

## **PERFINS OF THE PORT OF LONDON**

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Prior to the formation of the Port of London Authority the London docks were owned by private companies, and it is known that two of these used perfins. Possibly other companies whose names are under-lined in the following paragraphs, may also have used perfins at one time or another.

### **The East and West India Dock Company**



The West India Docks were built by William Jessop and opened in 1802. John Rennie and Ralph Walker designed the East India Docks, which opened in 1808. These two companies later amalgamated under the above title. The Jennings & Rymer Young listing of the Line Engraved Issues included this die as E&W/IDCo and say that it was used on the 1d red plates ranging from 171 to 223. The die

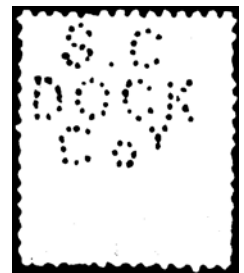
is confirmed as used by the dock company.

**The Victoria Docks Company** opened their large systems of docks in 1855. They were built on land known as the Plaistow Marshes, near to the North Woolwich Railway. This was the first dock in the Port of London to be connected with the railways.

**The Royal Albert Docks** opened on June 24th 1880, and were built by the **London & St. Katharine Docks Company** at a cost of about £2,200,000.

### **Surrey and Commercial Docks Company**

The company probably used perfin S.C/DOCK/Coy. I have examples of this perfin on 1d plates, 158, 159, 165, 166, 168, 176, 191, 214, 222, but I have no proof of identity. There is also the possibility that this perfin could have been used by the St. Katharine Docks Company, as "Katharine" is sometimes written as "Catharine".



**The Millwall Docks** were constructed by the **Millwall Docks and Land Company** and opened on March 14<sup>th</sup> 1869. Another reference says that it was formerly the Millwall Canal Company. The Millwall Docks were privately owned until about 1908/9.

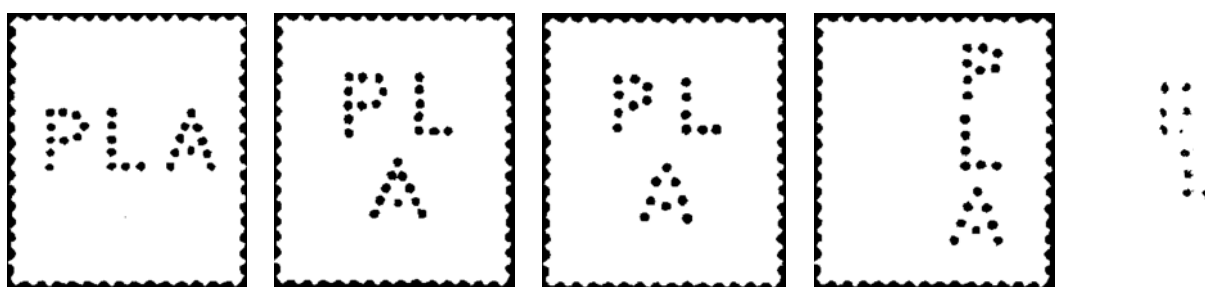
**Tilbury Docks** 26 miles below London Bridge, were opened in 1886 and remained in private ownership for 30 years.

**London & India Joint Docks Committee** With the exception of the Surrey Commercial Dock Company and the Millwall Docks, various

companies became united under this title. I do not know the date when this took place.

**The Port of London Authority** was incorporated by Special Act of 1908 and came into being on March 31st 1909. It acquired the undertakings of the London and India Docks, the Millwall Docks and the Surrey Commercial Dock Company. Other concerns were also transferred, including the Thames Conservancy. Thus the major dock systems on the Thames between Tower Bridge and Tilbury were co-ordinated. The P.L.A. was housed in a fine building on Tower Hill, which was designed by Sir Edwin Cooper and constructed between 1912 and 1922. At a date between 1969 and 1973 the Authority's address is given as "World Trade Centre", London, E.1. Five perfin dies are known.

1. PLA Used on KEVII ½d KGV ½d, 2½d and UPU 1½d
2. PL/A Used on KGV ½d, 1d KEVIII ½d  
KGV ½d, 1d (Dark colours)  
Latest date 14th October 1939
3. PL/A Used on KGV 1d pale red, 1½d green, 6d  
QEII Wilding 2d, 2½d, 3d, 4d, 1/- Machin 4d phos 2b  
Pmks: Victoria Docks, Poplar E14 - Rotherhithe, London EC  
Earliest date 21st march 1947 Latest 1st March 1968 Poplar pmk.  
There are missing pin varieties on QEII stamps,  
(a) middle pin of "A" missing. (b) top pin of "A" missing.  
One of my 3d stamps has treble perforation.
4. P/L/A Used on KGV 1d pale red (wmk sideways), QEII 2½d Wilding
5. P/L Used on KGV 1d scarlet. Pmk 19 May 1943



1. P2870.01    2. P2880.01M    3. P2880.01M    4. P2890.01    5.

This last die is on piece with a PLA identity. It is probably a wartime provisional. It is not a variety of No. 4. The letter "P" has three holes in a line vertically and two holes opposite the top pair making a small square. The "L" has three holes vertically in line with to right hand holes of the "P", and one hole to the right below. Finally, I have an envelope with PLA identity using a meter mark. The date is 4.1.68 London E.C. Does this mean that perfins are no longer used?