

Beware the perfins of Zululand!

I imagine that one of the least collected continents—and the least known by perfin enthusiasts—is Africa. However, I live in Africa... in Somerset West, in South Africa, so a natural focus for my interest in what my friends call “the holey stamps” would be the perfins of South Africa and later Africa as a whole.

There are few specialist perfin collectors in South Africa but increasingly perfins are being better understood by the regular philatelists and included in their fields of study, including for national exhibits. A friend with an excellent collection on universities was delighted recently with some of the U.S. university perfin covers. For another, with a thematic collection of African animals, I could sort out animal stamps with identified perfins from South Africa, Angola, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Egypt, Mauritius, and others. I

have presented substantial exhibits—mainly on South Africa and African perfins to six South African philatelic societies. Another sixty pager is in preparation for next January.

Perfin collectors elsewhere in Africa are less well known to me, although Mr. Vahe Varjabedian must be mentioned. He lives in Egypt and is a member of the Egyptian Study Circle. He independently researched and published a very informative and attractive booklet on perfins on Egyptian stamps. His list is similar to that of the Perfins Club, but it contains scarcity ratings, identifications, and illustrations of mouth-watering covers. These make the publication an invaluable addition to the literature on perfins. I have published a basic list of the perfins of South Africa in the journal, *Bartholomeu Dias* of the *Filatelisten-vereniging Zuidelijk Afrika*. I am also establishing a data base for the perfins of all the countries of Africa.

However, my main objective is to work on and extend the Perfins Club's lists on the perfins of this continent. I intend, if the editor and readers of the *Bulletin* like the idea, to offer, periodically, a newsletter from Africa as a medium for publicizing and attracting information on this subject.

There is much to write about, although the total number of patterns used in Africa probably will not exceed 600 even if the Indian Ocean islands are included.

The diversity is fascinating, from the countries of North Africa to Mauritius to the last word in the philatelic alphabet—Zululand.

Perhaps I should discuss the last first.

A Newsletter from Africa

By Brian Dennis #2581

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They're all forgeries!

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Zululand only existed as a postal entity, issuing its own stamps, until 30 June 1898. However it was recognized as a unique region of South Africa until recently and is now included in Kwazulu Natal.

Theoretically, there are not likely to be any perfins from Zululand, which at that time had no commercial developments. The postal activities were probably mainly based on the local magistrates and the administration and a few traders in a very under-developed society.

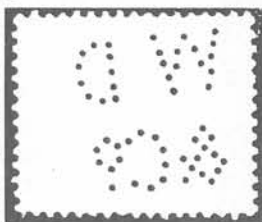
BUT if you look you may find!

There are some perfins found on Zululand stamps.

At one stage, from 1888 to 1893, British stamps, overprinted Zululand, were used there. Some are known with perfins—and their origin is fascinating.

They are all forgeries!

Ordinary GB stamps are fairly commonly found with forged overprints. For some weird reason, the forgers even used stamps such as the Queen Victoria 1/2d vermilion with British perfins and Great Britain cancellations!



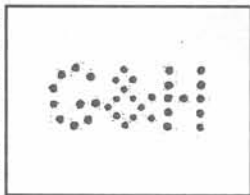
The Zululand forged overprint on a used and perfined stamp of Great Britain.

One of the Club members has one with a Charing Cross cds. I can assure you Charing Cross is not in Africa! I obtained one recently with the pattern WD/&Co. which is No. W1970.01 in Ed-

wards and Lucas catalogue and was used by Wm. Dunn of London. The overprint is good but definitely forged.

Yet there is more.

A colleague of mine with a specialised Zululand collection asked me to comment on a Transvaal King Edward VII stamp he has. It is perfined with one of the three G&H patterns of Garlick and Hands who were merchants in Durban (which is *not* in Zululand). The postmark is Nkandla, one of the few centers then in Zululand. Dated 1911 with the Zululand canceller which was still in use, it was therefore definitely used in Zululand even though this was after the "country" ended as an independent postal authority. The explanation is that it was probably used by a traveling salesman for Garlick and Hands who traveled widely seeking business and sending in orders to his head office. The G&H perfins are known with a variety of unusual cancellations from remote towns and villages in Natal, so the Zululand cancel fits a pattern.



So even for a philatelic country like Zululand, which did not have any indigenous perfins, there is something to be added to the story of African perfins.

I would be very interested to hear from any perfins collectors with questions on African perfins or who can contribute information on perfins and their identification and use. I can add this to the Perfins Club's listings on Africa or include them in future newsletters.

Please contact me through the *Bulletin* or on email: bdennis@mweb.co.za, or by slow mail to 28 Pyracantha St, Heldervue, Somerset West, 7130, South Africa.