

THE FIRST PERFIN

by Roy Everett

John Nelson wrote an article in Bulletin 234 page 4, but unfortunately in the copy I received, pages 4 and 9 had missed being printed, so as the article did not appear fully I wrote to him. (Editor: The pages were replaced at once when the error was made known.)

Other readers may also be in the dark as to the content of page 4, but suffice it to say that this went into greater detail to establish the point that he made on the relevance of the SC perfin he later illustrates and provides information on the other perfins utilised by Copestake.

The illustration on page 5 (Fig 3) is of an underprinted 'type 1' style over the gum, the pen cancel is "obviously to demonstrate to the Postmaster General that a valid stamp had not been defaced by perforation and also that there was no intention to use it, or stamps like it, until official sanction was given", to quote Mr. Nelson's letter.

That being so, one cannot attribute 'first perfin' status to this perfin for postal relevance, nor could one attribute it to the prime position for fiscal relevance.

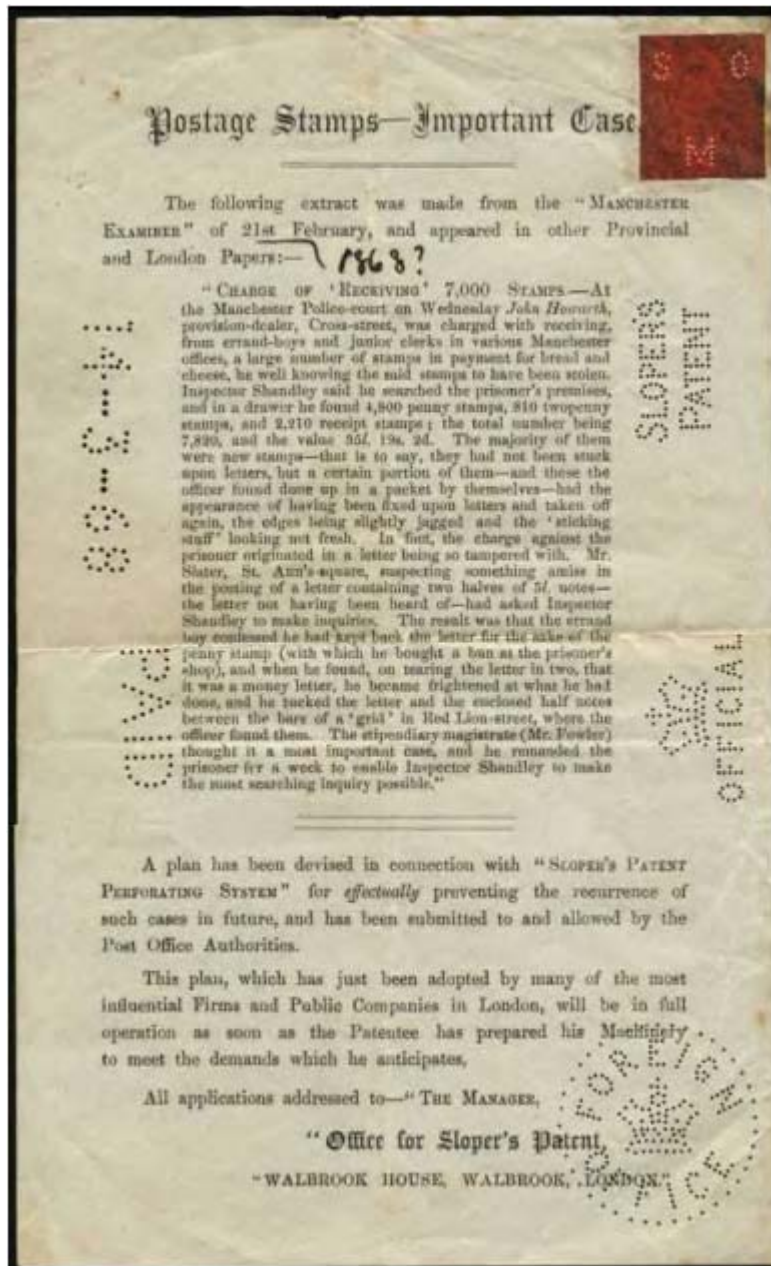
It does appear that the belief that Sloper started making perfin machines after the acceptance of his patent in 1858 for Government Departments and private enterprises is correct. Vallencey mentions it and Nelson confirms it. Yet it is mentioned that not until 13th March 1868 for postal purposes, and 27th June 1870 for fiscal purposes, were perfins validated.

continued/

THE FIRST PERFIN (Continued)

That being so, just what were Slopers perfin machines doing between 1858 and 1868? Vallencey states that the Post Office machine "has been applied to Money Orders issued from the Chief Money Order Office in London, for the purpose of perforating the date through the orders", from a letter of F. I. Scudamore to Sloper 30th May 1870.

At, or around this time, Sloper was issuing advertising leaflets, see illustration Fig 1, (courtesy of 'Glass Slipper Catalogue' 7/8/87).



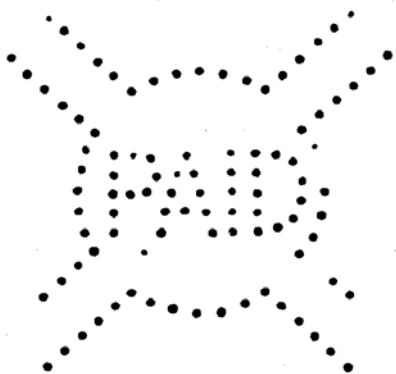
(FIG. 1)

continued/

THE FIRS PERFIN (continued)

This leaflet is after Post Office authorisation as it says so on it, but it does give an indication of what Sloper had been up to, the "stamp" at the top right corner is of 'red paper'.

Also one can see from a later Bank of Scotland cheque cancellation (Fig 2) fiscal usage in 1899, the adoption of Fig 3 by the Royal Courts of Justice by Fee Order of 4/7/1884 to cancel their stamps as from 18/7/1884. (R. G. Booth Revenues Catalogue).



(FIG. 2)

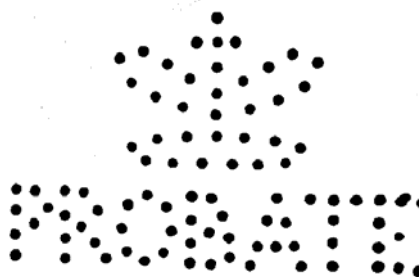


(FIG. 3)

Also the adoption of the practice by the Mayor's Court, Fig 4, and the adoption by the Probate Office, Fig 5.



(FIG. 4)



(FIG. 5)

Continued/

THE FIRST PERFIN (continued)

So it appears that the machines were being used for validation or invalidation of documents in the early years, this carrying on in the later years after Post Office approval.

This though being the case, what if a copy got into the post and was passed through?

Would we go to the extent of the "Perfin Club" and ostracise the item from the perfin catalogue proper, noting it as illegal usage in an addenda?

I cite an instance related to Portugal: The King signed the Directive allowing perfinning on 30th March 1884, the Postmaster issued it on 5th April 1884, yet a clearly postmarked example of the WELSH perfin on the issues for Madeira is dated 01/02/1871 (Fig 6).



(FIG. 6)

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Illustrations drawn from 'Glass Slipper Catalogues' with due acknowledgement and thanks.)

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EDITOR: Please note that the illustrations, Fig 3, 4, 5, from the above article, along with others, may be consulted in our publication 'G.B. Official Perfins' by T.A. Edwards and B.C. Lucas, obtainable from the Publications Officer.
