

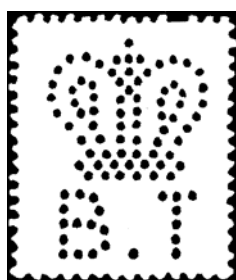
BOARD OF TRADE PERFIN FORGERIES

John Nelson

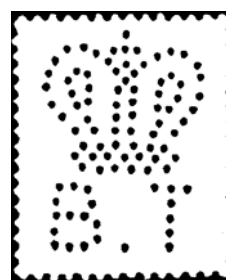


The Board of Trade perfin on piece illustrated above was acquired in 2004 by Italian collector and member of the Society, **Giovanni Sironi**, of Genoa. It is an 1864 Penny Red, Plate 80, postmarked GLASGOW 3rd AUGUST 1864, but since the use of perfins of any kind was not authorised by the Post Office until 13th MARCH 1868 it is beyond doubt that the perfin is a forgery. It is also clear that, as has been suspected by some, but not previously proven, that the stamp must have been removed from the piece, fraudulently perforated and replaced.

The die employed is No. 11 in my classification of dies (Bulletin 294, page 25), and is shown below alongside the genuine die. It is one found quite often on loose stamps, three of which were acquired by **Giovanni Sironi** at the same time as the piece.



Genuine die
B9000.01



Forgery

This forgery is also the one used on Board of Trade items previously mentioned in the Bulletin, some of which I had argued might be genuine, notably:

The six single 1864 Penny Reds, Plate 150, on piece postmarked London, 13th December 1872 (Bulletin 283, page 9)

The 1864 Penny Red, Plate 138, on piece postmarked London, 9th February 1873 (Bulletin 295, page 22)

The Leonino letter sheet bearing an 1864 Penny Red, Plate 129 postmarked London, 26th April 1871 (Bulletin 312, page 9)

Two British Linen Company Bank stereotype letters bearing respectively a QV 1d lilac and two QV ½d vermilion Jubilees, postmarked Greenock, 31st December 1889 and Tain, 22nd July 1892 (Bulletin 312, page 11)



Another example of the perfin with the same forged die on piece, illustrated above, is an 1880 QV 1d Venetian Red postmarked Thurso, 12th August 1880. The stamp is affixed to blued paper, as is the 1864 example and the two British Linen Bank letters previously mentioned and it is notable that they all have Scottish postmarks. One wonders if the forger had access to a quantity of material sourced in Scotland and I would be interested to receive information on any other known examples.

The question which must now be asked is whether forged die No. 11 was produced on the perforating machine made on behalf of the two crooked but unnamed London stamp dealers exposed in *Mack's Stamp Review* in 1908 (Bulletin 330 page 12). One cannot as yet be sure, but it is a probability.

There is an interesting sequel to the story in *Mack's Stamp Review* brought to our attention by Fred Taylor, full details of which are to be found in *The GB Journal* of March/April 1993. It will be recalled that

the representative of *Mack's Stamp Review* who accused the London stamp dealers of forging and selling Board of Trade perfins was named as Mr Lowden. He was in fact George Lowden who, at that time calling himself Frank Moore, had been identified in the Richards-Creeke trial of 1903 as having been a stamp dealer who had purchased irregularly acquired GB official overprints from one of the defendants in the case.

In 1909 Lowden was charged with the forgery of North Borneo stamps and acquitted but in 1913 he was further charged with the forgery and sale of 2,683 used copies of the GB KEVII green £1 stamp. This time Lowden was found guilty and sentenced to three years imprisonment. Most of his KEVII £1 green forgeries are said to have been destroyed, but some survived and have been offered for sale for as much as £500 each. In the light of his appalling record, did Lowden perhaps have a hand in the forgery of Board of Trade perfins himself ?!

To add to the array of Board of Trade dies, **Burkhart Beer** has shown me a 2d blue, Plate 15 with only six pins forming the left hand petal inside the crown (see illustration). This is No. 32 in my classification.

