

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PERFIN SOCIETY

By Michael Rucklidge (1998)

{Updated annually since 2013 by Roy Gault}.



Joseph Sloper (1813-1890)

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By Michael Rucklide

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Originally written by Michael Rucklide in **May 1998**.

Since **2013** the information has been updated annually by Roy Gault to ensure that the ***more important changes*** that have taken place over the intervening years are documented for posterity.

Latest revision - 1st January 2026.

Introduction

The **40th anniversary** of the Society in **1997** seems an appropriate time to record its early history before it is forgotten. The memories and recollections of long-standing members have been tapped to supplement written records such as the Society Bulletins and, notably, the Jennings book.

It would be foolish to claim that there are no errors or omissions but we believe these to be few and minor.

Michael Ruckridge - May 1998.

Pre-founding

Although perfins were introduced by Sloper in **1868** it was many years before they were recognised as worthy of study by philatelists. For a long time most collectors regarded them as damaged stamps and destroyed them. This attitude lasted until comparatively recently, but has changed markedly in the last twenty years. The change is due partly to the publication of articles in the philatelic press and the efforts of our members.

Several collectors did study perfins in the **1920** to **1945** period, notably **Hugh Vallancey** (who published a short monograph in **1933**), Dr Rendall, and Charles Bein who corresponded with other collectors chiefly in the U.S.A.

The **1933** Handbook by **F Hugh Vallancey** - British Stamps Perforated with Firms' Initials - was updated in **1948** with the addition of (S.P.I.F.S.) under the title. They were published by 'The Vallancey Press Ltd' in 1933, and by F Hugh Vallancey himself in 1948.

Founding

After World War II Perfin enthusiasts corresponded and when, in **1956**, Charles Jennings had a two-part article about perfins published in *Stamp Collecting*, more people wrote for further information. They were directed to Ron Bowman who had already been selected as the contact person for their small group. In **1957** the number of correspondents had risen to twenty and in July 1957 they founded the Society we know today.

These founder members were:

Bowman, R J
Carr, C J T
Bartleson, A S
Blyth, J G
Clarkson, H
Davidson, D
Eades, E
Fosbery, J
Hoggett, R A
Jennings, C
Lucas, Mrs B
Millett, P J
Muggleton, D
* **Nelson, J**
Newman, Mrs J
Smith, F H B
Tomkins, B C
Welch, M O
West, W
Young, Keith Rymer

* Still a member to this day (*1st January 2026*).

The original title was the **G. B. Perfin Study Group**. Evidently modesty prevented the use of the more prestigious 'Society'. At the end of **1963** it became **Security Endorsement & Perfin Society of G. B.** This cumbersome title was adopted almost entirely at the insistence of the then President, Charles Jennings, who maintained correctly that overprints and underprints were the predecessors of Perfins and should therefore be included in the title.

At the London meeting in November **1983** it was decided that the title **The Perfin Society** be adopted. The aims of the Society are the study of all aspects of Perfins. These comprise:

- the identification of users
- the recording of dies
- periods of use
- number of patterns in the perforating heads, etc.

All this information to be published in the form of lists, catalogues, and monographs as appropriate.

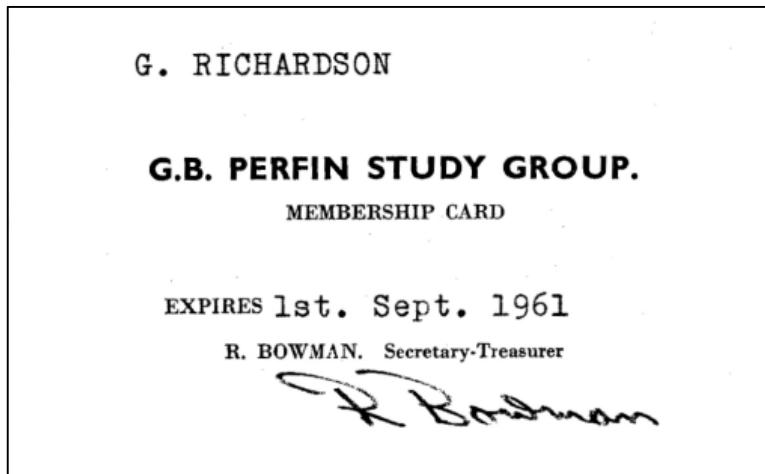
In short, the society has been known under three different titles:

1957-1963 G.B. Perfin Study Group.
1963-1983 Security Endorsement & Perfin Society of G.B.
1983-Date The Perfin Society.

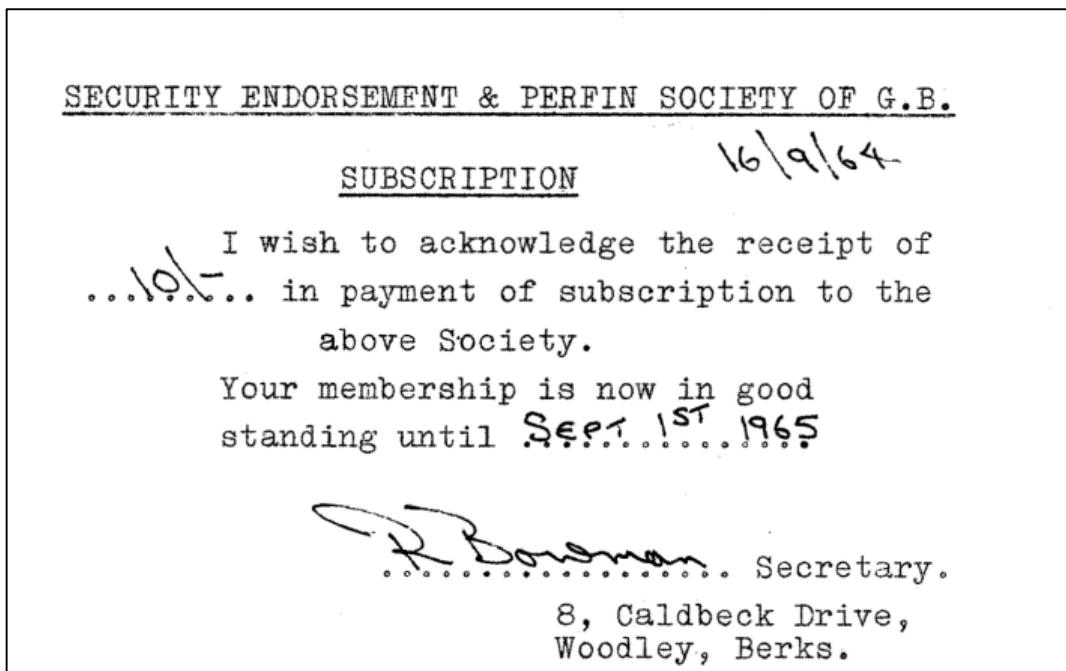
Early Days

Originally the dissemination of information was by written correspondence from member to member. However, it was soon realised that this was rather slow and inefficient, and as a result a duplicated news-sheet was started in **1957** and sent to all members. This was sent out every month, or two months, depending on the workload of the Secretary/Editor.

