

Norway's W&J Perfin - A Phoenix Rising From The Ashes?

Joe Coulbourne (#2547)

In my never-ending search for perfins, I stumbled across a trade card/reply card at a stamp show. I bought the item because Norwegian cards and covers are not very common and paid no more attention to it. For 5 years or so, this card has lain in my "round-to-it" box undisturbed.

While looking for another item that was lost in the piles of material, this card caught my interest. The postmark of 2 August 1992 triggered a memory that I had not seen any

Norwegian perfins with usage dates beyond 1990 under Norway in the European section of the World Perfins Catalog.

I checked the catalog and discovered that only one perfin, with a philatelic connection, was listed as having been used in 1990-1991. Additional data provided by the catalog was that Wittusen & Jensen had used this particular pattern, designated pattern A79. The pattern was comprised of the initials W&J, the period of use was 1913-1935, and both Kristiana and Oslo postmarks are known. The identification of the user on the reply card agreed with the catalog. The full address is Wittusen & Jensen a/s, Din Kontorpartner, Postboks 115, Kalbakken, 0902 Oslo.

What is particularly nice about

this card is that Wittusen & Jensen were advertising a modern day postage machine with a perfin machine pictured alongside. What was the connection and how did this machine that last saw service around 1935 come to be in use again?

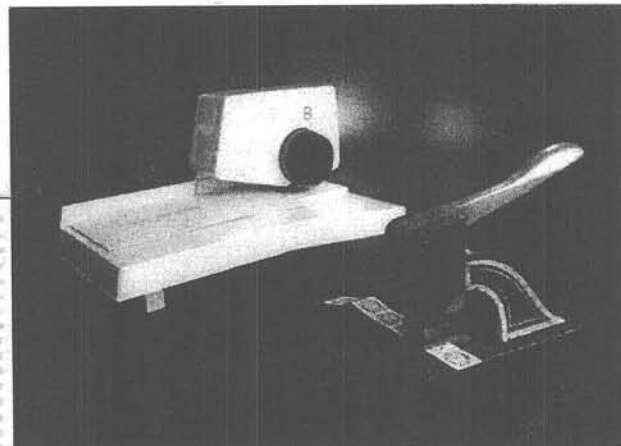
A friend of mine, Mr. Soren Beck, translated the message. As with a 11 trans-

a commercial background. The card is franked with a stamp that is perforated with the initials WJ. This perforation device was in use by us from ca. 1904 and for many years after 1920. Wittusen & Jensen Ltd. received, in 1935, a stamp-machine and the perforation device was put aside. In 1965 the perforation device was placed in the Postal Museum, where we can borrow it for special events. Today, Wittusen & Jensen Ltd. deal with ALCATEL-NEOTYPE stamp machines. There is a broad range of models and price categories. Do

you wish to "leave stamps," or have a desire for a modern, economical and labor saving stamp machine - then mail us the reply-card. We can be reached on phone (02) 16 00 10 and fax (02) 25 88 60."

What a wealth of information this card contained. It established the first year of the perforating machine's use as 1904 and verified it was retired from service in 1935. The card gives the machine's permanent location as the Postal Museum and shows a picture of the machine. The reason for the late use is established, as is the fact that it was only used for one day (2 August 1992). The lack of an address on this card leads me to believe these were passed out at a trade show or enclosed with advertising information to potential clients.

My parting thought—is this the last Norwegian perfin?



lations, there may be small grammatical or translation errors induced in my attempt to put the message in English.

It reads "Wittusen & Jensen Ltd. 95th anniversary 2 August 1992. At the end of the last century, stamps were accepted as a means of payment, and theft from the stamp "petty cash" was a problem for many companies. The solution to this problem was perforation of the stamps with a special perforating device. For the occasion of the 95th anniversary of our establishment, we have made a postcard—in very limited numbers—which also has