

MEMBERS' COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS ARTICLES

Perfins - Partial - or Rubbish Bulletin 278 Pg.7-9.

Rosemary Smith.

When I penned this article I was hoping to stir up a bee hive if not a hornet's nest. I have had a good response by letter phone and personal contact with members I met at three Northern Stamp Fairs. It is obvious that this subject is of concern to others as well as myself.

The majority would not go along ray route and destroy the "rubbish", as "rubbish" is a subjective term. The following are the points of view from some of our members - for the most part unedited.

PAUL DAVEY

"It may be true that a collector of the perfins of a country which issued vast numbers of perfins such as GB or the US does not want to be bothered trying to identify partials but I collect China with just 50 or so dies known. Some are known from a single example, at least one by a single partial, although the same die is more "common" on the stamps of Hong Kong. I paid well over 20p for it and was glad to do so!

"Surely the same "rules" should apply to perfins as stamps. No one is going to keep a torn 25p machin, but the world's most valuable stamp (the Br. Guiana 1c black/magenta) is cut to shape, grubby and not a nice looking item at all. No one would seriously consider destroying it!

"The problem of a dealer's greed is common, but if you don't think it's worth it don't buy it. If you buy lots from dealers that are poorly described, complain and don't use them again. At best you may educate them as to what's a good perfin, at worst they will find their customer base getting smaller.

"Finally, if your dealer did have a customer who would pay 20p each, why was he offering them to you at the same price? Keep his regulars happy would be what I'd do!"

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JON JOHNSON (Canada)

"I agree that partial perfins are of limited use to many collectors. There are usages for some of the partials if there is any chance of identifying the perfins. I collect perfin postmarks; the condition of the stamp and the perfin are unimportant if I can identify the perfin. Also as an issue collector I am not fussy about condition, if the stamp is a catalogue number that I don't presently have. Admittedly, I will replace a damaged stamp or incomplete perfin with a better copy when found. I have a number of damaged stamps that have yet to be replaced and I doubt if they ever will.

"In North America, with our individual perforators, it is not uncommon for missing pins as the machine aged. If the machines were not cared for, blind perms were possible when the bolts loosened. The changing size of definitive and commemorative stamps frequently cause split or partial perfins. The result for issue collectors is that most of the later perfins would be classified as partials for one or more reasons so the quality of the perfin has to be overlooked or at least qualified.

"Where the partial perfin has no chance of being identified or can be identified and both the stamp and perfin are common plus there is no usable postmark then I do not have a problem with destroying the stamp. In different words, only partial perfins with no philatelic value to anyone, not just the owner, should be considered for destruction. If you are uncertain do not destroy the perfin. Remember, others have already destroyed stamps damaged with holes through the middle! Do not duplicate their errors. Only destroy stamps that realistically are philatelically valueless.

"Of the perfins you illustrated, I would only destroy about four if they were in my possession. Pg.7: top right and second row second from right; Pg.8: bottom right; Pg.9: bottom left.

"I should note that I collect Canada, Australia and U.S. so my perspective may be different from those who collect G.B."

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BILL HAYMAN (U.S.A.)

"I completely agree that the "Bummers" should be culled out and destroyed. However, having been a collector of those little bits of paper with glue for more than 60 years I am loath to toss any in the bin. Although for years I didn't save any perfins, thought of them as damaged and gave them away. However, since becoming enthralled with perfins within the last two years I realize how much of the really useless stuff is circulating. It's time to deep six the junk. (A cricketing term from the US? Ed.)

"My solution: any stamp of QV and KEVII that do not measure up to standards is marked with a ball point pen with an "X" on the reverse and then given to a beginning collector, who is usually thrilled to have a stamp that is so old. To them it matters not that the stamp is perforated or heavily cancelled as long as they can recognise the portrait.