Membership Cards were originally issued as these two examples show, both discovered in the material of the late Gordon Richardson, a member of the Society from 1961 through to 1972.



This next card reflects the change of name for the society that took place at the end of 1963.



By the time I (Roy Gault) joined in 1984 the name had changed again to the Perfin Society, but by then membership cards had been dispensed with!

Meetings

Membership of the Society has always been widespread, initially in the UK and USA and subsequently worldwide. Consequently communication between members was for the most part by the written or spoken word, but then came the Internet!

Members soon realised that meetings were very desirable for those who could manage to attend. The first meeting was proposed in June **1961** and took place at the ***Crown & Sugarloaf Inn*** on the 18th November that year. Twelve members attended. Two more meetings were arranged the following year (**1962**) and then seem to have lapsed for some nine years. Regular annual meetings in November started again at:

- B P A, 466 Strand: **1971** and **1972**.
- National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place: 1973 to 1981, in rooms rented by the B P F.
- B P F, 314 Vauxhall Bridge Road: 1982 to 1983.
- Baden Powell House, Queens Gate: 1984 to 1999.
- StampShow 2000 - Earls Court: May 2000.
- Independent Order of Oddfellows, Warren St: Nov 2000 to May 2005.
- Friends House, 173 Euston Road: November 2005 to May 2008.
- London & Scottish Regimental Headquarters, Horseferry Road: November 2008, and again in April 2009.
- The Young Chelsea Bridge Club, 32 Barkston Gardens: Aug 2009.
- Hilton Hotel: May 2010.
- The Young Chelsea Bridge Club, 32 Barkston Gardens: Nov 2010 to April 2013.
- Grosvenor Auctions, 399-401 Strand, London: Oct 2013 to Oct 2018.

Meetings continued ...

- Royal Philatelic Society, 41 Devonshire Place, London: May 2019.
- Royal Philatelic Society, 15 Abchurch Lane, London: Oct 2019.
- No meetings held in 2020 due to the **Covid-19 Pandemic!**
- King's Head public house, Westmorland St: Oct 2021 to Apr 2022.
- YMCA, Cromer St, Kings Cross, London WC: Sep 2022 to Oct 2023.
- Theodore Bullfrog Public House (Villiers Room): Spring: 24th April 2024, AGM: 2nd November 2024. Spring: 5th April 2025, AGM: 11th October 2025.

These meetings have all been held in London and attendance inevitably limited to those willing and able to travel there. On a few occasions members from overseas have attended when their holiday or business stay in the U K coincided with a meeting.

A handful of provincial meetings have been held in ***Sheffield, Cambridge, Birmingham, and Morley***. The last one mentioned is held at a Stamp Fair, the last Saturday of each month, and Perfin collectors are usually to be found there. The other venues have usually been in members' homes.

In recent years, regional meetings have also been held at:

- Sheffield Wednesday Football Club - 20th June 2009.
- **Mid-Pex** 2013, where the Perfin Society also manned a stand between 10am and 5pm. Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Leamington Spa - 6th July 2013.
- **Ham-Pex**, Wickham Centre, Mill Lane, Wickham near Farnham, Hampshire - 25th September 2021.
- **EuroPhilEx (Birmingham) 2025**, NEC - 7th to 11th May 2025. Perfin Society meeting - Hall 9, Room 1, 8th May.

Officials of the Society

The rather casual way in which the Society was started has meant that no committee as such has ever been set up. The running of the Society has always been in the hands of the officials, who are recruited as and when a replacement is necessary. This rather unprofessional procedure has resulted for the most part in the Society being run by a small band of keen and energetic workers who are responsible for the flourishing state in which it finds itself today.

The day-to-day running of the Society is left in the hands of the appropriate official. Any more serious matters are discussed with the other officials before a decision is taken. The London meetings are sounded out for opinions on such matters - this is as near to an Annual General Meeting as is considered practical. Any fundamental matter which is considered to require the opinion of all members would be the subject of a postal vote by all members. Fortunately this has not yet proved necessary.

President

This office is virtually a sinecure but it was felt that the Society should have a titular head ideally chosen for his/her contribution to the Society and knowledge of Perfins.

<i>Charles Jennings</i>	<i>1957 - 1973</i>
<i>Keith Rymer Young</i>	<i>1973 - 1979</i>
<i>John Nelson</i>	<i>1979 - 1993</i>
<i>Michael Rucklidge</i>	<i>1993 - 1998</i>
<i>Chris Carr</i>	<i>1998 - 2010</i>
<i>Rosemary Smith</i>	<i>2010 - 2020</i>
<i>Richard Husband</i>	<i>2020 - Current</i>

Secretary

The founding secretary was **Ron Bowman** who combined this post with those of Treasurer and Bulletin Editor until 1970. By then these tasks were too much for one person. (Bulletin Editor entailed amassing material, typing stencils, running off some 170 copies, stuffing into envelopes, stamping and mailing every month).

Ron Bowman	<i>1957 - 1970</i>
Michael Ruckridge	<i>1970 - 1993</i>
Dave Hill	<i>1993 - 2008</i>
Stephen Steere	<i>2008 - Current</i>

Treasurer

Ron Bowman	<i>1957 - 1968</i>
John Nelson	<i>1968 - 1970</i>
Richard Husband	<i>1970 - 1977</i>
Michael Ruckridge	<i>1977 - 1993</i>
Dave Hill	<i>1993 - 2008</i>
Stephen Steere	<i>2008 - Current</i>

It will be seen that the two posts, Secretary and Treasurer, have often been combined. This has worked quite well since some of the labour is common to both posts e.g. keeping the membership list up-to-date.

