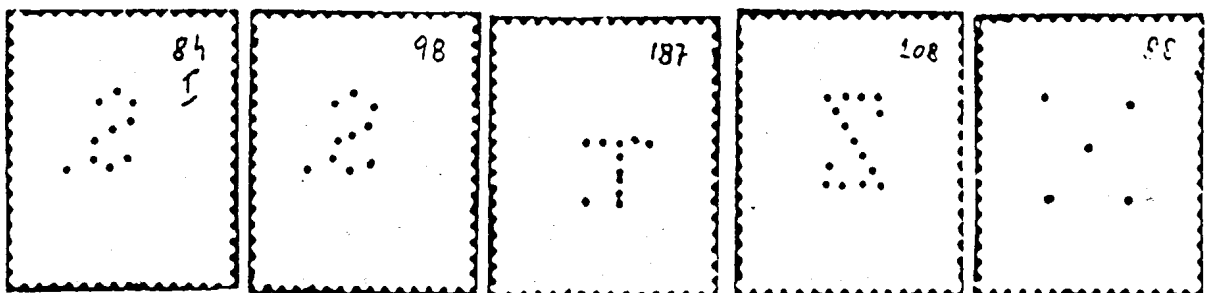
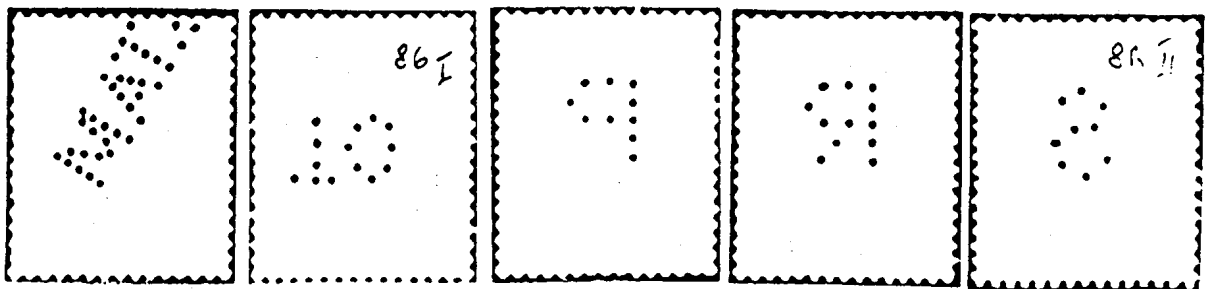
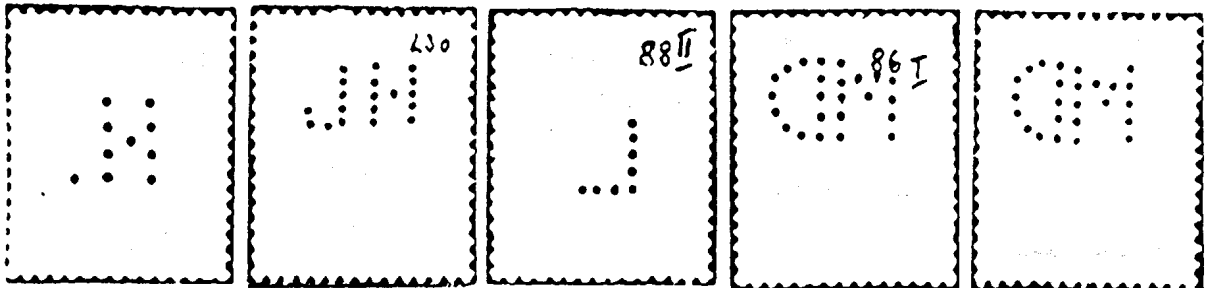
