

PERFORATING CHARGES 1905 Alastair Walter

The data for this article comes from Post Office Archives files c. 1906, extracted by Stephen Steere about 15 years ago. For other articles based on these extracts, see Bulletin 245 p.7-10, 262 p. 13-17 and 263 p. 12. The full extracts are held in the library.

The file extracts make for a very interesting (if rather long!) read, and one aspect that I don't think has really been covered before is the charges made by perforating firms to their customers.

The GPO were investigating the stamp perforating trade in 1906 after the bankruptcy of Braham, a London sub postmaster who at the time of his bankruptcy owed several firms perforated stamps which they had already paid him for. This caused some embarrassment to the GPO - see the above references for details.

As part of the investigation, the GPO looked at the charges levied for perforating, with a view to possibly bringing the perforating under the control of the post office (see Bulletin 245 p. 7-10). The results are reproduced in the table on the next page. Those firms that were sub post offices would also receive poundage from the post office of up to 1% on stamps sold.

One thing that stands out for me is the charge made by the Printing & Stamp Perforating Co. for overprints on stamps for receipts, which was at least 1% (depending on quantity) - double their rate for perforating. There is no information in the file on overprinting charges for the other firms.

I would have thought that producing a printing plate for overprints would be cheaper than producing a perforating die, so why the higher charges? Although we know something of the mechanics of perforating stamps, I have yet to see any information on the methods of production of overprints. The precise registration of printing required and the fragility of sheets of stamps must have posed some special challenges.

Stamp Perforators operating in London in 1905

Company	Perforating Charges
<u>SUB POST OFFICES</u>	
Sloper – 20 King William St EC	0.5% (less for higher values)
James Wright – Bishops Road NE	Not stated (only supplied 1 firm)
G.F. Males – Deptford Broadway SE	1d per sheet
Allchin – Englands Lane NW	0.5% - 1% (sometimes less)
Unknown – Islington High St N	0.25%
<u>PRIVATE COMPANIES</u>	
Waterlow & Sons 26 Great Winchester St. EC	1d per sheet (min 2/-) Plus 6d registered postage
Printing & Stamp Perforating Co. 9 South Street, Finsbury EC	0.5% (overprints at least 1%)
John Parry & Co 187 Upper Thames St EC	No charge
Albert Luff 13 Paternoster Row EC	1d per sheet or 1/- for £5 mixed denominations

John Parry & Co. seem to have derived no benefit from their perforating business as they made no charge for perforating and also received no poundage from the post office.

According to the file, “They say **they** only do this for their customers and that they are compelled to oblige in this way to prevent loss of trade”.

However, it was also stated that Mr. Stanislas, Town Sub Postmaster of Upper Thames St T.S.O. was a member of John Parry & Co. so he would presumably have benefited from the post office poundage.