

DAVID RABINOW writes that he has three copies of I2170.06 which do not have the London Chief Office diamond numeral. They have the London District Post or Suburban Office barred oval. The first is Plate 118 and cancelled EC/66: the second is Plate 168 with cancel EC/70: the third is Plate 169 and cancel is 81 within a circle.

MIKE BAVIN writes with different Plate numbers to those mentioned by Arthur Smith - also new values.

2107.04 Plates 130, 138, 142, 148 and 153.

2107.06 Plates 124, 140, 149, 156, 189, 192, 205 and 208.

He also has this latter die on a 1d Venetian Red, a 2d Plate 14 and 3d Plate 12.

As Fig.3 he has Plates 125 and 152.

Mike points out that there are differences in the spacing between the top holes of the vertical legs and top holes of the diagonal centres of the 'M' in 2107.04. He suggests this could indicate a multi-head.

MAURICE HARP offers the following study paper.

The article by Arthur Smith in the April issue of the Bulletin greatly interested me. Several years ago I purchased some 300 copies of the I&R/M dies 2107.04 and .06 all on 1d Plates. I filed them away thinking that one day they would be good for study purposes. When I did get round to sorting them out, like Arthur, I noticed that die 2107.04 could be found with broken pins at the base of the 'M'. In my accumulation though I found copies with both the right and left leg of the 'M' broken. Immediately I started to wonder whether die 2107.06 was in fact a broken pin variety of die 2107.04. Unfortunately as we will see on closer study the theory does not stand up.

From the accumulation I was able to record the following broken pin plate numbers:

Broken left leg to 'M' 117, 119, 120, 124, 125, 129, 130, 138,
140, 151, 152, 158, 159, 163, 169

Broken right leg to 'M' 125, 152

Previously the following plates have been recorded.

I2107.04 (17 pin 'M') 102 - 216 (63 different plates)

I2170.06 (15 pin 'M') 102 - 224 (100 different plates)

Thus the broken pin variety is not common and the broken left leg shown by Arthur is considerably more common than the broken right leg. It also should be noted that considerably more plates are known with the 15 pin 'M' than the 17 pin 'M'.

Roy Gault mentions that these two dies were almost certainly multi head dies. The sheer quantity of stamps that can be obtained for these dies clearly leads to that supposition - but that's not proof. With dies on the line engraved and surface printed issues it is of course possible to position every stamp in the sheet via the four corner letters. I thus took my accumulation and sorted them into what would be their column position on the sheet of stamps. Thus looking at the bottom pair of corner letters, AA, BA, CA etc. would all be from the first column of the sheet. Having done this the story started to become clear.

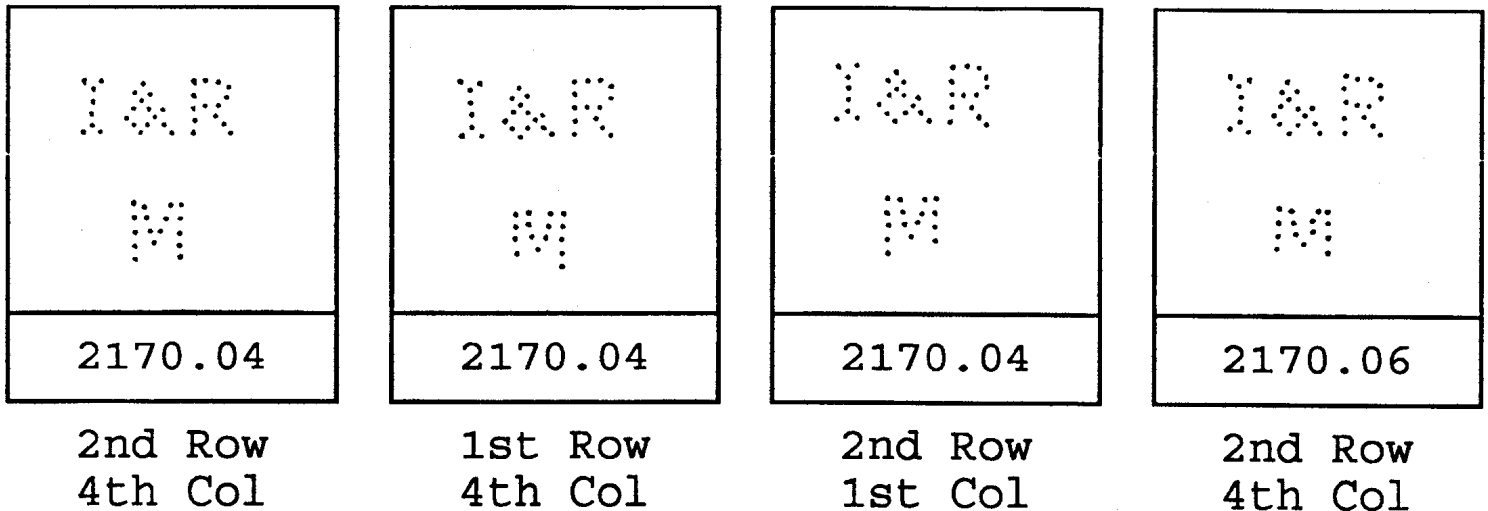
Looking at the 4th column of stamps from die 2107.06, (AD,BD,etc.) showed a very distinctive 'M' which has one pin of the 'M' very displaced. This distinctive letter also appeared on tenth column stamps (AJ,BJ,CJ etc.). Closer inspection though showed that it did not appear on every row of the sheet. In fact the characteristic 'M' only appeared in every other row of the sheet, i.e. BD,DD,FD, or BJ,DJ,FJ etc. Thus it would seem that die 2107.06 is in fact a multi-die which is laid out as two rows by six columns. Based on this arrangement of the die similar minor irregularities can also be found to match in the other die positions, but these are minor and hard to reproduce.

Based on this die layout I then looked at copies of the 17 pin 'M' die 2107,04. This die is in general much better made than 2107.06 and doesn't exhibit any marked irregularities. It was clear though that die 2107.04 showed a complete absence of the characteristic 'M' in the fourth, tenth or indeed in any column. At this stage I haven't been able to determine the exact head arrangement for the die but it may well also be a two by six arrangement. Thus there was no evidence that die 2107.06 was a broken pin variety of 2107.04, indeed we are clearly looking at two distinct dies.

figure 1 below shows identically positioned stamps for both 2170.04 and 2170.06. The characteristic 'M' can be clearly seen on one but not the other.

Figure 1.

Row/column position of multi-head die
(note characteristic 'M')



Looking at the copies with broken pins showed that those with a broken left leg to the 'M' (looking at the front of the stamp) only appears on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th columns of the six head die. Again closer inspection was able to locate the positions within the multi-head die. These are shown in Figure 2. The copies with the broken right leg only appear in the 1st column/2nd row of the multi-head die - which explains why it is considerably harder to find.

Figure 2.

Broken Pin Variety positions on 2170.04

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1		L	L	L		
2	R	L	L			

L - Left leg broken
R - Right leg broken

In conclusion we can say that dies 2170.04 and 2170.06 are two distinct twelve-head dies - 6 columns/2 rows. The earlier die must have come into use around 1869 and very early on started to suffer from broken pins to the bottom of the 'H'. This was probably due to the high usage of the die. I & R Morley then invested in an additional die around 1870 to cope with the demand but this time decided to have a 15 pin 'M' to avoid risking further broken pins.

As a footnote it should be noted that die 2170.04 also exhibits other broken pin varieties within the ampersand - but study of these varieties is for another day.

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