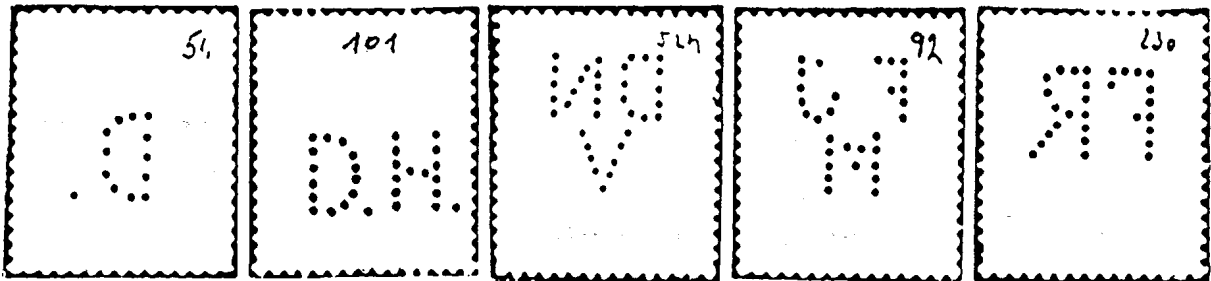
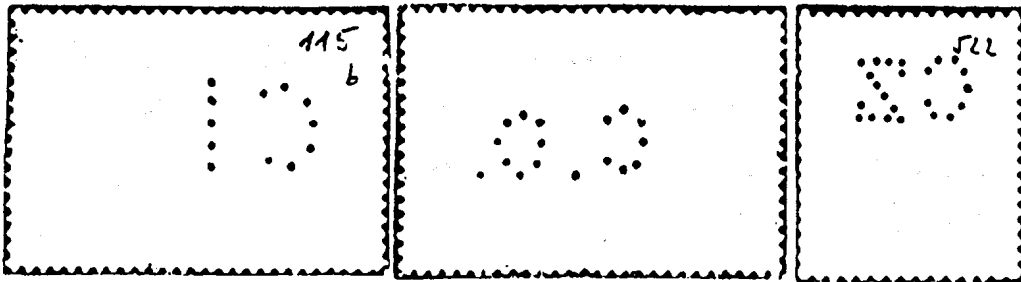
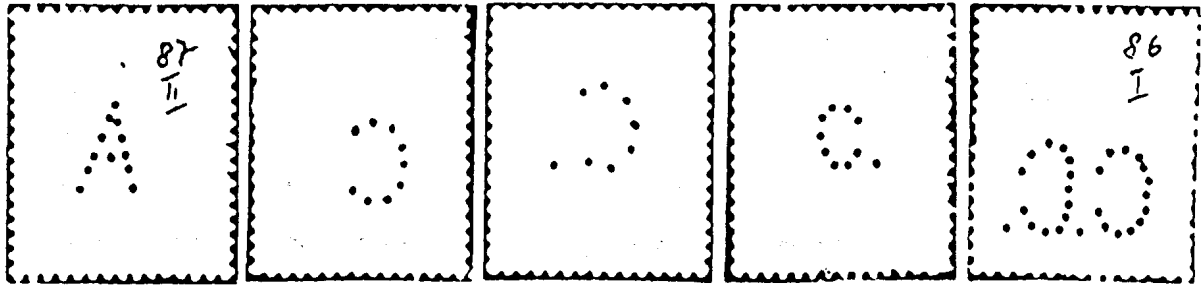


STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

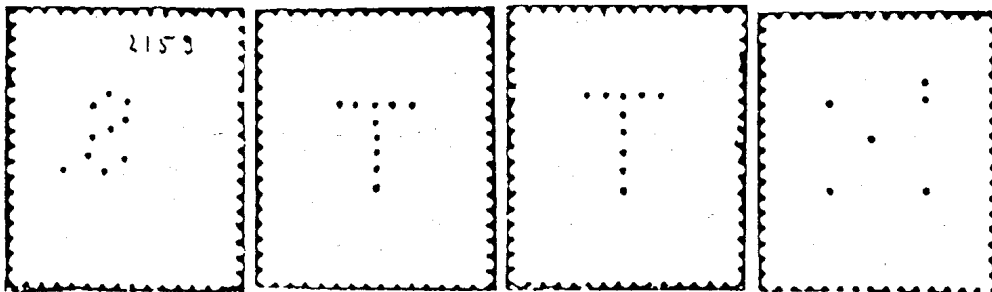
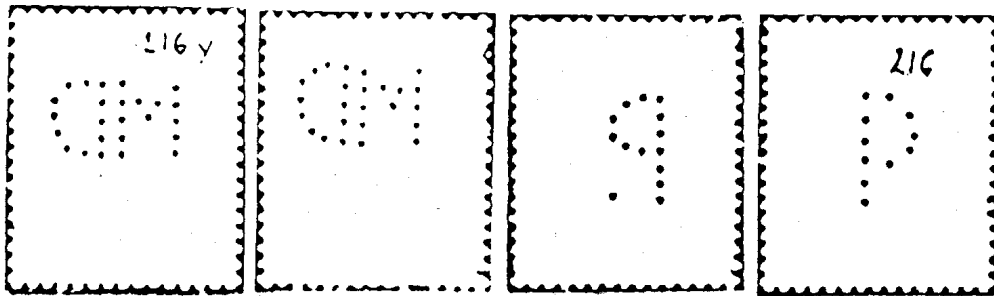
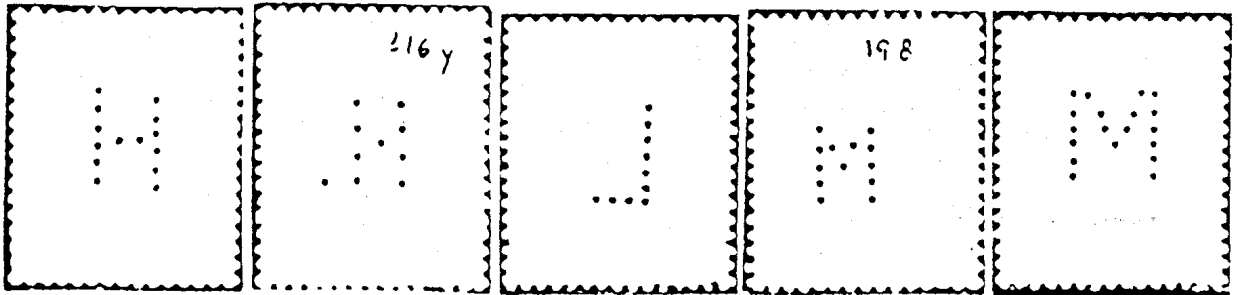
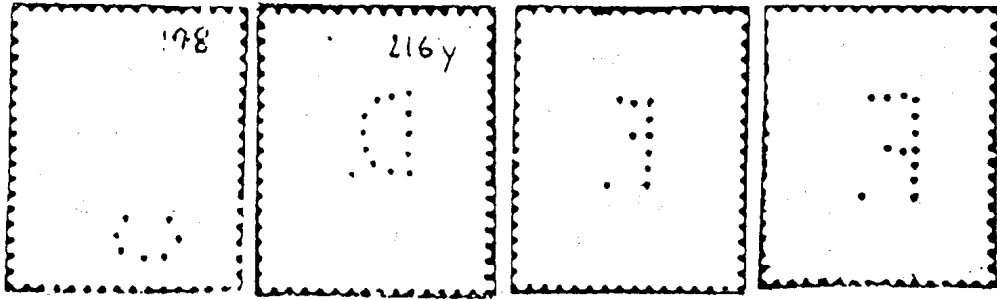


WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FORGED AND BOGUS PERFINs OF GERMANY



FORGED AND BOGUS PERFINs OF DANZIG



FORGED AND BOGUS PERFINs
ON GERMAN STAMPS CANCELLED
IN DANZIG

BOGUS PERFIN
OF
FINLAND

