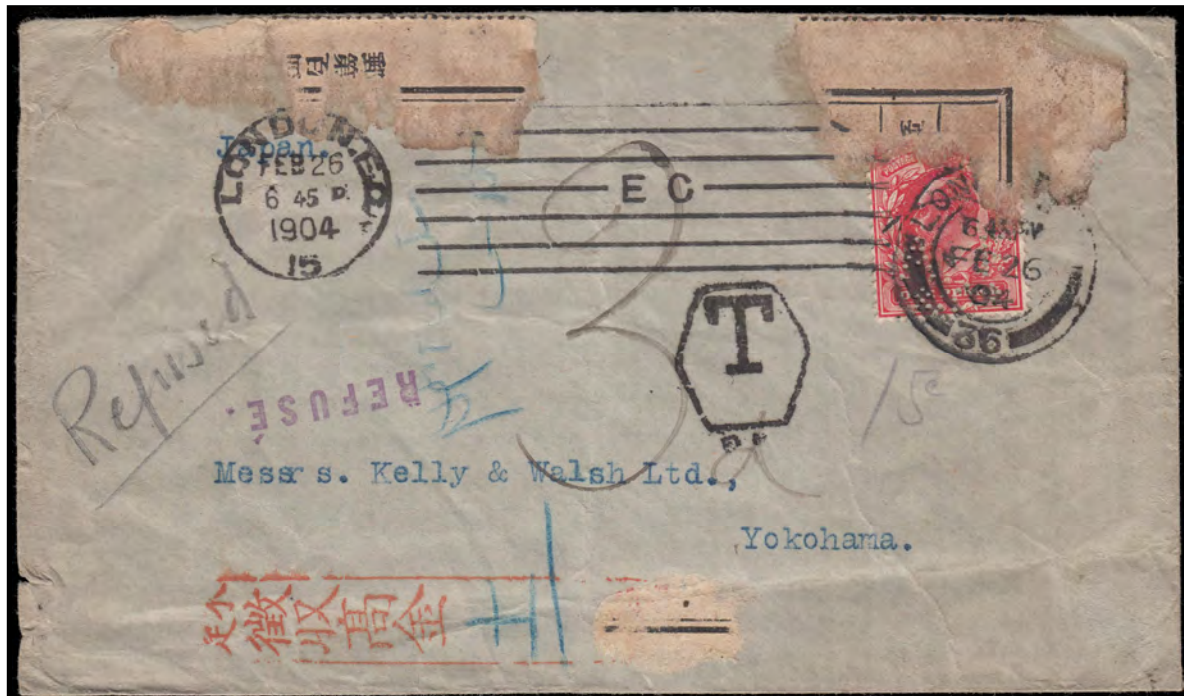
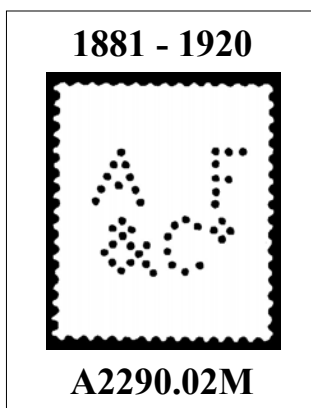


ADOLPH FRANKAU & Co Ltd

John Marriner



This somewhat battered cover shown above was sent by Adolph Frankau & Co Ltd from London to Kelly & Walsh Ltd in Yokohama, Japan. Adolph Frankau & Co were importers & manufacturers of pipes and tobacco related products. At the time of this letter they were based at 119/121 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4. The KEVII 1d red which has perfin AF/&Co - A2290.02 is cancelled London EC, Feb. 26th 1904. The reverse shows a Yokohama receiving mark of April 4th 1904 – just over a month to get to Japan. The postage was clearly underpaid (1d to Japan would have been a bargain) and the envelope has been struck with a T (for Taxe) in a hexagon. On arrival in Yokohama it appears that the Japanese authorities tried to recover the underpaid postage from Kelly & Walsh but it seems the company refused the letter. A second date stamp of 37-4-6 (1904 was the 37th year of the Meiji period) was applied when the letter was returned to the post office and presumably it became a dead letter.



