

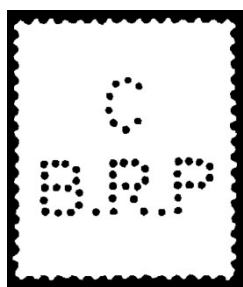
AN “ODD PAIR” BECOMES TRIPLETS

William Hall & Maurice Harp

The recent appearance on eBay of a QV 5/- Plate 1 from the 1867-74 issue bearing a C38 obliterator postmark, signifying its use abroad in Callao, Peru, SG No. Z56, has led the authors to pool their knowledge about the user and with some new research have perhaps made a startling discovery.

The 5/- stamp bears the perfin C/B.R.P - C0910.01M provisionally identified as being used by *Commercial Bank of the River Plate Ltd.* Known on only a handful of QV issues including Foreign Bills, used between 12 Feb 1872 and 27 May 1873. This stamp also has two partial strikes of the die, establishing that the die was multi-headed.

1872 - 1873



C0910.01M



Plate 138



The bank's offices were located at 6 Lombard Street London EC.

In previous articles in Bulletins 288 (June 1997), 289 (August 1997) and 387 (December 2013) *Maurice Harp* identified a related pair of dies, C/B.R.P and M/B.R.P.

The company name was changed on 27th May 1873 to *Mercantile Bank of the River Plate Ltd.* They are thought to have used perfin die M0740.01M which is also know on only a few QV issues including Contract Notes and Foreign Bills between 1873 and 1875. It is thought that C0910.01M was modified to produce M0740.01M.

According to *John Nelson's* response in Bulletin 289 Mercantile Bank of the River Plate Ltd entered into voluntary liquidation in February 1881. The principal assets were bought by River Plate Trust, Loan and Agency Co Ld.

1873 - 1875



M0740.01M



Plate 156



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the name of **THE COMMERCIAL BANK** of the **RIVER PLATE (Limited)** has been **CHANGED** from to day's date to **MERCANTILE BANK** of the **RIVER PLATE (Limited).**

All documents in the former name are equally valid with those in the new name.

By order of the Board,
J. H. DUNCAN,
 Secretary.

6, Lombard Street, London,
 29th May, 1873. 840

MERCANTILE BANK of the **RIVER PLATE (Limited)** (late Commercial Bank of the River Plate, Limited).

Head-office—6, Lombard Street, London, E.C.
 Office hours—10 to 4; Saturdays, 10 to 2.

BRANCHES:
 Buenos Ayres. | Monte Video.

Drafts on Buenos and Monte Video granted. Bills, Coupons, &c., payable in the River Plate Republics, purchased or collected. Letters of credit and circular notes for use of travellers issued. The purchase and sale of South American and other securities and generally all Banking agencies in business connected with the River Plate undertaken. Money received on deposit for six months and upwards.

CH. RAPHAEL,
 Manager.

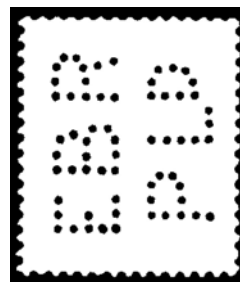
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However, according to *“Banks and Money: International and Comparative Finance in History”*, edited by Geoffrey Jones, during the 1880’s the *English Bank of the River Plate Ltd* was formed to directly replace the failed Mercantile Bank of the River Plate.

Intriguingly a quick look at the Gault Catalogue of Great British Stamps throws up the perfin die EBR/PLD - E0427.01 which has no known user. It is known on a single QV issue D 2½d and was in use between 1885-1887. Could this die have been used by the English Bank of the River Plate Ltd? If so, a triplet is born.

The British Postal Agencies in Peru dated from 1846 when offices were established at Arica and Callao. The local postal services did not carry letters beyond the borders of the country, the British Post Offices forwarded on all foreign correspondence.

1885 - 1887



E0427.01

Letters sent within the country would attract local rates of postage with a Peruvian stamp applied to pay that rate for transmission to Callao from the sender's location. The letter would then be additionally franked with British stamps to pay the rate of transmission overseas. These rates varied from 1/- to 2/6 per ½ ounce, so a preponderance of high value stamps is known, with the values below 3d being quite scarce. The British Post Offices in South America were closed in 1885 when the local postal administrations took over international mails.

Below is a lovely example of the exception to the rule, being a Peruvian 10 cents postal stationery cover sent to France and bearing twelve ½d 'bantam' stamps, sadly not with a perfin, franked with the C38 obliterator. Evidently the rate was calculated incorrectly as a Postage Due 50 centimes tax mark was applied on arrival in France.



Callao is Peru's main seaport and naval base and also the site of the country's main airport. It is situated about 10 km north of the nation's capital Lima. Today Callao has a population of close to one million people. However at the time when this stamp was used, Lima had a population of just 105,000 and Callao just 26,000.

