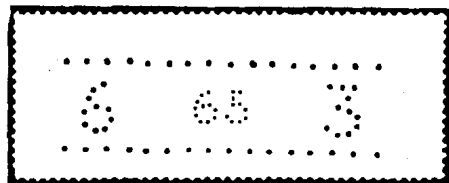


Date Perforations Bulletin 298 Pg. 14

To the question posed by David Scott in his article in Bulletin 298, concerning the earliest known date for a date perforation on document or stamp, **LEIF BERGMAN** points to Edwards and Lucas' *G.B. Official Perfins*, page 67, which states that these date perforations are known from 1866.

However, in the handbook of Swedish Perfins by Bergman, Lagerwall and Swenson, *Svenska Skyddsperforeringar*, page 6, there is shown an illustration of an Admiralty Court stamp perforated 6 65 3. I cannot guarantee the accuracy of scale of this illustration as it is from an illustration which, I am sure, has been photocopied a number of times. Each copy can be slightly distorted and after a while the accuracy cannot be relied upon.



JOHN MATHEWS provides this interesting theory to explain the uneven lines above and below the date.

"I am only using my memory of what I read in the Sloper Work Books when I saw them in 1993. The part dies for day (left) and month (right) had changeable numbers and were supplied once when the perforator was delivered. The year die was able to be replaced each year, and the making of these must have been a lucrative part of Sloper's business.

"I think I recall that the day dies and the month dies slid into place from the sides, and this seems to be borne out in the illustration as the 4 holes above and below the "16" seem to align with the 4 holes above and below the "2". The year die slid in from the front, and so the 4 holes above and below those numerals do not necessarily align with those in the month and day dies.

"That leaves a pair of holes above and below on each side of the 4 of the year die. I presume these are on the fixed part of the head into which are the grooves for the year die. No doubt these holes were designed to give "continuous" line from one end of the date to the other."

TONY LLEWELLYN-EDWARDS also comments on this article. "This, of course, was the first use of Sloper's perforating machine and was, presumably, in use soon after the firm was set up in 1858 although the earliest I have seen was dated in 1866. There were a number of these types of perforator in use in the Admiralty Court, the Police Courts and the Chancery Court (the latter has the initials CRO above the year number) and probably in other places."

Tony goes on to explain the reason for the undulating rows of dots in exactly the same terms as John. He also says that examples of these perforators can be found with the lines above and below the numerals missing, and with all the lines missing.

BRIAN DENNIS comments that he has two Admiralty Court revenue stamps from 1866, a 10/- dated 2 MARCH 1866 and a 5/- dated 2 NOVEMBER 1866. This tallies with the date in "GB Official Perfins" but we now see that March 1865 is mentioned by Leif Bergman.

Brian seems to recall that this die was called a "roller die" perforator. It may also be worth noting that in David Scott's example (and in one of Brian's from 1867) the dotted lines above and below the date are continuous. In both of his copies from 1866 the lines are above the day and month but not the year numerals. He has another Admiralty Court, a 5/- value, with a date of 14 APRIL 1874 without any perforated lines. It would seem that there may have been three or more perforators in use over the period.

Brian adds that he has always been fascinated by these Admiralty Court perfins and he hopes we can provoke the contribution of information, from the members, on their 'raison d'etre'. They could well be the "earliest perforated stamps" and it would be worthwhile to record the earliest usage.