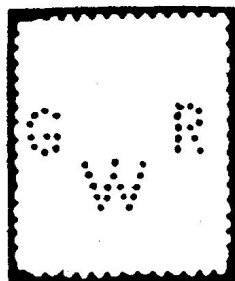
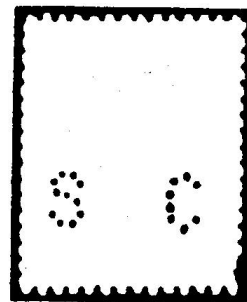


THE "FIRST" GREAT BRITISH PERFIN DIE.

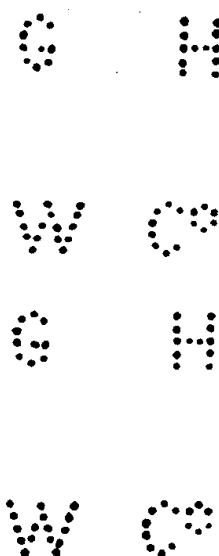
In recent years there have been a number of attempts at identifying the "First" Perfin. For example, in Bulletin No.260 (Oct 1992) I suggested that the title be given to SC (S1210.08). The only known example is on a 1d Red (plate 73) and probably comes from a small batch sent by Copestake's to the Postmaster General for approval on 2 January 1868. However, this perfin is best regarded as a *proof* as Joseph Sloper was not given permission to perforate postage stamps until 13 March 1868.



Bulletin No.261 (Dec 1992) contained an article by Horst Brandt (translated by Gerry Soutar) entitled "The World's Oldest Perfin", in which the perfin GR/W (G4350.02) was reported on an early 1d Red plate. Undeniably, plate 71 was the first 1d Red plate to include 'visible' plate numbers but it was just one of fourteen plates printed from

when printing commenced on 1 March 1864. This particular perfin is best described as having the *earliest* or *lowest* 1d Red plate number, rather than being the oldest perfin.

However, now that the Perfin Society owns a number of the Sloper ledgers, including some from as early as 1862, a more definitive statement can be made. The first entry in the Order Book *after* the 13th March 1868 was for the 28th March and relates to a press (No.2607 from stock) being altered to take "a die with letters". Alongside, in manuscript, are the letters to be used GH/WC°. In fact the die consisted of two patterns arranged one on top of the other "for doing two at a time". The die was well made (by H Harborow) as the two patterns are virtually identical. The only noticeable difference is a slightly wider gap between pins halfway up the left hand side of the 'W' in the upper pattern.



G2410.01M

On completion of the work an impression was made in an Impression Book. Both the Order and Impression Book entries are illustrated below (reduced). Although the user has not yet been positively identified, it is thought to have been George Hitchcock Williams & Co, St Paul's Churchyard,

ORDER BOOK / 568		IMPRESSION BOOK	
March 5	Small Press originally fitted to Press dies. Co. H. St. Paul's	1	Small press - originally 1 of 8 presses fitted up by H. St. Paul's for space dies - altered by H. Harbrow for perforating stamp.
28	Ordered Harbrow - for a die with letters - stop back of front paper to go in at the sides	3	Die milled with 75 lines
	2603		No. 2607: Press. for using two at a time
	2604		
	uttered in Harbrow for a crossing		
	Bardley Co		
	2603		
	9: 2 - Smith Payne Co		
	2606		

H	C
G	W

H	C	H	C
G	W	G	W
H	C	H	C
G	W	G	W

In conclusion, this should be regarded as the earliest record of a machine and die made specifically for a company to security perforate their own stock of postage stamps.