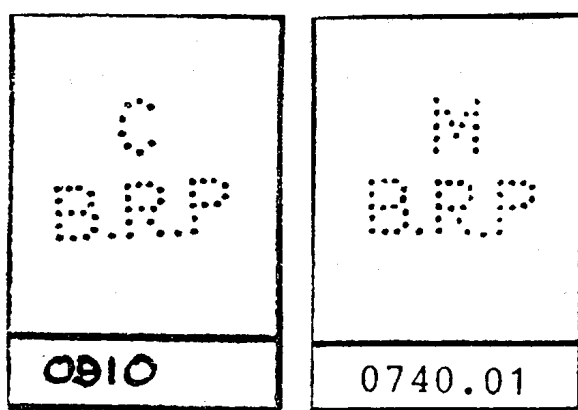


A MYSTERY PAIR - HELP WANTED

By Maurice Harp

As I work on the principal that there is always someone out there who knows more than you, I am appealing to members for help on a mystery that's been bugging me for some time. The two perfin illustrated were provisionally identified by Jennings as coming from the CORK, BLACKROCK and PASSAGE RAILWAY, IRELAND and MIDLAND, BLACKROCK and PASSAGE RAILWAY respectively. The provisional identity for C/B.R.P is also given in the Tomkins catalogue: but these provisional identities appear to be just wishful thinking as there seems to be nothing to link the dies with these identities.



Certainly the Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway existed and used perfins but Bowman does not include the die C/B.R.P in his catalogue. I can find no reference to a Midland, Blackrock & Passage Railway having ever existed.

I have a copy of each of these dies on 1d plates but both show London cancellations rather than Irish cancellations as would be expected for an Irish railway company.

I have no records of dated copies of either of the dies. Die C0910.01 has been recorded on plates 138, 148 and 155: die M0740.01 is known on plates 155 and 175. As far as I can tell these are the only two dies recorded with the unusual letter combination B.R.P. So maybe what we have here is one company or organisation that changed its name from C/B.R.P to M/B.R.P around the year 1872.

But what could B.R.P stand for? I have been stretching my imagination to it's limit but cannot come up with any reasonable suggestion. My only possible fit to date is the Mercantile Bank of the River Plate that was based at 6 Lombard St., London EC in 1877. Were they earlier known as the Commercial Bank of the River Plate? This speculation is a little better than that done by Jennings - but not much. Can anyone out there supply any information on cancels, period of use or a better suggestion as to who could have used either or both of these dies?

JOHN NELSON writes:- "Maurice Harp's inspired speculation is nothing less than brilliant.

In my small library of books likely to be of help in sorting our perfin problems I have one with the grand title, "Registry of Defunct and Other Companies removed from the Stock Exchange Official Year Book, 1954". In it, the following entry appears:

'Mercantile Bank of the River Plate Ld, Regt 1872 as Commercial Bank of the River Plate Ld.; name changed, 27 MAY 1873. Vol. liq. FEB 1881. Principal assets were bought by River Plate Trust, Loan and Agency Co Ld. Final Meeting return regt. 24 MAY 1888'.

The dates mentioned all seem to fit in with the evidence to which Maurice refers and all put together, the two dies are for my money, worth having the provisional identities allocated to them."