Web Master

Alastair Walter	<i>2001 - 2002</i>
Jon Evans	<i>2002 - 2005</i>
Alastair Walter	<i>2005 - Current</i>

Bulletin Editor

This is possibly the most important post since the Bulletin is the cement which holds the Society together. With some help from **Chris Carr** and **Vic Terry**, **Ron Bowman** produced the Newsletter, later renamed the Bulletin, from the start until his untimely death in 1982.

Ron Bowman	1957 - 1982
Tony Edwards	1982 - 1987
Frank Tully	1987 - 1988
Rosemary Smith	1988 - 2005
Maurice Harp	2005 - Current

Librarian

The Society soon began to accumulate written material on perfins such as catalogues, articles from the press, bulletins from other societies, etc. These formed the nucleus of the library from which items could be loaned to members by mail. A librarian to keep this material and arrange the loans was obviously essential.

G Holden	1961 - 1963
Frank Summers	1964 - 1970
Brian Birch	1971 - 1984
M Hankin	1985 - 1986
Geoff Longbottom	1987 - 1991
Maurice Harp	1991 - 1994
John Donner	1994 - 1999
Alastair Walter	2000 - 2009
- Vacant -	2009 - 2011
Brian Morgan	2011 - 2013
Roy Gault - keeper	2013 - 2014
Sean Brady	2014 - 2017
Ron Mills	2017
Roy Gault - keeper	2017 - Current

Auctioneer

The Society's postal auction started in a small way in 1964 and has grown considerably, thanks to many hours of devoted work by the auctioneers.

<i>Chris Carr</i>	<i>1964 - 1974</i>
<i>Ted Francombe</i>	<i>1975 - 1976</i>
<i>Peter Day</i>	<i>1979 - 1986</i>
<i>Harry Skinner</i>	<i>1987 - 1998</i>
<i>Tony Edwards</i>	<i>1998 - 1999</i>
<i>John Donner</i>	<i>2000 - 2014</i>
<i>Sean Brady</i>	<i>2014 - 2016</i>
<i>Ron Mills</i>	<i>2016 - 2021</i>
<i>William Hall</i>	<i>2021 - Current</i>

Catalogue Editor

It soon became obvious that to produce worthwhile catalogues it is essential to have an individual to gather and collate all the available data. This is a task demanding many, many hours of careful work and we have been very fortunate in the occupiers of this post.

<i>Basil Tomkins</i>	<i>1964 - 1984</i>
<i>Tony Edwards</i>	<i>1985 - 1989</i>
<i>Roy Gault</i>	<i>1989 - Current</i>

The late Basil Tomkins is remembered by giving his name to the GB Identified Perfins Catalogue - the '**Tomkins**'.

Publications Officer

For many years the publications produced by the Society were prepared by *Ron Bowman* from stencils and sent out with the bulletins. More recently they have been printed either in-house or by outside printers. Eventually it became desirable to have a single person to order, store and despatch material.

<i>David Higgs</i>	1985 - 1987
<i>Tony Edwards</i>	1987 - 1989
<i>Geoff Longbottom</i>	1989 - 1991
<i>John Donner</i>	1991 - 1999
<i>Jeff Turnbull</i>	2000 - 2010
<i>Terry Comper</i>	2010 - 2021

The post was rendered obsolete in October 2021 as the catalogues are now issued electronically.

Packet Superintendent

The Sales Packet has had a chequered career with eight members running it over the years. It has provided a useful way of disposing of members' Perfins but has never been profitable largely because of losses in the mail.

<i>Rev William G West</i>	1957 - 1959
<i>Michael Rucklidge</i>	1959 - 1964
<i>Rev William G West</i>	1965 - 1966
<i>John Nelson</i>	1971
<i>Brian Birch</i>	1971 - 1982
<i>John Luft</i>	1983 - 1986
<i>David Scott</i>	1986 - 1989
<i>Dave Hill</i>	1989 - 2005

The Exchange Packet system ceased in 2005 due to a lack of booklets and costs.

Life Membership

The rules of our Society permit the honour of conferring ***Life Membership*** for long and valued service to our Society. To date **nine** members have had this honour awarded them.

B357 (Dec 2008)

John Nelson - 17 years in office.

1968-1970 Treasurer; 1971 Packet; 1979-1993 **President**.

Rosemary Smith - 27 years in office.

1988-2005 Bulletin Editor; 2010-2020 **President**.

Dave Hill - 19 years in office. Dave died in 2025.

1989-2005 Packet; 1993-2008 Secretary/Treasurer.

B369 (Dec 2010)

Chris Carr - 22 years in office. Chris died in 2022.

1964-1974 Auctioneer; 1998-2010 **President**.

B394 (Feb 2015)

John Donner - 24 years in office.

1991-1999 Pubs; 1994-1999 Librarian; 2000-2014 Auctioneer.

B249 (Apr 2024)

Roy Gault - 35 years in office and counting ...

1989-Current Cat Ed; 2013-2014, and 2017-Current Librarian.

London AGM, 2nd Nov 2024

Life membership awarded to two serving officers ...

Maurice Harp - 22 years in office and counting ...

1991-1994 Librarian; 2005-Current Bulletin Editor.

Alastair Walter - 24 years in office and counting ...

2000-2009 Librarian; 2001-2002, and 2005-Current Webmaster.

London Spring Meeting, 5th April 2025.

