

The Perfin Society Bulletin

THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS

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<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Editorial - General & Society Information	2-3
<u>Members' Comments on Previous Articles</u> - What is a Perfin?; Perfins of Jersey & Guernsey; Copestake & Co.; I&R/M Perfin; Uruguay Perfin; Taff Vale Railway; Mixed dies on one cover; British Empire Exhibition stamps.	4-14
<u>Members' Queries</u> - B3/1H and MZ/DS Perfins.	14-15
Spanish Olympic Commemorative Perforation.	15-16
Life After Perfins. (Jack Peach)	16-17
Perforated Coil Stamps - The 'Michelius' Affixer.(Roy Gault)	18-22
Thief-Proof Stamps & True Philately. (1925 Dr. Gordan Ward)	23-24
Auction No.4 (1992) & No.5 (1992) 24 Pages	
Perfin Society Bulletin Index Nos.1-207. 8 pages	

EDITORIAL - cum - GENERAL INFORMATION. Rosemary Smith.

Again - a big 'thank-you' to all members who, once more, have made sure that I have more material than I need for this issue.

Roy and I took it upon ourselves to leave out the five pages of New Identities so that I could include another five pages of your contributions. It may be that, because of the large number of New Identities still in the pipe line from Stephen Steere's examination of the Sloper Record Books, we will issue a separate booklet for these.

I am particularly pleased to see so many comments on, and added information to, the articles in the last few Bulletins. John Nelson has written a short piece following his worksheet in the June issue. Dave Hill tells me he too has had replies about the Perforating Machines made by Slopers but only two members so far have expressed a desire to visit Sloper-Checkpoint Ltd. It is not too late to get on the list.

Please make a special note of the new address of our Librarian, Maurice Harp. If you need copies of anything out of the library, particularly now we have the first part of the Bulletin Index, make sure you pick up this issue for the address and not an old Bulletin. I have been guilty of that stupid trick in the past.

You will see that Michael feels the time has come to resign as Secretary/Treasurer. Sadly, we must respect his decision, and by the November meeting (N.B. Sat. November 7th) I hope we have had offers[^] from members; to take up the vacant position/s. Please give this matter serious thought and if you think you can help, do write to John Nelson or Michael. Obviously Michael will be only too pleased to itemise the workload which he undertakes, if anyone is not sure if they have the necessary time or skills.

Lastly, after feeling guilty for over a year, I have finally found time to produce the first part of the two part Index to the Perfin Society Bulletin. I hope this will produce two results: far less time wasted looking for those elusive articles which you knew you had read at some time: newer members wanting information about a certain topic will know if anything has been written on the subject.

SOCIETY INFORMATION

SECRETARY/TREASURER

As I announced at the May meeting in London I would like to be replaced as Secretary/Treasurer. My reasons are partly advancing age and partly that I have always felt that a change of officers can only be beneficial in bringing in new ideas. I have been Secretary for 22 years and Treasurer for 15, so a change may well be thought overdue. I have no quarrel with the Society or any of the officers who are now a first-rate team and are doing an excellent job for the Society.

I am, of course, willing to continue at least until the end of the current financial year or until we find a replacement.

It may be thought better to separate the two posts, although I feel it is in many ways easier to combine them. It is only fair to point out that both require a considerable amount of time.

J.M.R.

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MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

New Members

DIXON MRS.A.

ANDERSON D.L.

WORTH E.R.

MAYBURY P.

LEE A.H.

Change of Address

SETTGAST DR.J.

CARCARY J.R.

GERSCH W.

HARP MAURICE

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MEMBERS' COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLES

WHAT IS A PERFIN? Bulletin 251/7; 252/6; 256/8.

The original article by Michael Rucklidge in Bulletin 251 produced quite a number of comments. Some appeared in Bulletin 252 and 256 and the first of the following contributions on this theme is in response to the article by Brian Birch in issue 256.

From David Andersen - Australia.

Brian Birch's comments about what is a perfin in the Feb'92 issue of the Perfin Society Bulletin are interesting but his suggested definition "A perfin is a number of holes in a distinct pattern applied to postage and other stamps as security against theft" still has a couple of problems.

1) The condition that such puncturing be done for the purpose of security against theft is unable to be checked for the majority of private perfin users. I'm sure that some of the individuals concerned, in deciding to buy perforators, did so for advertising purposes, as a gimmick or to keep up with "good business practice". I can't prove this but neither can it be proved that for all of the private commercial patterns, security against theft was the primary motive.

2) Historically the term Perfin encompasses more than those items punctured as security against theft.

Warren Travell in "Perfins" (U.S.) v.2 no.5 December 1946 mentions SPIFS, the British term for perfins meaning "Stamps Perforated for Insurance against Fraud". By contrast he also lists three divisions of "Perfins" in v.2 no.4 of the same title in an article on what should one collect. These divisions were:-

- a) perforated postage, where the punching is done as a security measure.
- b) revenue stamps punched with a companies initials as a method of cancellation.
- c) stamps punched by postal authorities in place of more customary surcharges (I think he meant overprints) e.g. S.O.

The point is that Brian's definition amounts to the same as "SPIF" but "perfin" is historically a wider term.

A wider definition of perfin to include the SPECIMEN, personal patterns etc, that some would not want included, is in fact not based on what I collect but on the type of items perforated - i.e. postage and revenue stamps or stationery, and the method of production - eg. perforating. Certainly there is some material that is less desirable such as personal patterns, but is this not also the case with normal stamp collecting. A definition, if it will serve any useful purpose, should not be based on a condition that is impossible to check - the motivation of the purchaser - but on the method of production and the end result, devoid of motive.

Brian also wonders about the Western Australian circular punches. I am happy to advise that these punches were certainly produced for security purposes and not to identify convict mail. The following notice appeared in the Government Gazette from Western Australia for Tuesday 5 August 1862.

"For the purpose of preventing the improper use of Postage Stamps provided for Imperial Services, in future each stamp will be perforated in or near the centre, the hole being about one-sixth of an inch in diameter, and all persons are requested not to receive any stamps so perforated which may be offered as money".

Sloper's first perfins were not produced on postage stamps until 1868, six years later. Was there a link between Sloper and the Imperial bureaucracy or the case of a similar idea being developed separately? However, the histories of perfins starting with Sloper as the originator of perfins on stamps possibly need a little modification. I imagine the Imperial Service neglected to pay Sloper any royalties also!! (Touché - Ed)

* * * * *

From Frank Brown.

A list of official perfins applied to fiscal stamps by M. Burrows and C. Tennant appeared in the Perfins Bulletin of Sept'1976.

A correspondent of mine - J. Schonfeld, of Victoria, B.C., Canada - is a joint author of the catalogue "The Impressed Duty Stamps of Great Britain" (by S.B. Frank, J. Schonfeld and W.A. Barber, 360pps, 2nd edition 1981). Broadly, these are the embossed stamps which

appear on documents subjected to Stamp Duty from 1694 to date and very rarely, some of these stamps (especially in late Victorian times) are found perforated.

