

"Bailey & Leatham" was one of the oldest and largest shipping companies in Hull, second only to the 'Wilson Line'. They traded mainly to the Baltic, but were also engaged in whaling and sealing, and had a contract (until 1881) with the Portuguese Government for the carriage of mails.



(red on white)

Their steamship's funnels were painted black with broad, vertical, white stripes, rounded at the top, giving rise to the nickname

"The Tombstone Line"!

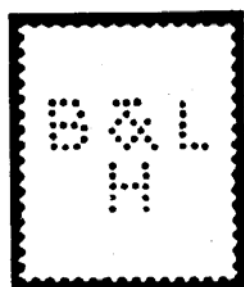


The company was first established in 1854 when two former sea captains, William Badger Bailey (1816-1882) and William Leatham (1823-1875), formed a partnership to operate cargo and passenger services out of Hull to the Baltic ports. Other routes included Hull to Lisbon (later extended to cover the Mediterranean), with occasional voyages to India after the opening of the Suez Canal in Nov 1869. By 1871, ships were also operating from London and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Six perfin dies are known (or suspected) as having been used by the company, two of which date virtually from the introduction of perfin and must have been made by Joseph Sloper during his 'monopoly' period. We begin with dies from the 'line engraved' era, one specifically for each of the British ports used by the company.

'Bailey & Leatham', Steamship Owners, Commercial Rd, **Hull**.
Also Dunster House, 12 Mark Lane, **London** EC, and
Guildhall Chambers, **Newcastle-on-Tyne**.

1869-1881



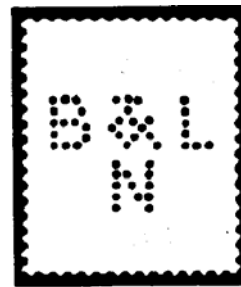
B4390.02

1869-1881



B4460.01

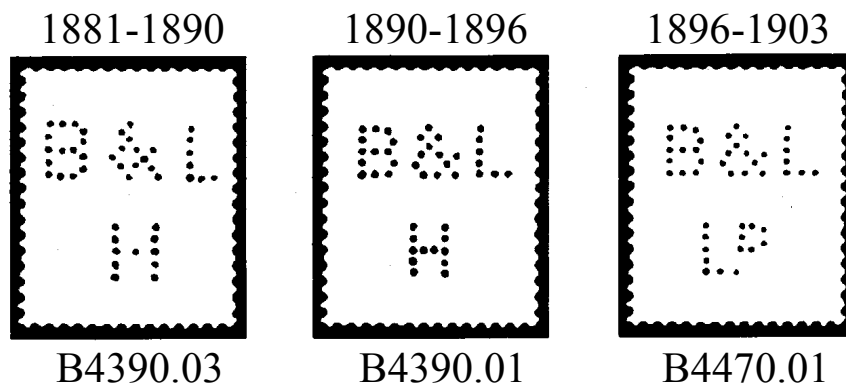
1875-1879



B4510.01

In 1872 the Hull based 'Humber Iron Works & Shipbuilding Co' was purchased by Bailey & Leatham for use as a general repair yard in which to refurbish and re-engine their ships. In 1881, the six vessels of 'Gee & Co' were absorbed into the fleet. Neither used perfin.

A new "B&L/H" die was used from the early 1880's before being replaced by another die with the same lettering cl890.



When the company became 'Limited' on 17th Sep 1896, the then current "B&L/H" die was simply modified to read "B&L/Ld". The die continued in use until 1903 when, in July, Bailey & Leatham's existing fleet of twenty-three ships were absorbed into the 'Wilson Line'.

"The Wilson Line".

Originally founded in Hull in 1822 by Thomas Wilson (1792-1869) as "Beckinton, Wilson & Co", specifically to import iron ore from Sweden for use in the expanding Sheffield iron trades. In 1831, after the death of Beckinton, the company became "Wilson, Hudson & Co", and in May 1840 a regular steamship service was established between Hull, Oslo and Gothenburg. John and Thomas Hudson withdrew from the partnership in 1841 and the company then became known as "Thomas Wilson, Sons & Co", taking on 'Limited' liability in 1891.

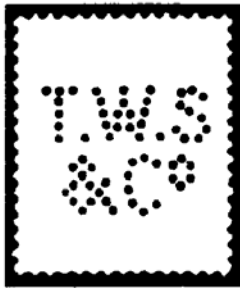
The company prospered under Thomas Wilson's sons, Charles Henry (1834-1909) and Arthur (1838-1907), so much so that it became the world's largest privately owned shipping company with over 100 ships sailing (steaming!) to destinations all around the world. 71



The company's steamship funnels were painted red with a black top.

Four perfins are known/suspected as having been used the company.

1870-1882



T5180.01

1881-1890



T5170.02

1881-1893



T5170.01

1890-1917

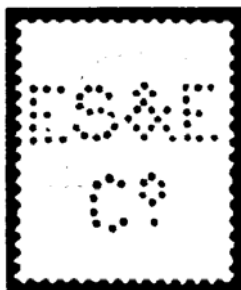


T5160.01

The fourth 'Wilson Line' die was used until J R Ellerman purchased the company, forming "Ellerman's Wilson Line Ltd" in Feb 1917.

