

SLOPER SINGLE DIE
PUBLICITY PERFORATING MACHINE

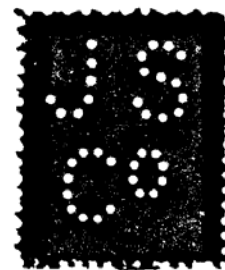
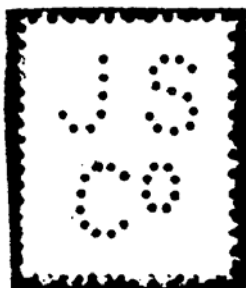
James Norris

Some members may recall a short article I wrote regarding a Sloper Single Die Publicity Perforating Machine that appeared in Bulletin No 263 in April 1993.

At that time I used this machine to perforate approximately 100 'labels' on gummed paper in a selection of colours and these were sent out with the Bulletin as free samples for members.

The perfin produced by this machine is the large J S / Co with pin configuration 7,12/10,8 & 6½ mm high, and is listed in the new identities catalogue section letter J and the details are listed as

“Strike from a die believed to have been used for demonstration purposes by Joseph Sloper & Co, but not known used on postage stamps. Modern examples exist on gummed paper in various colours”.



Rosemary Smith recently contacted me with a question regarding the machine and this has prompted me to give a more detailed account of the machine's history and how I came to possess it.

I have always had an interest in embossing machines since my Grandfather used one on his letterheads, the mechanics and appearance of them created a fascination for me. From the age of ten I was a keen GB collector and would buy Queen Victoria line engraved stamps whenever I could afford to on my 2/6d pocket money. Perfins on 1d Red particularly captivated my interest and

dealers at stamp fairs would often give away these items perceived as damaged stamps at the time.

When I was a salesman for an engineering company in the early 1990's, I visited a security firm in Chesham, principally involved in door entry security systems, but the owner had dabbled in security endorsement, and had an old press in the office.

I expressed an interest in the item initially thinking it was an embossing press. It was very rusty and in quite poor condition with many of the pins broken. The owner said it was destined for the skip and gave me the item. I could not believe my luck when I had a chance to examine it and found the die attached to the base plate was JS / Co!

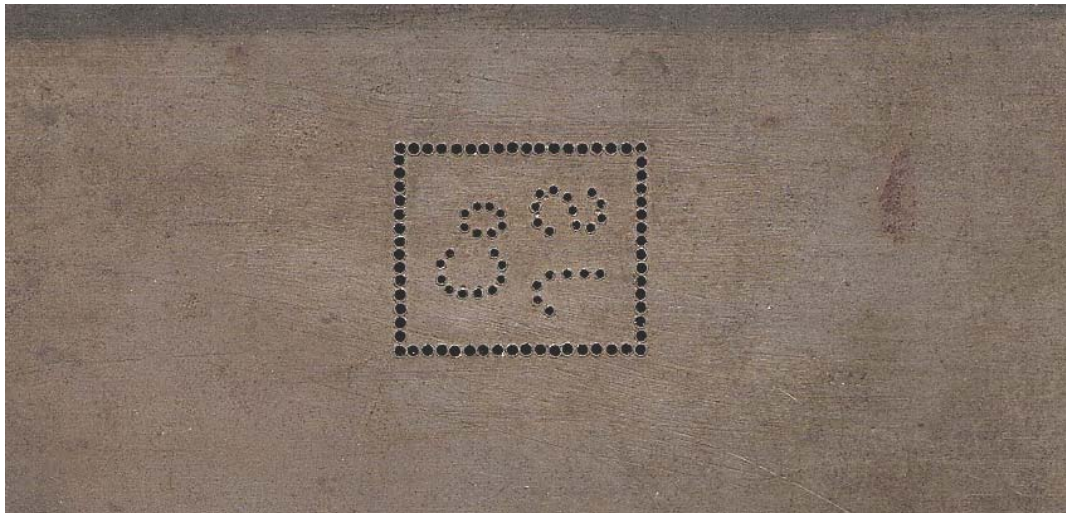


Figure 1.

Close up of die showing arrangement of pins around the periphery creating the effect of a perforating comb (80% scale)

The die is unusual as it incorporates an arrangement of pins around the periphery creating a perforating comb to enable each impression to be torn from the perforation creating a single 'stamp' or label. This is best illustrated in the close up of the die in Figure 1.

Coincidentally I was by then a member of the Perfin Society and was one of the people who went on the factory visit to Sloper's in August 1991, just prior to the closure and subsequent take over by Checkpoint.

I took the press with me to the Blackburn Road Works and Bill Cokayne, the manager at the time, confirmed that it was indeed one of Sloper's old machines, he kindly cleaned the mechanism, replaced the pins, and got it working again whilst we were being given a guided tour of the factory. See Figures 2 & 3 below.



Figure 2.

The machine is very crude in appearance and is made from a rough iron unpainted casting.

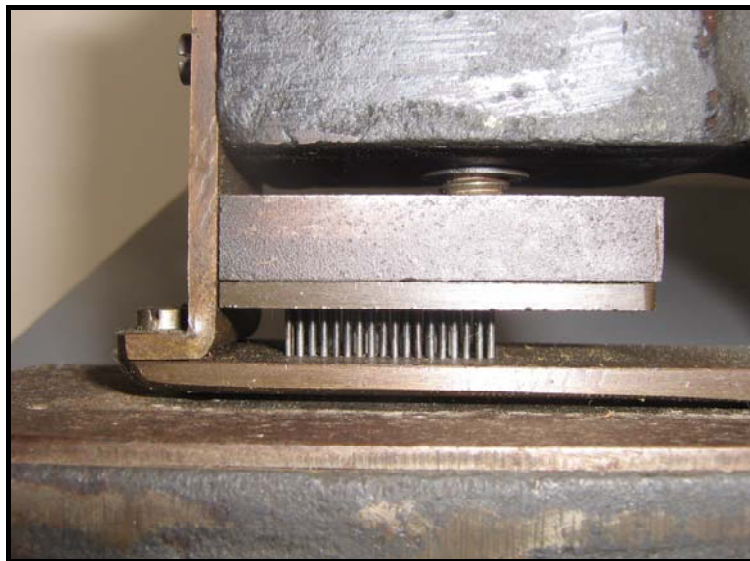


Figure 3.

Side view of die showing position of pins and base plate

Bill explained that the machine was almost certainly produced as an advertising or demonstration unit to produce labels to be sent to prospective clients. It was never intended for use on postage stamps and it is highly unlikely that it was ever used for such a purpose.

It is not clear how the machine came in to the hands of the engineering firm, but it clearly had not been used for many years.



Figure 4.

End view showing the guide plate that keeps the die parallel during operation.

[Ed:- Note that this die pattern was displayed in the window of the Sloper office in Budge Row. The shop front and the sign were illustrated in the February Bulletin (352). As the company moved to Budge Row in 1914 we may presume that this machine dates back to that period.]