He has made a study of such perforations and where they also apply to printed fiscal stamps. The initials and other devices perforated into both kinds of stamps have a different purpose from "perfins" - they serve to cancel the stamps per se, or to cancel the document, or to accept the document as properly executed by government departments or subsidiary authorities. His invented term for such devices is "PERFCANS" which fall into five groups:-

Lettering only

Lettering and Crown

Lettering and Crown in a ring

Lettering and date

Date only

A common example is "Crown/RCJ" in a ring which is found on embossed stamps worded "ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE" with date plugs 1886 etc. and on the adhesive JUDICATURE FEE stamps of the 1881 issue.

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PERFINS OF JERSEY AND GUERNSEY Bulletins 253; 254, 255, 257,

JACK BRANDT has added two more to the list:-

a) G.B. with Jersey Cancels

F3860.01 FS/Ld 3d Machin

b) G.B. with GUERNSEY Postmarks

S3820.01 SI/Ld 2½d Wilding

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COPESTAKE & CO. Bulletin 257; 258.

IAN HAMILL (New Zealand) adds another value to C4370 (Fig.15 - Bulletin 257/13). He has a 2½d QV Jubilee.

* * * * *

DAVID RABINOW writes that he has three copies of I2170.06 which do not have the London Chief Office diamond numeral. They have the London District Post or Suburban Office barred oval. The first is Plate 118 and cancelled EC/66: the second is Plate 168 with cancel EC/70: the third is Plate 169 and cancel is 81 within a circle.

MIKE BAVIN writes with different Plate numbers to those mentioned by Arthur Smith - also new values.

2107.04 Plates 130, 138, 142, 148 and 153.

2107.06 Plates 124, 140, 149, 156, 189, 192, 205 and 208.

He also has this latter die on a 1d Venetian Red, a 2d Plate 14 and 3d Plate 12.

As Fig.3 he has Plates 125 and 152.

Mike points out that there are differences in the spacing between the top holes of the vertical legs and top holes of the diagonal centres of the 'M' in 2107.04. He suggests this could indicate a multi-head.

MAURICE HARP offers the following study paper.

The article by Arthur Smith in the April issue of the Bulletin greatly interested me. Several years ago I purchased some 300 copies of the I&R/M dies 2107.04 and .06 all on 1d Plates. I filed them away thinking that one day they would be good for study purposes. When I did get round to sorting them out, like Arthur, I noticed that die 2107.04 could be found with broken pins at the base of the 'M'. In my accumulation though I found copies with both the right and left leg of the 'M' broken. Immediately I started to wonder whether die 2107.06 was in fact a broken pin variety of die 2107.04. Unfortunately as we will see on closer study the theory does not stand up.

From the accumulation I was able to record the following broken pin plate numbers:

Broken left leg to 'M' 117, 119, 120, 124, 125, 129, 130, 138,
140, 151, 152, 158, 159, 163, 169

Broken right leg to 'M' 125, 152

Previously the following plates have been recorded.

I2107.04 (17 pin 'M') 102 - 216 (63 different plates)

I2170.06 (15 pin 'M') 102 - 224 (100 different plates)

Thus the broken pin variety is not common and the broken left leg shown by Arthur is considerably more common than the broken right leg. It also should be noted that considerably more plates are known with the 15 pin 'M' than the 17 pin 'M'.

Roy Gault mentions that these two dies were almost certainly multi head dies. The sheer quantity of stamps that can be obtained for these dies clearly leads to that supposition - but that's not proof. With dies on the line engraved and surface printed issues it is of course possible to position every stamp in the sheet via the four corner letters. I thus took my accumulation and sorted them into what would be their column position on the sheet of stamps. Thus looking at the bottom pair of corner letters, AA, BA, CA etc. would all be from the first column of the sheet. Having done this the story started to become clear.

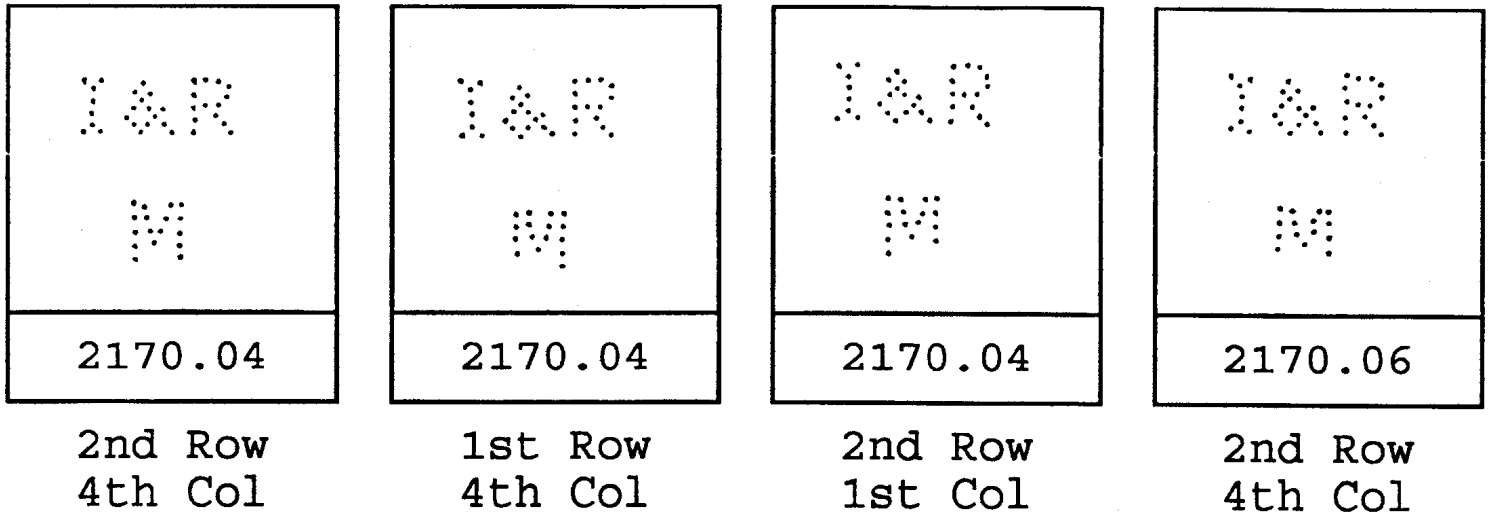
Looking at the 4th column of stamps from die 2107.06, (AD,BD,etc.) showed a very distinctive 'M' which has one pin of the 'M' very displaced. This distinctive letter also appeared on tenth column stamps (AJ,BJ,CJ etc.). Closer inspection though showed that it did not appear on every row of the sheet. In fact the characteristic 'M' only appeared in every other row of the sheet, i.e. BD,DD,FD, or BJ,DJ,FJ etc. Thus it would seem that die 2107.06 is in fact a multi-die which is laid out as two rows by six columns. Based on this arrangement of the die similar minor irregularities can also be found to match in the other die positions, but these are minor and hard to reproduce.

