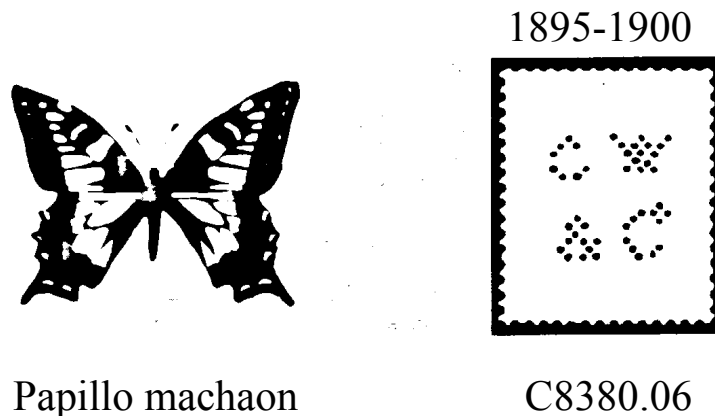


## "The Butterfly Alphabet - an Update".

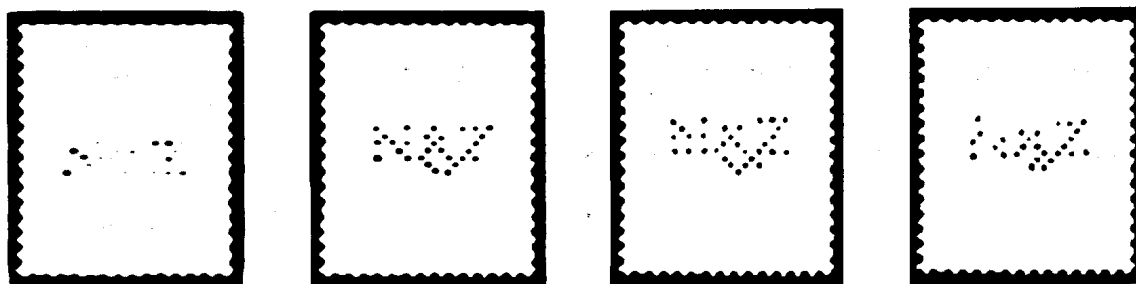
Roy Gault.

Prompted by a recent letter from Dave Hill enclosing an example of a potentially new die showing the characteristic 'W' of the so called 'Butterfly' alphabet, I've acted on his suggestion and produced an up to date listing plus illustrations of all the known dies. Newer members to the Society may not have seen the original article in Bulletin No.264 (June 1993), its update in B265, and the feature made of them in the Perfin Society Stampshow 2000 exhibit.

The original die showing the characteristic 'W' that sparked of the study was "CW/&C" (C8380.06). To some it's a delicate Swallowtail butterfly, to others it's a 'keep fit' fanatic. I know which name I prefer!

