

THE STAMP DISTRIBUTION (PARENTS COMPANY LTD

PART 2

Rosemary Smith

The first part of this story (in Bulletin 317) ended on a sour note. The concession to the Stamp Distribution Syndicate, to operate 'stamp booklet machines', was to be withdrawn by the Postmaster General. This was because of the displeasure of the general public who were too frequently being exasperated when their penny coin was swallowed by the machine without giving out a stamp booklet, or the machine would not accept the coin.

On 26th of May 1892, one day before the concession of the "SDS" was terminated, another company was formed under the chairmanship of John Henniker Heaton MP, a well-known Postal Reformer of the day. The new company was called "**The Stamp Distribution (Parent) Company Limited**".

Their operation followed that of the SDS in that for 1d the user received a 64 page booklet containing advertisements, postal information, a calendar for that year and blank Memo pages, some headed with the days of the week. The booklet had a red cardboard cover whereas the SDS booklet covers were made of red linen. The back of the booklet was slit and a 1d lilac stamp inserted, perforated with the letters "SDC". The booklet was in an envelope with 4 punched holes to show the 1d lilac inside.

When the operation began in 1892, they used a different type of vending machine. This machine was described in a promotional booklet and lists 138 machines, "fixed and in full working order", in the London area, Ipswich, Margate and Ramsgate.

At the opening of the 'SDC Company's new premises on 14th October 1892, it was reported that the average number of books sold per day was 260 per machine and the net profit of 17/6d per 1000 books, each machine would realise a net profit of over 4/6d per day. The newspaper reports for the day went on to say:-

"In connection with the above company (SDC) it may be mentioned that The Northern Counties Stamp Distribution Company Ltd has been formed with a capital of £75,000 for the purpose of acquiring the exclusive licenses to them to work in the six Northern Counties of England, viz:- Northumberland, Westmoreland, Durham, Yorkshire and Lancashire, as also the Isle of Man. "

There are records which show that a few SDS machines were still operating in situ after their concession was terminated and at the same time as the SDC was operating.

The SDC continued to operate until 1895 when a petition for winding-up was made on the 13th March. In all the literature I have to hand, I cannot see the reason why the SDC did not continue to make the profits of its early months. The ending of the story is reported as *"the liquidator was released in November 1898, but the name of the Company was not removed from the Register until 1907"*.

The 1d lilac stamps were printed by De La Rue but it is a very curious thing that Harrison & Sons, who did not print stamps themselves until 1911, were the Petitioners for the winding-up of the SDC.

I cannot say with any certainty who perforated these 1d lilacs with "SDS" and "SDC".

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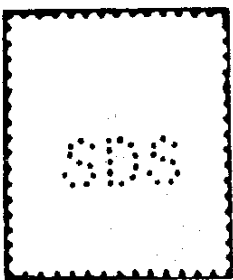
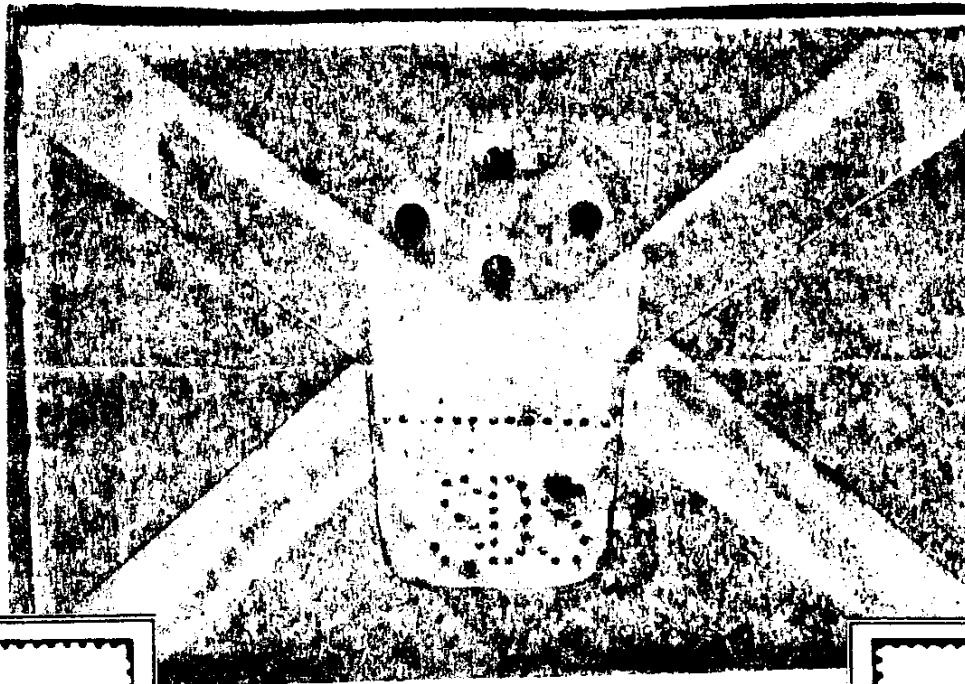
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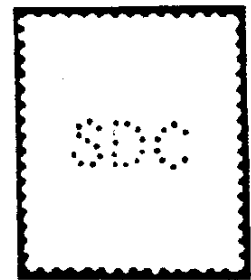
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