Based on this die layout I then looked at copies of the 17 pin 'M' die 2107,04. This die is in general much better made than 2107.06 and doesn't exhibit any marked irregularities. It was clear though that die 2107.04 showed a complete absence of the characteristic 'M' in the fourth, tenth or indeed in any column. At this stage I haven't been able to determine the exact head arrangement for the die but it may well also be a two by six arrangement. Thus there was no evidence that die 2107.06 was a broken pin variety of 2107.04, indeed we are clearly looking at two distinct dies.

figure 1 below shows identically positioned stamps for both 2170.04 and 2170.06. The characteristic 'M' can be clearly seen on one but not the other.

Figure 1.

Row/column position of multi-head die
(note characteristic 'M')



Looking at the copies with broken pins showed that those with a broken left leg to the 'M' (looking at the front of the stamp) only appears on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th columns of the six head die. Again closer inspection was able to locate the positions within the multi-head die. These are shown in Figure 2. The copies with the broken right leg only appear in the 1st column/2nd row of the multi-head die - which explains why it is considerably harder to find.

Figure 2.

Broken Pin Variety positions on 2170.04

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1		L	L	L		
2	R	L	L			

L - Left leg broken
R - Right leg broken

In conclusion we can say that dies 2170.04 and 2170.06 are two distinct twelve-head dies - 6 columns/2 rows. The earlier die must have come into use around 1869 and very early on started to suffer from broken pins to the bottom of the 'H'. This was probably due to the high usage of the die. I & R Morley then invested in an additional die around 1870 to cope with the demand but this time decided to have a 15 pin 'M' to avoid risking further broken pins.

As a footnote it should be noted that die 2170.04 also exhibits other broken pin varieties within the ampersand - but study of these varieties is for another day.

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URUGUAY PERFIN Bulletin 257/7

Although I have not had any correspondence sent in about this article, by coincidence there was a two page article on this topic in The Perfins Bulletin (USA) of February 1992, which I received just a week after our own Bulletin was issued.

The following, quoted from The Perfin Bulletin, is a comprehensive answer to the query posed by Rolf Nievergelt in our April issue.

URUGUAY-ADVERTISING LABELS WITH PERFINS FOR FRANKING LETTERS.

By Walter B. L. Bose (Bueno Aires) & Diego Capandegui (Montevideo)

In the beginning of our century some postal administrations allowed the use of stamps for private advertising purposes. Several countries used the reverse of their stamps for advertisements, as we see in France, Great Britain and New Zealand.

A forerunner for the type we describe here existed in Germany. About 1912, the General Post Office authorized a label or sticker for the FIRST FLIGHTS "BORGBRUCK". These labels consisted of an ordinary 10 Pf."Germania" stamp, with "GR" perforated through the stamp and label. (See MICHEL catalogue - Semiofficial Airmail stamps).

In Uruguay, the General Postmaster, by decree of 5 August 1932, No.3837, authorised the firm "R.PEREZ-SARMIENTO-COMPANIA INTERNACIONAL DE AUUNCIOS" to sell special advertising labels, with stamps attached at the centre, surrounded by 5-6 different advertising texts. These labels were sold as reduced postal dues to the public, at half the value of the stamp.

They were sold by a "private stand" in the postal office at Montevideo (Central Post Office and Suboffices No.2 and No.31). The Postal Director received a "commission" for this concession: ¼ centesimo for each stamp sold by the firm. The monies received were given to the "Consejo de Salud Publica" (Council for Public Health).

By a second decree, No.3840 of 10 August 1932, the firm was authorised to perforate their labels and stamps with the initials CI-DA of the firm. This perforation may be described as CI/DA 7,8/9,8 5mm. The perfin exists in four positions: normal and inverted - as seen from front and rear.

We have seen the following stamps (Scott Catalog numbers):

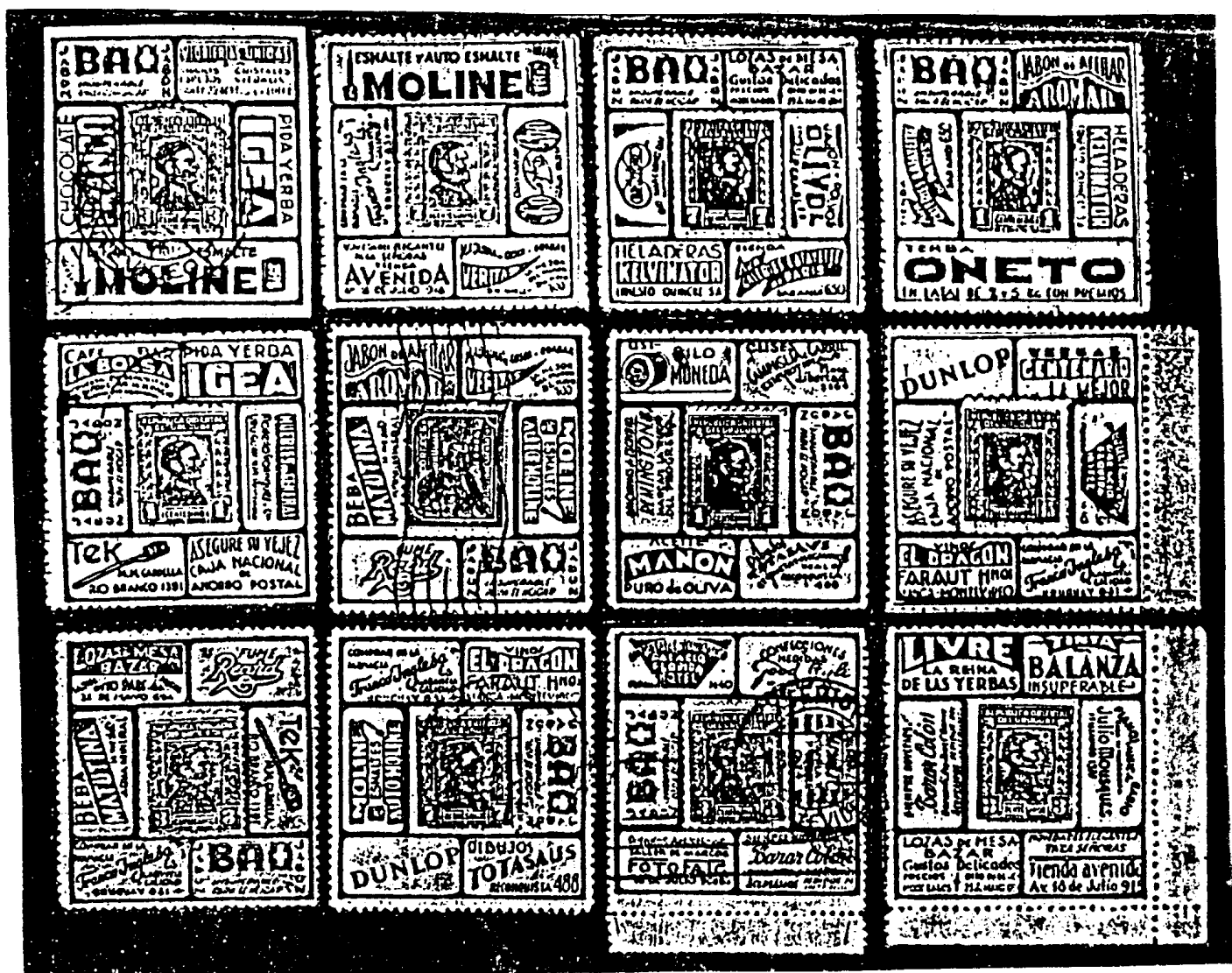
- a) Head of General Artigas (engraved) #352, 1c., lilac; #355, 3c, green; #358, 7c, red.
- b) Head of the poet Zorilla de San Martin, #416, 7c., grey-blue.
- c) Head of General Artigas (lithographed) #421, 1c., lilac grey; #422, 15 millesimo (1½c) grey.