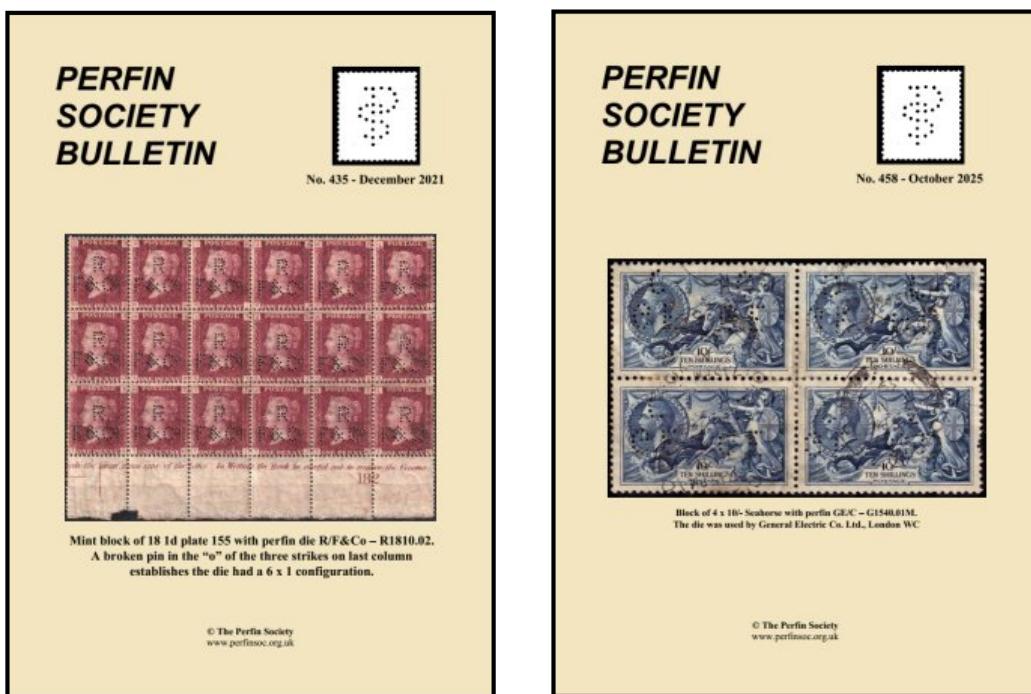
Life membership award to ...

Stephen Steere - 17 years in office and counting ...

20008-2025 Secretary/Treasurer.

Bulletin

The Bulletin has always been the major means of dissemination of information among members. In the early days it was produced from stencils typed by Ron Bowman. He prepared the manuscript, ran off copies on the 'Gestetner', placed in envelopes and posted. The bulletin appeared every month until 1972, since when it has appeared every two months.



Currently the bulletin is prepared on a computer by the editor, **Maurice Harp**, and is printed professionally in Sheffield. Since 2010, the Bulletin has been despatched by member **Margaret Harding**, helping to spread the workload. In 2007 the Bulletin, by then a regular 32 page production, could also be received in electronic form as a pdf via e-Mail, and from the February 2017 edition (N°.406), the entire Bulletin appeared in full colour. From June 2021 (N°.432), a bumper **64-page full colour Bulletin** has become the norm although there had been two such large editions prior to that.

Out of the current **281** membership,
160 (56.9%) now take the Bulletin via e-Mail.

Publications

One of the main tasks of the Society is the cataloguing of the many Perfin designs found on the stamps of the U.K.

The first listing of G.B. Perfins was the *Simplified* catalogue. This listed all the then known patterns in numerical order starting at 1 for each letter of the alphabet. Since it was suspected (all too rightly) that more patterns would be found, blanks were left so that these could be allocated the appropriate serial number.

An illustrated catalogue of G.B. Perfins was published by *Victor Van Lint* in the USA in **1959**. This consisted of illustrations only, some 80 to a page. Reference to a particular pattern was numerical e.g. 45.71 is the first pattern on line 7 on page 45. Some **9,438** patterns were illustrated.

In 1971 *Harvey Tilles* in the USA proposed a G.B. catalogue giving illustrations, details of letters (number of holes, height etc) plus the identities of users where known. Initially little interest was shown and it was not until **1975** that publication started a letter or two at a time. Some **14,188** patterns were eventually illustrated. The compilation was done by *Basil Tomkins* of the Perfin Society and *Robert J McKee* of the American Perfins Club. Publication was undertaken by *Harvey Tilles* of the Perfins Club.

Patterns were allocated with numbers carried over from the Simplified catalogue with •1, •2, •3 etc added where different dies of exactly the same lettering existed. In many cases insufficient blanks had been left so that suffix letters A, B, C, etc., had to be added.

By 1985 many additional dies had been discovered so that a new listing was highly desirable. Since the identities (see later) were already catalogued separately it was decided to publish the *Edwards* catalogue of illustrations only. This was started in 1986 by Tony Edwards, continued by Roy Gault in 1989, and finally ‘completed’ in 1992. It eventually contained some 15,000 dies. A much improved numbering system based on the Tilles Catalogue Number was introduced, allowing scope for additional dies while maintaining alpha-numeric order.

The increased interest in perfins resulted in an increase in the number of known patterns to 21,452. While this could be coped with by adding more pages, as was done for some time, it was agreed that a new edition was desirable. This task was taken on by Roy Gault, and called ‘*The New Illustrated Catalogue of G.B. Perfins*’. Now ‘complete’, it was issued in paper form a letter at a time in two versions. One was illustrations only, and the other had illustrations plus information such as the user’s name, address, business, period of use, etc.

The electronic masters were updated (Project 610) and the resulting ‘*Gault Catalogue of G.B. Perfins*’ issued in both electronic form (as part of ‘*Sloper 150*’) and paper on 13th March 2018 to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Joseph Sloper being granted permission to perforate postage stamps with firm’s initials. An updated version was released 13th March 2022 (S154), by which time the number of different patterns had reached 25,148, involving 283,173 different die/face. The 2026 edition (S158) has 25,352 DD with 290,863 DDF.

Another task of the Society is the listing of “*Identities*” i.e. the names of the users of the individual Perfins, but without illustrations. This was undertaken by Basil Tomkins in 1982 until his death in 1984. Tony Edwards took this on until 1988, since when Roy Gault has produced it in addition to the Illustrated Catalogue. An updated 12th Edition of ‘*Tomkins*’ was included in the electronic release (‘*Sloper 154*’).

Any New Identities reported to the Catalogue Editor appear in the ‘New Identity’ section of the Bulletin, along with an acknowledgement of who made the contribution. This practice started in late 1970, and to date **279** different individuals have contributed information. However, from **1st January 2021** this practice ceased to save costs and paper! Instead it is placed on the Perfin Society website, downloadable to all as a pdf file. Some have submitted just a single new user, whereas others seem to have made a career out of it! The following shows the tallies for those with **70 or more** ‘new identities’ to their name.

