

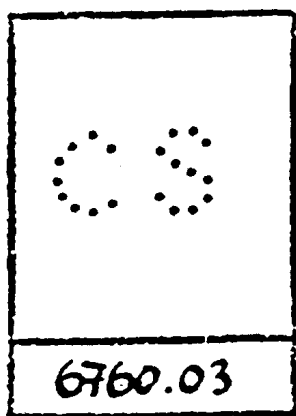
## SHEFFIELD CORPORATION DIES

Rosemary Smith

In 1992 I bought a large batch of 'fronts' from returned pre stamped Valuation Forms sent out by Sheffield Corporation. Amongst them were some with a Sloper type die 'SC', which was not in the identities catalogue. I wrote up a three sheet article for display at Sheffield Philatelic Society, showing this new perfin die and the normal large 'CS' but before I had a chance to send it to Roy, I heard from Stephen Steere that during his research into the Sloper Record Books he had come across a reference to a small 'SC' die for Sheffield Corporation.

I sent Stephen a copy of my three-sheet display and we agreed it would be better put in the Bulletin when the new identity had been published. At that time, Stephen was sending to Roy batches of hundreds of identities, which were gleaned from the Sloper Record Books. It was impossible for them all to be put in the Bulletin and some appeared for the first time in the Tomkins Identities Catalogue. By this time it seemed too late to put the article in the Bulletin.

After getting the August '96 Bulletin off to the printer, I spent some time on my own collection. Looking through the 'S' section of the New Illustrated Catalogue with Details, and cross checking dates etc with my covers, I found another new identity in my Sheffield Corporation collection - but more of this in sequence after a rehash of my original three sheet display.

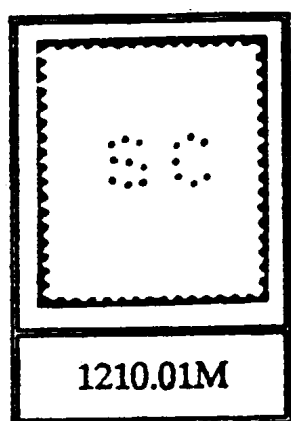


In the list of Council Perfin users, compiled in the 1960's by the Perfin Society, the City of Sheffield was credited with but one perfin:- C6760.03 CS 9,11 7mm.

The list also states that the perfins are produced by the Council's Printing & Stationery Department on a hand operated Jean Sauven 153/400 machine which perforates across 12 stamps at once. This I know to be correct as I visited the office in 1978 where the machine was used and a sheet of blank paper was perforated 'CS' for me to add to my collection.

The Society published the Council Perfin sheets a few at a time all during the 60's and no doubt the information obtained from Sheffield Corporation employees at that time would be correct AS FAR AS THEY WERE AWARE. The Jean-Sauven machine had been in use for over twenty years and the earlier perfins were only in use for less than two years.

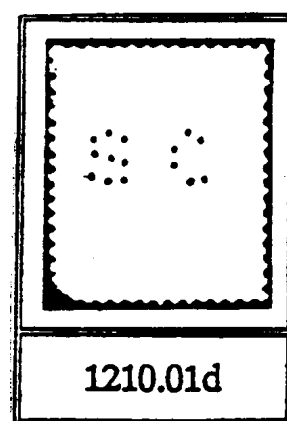
The City of Sheffield is said to have introduced perfins in 1941 but I query the use of the die C6760.03 as early as 1941. As far as I can discover, from dates seen on dozens of these perfins, the earliest use of this die is March 1942.



I have five fronts from the Valuation Forms, which have a different die to the large 'CS'. The perfin is S1210.01M SC 9,7 4½mm and is a typical Sloper style die. The values are ½d or 1d GVI dark colours and dates are from 19th Jun 1941 to 8th Nov 1941.

Sloper's Works in London were bombed in May 1941. Following that, many of the perfins coming out of Sloper's were on GVI light colours and were provisional dies, hastily put together until business could be resumed in a more professional way in new premises.

Two other Valuation Forms, dated 3-11-41 and 16-2-42 have another die, S1201.01d: SC-9,6-4½mm. The values are ½d GVI dark colours. The 'C' seems to be a deliberate pin removal from a 'B' to make the 'C'. Originally I had thought that it was a missing pin from a normal 'C' after Stephen had searched through the Sloper Ledger for this die and found it was not there. This is the new identity, which has not been reported for the New Illustrated Catalogue with Details, which now shows this die. A 2½d dark colour has been reported with this die but I have not seen one myself.



Sheffield was bombed on 12th and 13th December 1941. It could be argued that the first perfins used by the City of Sheffield were from Sloper's – i.e. S1210.01 - perforated before

Sloper's were blitzed. We are told that when the Council Perfin sheets were produced in the 60's, Sheffield used more than 500,000 perfins per year. Even in the early 1940's they must have been using many thousands of stamps and no doubt had quite a stock in hand when Sloper's were bombed, perhaps enough to last until the provisional issues came through. I am guessing that the die S1210.01d is a provisional die. Both my fronts with these dies have 2x½d stamps to make up the 1d rate at the time and no doubt Sloper's had to perforate whatever stamps they could get hold of after the blitz. 1d values would be used up very quickly as it was the general postage rate and so the ½d value would be pressed into service. The GVI light colour stamps were not issued until August and September 1941.

After the blitz of December 1941, much of the Sheffield Council equipment had to be renewed when the city centre received so much damage. Again I would guess that it was at this time that a perfin machine of their own was purchased - the Jean-Sauven - this time with the distinctive large letters. The Treasury Dept in Sheffield must have had considerations such as the continuous bombing of London, road and rail transport difficulties between Sheffield and the capital, money transfer etc and came to the conclusion that it would be safer and quicker to have a perfin machine of their own as they had already taken the decision in 1941 to perforate their postage stamps.

I have two values only of the C6760.03 (CS) in GVI dark colours - a 1d red and a 2½d blue value. All the other dozens of copies of GV2 stamps I have seen are in the light colours or 1950 changed colours.

I would be interested to hear of any relevant dates, issues or dies, which confirm or refute my theory.

For anyone with a special interest in different types of perforating machines, Ron Bowman wrote an article in Bulletin 39 (Dec'62), which mentioned the Jean-Sauven machine. There was an excellent illustration of the treadle-operated machine, which I saw at Sheffield. The large Sheffield die is also illustrated there as an example of a perfin die from that machine.

\* \* \* \* \*