The advertising labels were printed on common white paper without watermark. The text was printed in carmine and the frames were in dark blue. We do not know the form of the label sheets. Most of the labels that we have seen were singles. Only two pairs and a single horizontal strip of three with the same advertising text are known. No pairs with differing text are known to us. We have seen less than 80 pieces; only 14 on cover. These issues were first reported by Harry Rickard in TPB March 1989, p.58 and TPB May 1990, p.108.

There are twenty four different combinations of forty-three advertisements: six have five advertisements and eighteen have six advertisements.

The time of usage began in September 1932, and the last date known to us is about May 1933. Quantities of each stamp are unknown; but there exists the same advertising label with different stamps. If any member can provide any additional information, please contact Walter B.L.

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Editor's notes: (USA)

Bob Schwerdt, the Perfins Club Foreign Catalog Editor, notes that according to the Scott Catalog #352 and #421 were not issued until 1934; therefore, usage had to extend beyond 1933. It is assumed that the author's statement, "...the last date known to us is about May 1933." relates to copies on cover with readable postmark.

In addition. Bob Schwerdt also noted that after checking his files and the World Perfins Catalog, "In ASC #8, I have listed a slight change in the company name - ANUNCIOS to AVISOS - both words mean about the same - advertising = announcement. Perhaps this was a change in the company name. (Ed. M.R.S. - This last paragraph is printed exactly as in the Perfins Bulletin).

TAFF VALE RAILWAY CARDS Bulletin 229/6; 239/5; 240/10.

ALAN BRIGGS has just purchased a TAFF VALE RAILWAY card. The die is TV/R - T4820.01 - on a blue-green 'stamp'. The postmark is Cardiff JU 16 02 which is approximately 3 months earlier than the date quoted in Tom Venables article in Bulletin 229.

Since Tom wrote the article in 1987 many of these cards have found their way onto the market. I personally would not pay over £10 for a card but I have seen dealers asking over £40.

If you have bought one of these cards in the last five years could you check the dates please? Earliest and latest dates of use at the moment stand as:-

The blue-green 'stamp' card 16-6-02 to 13-2-05.

The yellow-green 'stamp' on thick white card 19-5-06.

The yellow-green 'stamp' on thin, cream/buff card 24-5-05/12-6-12.

* * * * *

TWA & TW ON ONE PIECE Bulletin 258 Pg. 13

MARTIN KNIGHT reports the following mixed dies on piece – with probable identity.

- 1) 2½p H&W/UDC + 1p HB/C
Havant & Waterloo U.D.C. + Havant Borough Council.
Dated 5-9-74. (Local Govt. re-organisation that year)
- 2) 12½p GLC + ½p IL/EA
Greater London Council + Inner London Education Authority
- 3) 16p NW/G + 1p BG/C
North West Gas + British Gas Corporation.
- 4) 16p B/HA + 1p BH/A
Bromley Health Authority?
- 5) 16p R/HA + 1p RA/HA
Rochdale Health Authority + Rochdale Area Health Authority
- 6) 2x2p ES/AHA + 5p & 20p BH/D
East Sussex Area Health Authority + Brighton Health District
- 7) 4d MH + 1d BMH
Middlesex Hospital? + Bethlehem & Maudsley Hospital?

JOHN DONNER adds:-

8) 14p CC + 1p C/EC

Croydon Corporation + Croydon Education Committee

9) 19p SC + 1p S/C

This one will bear investigating. The S/C is not in Edwards and appears to be SC/C (S1310.01) with the top C removed.

10) 14p TW + 3 x 1p TWA

These are as in the original article.

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PERFINS ON BR.EMPIRE EXHIBITION STAMPS OF 1924 & 1925

Bulletin 258 Pg.15

From John Nelson:- My very special thanks to all members who, whether they have one or many Wembley perfins to report, have completed and sent me their survey forms. The response from at home and overseas has been beyond all my expectations and apart from several interesting patterns of use which are emerging we have already uncovered thirty-five new dies in addition to those listed on the survey form.

If you have not yet filled in your form please do so as soon as you can and send it to me.

Of the dies on the list, I have yet to receive reports of GLC, HW/L, KSC, MWSC, M&S and SSW. Please keep a good look out for these in particular and also for any dies on the stamps of 1925 which may very well turn out to be on the scarce side.

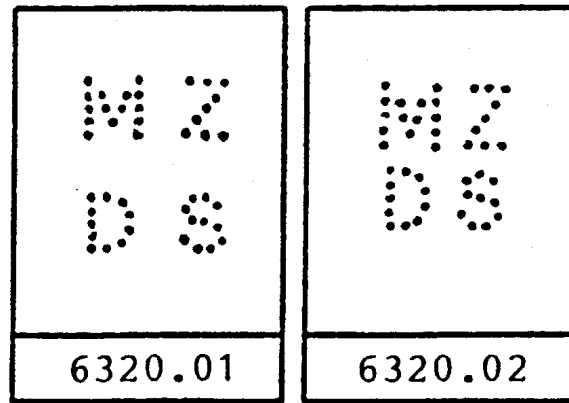
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MEMBERS' QUERIES

JOHN DONNER has identified B8010.01 (B3/1H) with BURBERRY'S, 30 to 33 Haymarket, London and Basingstoke. Manufacturers of Gabardine, Urber, Slimber Combines; Weatherproofers and Breeches Maker. John asks if anyone knows what the full B3/1H stands for. (The 1 could be a capital 'T') My guess is Burberry's,

31 Haymarket. Any positive information to the Editor please.

IAN HAMILL asks if anyone could come up with some suggestions about M6320.01 and M6320.02 - MZ/DS.

