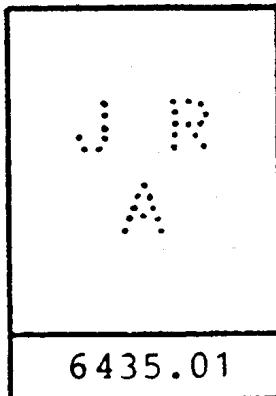


## HISTORY OF FIRMS USING PERFINS

J. & R. ARCHIBALD

By IAN BURNS.

The following is the result of another request from Roy Gault to try to establish the identity of J6435.01 - Perfin JR/A. Coincidentally the only postmarks were of Tillicoultry, 1898 to 1899. (See Bulletin 281)



J6435.01 JR/A 7,12/10

J.& R. Archibald, Devondale Mill,  
Tillicoultry.

One Robert Archibald was in business in Menstrie, another of the "Hillfoot" towns when, in 1817, he bought the Middleton Mill in Tillicoultry. This mill belonged to the Christie brothers, one of whom had died, the other then emigrated. In 1836 Robert Archibald & Sons (there were four sons) built new premises.

Craigfoot Mill was built in Tillicoultry in 1806 by William Archibald (who had also started in business in Menstrie). Archibald died in 1826 and the mill was carried on by his widow and the mill became known as Widow's Mill. In 1838 a new building was built alongside Craigfoot Mill - this incorporated a massive water wheel taking its supply from an aqueduct. In 1839 this mill was taken over by John & Robert Archibald, William's two sons who formed the company - J. & R. Archibald - they were later responsible for the large Devondale Mill.

In 1857 Mr Archibald of Devondale and William Gibson entered partnership. Devondale was now fully operational and Gibson moved from Dawson's Mill to Craigfoot. Major fires caused problems at Craigfoot Mill in March 1858, July 1863 and November 1876. The giant water wheel was still operational in the 1920's but the building was finally demolished in the 1930's.

During the 1840"s Dawson's Mill was leased in two parts - the north part leased to J. & R. Archibald as a weaving shop and the south part jointly to J. S R. Archibald and J. & D. Paton. In 1848 William Gibson leased the whole mill and worked independently until 1851 when he joined in partnership with Robert Archibald of J. & R. Archibald. In 1857 Gibson moved to Craigfoot Mill though he retained the tenancy of Dawson's Mill until 1880.

J. & R. Archibald expanded rapidly in the early 1840's and, in 1846, built the Devondale Mill on the north side of the River Devon. This was some distance from the other mills already clustered around the Tillicoultry burn. The Archibalds operated at both Craigfoot Mill and Devondale Mill until 1851 when they transferred completely to Devondale Mill and expanded it further. In the mid-1850's a change in fashion caused a change in manufacture. J. & R. Archibald eventually gave up production of tartans and concentrated on tweeds. Devondale ceased production of woollen goods in the early part of this century and the buildings were occupied as barracks during the First World War. In 1921 the buildings were taken over from J. & R. Archibald and reopened as a paper mill by Messrs Samuel Jones and Company (Devondale) Ltd. The premises were expanded and continued as a paper mill for many years. More recently the premises have been occupied by a large furniture warehouse and the public now have access to many parts of the building.

Unfortunately I have no definite proof that the perfin die JR/A belongs to J. & R. Archibald but it is unlikely that there was another company with those initials, trading in Tillicoultry at that time.

A similar comment was made in Bulletin 281 at the end of the article on J. & D. Paton & Co. Ltd. If anyone is hiding a proving cover for either of these two old Scottish firms, please let Roy know so these identities can be more that 'probables'.

Contact address for Ian Burns about this article, or the "More on the Glasgow 'Mr.Oinco'" is 7, Elm Grove, Larbert, Stirlingshire, FK5 3LP, Scotland.