

GREGORY, ROWCLIFFE & CO. By DAVE HILL.

With a few notes from Rosemary Smith.

Gregory, Rowcliffe & Co., solicitors, were founded over 200 years ago and have had an office at No.1 Bedford Row, London W.C.1 for much of that time. This is near London's "stampland" which could account for the fact that covers with their perfins are so frequently seen.

When I wrote to them they sent me a book giving their history but could tell me nothing about their perfins. The book lists the company's names over the years but this does not tie up with known usage of the various perfins.

<u>KNOWN PERFINS</u>			<u>STAMP</u>
G0970.05	G&C°	Gregory & Co.	B
G1005.01	G/&C..	Gregory & Co.	D
G4270.01	GR&C°	Gregory Rowcliffe & Co. Gregory & Co.	B-E
G4280.01	GR/&C°	Ø Gregory Rowcliffe & Co.	B-M
G4290.01	G.R/&C.°	Gregory Rowcliffe & Co.	M-U
R1060.01	R/SC.°	Rowcliffe & Co. Rawle Johnstone & Co.	B-F 1919

Names of the firm 1866 -

1866-1880	Gregory Rowcliffes & Rawle.
1880-1887	Gregory Rowcliffes & Co.
1887-1904	Rowcliffes Rawle & Co.
1904-1927	Rawle Johnstone & Co.
1927-	Gregory Rowcliffe & Co. (Now Gregory Rowcliffe & Milners)

Actual Dates Seen On Covers By Rosemary Smith

G0970.05	28-7-85 to 11-8-85
G1005.01	27-8-86 to 7-6-87
G4270.01	25-4-81 to 13-7-84
G4280.01	None
G4290.01	29-8-47 (Only cover noted but stamps seen GVI to Wilding)
R1060.01	13-11-88 to 2-8-24

As most of these covers are common there must be many more earlier and later dates. Please report new ones to Rosemary.

There may be a number of reasons why these names, dates and perfins do not match. One may be that the different partners may have used their own perfins (Gregory-G&C, Rowcliffe-R&C°). Also the firm's name did not appear on the letter headings until 1914, just the address, although the telegraphic address "Rowcliffes" did appear from about 1890. The identities in some cases may have been taken from a partner's manuscript signature on the letter.

Rosemary has two envelopes with initials of firm and address embossed on the flap. The first envelope has a 1d lilac, perfin G1005.01, dated 7-6-87 and the embossed initials GR&R. The second envelope has a 1d EVII stamp, perfin R1060.01, dated 21-7-08 and embossed initials RJ&Co. These initials do match the known name of the firm at that date. So keep a look out for these different initials on the flap of Rowcliffe covers.

It would appear that in the early days Rowcliffes were Somerset solicitors and Gregorys acted as their London agents as county solicitors were not allowed to practice in London. I do not know whether any of the Rowcliffe perfins are known used from Somerset. It also seems that the London office was in two almost separate parts so two machines may have been used in different parts of the office.

It is a pity that despite the very helpful attitude of the firm when I wrote, the information was not more conclusive.