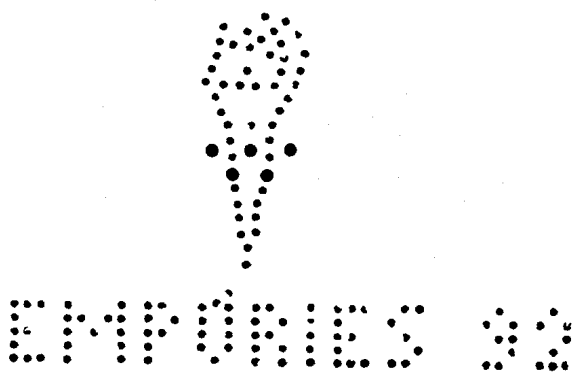


He has copies with distinct New Cross postmarks. He believes that these stamps might be tied to the Mazzawattee Tea Company. He thinks this firm used to own a large factory on the banks of the Surrey Canal. It lay to the East of the Railway line from New Cross Gate to London Bridge.

Living now in New Zealand, Ian would find it very difficult to find out more but hopes the information he has given may provide the clues for someone else to do some research in business directories.

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SPANISH OLYMPIC COMMEMORATIVE PERFORATION



The, perforation illustrated is to commemorate the arrival of the Olympic Flame into Spain on June 13th 1992.

The stamp is the 20 pts EXFILNA '87 plus the MINATURE SHEET of this stamp and the handstamp, also illustrated, shows the arrival of the Flame and the date.

There are five different 'covers' available:-

1. Large envelope (8½x6½ins) with mini-sheet perforated, plus special handstamp ----- 200pts
2. Postal Stationery Envelope (6½x4½ins) with perforation and special handstamp ----- 200pts
3. Coloured postcard showing runner with Flame, stamp-, perforation and special handstamp ----- 200pts
4. Mint mini-sheet perforated - no handstamp ----- 100pts
5. Mini-sheet perforated and special handstamp ----- 100pts

The price for these items is very reasonable at roughly 175pts to the £. Orders to SOCIETAT FILATELICA GIRONINA, RAMBLA 14 2n, GIRONA, SPAIN. There was no mention of postage in the letter.

* * * * *

LIFE AFTER PERFINS

By Jack Peach

That famous letter of 13th March 1868 conveying to Mr. Sloper the Postmaster General's permission for stamps to be perforated with names and initials ends "...with a view to protect merchants and others, as far as possible, from the theft of stamps used by them".'

The first patent in the UK for 'Apparatus for Impressing and Registering Fiscal Stamps to Supercede Adhesive Stamps' (1884) has the claim, among others, that "the loss and robbery of stamps becomes absolutely impossible". That patent was for what are now known as meter franking machines. However, in spite of their many advantages it was not until 1922 that the British Post Office allowed their use.

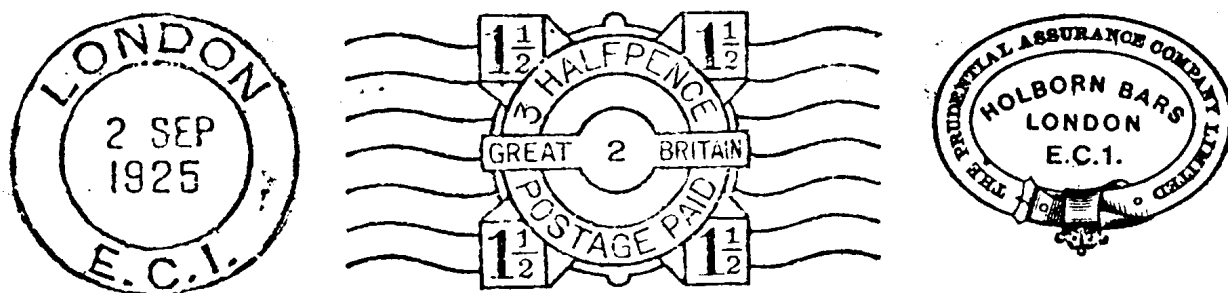
During the period between 1868 and 1922 the perforating of stamps with firms initials held unquestioned supremacy as the means for preventing theft of postage stamps. Since 1922 the position has changed; first gradually then with ever growing rapidity after the last war. The meter franking machine offers much more than increased security and today most firms would place the reduced labour costs in the post room together with the advertising advantages of a slogan as prime reasons for changing to meter franking.

Many firms who used to perforate their stamps now use these machines and a fruitful area for perfin collectors is to try to match the perfin with corresponding meter mark.

What about the first perfin - arguably SC of Copestake, Moore, Crampton) & Co - would the mark shown in Fig. 1 be such a match? The meter frank slogan tells us that Copestakes goes back to 1826 and Nottingham is also a town which might have had an association with 'Drapers' Warehousemen¹ (Bulletin 234; 257 & 258).



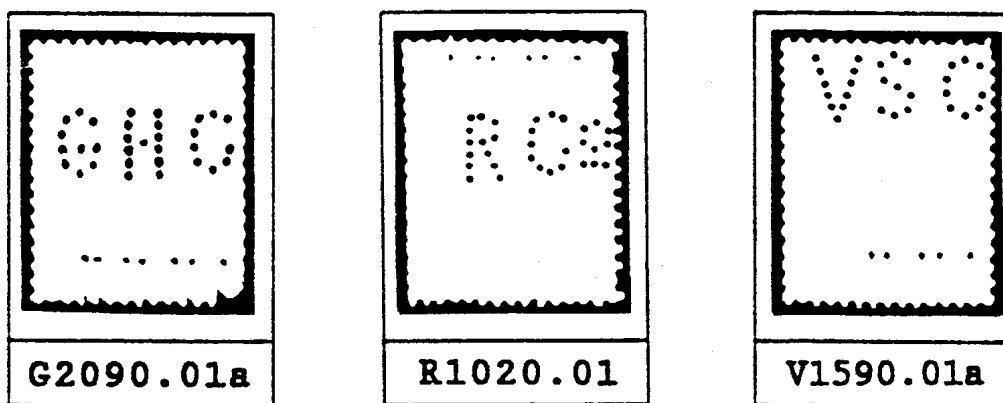
The second licence to be granted for the use of a meter franking machine was to the Prudential Assurance Company. Licence No 1 was issued to the firm selling the machines so Licence No 2 becomes the first issued to a normal user. Most perfin collectors must have an example of a 'Pru' perfin. Their meter franks are not exactly scarce either; the earliest type is illustrated and the identity is on the envelope flap. The machine number is the small figure 2 in the centre of the frank. And so we could go on –



Concluding one might say that the philatelic collector of perfins is on the same playing field as a collector of Newfoundland stamps there's not much new coming out! But new meter franks are born daily - so you see there IS life after Perfins.

