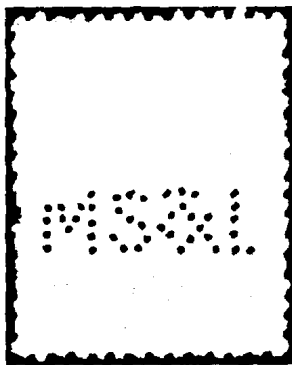


ANOTHER LINE ENGRAVED DIE CONFIGURATION
DETERMINED -"MS&L'

Maurice Harp

In Bulletin 325 Roy Gault showed that the study of the minor die differences on line engraved dies could help yield information on the overall configuration. Inspired by this piece and the current work on the Railway Catalogue I decided to look closer at my holding of M5250.01, MS&L, used by the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway. I very soon found that a number of copies had a distinctive broken pin variety. As can be seen in the illustration below the top pin of the letter M and the last pin, of the leg of the L are broken and missing.

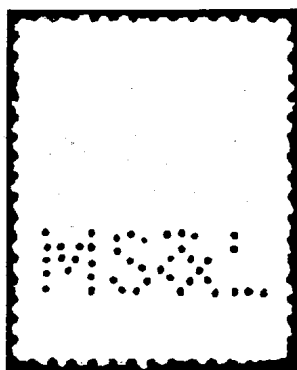


Recorded only on B & H
columns of plates

124, 158, 159, 164, 172
173, 178, 179, 180, 181,
183, 184, 185, 187, 191,
192, 200, 205, 212

I found seven copies of this variety from the B (2nd) column and a further twelve copies from the H (8th) column stamps. Thus clearly this is another 6x1 die. This is starting to appear to be a popular arrangement with Sloper for producing perfins for the large users at this early period. The earliest plate that I have is plate 124. Roy has been able to add some additional information in that his copy of this die on plate 159 is complete whereas mine has the variety. However he has a copy on plate 150 where the M pin is missing but the L is complete which must mark the beginning of trouble with this part of the die. Plate 159 that shows both states was first put to press in August 1872 but without dated copies of this variety it is impossible to set a likely date for when the broken pins occurred.

However there is a twist in the tail to this story. There is another broken pin variety that is much scarcer and it appears in the same columns - B & H. This time two pins are missing from the L upright and the two pins in the first variety are intact. Note how the top of the ampersand is curved in both varieties - so we are indeed looking at the same die position. Neither Roy nor I have any real explanation for this second variety. The only suggestion I have is that this break was spotted and the two pins were moved from the top of the M and the leg of the L to do a quick fix - and then like many quick fixes it became permanent. It is strange though that Sloper seems to have made no attempt to repair the broken pins.



Recorded only on B & H
columns of plates
157, 182

If any members can report other copies of these varieties I would be very pleased to hear from them.

Maurice Harp, 'Woodside', Silver Street, Sway, Hampshire, SO41 6DF.

O00oo00O