

**KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY - AUCTIONEERS &  
ESTATE AGENTS**

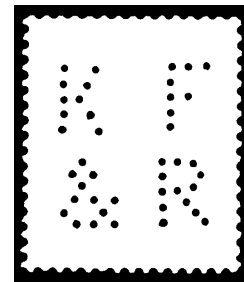
**Roy Gault**

A combination of both positive and suspected identities, along with an unusual set of initials, provide evidence for 70 years of continuous perfin use. The particular initials involved are “K”, “F”, and “R”, and the company in the spotlight is ‘Knight, Frank and Rutley’ - esteemed Auctioneers, Surveyors (later Estate Agents) & Valuers.

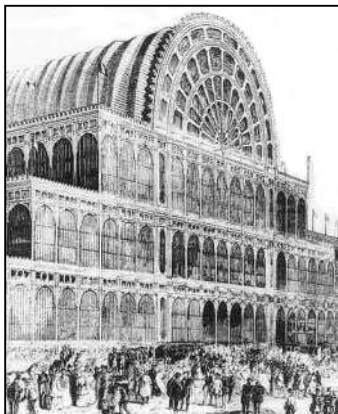
The story starts in October 1895 when John Frederick Horace Knight (1859-1931), Howard George Frank (1871-1932) [later knighted], and William Rutley (1864-1909) formed the partnership ‘Knight, Frank & Rutley’. Their first auction was held in London in April 1896 from their offices at No. 9 Conduit St, London W.

The first positively identified use of a perfin is “KF/&R” (K0790.02), known used from c1905, but could easily have been introduced a little later in 1910 when they moved to larger premises at No. 20 Hanover Square, London W. The die was in use until 1921 when it was replaced another “KF/&R” (K0790.03M).

**1905-1921**

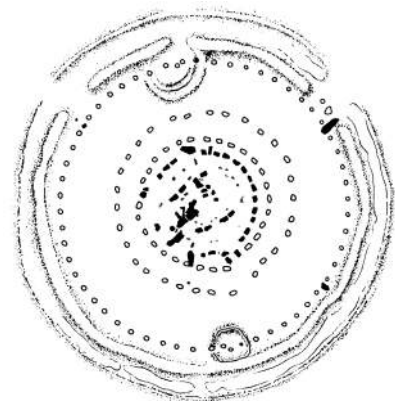


**K0790.02**



Notable sales during this period include:

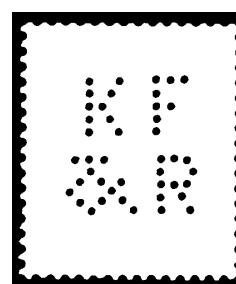
- **Crystal Palace**, built to house the Great Exhibition of 1851, for £210,000 in 1911, but destroyed by fire 25 years later.
- And Lot 15, **Stonehenge**, sold at auction in 1915 to Cecil Chubb for £6,600. He bought it as a present for his American wife, but gifted it in 1918 to the nation.



The replacement die, “KF/&R” (K0790.03M), Sloper m/c No. 62827 fitted with a 2x2 multiheaded die, was dispatched to ‘Knight, Frank & Rutley’ on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1921.

Notably, in October 1921, virtually the entire town of Reigate was sold by ‘Knight, Frank & Rutley’ for £203,840. This unusual feat was repeated in 1937 when the greater part of Lytham St Anne’s was sold, including the famous golf club and course.

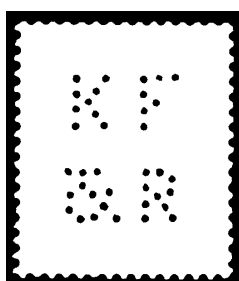
1921-1930



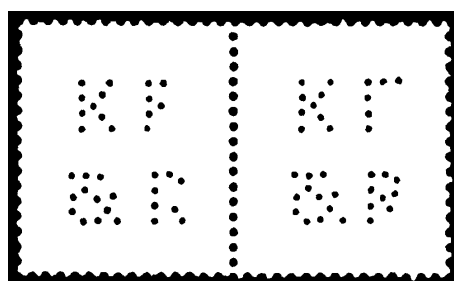
K0790.03M

This die in turn was replaced c1930 by another multiheaded die (of unknown composition), using the now standard Sloper 4-pin high alphabet. The fact it was multiheaded can be seen in the joined pair illustrated below showing different pins missing each of the patterns. This ‘failure’ of the die may have precipitated a replacement (K0790.01c), known only on King George VI dark colour definitives. This latter die is almost certain to have been destroyed in the “Blitz” on Sloper’s premises in May 1941, hence its relative scarcity.

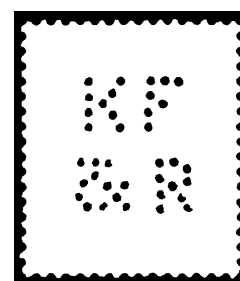
1930-1941



K0790.01aM



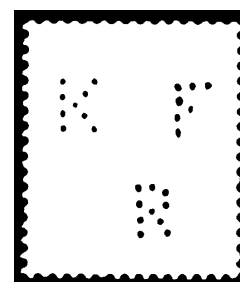
c1941



K0790.01c

The ‘Emergency’ replacement was “KF/R” (K0780.01p) which appears in the Sloper m/s ledger with the notation [1-1-12]. These were the instructions to the operator to create the initials using a single headed “K”, followed by a single headed “F”, then finishing off with a 12x1 multiheaded “R”. Usually the result was that the letters appeared on the stamp ‘all over the place’!

1941-1945



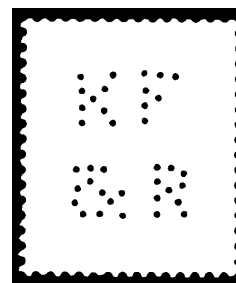
K0780.01p

In due course this so-called ‘Sloper Wartime Provisional’ was replaced by a regular single headed die, “KF/&R” (K0790.01), held at Sloper’s premises. The “F” has a characteristically ‘droopy’ top, as well as a convex top to the “&”.



The KFR Trademark was awarded a certificate of excellence in Milan, March 1974.

1945-1975



K0790.01

This die was the last and longest lived of the perfins used by ‘Knight, Frank & Rutley’, and can be found on stamps up to the early decimal Machins of Queen Elizabeth II. The latest known date for its use is the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1975. By comparison, the earliest known date for their first die (K0790.02) is the 5<sup>th</sup> February 1920, although as it’s found on the stamps of King Edward VII, it was clearly in use a decade earlier.

Letters	Cat No.	Die in use	Earliest Date	Latest Date
KF/&R	K0790.02	1905-1921	5 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1920	---
KF/&R	K0790.03M	1921-1930	9 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1923	2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb 1929
KF/&R	K0790.01aM	1930-1941	... Oct 1934	24 <sup>th</sup> Dec 1940
KF/&R	K0790.01c	c1941	---	---
KF/R	K0780.01p	1941-1945	---	---
KF/&R	K0790.01	1945-1975	10 <sup>th</sup> Feb 1959	16 <sup>th</sup> July 1975

If anyone can report earlier/later dates for the various dies as shown in the above table, I would be pleased to hear from you.

The firm continues in business to this day, although the ‘Rutley’ part of the name was dropped in 1996.

One thing I forgot to mention earlier is their nickname:  
*‘Knife, Fork & Cutlery’!*