

JOHN MATHEWS (Australia) adds the following to this saga.

The article, quoting Ian Burns' letter about the "BP & scroll" perfins on the 1957 Jubilee Jamboree stamps coming on the market again, sent me diving into my correspondence files. I had done some investigating on these; and two other people had mentioned these items to me. All said they came from an auction in Australia!! In view of the latest article, I guess it is not too late to repeat the information direct to you for Bulletin readers.

I wrote to the auction house here in Australia, run by a chap I know reasonably well. His reply was a lot more helpful than Ian's from Avon Stamps. The staff member who handles the vendors' material for lotting remembered the items quite clearly. He recalled that they had come in an old envelope with the return address of "British Petroleum". He gained the impression that the owner had been an ex-director of the oil company.

I then contacted another stamp collector who has a very strong connection with the Scout movement. He was able to confirm that, British Petroleum sponsored the 1957 Jubilee Jamboree at Sutton Coldfield. The coincidence of initials for British Petroleum, Baden-Powell and "Be Prepared" was obviously all too much for some publicity guru to resist! The scroll is no doubt styled on that which held the motto or the Scout badge - the dot between the letters "B" and "P" may correspond to the hyphen in the name Baden-Powell.

The puzzle concerns the reason they remained "undiscovered" for 35 years. I think it unlikely that someone would have stockpiled the stamps for so long and then produced 3 expensive perforators about 1990 or so, so I believe that they probably were perforated in 1957. What happened to them in 1957 in that case? Was approval for their use never granted? Did a director decide that they would be a good investment/souvenir for himself? Or, were they issued at the Jamboree, and some remain hidden in "Scout" collections somewhere? My scouting-collector friend has seen covers from that Jamboree, but none with perfined stamps. And of course, what happened to the perforators - has anyone tried to find out if British Petroleum in the UK has a company archive?