		New Ids
1	Rosemary Smith	2,409
2	Roy Gault	2,267
3	Stephen Steere	990
4	Maurice Harp	947
5	Jeff Turnbull	705
6	<i>Dave Hill (ob 2025)</i>	532
7	John Nelson	505
8	<i>Keith Rymer Young (ob 1982)</i>	461
9	<i>Reg Powell (ob 1991)</i>	338
10	<i>Arthur Smith (ob 1997)</i>	227
11	John Mathews	222
12	<i>Peter Maybury (ob 2020)</i>	195
13	Robert J McKee	164
14	<i>Bert Johnson (ob 1994)</i>	147
15	Ron Mills	135
16	<i>Paddy Murphy (ob)</i>	85
17	<i>Eric Whitehead (ob)</i>	81
18	John Donner	80
19	Peter Day	80
20	<i>Gerry Soutar (ob 2024)</i>	80
21	William Hall	74

Currently **16,746** of the **25,352** recorded G.B. Perfin dies (on **290,863** DDF) have positive/suspected user (i.e. **66.1%**).
Correct to **1st January 2026**.

Several specialised catalogues have been produced over the years, some *early* examples of which are:

- Railway Perfins (1976) - Ron Bowman.
- GB Official Perfins - Mary Thornton, subsequently revised and enlarged by Tony Edwards & Betty Lucas.
- Sloper's Wartime Provisionals (1992) - Roy Gault.
- Hospital Dies - Ian Hamill, Kevin Parkhill, Stephen Steere, and Roy Gault.

Recent publications include:

- A catalogue of King George V '*Silver Jubilees*', originally in paper form - 4th Edition available on the Sloper 154 'Twister'.
- The 4th Edition of King George V '*Seahorses*' (electronic only) - available on the Sloper 154 'Twister' (2022).
- A new 2nd Edition of the *Irish Catalogue* released in 2022.
- Electronic release - '**Sloper 154**' black Twister released on 13th March 2022 - containing:
 1. The '*Gault Catalogue of G.B. Perfins*' - '**Gault-2**'.
 2. '**Tomkins**' Identities Catalogue - 12th Edition.
 3. 'All Dies' spreadsheet 2022.
 4. GB Coils Catalogue - 2nd Edition.
 5. Website Project - '*G.B. Stamps known with Perfins*'.
 6. The 'Gault Irish Perfins Catalogue' - 2nd Edition.
 7. Complete set of Bulletins, 1957-2021, Maurice Harp.
 8. Sloper and other records by Maurice Harp.
- A complete update for the *Line Engraved Catalogue* - released electronically on a Green 'Twister'. **ISBN 978-0-9564628-5-5**
- A 2nd Edition of *Sloper's Wartime Provisionals* - released electronically on a Red 'Twister'. **ISBN 978-0-9564628-6-2**
- A 2nd Edition of *Ron Bowman's Railway Catalogue* - released electronically on a Grey 'Twister'. **ISBN 978-0-9564628-7-9**

Publication in the pipe-line: 'Sloper 158' white 'Twister'

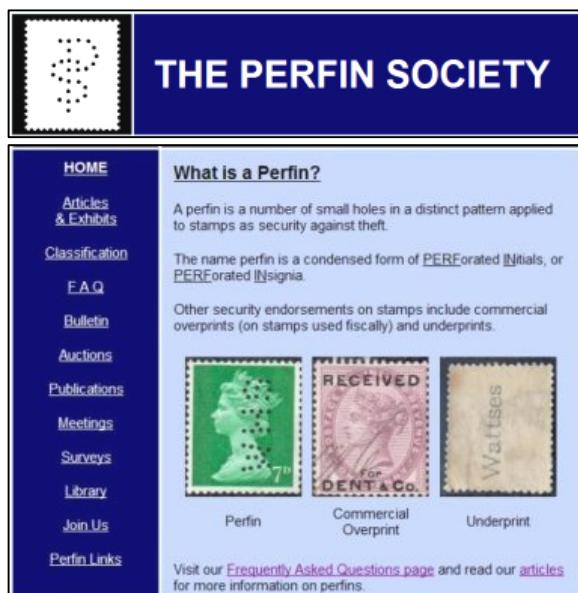
Due for release ...

13th March 2026.



The Perfin Society Website.

From 2001 the Perfin Society has maintained a Website (www.angelfire.com/pr/perfinsoc) allowing the work of the Society to be viewed by a worldwide audience. The site has been developed over the years so that a great deal of information can now be accessed electronically via the home page.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the original website. At the top is a logo of a perforated stamp. The title 'THE PERFIN SOCIETY' is in large white letters. A sidebar on the left contains links: HOME, Articles & Exhibits, Classification, FAQ, Bulletin, Auctions, Publications, Meetings, Surveys, Library, Join Us, and Perfin Links. The main content area has a heading 'What is a Perfin?' with a definition, examples of security endorsements, and three images of stamps: a green 7p stamp labeled 'Perfin', a pink stamp labeled 'RECEIVED FOR DENT & CO' labeled 'Commercial Overprint', and a brown stamp labeled 'Watties' labeled 'Underprint'. A note at the bottom encourages visiting the 'Frequently Asked Questions page' and reading articles.

The webmaster is currently engaged in transferring information from the 'old' to the 'new' website.

This website was replaced in 2021 with <https://perfinsoc.org.uk>



The screenshot shows the new website's homepage. It has a dark green header with a navigation bar: HOME, SOCIETY ACTIVITIES, CATALOGUES, PERFIN RESOURCES, JOIN, and CONTACT US. Below the header is a large white logo of a perforated stamp. The text 'The Perfin Society' is centered below the logo.

- **Articles** - A selection of Bulletin articles showing the wide range of topics covered by a variety of contributors.
- **Exhibits** - A recent addition which currently shows twenty-two different Perfin exhibits submitted by six members.
- **Auctions** - Results from 2007 onwards, usually with prices realised.