PERFORATED COIL STAMPS - The 'Michelius' Affixer. Roy Gault

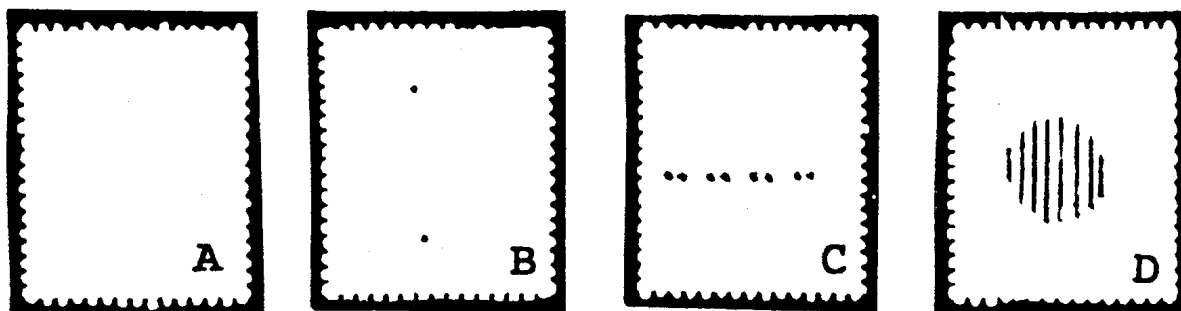
In my FIXO article (August 1991 Bulletin) I acknowledged Harry Dobson's contribution to the study of perfins on GB coil stamps. Amongst his coil material were two examples (GHC and VSC) where up to eight impaling pin marks were visible instead of the customary three associated with FIXOs. To these I added a third example (RC.?) which showed the same markings. Noting that 'characteristic' lettering had been used (note the shape of the 'C'), I put them all to one side to await further study.



And that is the way it remained until quite recently, when completely 'out of the blue', I received a complimentary copy of 'MICHELIUS - Postwertzeichenaufklebmaschine und Barfrankierungsmachine' (in Dutch and German) from its author, Ruud Hammink. In the publication, Ruud covers in detail the various patents which were registered between 1909 and 1912 by individuals associated with 'The Michelius Company' (for want of a better title) in a number of countries, but especially Germany. -

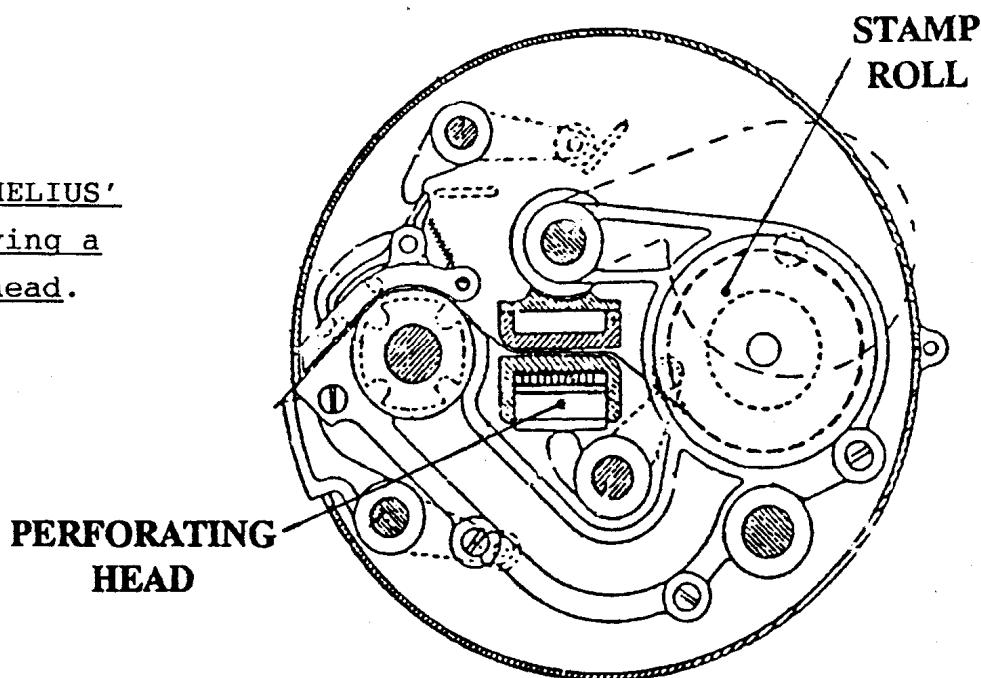
It would seem that the name 'Michelius' was taken from Isaac Michel the engineer/designer/inventor of the machine who, judging by the patents, made a number of different types of affixing machine. Each had its own method of gripping and moving the stamps through the machine, and at least two designs involved a perforating head. One of these even used the principle of 'interchangeable' cassettes containing their own roll of stamps and perforator.

MICHELIUS Feed Marks.



- (A) No marks visible, tops/bottoms usually torn.
- (B) Two fine vertical pin holes, cut tops/bottoms.
- (C) Four pairs of impaling pin marks.
- (D) Vertical 'ridges', stamp best viewed edge on.

Typical 'MICHELIUS'
design involving a
perforating head.



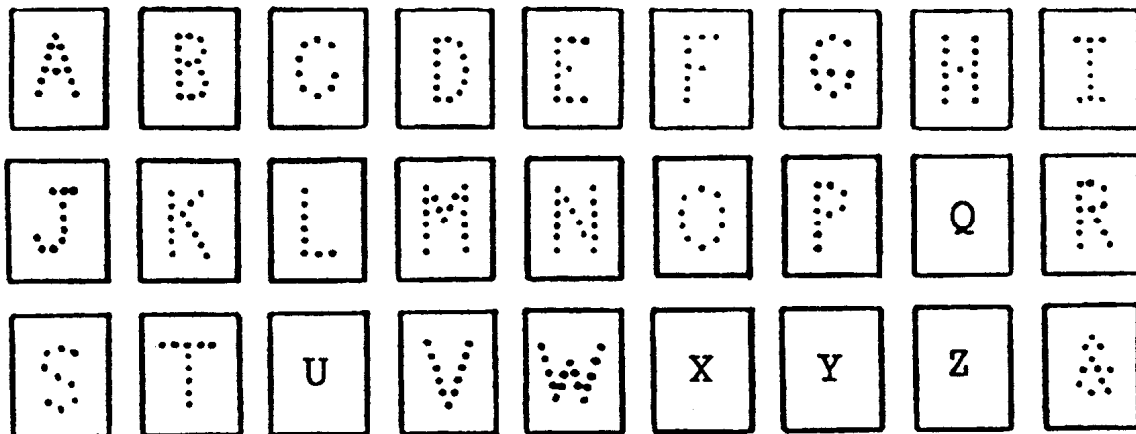
GB Coil Issues involved.