"This may not get such items completely eliminated, but if that stamp ever gets back into circulation at least I will know it is a 'junkie*'. Now the other method of disposal is that I toss all damaged stamps into a box and when the grandchildren visit we can spend hours pasting stamps onto a box, bottle, can etc. and then coating it with clear polyurethane sealer and presto, a unique vase, pencil holder or a glory box. This gets the junk permanently stuck down so it won't circulate again.

"So I guess what I'm trying to get across is that if you don't have anything better to do with the rubbish perfins to keep them from surfacing again and again, DESTROY 'EM! Fortunately I have not had a great many of these items offered to me but enough of them do show up in mixtures to vex me."

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ALASTAIR WALTER

"I was interested to read your article on partials - though I must say I disagree with you. Personally I accept any decipherable perfin in my collection, i.e.; any where I can be sure what die it is, which is sometimes possible with quite a lot missing.

"Also, any perfin for which it is possible to tell which die

it is may yield useful information, such as a new period of use, no matter how poor the strike or how badly damaged the stamp.

"It is worth looking at the stamp too before throwing it away - when I say look at the stamp, I mean look at what the stamp is, not the perfin. I would hate to think a Plate 225 1d Red has been destroyed because it had an undecipherable perfin.

"Finally, it was 'seconds', many of them partials, that got me started with perfins. I bought a bag of about 1000 for a couple of pounds, all poor strikes and/or damaged - although as my collection has grown, most of the badly damaged ones have been weeded out but many of the partials remain. I found it a great way to get started - that bag of "rubbish" got me hooked and I enjoyed the challenge of identifying many poor strikes (not always successfully of course).

"So I personally don't agree with burning stamps - perhaps they make unusual wallpaper!"

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BURKHART BEER (Germany)

"If you can not decipher the identity on a stamp because one letter is missing then get rid of the item. But if you have a missing pin or a double strike why not keep it (perhaps side by side with a normal) as a variety?

"I have several HUTH perfins on 2d Blues where you find these varieties and where I show that the perfin moves up and down. On one stamp HUTH has gone half "overboard" - over the lower end of the stamp. Shall I destroy this stamp? What about a perfin where the letters overlap? The sheet of stamps has not been repositioned correctly when the next perfin strike was done. Not collectable?

The answer is surely that everybody may collect what she or he likes. In my experience you are certainly right regarding dealers and "big bucks" "

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FROM "THE SOUTH PACIFIC PERFIN BULLETIN"

At a club meeting in Sydney this article was discussed. The write up is as follows:-

"Although there was some lively discussion, the general consensus was that even these very poor quality perfins should be retained, rather than destroyed. Where a partial strike is identifiable, it can provide useful postmark information, for instance, on the date/place of usage. Similarly, missing or blind pins (which point to the deterioration of the die) can throw light on the demise of a particular perfin pattern. Split perfins (showing the separated halves of a die) can also be useful in throwing light on the spacing of heads in a multi-die perforator. There are also particular perfin patterns (e.g. L&L&GINSURANCECO.1) which do not fit on a single stamp and which will always appear as partial strikes. In short, members balked at the prospect of destroying perfins, whatever their condition."

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JOHN NELSON

"I enjoyed your item in the last Bulletin about sub-standard perfin material and totally support your view that this kind of stuff should never be purchased or sold nor should our members who get landed with it allow it to circulate any further. I know Harry Skinner refuses to accept these junk lots for the Auction and in this he is quite right.

"Whether or not one immediately regards such stamps to be total rubbish depends on the type of collector you are. Those who insist on perfect condition or who collect only one nice example of each die will probably be inclined to destroy them straight away. This however may at the same time deprive all of us of valuable information such as a postmark which confirms an identity or a stamp which extends the known range of issues on which a die is to be found.

"Some of the typical examples you have reproduced in the Bulletin are quite beyond redemption but with a bit of experience and a good deal of patience I suggest it would be possible to assign a die number to something approaching half of them. My personal attitude as regards the latter is that if any stamp

contributes new information such as the kinds I have mentioned, I would add it to my collection. If not, it would, along with all the other hopeless cases, be irrecoverably destroyed."

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