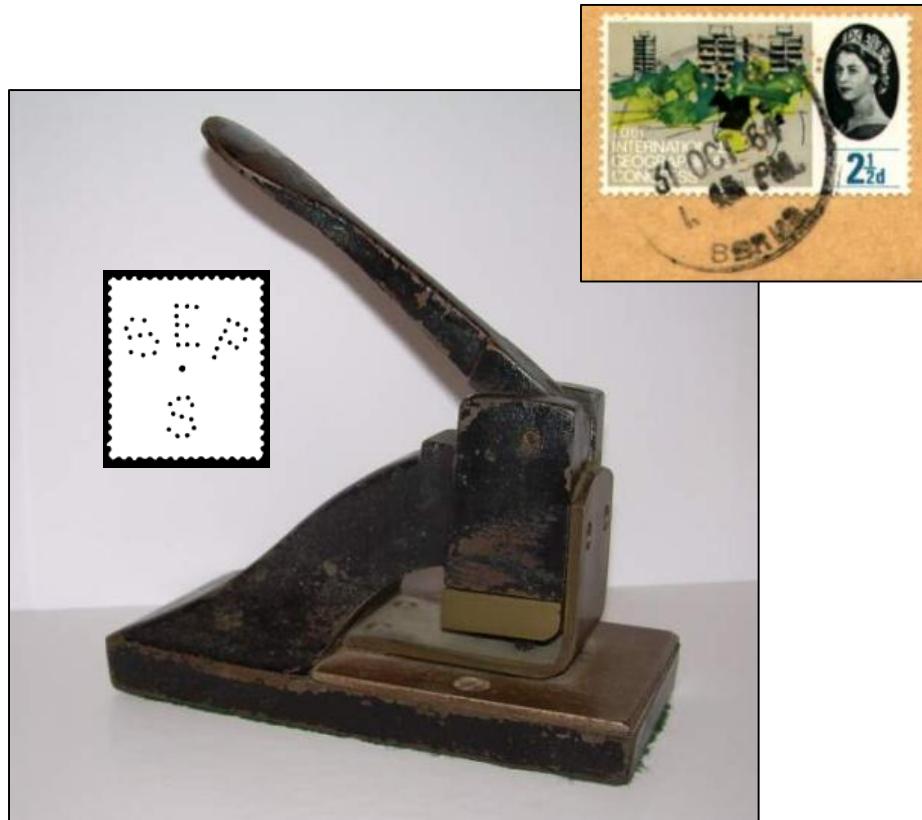
- **Publications** - Prices & Postage for the 'Gault Catalogue of GB Perfins' and 'Tomkins', both released on the new 'Sloper 154' electronic release, as well as other Society publications.
- **On-line Catalogues**
 - Foreign Bill & Contract Note Stamps (Jeff Turnbull).
 - 1d & 6d Inland Revenue Stamps (Jeff Turnbull).
 - Telegraph Stamps (Jeff Turnbull).
 - G.B. & Ireland Official & Crown Circle Perfin Cancels (Jeff Turnbull).
 - India (including Indian States, Burma, Pakistan, and Nepal), Malaya, and Ceylon/Sri Lanka (Jeff Turnbull).
 - All African Countries (Jeff Turnbull).
 - All Caribbean Countries (Jeff Turnbull).
 - Finland, Gibraltar, and Malta (Roy Gault)
 - Perforated Postal Stationery (Rosemary Smith & Maurice Harp).
 - Newspaper & Parcel Delivery Perfins (Jeff Turnbull & Maurice Harp).
 - Advertising Rings in 2 parts (Maurice Harp)
- **Surveys**
 - Sloper Wartime Provisionals (Roy Gault).
 - Machins Perfinned (Barrie Williamson).
 - Stamps not recorded Perfinned (Alastair Walter).
 - Braham Study (Roy Gault).
- **Library** - We now have scans available in pdf format of a large number of library items accessible by either Subject or Library Number. There is also a list of Books and Catalogues covering Great Britain and other countries.
- **Perfin Links** are provided for:
 - Other Perfin Clubs & Societies, Perfin Sites, General Philatelic Sites, and Resources.
 - On-line Catalogues & Perfin Exhibits.

Note - A '**Members only**' area was set up in November 2023, and a '**Research Corner**' area in August 2024.

Perforators used by the Society.

Perfins were intended as a security measure against the theft of postage stamps, they were not intended for publicity. Indeed, in Victorian times the British Post Office forbade (though ineffectively) the use of full names.

The purist deprecates the use of perfins by individuals of the Society since the security aspect must be negligible. However, the majority of members agree with the use of a perforator by the Society and the “SEPS” model was purchased in 1964 from Baddeley Bros in London for £9 15s 0d, and used to perforate stamps used to mail Bulletins. Members could also have their postage stamps perforated for their own personal use. The first day of use was on ***31st October 1964***.



At the London meeting in November 1983 we became known as “The Perfin Society” and the “SEPS” perforator became obsolete.

Thanks to the good offices of member Peter Day*, his perforator, consisting of a “PS” in Monogram form, was offered on loan to the Society.

* Perfin Society Auctioneer 1979-1986.

The story of Peter’s perforator, which appeared in Bulletin (N°. 209, February 1984), is reproduced here.

*The recent change of name to the **Perfin Society** has meant that the “SEPS” Perfin die has become redundant. It was pointed out to me that the perforator I own and had used until recently for a small business registered in the name of Peter Stannard (a nom de plume used by myself for many years for writing magazine articles and derived from the maiden name of my mother), would make a perfect die for the new Society initials. I readily offered exclusive use of it to the Society and from 1st January 1984 this has been accepted as its new role.*

The perforating machine is a hand operated single-die one, dating probably from the turn of the century. Its black surface is enhanced with sprays of gold foliage in a style my wife refers to as ‘early Singer sewing machine’. It came to me as a birthday present, having been found in an antique shop in Chichester in 1978. Its original users are unknown and its original die (shown in Fig 1), which being too wide for definitive stamps means that it was probably employed as a cheque perforator and not for any philatelic application.

The purchaser, a tool-maker by trade, carefully removed the ampersand and small ‘s’ pins to form the ‘new’ die “PS” in a monogram (shown in Fig 2) before presenting it to me. Having given me also the original pins, the machine could, if so desired, be restored at any time to its original die.

It will be nice to see it in full use again, this time exclusively for Society business or for perforating stamps for Society members (preferably commemoratives). Being a single-die machine, as was the "SEPS" perforator, it will only handle single rows of stamps unless one is prepared to accept inverted perfins by folding the stamp sheet.

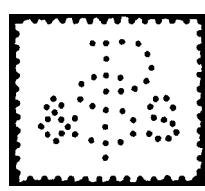


Fig 1



Fig 2

Peter relinquished his post as Perfin Society Auctioneer in 1986 and soon after sold the perforator (complete with the loose pins!) to Roy Gault, who still uses it to this day.



Membership

Since the modest beginning with 28 members there has been a steady increase to the 'present' 350 (in May 1998). This growth is partly due to introduction by existing members and partly to the appearance of articles on perfins in the philatelic press which usually result in a few new members.*

Although the Society's main concern is the study of the perfins of the U.K., we have a considerable number of members from overseas.