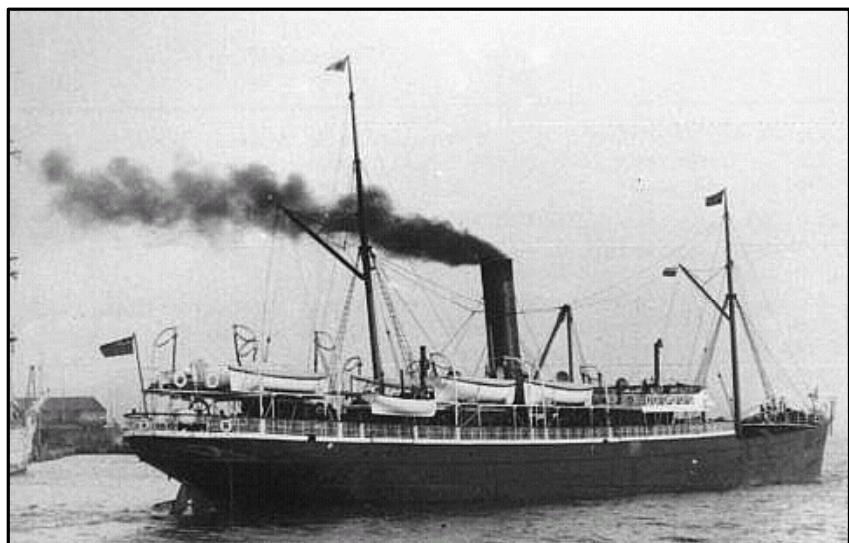
In 1901, Charles Henry Wilson purchased "*Earle's Shipbuilding and Engineering Co Ltd*", which was originally started in Hull in 1845 by two brothers, Charles & William Earle. As many as two to three thousand men were employed in the building and repair of ships, including the construction of many "Wilson Line" vessels. The yard finally closed in 1933.

1880-1895



E4300.01

Based on Hull postmarks, just one perfin die is suspected as having been used by the company prior to being bought by Charles Wilson.

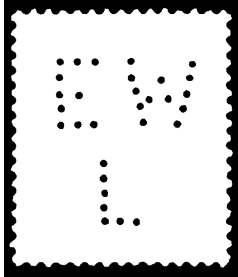


s/s ROMEO built by "Earle's Shipbuilding & Engineering Co Ltd" in 1881 for the "Wilson Line". 1,885 tons; service speed 12.5 knots.

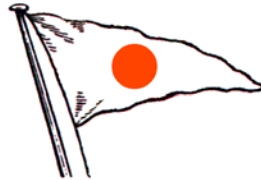
"Ellerman 's Wilson Line Ltd".

The tradition of using perfin by the Hull based shipping lines continued well into the 1970's, initially using this "EW/U die.

1917-1940

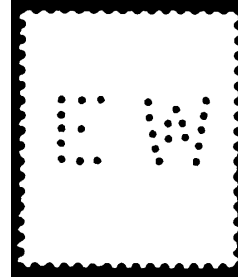


E5040.01



House Flag
(red on white)

1945-1973



E4960.02

There appears to have been a lull in the use of perfin during World War II, but after the cessation of hostilities, a new die with the initials "EW" was employed by 'Ellerman's Wilson Line Ltd".

In 1973 all constituent Ellerman companies were combined into "Ellerman City Liners", becoming part of Cunard-Ellerman in 1987



And so ended over a 100 years of continuous perfin use.
well almost continuous!



There are a few more perfin known used by steamship companies based in Hull, including (**not** an exhaustive list):

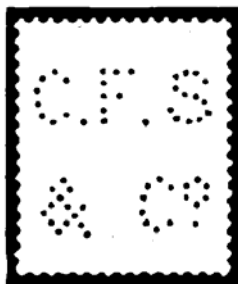
* Charles Frederick Smithson & Co.

* Hull & Netherlands Steamship Co Ltd.

* Hellyers' Steam Fishing Co Ltd.

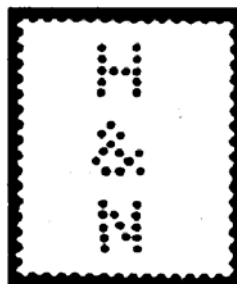
* Lofthouse, Glover & Co.

1875-1879



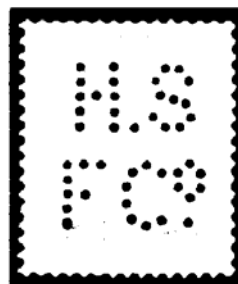
C2617.01

c1925



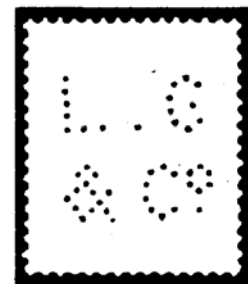
H5330.01

1905-1910



H6605.01

1872-1885



L2535.01