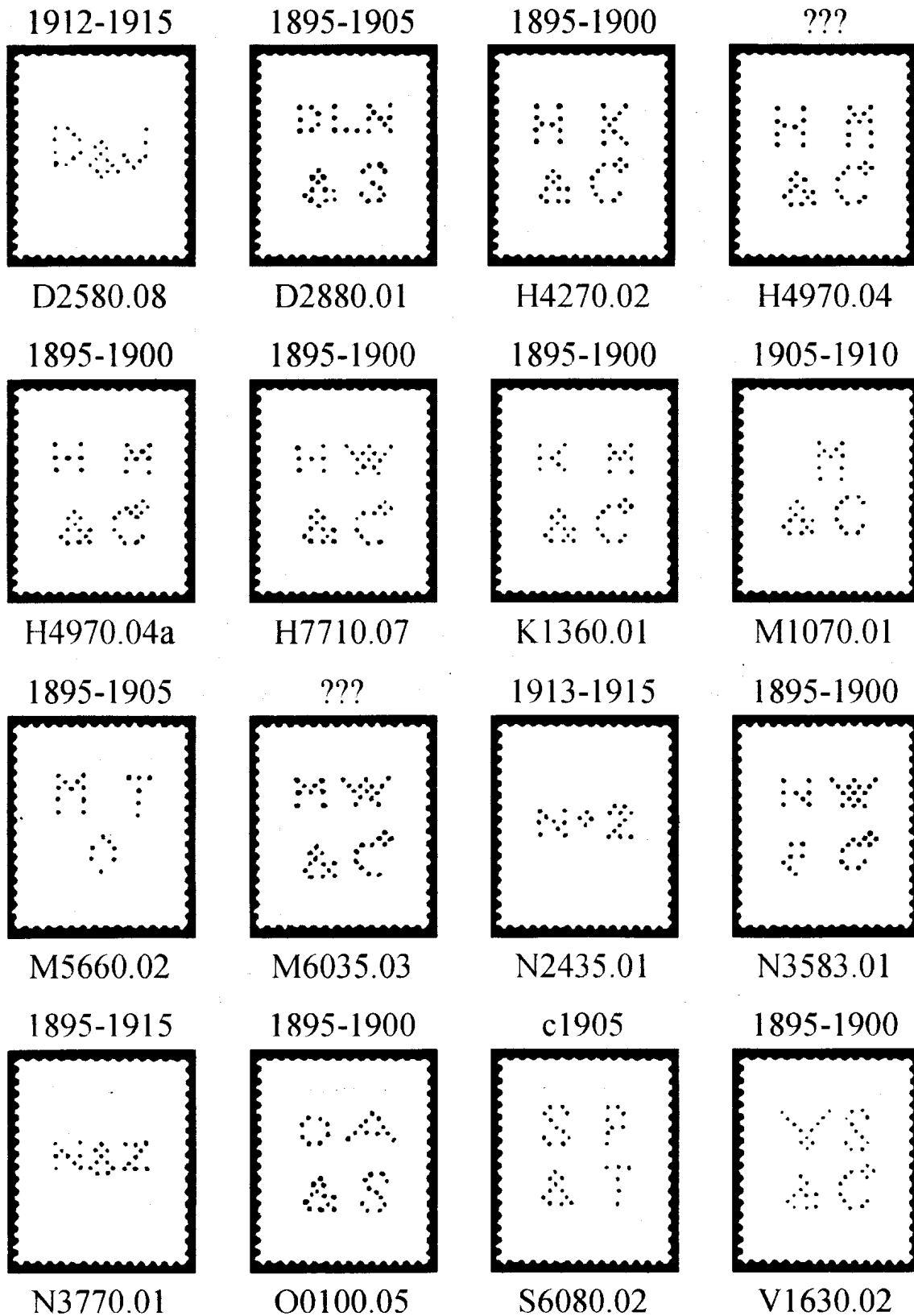


Although many of the dies are scarce, where examples are plentiful (e.g.."N&Z") considerable variation may be seen in the positioning of the pins forming the pattern. This lends support to the idea that the initialling was done using a die with *removable* pins set in a regular grid pattern. The stamps were probably perforated 'on request' and may even have been served "over the counter". John Mathews calls this type of die a 'Service Die', which (for me) seems to conjure up exactly the right sort of image.



The examples above of "N&Z" show the "&" pins 'all over the place'!

For dies that do not contain a “W”, there is the uncomfortable looking “C” and “Co” to look out for, as well as a characteristic “S”.



Note: All dies should have the suffix ‘v’, to warn of ‘variations’.

Based on dated examples and the stamp issues involved, the dies were in use for around 20 years, say 1895-1915. The earliest date recorded so far is 27th August 1896 (on Dave Hill's example of "NW/&Co"), whereas the latest is 1<sup>st</sup> April 1914 on the rare "No2". Legible postmarks are predominantly from London, although examples from Oxford, Sheffield, and Dublin have also been seen. Just two of the dies from this scarce but interesting group of perfins have identified users.

"OA/&S" of "Olney, Amsden & Sons Ltd, London EC" (confirmed)

"N&Z" by 'Negretti & Zambra Ltd, London W.' (suspected)

The table below lists all known dies and stamp details.

Cat No	Letters	Stamp Details	ED	LD	Post-town
C8380.06	CW/&C <sup>o</sup>	E 2½d	7 Jan 1898	7 July 1899	London
D2580.08	D&J	H ½d I(RC) 1 d	-	-	-
D2880.01	DLN/&S	B 1d F ½d (bl-gn)	2 Mar 1899	8 Nov 1902	London
H4270.02	HK/&C <sup>o</sup>	B 1d	2 Feb 1898	-	London EC
H4970.04	HM/&C <sup>o</sup>	-	-	-	-
H4970.04a	HM/&C <sup>o</sup>	E ½d (verm)	-	-	London EC
H7710.07	HW/&C <sup>o</sup>	B 1d E ½d (verm), 1½d, 2d	29 Aug 1896	29 Aug 1898	London
K1360.01	KM&C <sup>o</sup>	B 1d	-	-	-
M1070.01	M/&C	F ½d (ye-gn), 1d, 3d	-	-	London
M5660.02	MT/O	B 1d F 1d	5 Apr 1899	30 Jun 1903	Oxford
M6035.0J	MW/&C <sup>o</sup>	-	-	-	-
N2435.01	N <sup>o</sup> 2	I(RC) 2½d	-	1 Apr 1914	-
N3583.01	NW/&C <sup>o</sup>	B 1d	27 July 1896	-	London
N3770.01	N&Z	B 1d E½d (verm), 2½d, 3d, 6d, 1/- (gn) F ½d, 1d, 2½d, 3d, 4d, 1/- H 1d I(RC) ½d, 1d, 3d	16 Oct 1896	... Dec 1909	London EC
O0100.05	OA/&S	B 1d E ½d (verm), 2½d	5 Feb 1897	26 Nov 1898	London and Dublin
S6080.02	SP/&T	F 1d	28 Dec 1905	-	(Sh)effield
V1630.02	VS/&C <sup>o</sup>	B 1d E 1½d, 2½d, 6d	.....1898	10 Aug 1899	London

*If anyone can add any more, I would be pleased to hear from you.*

Grateful thanks for reporting the above details (over the years) go to:

Dave Hill, John Nelson, Steve Netten, Barry Pawson, Reg Powell (ob),  
Terry Pusterla, Alan Sandy, Harry Skinner, Arthur Smith (A),  
Rosemary Smith, Stephen Steere, Gerry Soutar, and Terry Wood.