In conclusion it may be well to remind members of the debt they owe to our officers and others who run the Society.

Michael Rucklidge

May 1998

* A peak of 358 was reached at the end of 2003.

* * * * *

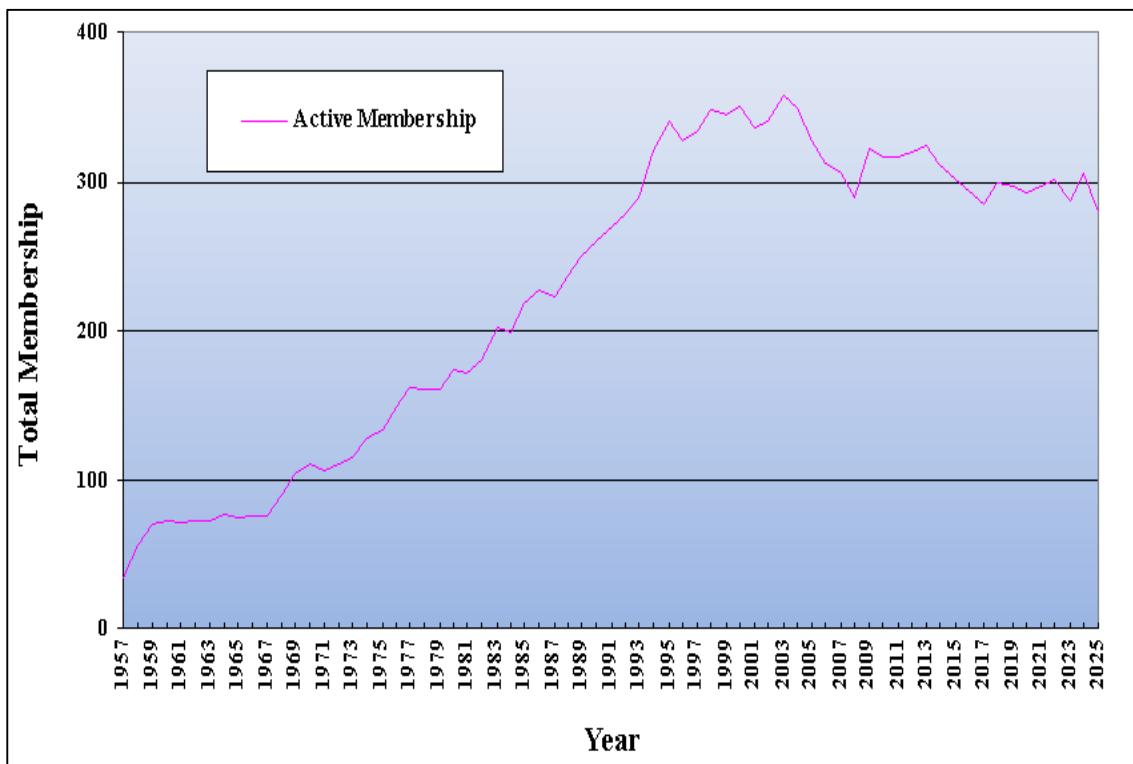
The current figure taken from Bulletin (B459 Dec 2025) is 279, plus three new members (living in the UK - England, Netherlands, and the USA) who joined after publication, minus one leaver (UK-England), making 281 in total.

Excluding organisations etc., the total number of Perfin collectors who have *ever been members* has now reached 1,604.

In passing, there was originally a limit imposed of 175 'Active' members at any one time, although this restriction was lifted sometime around 1983. There is no restriction today. We start 2026 with an active membership of 281.

* * * * *

A graph of the rise & fall of the Society membership follows ...



U.K. (157 - 55.9%),
U.S.A. (19 - 6.8%),
Canada (16 - 5.7%), **Netherlands** (14 - 5.0%),
France (10 - 3.6%), **New Zealand** (10 - 3.6%),
Australia (8 - 2.8%), **Germany** (7 - 2.5%), **Denmark** (7 - 2.5%),
Belgium (4 - 1.4%), **Sweden** (4 - 1.4%),
South Africa (3 - 1.1%), **Spain** (3 - 1.1%), **Czech Republic** (2 - 0.7%),
Italy (2 - 0.7%), **Malta** (2 - 0.7%), **Norway** (2 - 0.7%),
and elsewhere (11 - 3.9%). **Total Membership 280.**

The **U.K.** contingent comprises:

England (140 - 89.2%),
Wales (9 - 5.7%),
Scotland (7 - 4.5%),
Northern Ireland (1 - 0.6%).

The overall **Male/Female** split is 94.0%/6.0% (263/17).



Distribution map of UK members based on Post Codes.

The following countries have been represented by members over the years - the **31** in **Bold** still have active members.

Argentina		Italy	(2)
Australia	(8)	Japan	(1)
Austria	(1)	Luxembourg	
Belgium	(4)	Malaysia	
Brazil		Malta	(2)
Canada	(16)	Netherlands	(14)
Chile	(1)	New Zealand	(10)
China		Nigeria	
Cyprus		Norway	(2)
Czechoslovakia		Poland	(1)
Czech Republic	(2)	Portugal	(1)
Denmark	(7)	Singapore	(1)
Dubai		Slovakia	(1)
Egypt		South Africa	(3)
Eire	(1)	Spain	(3)
Finland		Sweden	(4)
France	(10)	Switzerland	
Germany	(7)	Taiwan	
Hong Kong	(1)	UK	(157)
Hungary	(1)	USA	(19)
India		Zimbabwe	(1)
Indonesia			