British P.O. records show that trial coils were supplied to Mr. F. Kleeman (the GB distributor) for testing in a 'Michelius' affixing machine. These must have been successful for when coils of stamps were officially introduced in August 1912, two sizes of rolls were made to fit the 'Michelius' - Rolls 'A' and 'B' for the 1d and ½d respectively. Both contained 1000 stamps coil-joined every 10th stamp, and wound to give Top End Delivery (i.e. the stamps would come from the roll head first).

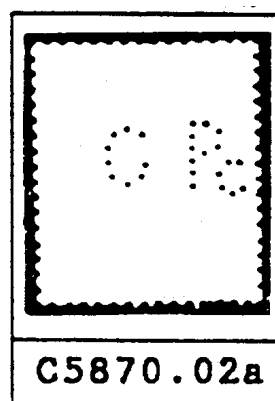
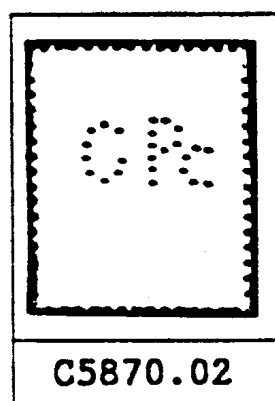
These early coils were made from sheets of King George V Mackennels (in which various dies and watermarks can be found), but GV Royal Cypher Typographs were used from 1913. In August 1918 a third value, the 1½d 'J' roll, was added to the coil range to accommodate the new postal rate introduced earlier that year. However, I suspect that these new 'J' rolls came too late to have seen much use in the 'Michelius' machines.

The Standard MICHELIUS Alphabet.

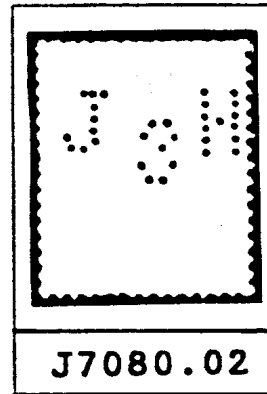
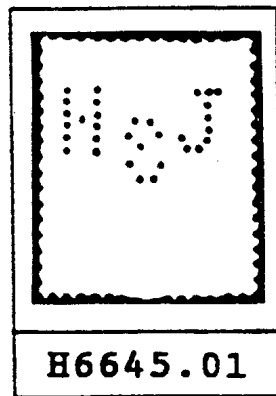
My search through the Illustrated Catalogue found enough examples to re-construct the majority of the 'Michelius' alphabet, leaving only the difficult 'Scrabble' letters QUXYZ!



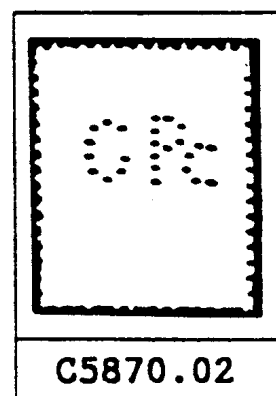
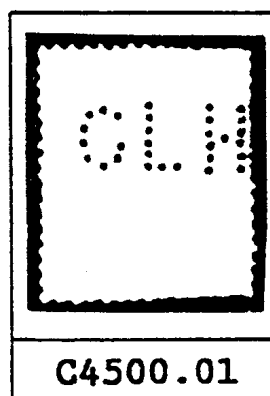
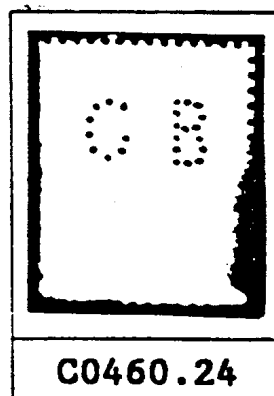
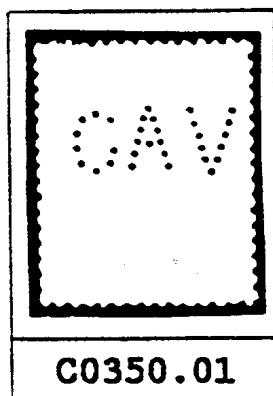
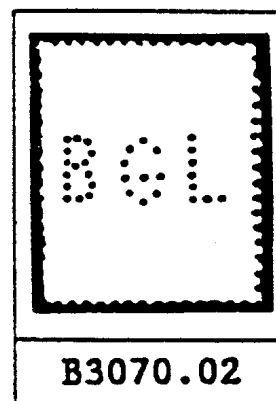
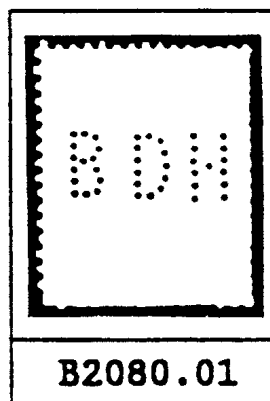
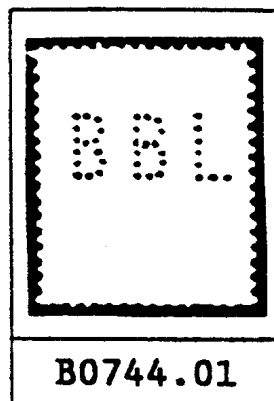
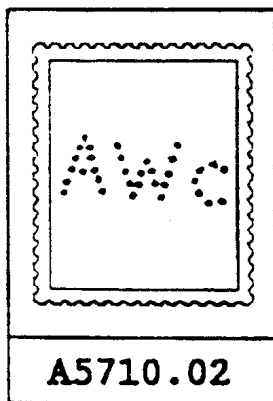
All of the 'Michelius' dies found so far are illustrated at the end of the article, but worthy of note are the variations of 'CpC' - are these from the machine that took cassettes?