1881 - 1920
A2290.02M

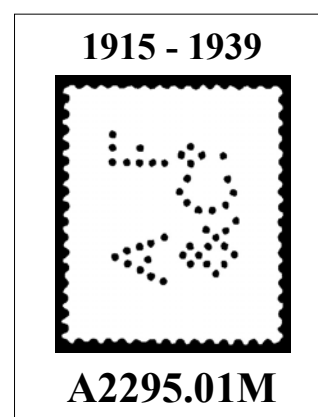
Adolph Frankau arrived in London in 1847 and saw opportunities in the tobacco market. He created the company Adolph Frankau and Co and became an importer of meerschaum pipes and other supplies. He also took on a 14 year old boy, Louis Blumfeld.

The business thrived until the death of Adolph Frankau in 1856. His widow prepared to sell the company, but Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), author of "Hero and worship of the heroes" advised her not to sell, but to entrust the future of the company to the young Louis Blumfeld, then 18 years old. Carlyle had a very high opinion of Louis for his sense of responsibility for the business, his enthusiasm and his inexhaustible energy.



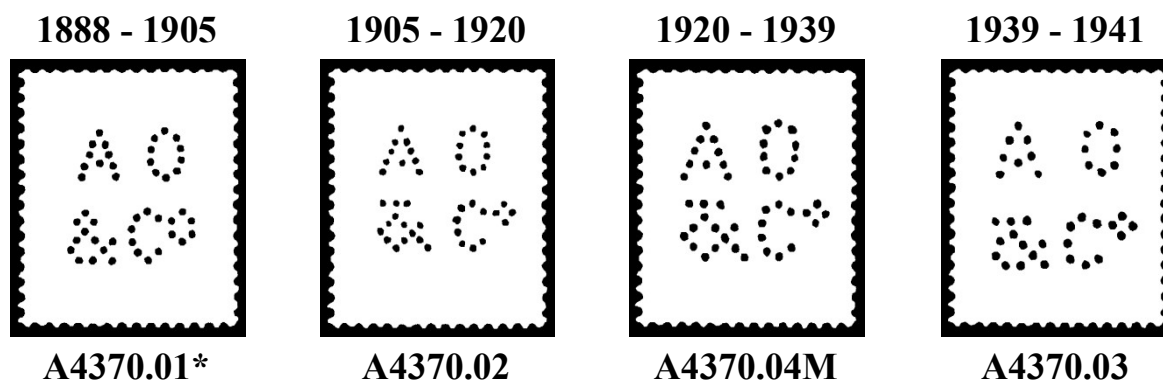
Louis Blumfeld quickly developed an important international trade, with particular success in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and Europe, particularly in Switzerland and Denmark. A branch also opened in New York but the marketing strategy focused mainly on the countries of the British Empire. Blumfeld also introduced a Trade Mark of B/BB in a diamond, the letters of which stood for Blumfeld's Best Briars

Shortly before 1914, the need for manufacturing in London became pressing, and by the turn of the century A. Frankau and Co had a warehouse and offices in Queen Victoria Street and an export department in Upper Thames Street. A factory was opened in 1898.



At the time, A. Frankau and Co also produced Calabashes. The gourd water-bottles originated in South Africa but supply became difficult. BBB set up a special department to manufacture the calabashes and this survived the Great War of 1914-1918. However, after the war demand declined and during the 1920s the company fell on hard times and were taken over by A. Oppenheimer and Co.

A. Oppenheimer & Co were importers and exporters of fancy goods and they too were users of perfin throughout the life of their company. The four dies they used are shown below and as can be seen the date ranges of the dies produce a continuous use of perfin up to the blitz on Sloper's premises in 1941.



Kelly & Walsh, who were the recipients of the letter shown at the start of this piece, were also perfin users. A postcard used by Kelly & Walsh in Hong Kong is shown below.



Kelly & Walsh Ltd. was formed in 1876 by combining two Shanghai booksellers: Kelly and Co. and F. & C. Walsh. It was incorporated on July 1st, 1885 and most active from the 1880s through the 1930s, with publications from cities including Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, and Yokohama. It moved to Hong Kong following the occupation of China by the Japanese, and was ultimately sold to book seller Swindon Book Co. Ltd. in Hong Kong.