Total - 281

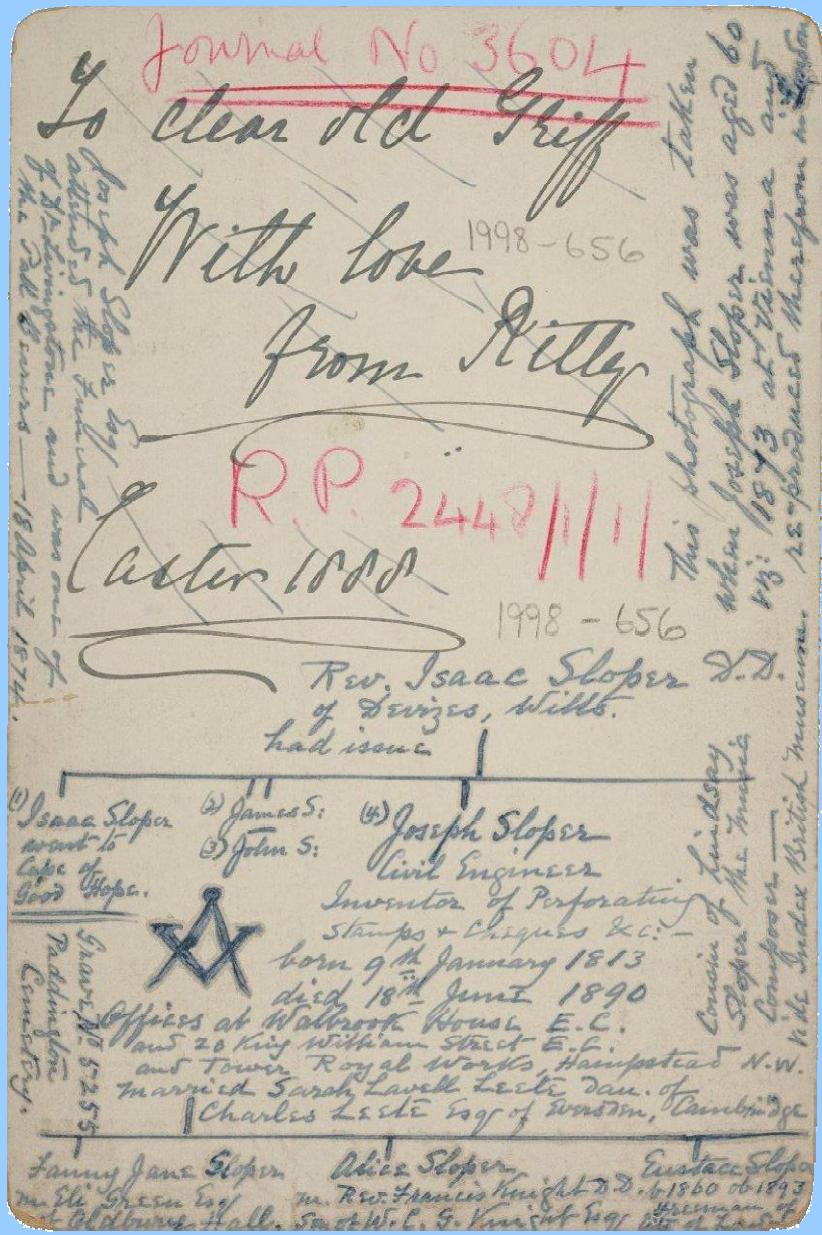
Figures are based on the details printed in the Society Bulletins up to and including **No. 459**, issued **December 2025**, plus any who joined or left between then and year end.

Longevity of membership

Inevitably some members only stay with us for a short period of time, but to balance that there are a great many members who stay with us for decades, and essentially for life. To celebrate their longevity, here is a list of all those who have been a member (80 in total) for *thirty-five* years or more ...

69	Nelson - John S	41	Beard - John M
66	<i>Carr - Chris J T (ob)</i>	41	<i>Moore - Keith B</i>
65	<i>Welch - Michael Owen (ob)</i>	41	<i>Oxley - H Mike (ob)</i>
57	Husband - Richard R	40	Cornforth - Tony
57	Ehreich - Bernie	40	Metzger - Uwe
56	Brandt - Jack L	40	<i>Hewson - John E</i>
56	Stockton - Peter S	40	<i>Schwerdt - Robert J (ob)</i>
55	Birch - Brian John	40	<i>Wibier - Joop</i>
54	Smith - M Rosemary	39	<i>Hayward - Neville A (ob)</i>
52	Bergman - Leif	39	<i>Whitehead - Eric L (ob)</i>
51	Harp - Maurice	39	<i>Lagerwall - Tord (ob)</i>
50	Bradbeer - Anne P	39	<i>Ottenheimer - Kurt (ob)</i>
49	Bavin - Mike	39	<i>Amiet - John L (ob)</i>
49	<i>Muggleton - Derrick J</i>	38	Dedecker - Robert
48	Kelly - Vernon J	38	Donner - John
48	Hammond - Alan D	38	<i>Shayler - Gary</i>
48	Perfett - Graham E	38	Merryweather - Brian D
47	<i>Coles - Albert E (ob)</i>	38	<i>Luft - John N (ob)</i>
47	<i>Prince - John W</i>	38	<i>Harris - Arthur J</i>
47	<i>McKee - Bob</i>	38	<i>Hempsall - Mike</i>
47	<i>Francombe - Ted (ob)</i>	38	<i>Pawson - Barry</i>
47	<i>Waghorn - M</i>	37	Lower - Stephen
46	Rowland - Keith A	37	<i>Holloway - Phil J (ob)</i>
46	<i>Rucklidge - J Michael (ob)</i>	37	<i>Hill - Dave (ob)</i>
46	<i>Summers - Frank T</i>	37	Moerkeberg - Thomas H
45	Swales - Tony	37	Steere - Stephen E
45	Fountain - Colin	37	<i>Rowe - Robert W</i>
45	<i>Fetta - Patrick J (ob)</i>	36	Hall - William J
45	<i>Peach - Jack</i>	36	<i>Redmond - Paul S A</i>
43	Winkelmann - Karl	36	<i>Fisher - L H R</i>
43	Boot - Dennis	36	<i>Dunderdale - Steve (ob)</i>
43	Harding - Margaret E	35	Hamill - Ian A
43	<i>O'Keeffe - Peter J</i>	35	Norris - James
43	Jennion - Arthur	35	Coulbourne - Joe
43	<i>Chambers - E D</i>	35	Button - John
43	<i>Burns - Ian (ob)</i>	35	Entwistle - Ian G
43	<i>Collins - Dennis F (ob)</i>	35	Netten - Steve
43	<i>Spittle - John W</i>	35	<i>Werner - Magnus (ob)</i>
42	Whitehead - Malcolm J		
42	Bence - Steve J		
42	Gault - William Roy		
41	Burrows - Peter C		

The 41/80 in **Bold blue** are still **active members**.



Reverse of Joseph Sloper's 'Vienna - 1873' Carte de Visite.
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