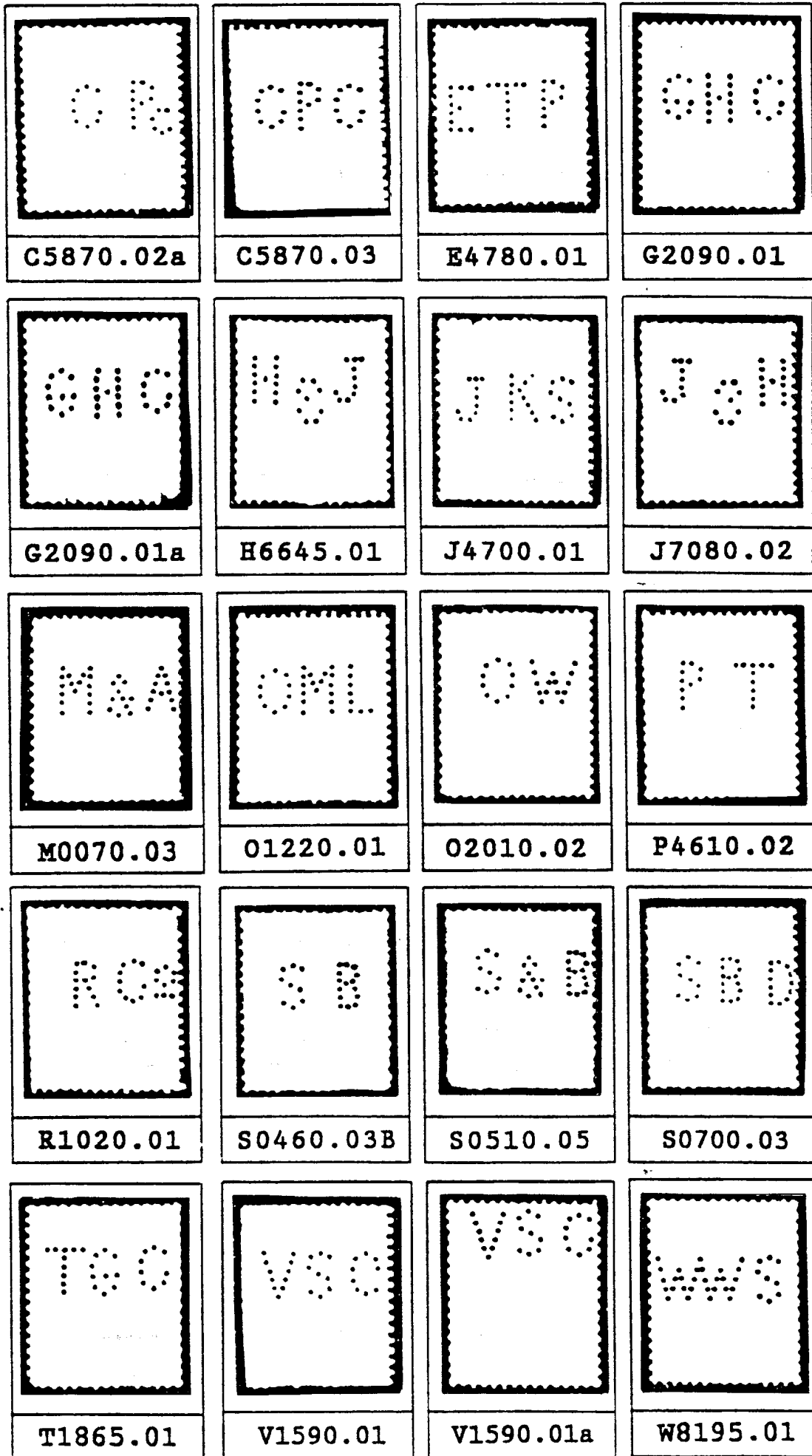


Also well worth a mention are 'HSJ' and 'JSH'. It would appear that the die 'HSJ' was made in error and later corrected to read 'JSH' by reversing the die and redrilling the foot of the 'J'. [Cover up the last 3 pins in the foot of the 'J' of JSH to reveal the mirror image of HSJ!]



Finally, could I call upon the good nature of fellow collectors to contribute to this original research by inspecting their GB perfin collections and report their holdings of these 'Michelius' perfins. As usual, issues, values, postmarks and dates would be welcomed, but this time would you also report on the 'transportation' marks (if any). I should point out that many of these perfins are scarce, and quite possibly unique!





THIEF-PROOF STAMPS and TRUE PHILATELY

In Bulletin 62 (Nov'64) there was a very brief mention of this subject and in Bulletin 170 (July'77) Mike Burrows wrote a full page about this article.

The paper was first written by GORDAN WARD M.D., in 1925. At the 12th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain held at Cambridge in 1926, Dr. Ward presented his paper "Thief-Proof Stamps & Legitimate Philately" to the delegates.

Searching through the library of the NPS, Dave Hill came across a copy of the full paper presented by Dr. Ward. There was no indication of when it was written or where it was published so I wasted two months making enquiries. Lo-and-behold, when preparing the Index I came across the above two references. So the Index has proved it's worth to me already.

The following represents the parts most relevant to perfin collectors and will be continued in the October Bulletin.

"In the year 1860 the population of Great Britain and Ireland was approximately 30 million persons, and these posted more than 500 million letters. To put it another way, 100 letters per year came to every inhabited house in the country - on an average, of course. It was about this time that the activities of the stamp thief began to impress the Post Office, so far that measures were taken to circumscribe his activities and out of the measures came a new and interesting side-line in philately.

It has long been the custom of the Post Office to buy in stamps for which customers have no use, a custom which was more generally useful when postal orders had yet to be invented. But there was no way in which the Post Office could tell whether the stamps tendered to them had been legitimately acquired, or whether they had been removed by some felonious clerk from the stamp drawer of his employer. The Post Office, therefore, permitted employers to so mark their stamps that they could be identified and such marked stamps could not be negotiated at Post Offices. The first stamps so marked were those of the Union Society of Oxford, these having the letters "O.U.S." between two wavy lines printed on the front in red.

These were the first thief-proof stamps in the sense in which that term is employed in this paper, and I claim that true philately must as much concern itself with their origin and evolution as it does with any other feature of postage stamps actually used or valid for the franking of postal packages. It matters not that the overprint was at first on the front and later on the back of the stamp, or that overprints gave way to perforations; all are definite features of our postal system and so of philately.

But this view is not always accepted and I may quote the view of Mr. James Watts, Jnr., who is himself responsible for the only surviving underprint. In spite of this fact, he writes as follows:-

"Although a keen stamp collector myself, I rather take the line that all interferences with the natural state of the stamp are of doubtful interest."

I hardly dare to suggest that this is indeed the view of a "stamp-collector" rather than that of a true philatelist but I shall scarcely be disturbed if anyone else ventures that criticism. For myself, I would boldly assert that philately is not the collection of postage stamps but the accumulation of such examples as may be required to illustrate postal history, whether stamps or envelopes or postmarks. Certainly, if they illustrate something unworthy, e.g., the financial exigencies of some petty state, we may choose to shrug our shoulders and pass them by. But if they illustrate some genuine emergency, some bona fide need or some natural development - why, then we should include them in our catalogues and collections and strive to understand their meaning.

Now we must return to the stamp thief and study the changes which he has made in our postal system. The O.U.S. overprint was carried out by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon and Co., the then stamp contractors, and the first delivery seems to have been made in 1859. The charge was an initial one of £5 for making a plate with an additional 5/- per hundred sheets for printing. It may have been this charge which prevented any great advantage being taken of the permission to overprint stamps. The firm of Wm. Dawbarn & Co., of Liverpool, printed its name in black, and the overprint "Holloway 244" in blue is recorded, but the latter I have never seen." (Ed.- much more has come to light since 1926 of course).

To be continued.