

IDEAS FOR STORING & DISPLAYING PERFINS.

Roy Gault

I'm often asked '*how do other collectors arrange/store their Perfins*'? Of course, there's no right or wrong way to do it, because we all collect Perfins for different reasons. Perhaps it would help our newer members if I outlined how I approached the problem almost four decades ago, and so potentially 'learn from my mistakes'.

I guess the first question to answer is *what to collect*, but whatever decision you come to, *be prepared to change your mind!*

For me, since a child I've always been interested in railways (i.e. steam locomotives), and collecting postage stamps, and as a youth moving into adulthood, I specialised in the Line Engraved issues. These two interests came together one lunchtime way back in 1984 when I worked in the design offices of the 'Austin Rover Group' in Coventry. By chance, I walked past a fellow employee whose desk was strewn with postage stamps, so I had to stop and ask him what he was up to. In the course of conversation, I mentioned my two interests, to which he replied 'did you know you can find Line Engraved stamps perforated with the initials of Railway Companies'? 'No I didn't', was my reply, in fact I'd been discarding such 'damaged' stamps for years! I joined the Perfin Society straight away and made sure I attended the London meetings in order to meet with, and talk to, as many Perfin collectors as I could. The fellow employee's name was *Tony Cornforth*, who joined the Perfin Society himself in 1986, and is still a member to this day. *Thank you Tony!*

Naturally I decided to collect only Line Engraved issues that bore a Railway Company Perfin, obtaining material from the Perfin Society Auction run at the time by *Peter Day*, as well as the auction run by *John Coles*, and purchases from other suppliers of G.B. Perfins. The problem was that I didn't know what there was to collect as I couldn't get hold of a copy of a G.B. Catalogue as 'Tilles' was unobtainable. Right from the start I kept my Perfins, *arranged alphabetically*, in a *loose-leaf stock book* which would help in their re-arrangement as new dies and stamps were added - the stamps arranged *chronologically*.

The first change I made to my original decision was to include, for any particular railway die, *all the different denominations* throughout the reigns to show the use of the die over time. Although the stamps were in ‘serried’ ranks, a bit like pilchards in a tin, they had a ‘hand-drawn’ silhouette at the head of the row. It didn’t take long before I altered the parameters yet again, collecting *all Line Engraved issues*, regardless of having a railway interest or not. Inevitably, the hobby soon became one of collecting *all different die face* (DDF) for *every known G.B. Perfin Die*. Fortunately, no-one could tell me at the time how many GB dies there were (currently 24,971, and 272,977 DDF), or I probably would have abandoned the quest there and then!

The problem of ‘no catalogue’ was addressed in 1986 when Tony Edwards (the then Perfin Society Catalogue Editor) and Betty Lucas, began to produce a new G.B. Catalogue, one letter at a time. It consisted essentially of silhouettes, but used an improved catalogue numbering system based on the Tilles Catalogue Number, which also allowed scope for adding new dies while maintaining the alphabetical order. When all the sections had been completed in 1991 (by me, as I became Cat Ed in the Autumn of 1989), it contained some 18,762 dies.



There was a brief time when I ‘wrote-up’ a small index card (obtained from W H Smith’s) for any ‘interesting’ dies I came across, which I kept in a special plastic index card box (again, from W H Smith’s). On the back of the card I recorded ‘salient’ details - for example, this stamp with the ‘Fancy’ 133-pin die “H/ & C^o/ L^d” (H1615.01M) was purchased in 1985 for the princely sum of £3.50 (that’s £11 today, so clearly I had no idea of what to pay and what not to pay - that’s almost 3p a hole)! However, that particular presentation technique proved time consuming in the extreme and was abandoned fairly early on.



I next experimented with making up a special label to head the row of stamps but that also took up too much time, and the details could so easily change. That idea soon gave way to simply cutting out the silhouette from a paper version of the catalogue - Job Done!



With so many different dies to collect, and especially for those of you who decide to collect as many DDF as possible, storage becomes a problem. I've never counted them, but I guess in 'round' figures I have some 20,000 of the known 25,000 dies (80%), and 125,000 of the 275,000 DDF (45%).



These I've housed in forty loose-leaf 4-ring binders in slip cases purchased over the years from the 'Arrowfile', Deluxe Classic Albums (padded) range in various colours, using double sided, 7-pocket refill pages. *I must stress that other suppliers are also available!*

Some collectors I know also ‘write-up’ their collections, in small part at least, surrounding the subject Perfin/Perfins with background information, making it much more like an ‘article’ or even an ‘exhibit’. My 2015 “**HUTH**” exhibit resident on the Perfin Society website is a good example of this, but as it’s a **10-page** display I’ve just shown here (greatly reduced) the last page, along with a pitfall! Inevitably, as new DDF’s are reported and/or new stamps are acquired, the whole display will require updating. As you can see, at the time I had 8 new stamps to add, which still haven’t been added in the intervening years, all of which ties in with the comment I made at the time - *‘I suspect there may be a long wait’!* I doubt they ever will.

Frederick Huth & Co.
Merchants and Merchant Bankers, 12 Tokenhouse Yard, London EC.

The sequence is completed by this single example of a King George V ‘Photogravure’ issue, introduced in 1935.



1½d

In 1936 the company was dissolved. The banking business was acquired by “*British Overseas Bank Ltd*”, and the fur business by “*C M Lampson & Co Ltd*”.

* * * * *

As with the earlier die, this later die is also known on ‘Foreign Bills’. The following examples are representative of the use on this category of material.



QV 3d



QV 2/-



QV 10/-



KEVII 5/-



KEVII 4/-

Newly acquired material awaiting incorporation into the display.
(I suspect there may be a long wait!)



Acknowledgements to:
Lars Boettger, Jack Brandt, Ian Burns (ob), Terry Comper, John Donner, Maurice Harp, John Nelson,
Jeff Turnbull, Terry Wood (ob), and Charles Jennings (publication).

Page 10 of 10

<https://www.angelfire.com/pr/perfinsoc/articals/ex.html>

Sometimes it's better to 'home in' on a rarer die as I did for this 3-page exhibit outlining the history of Percy Dalton (born Pizer Tolkan, s/o Nathan Tolkan, a Lithuanian) and his 'Famous Roasted Peanuts'.

PERFINS of Great Britain.
'Peanuts'

Percy Dalton's 'Famous Roasted Peanuts'.

The catalyst for this piece is *Stephen Steere*, who has recently been indexing the Sloper 'A-K' Ledgers in readiness for uploading to the Perfin Society website. In the ledger he came across the entry for '*Messrs. Percy Dalton (Ldn.) Ltd*', 50/51 Brushfield St, E1, along with 'proofs' of their overprint and Perfin "PD/L^{td}" (P1622.01). I'm afraid I don't have an example on a postage stamp of the *overprint*, but I do have an example of the *Perfin*.

c1954

P1622.01

To date this is the *only stamp value* known with the Perfin, a 2½d Wilding (Tudor Crown), introduced on 5th Dec 1952. This was later replaced by the St Edwards Crown watermark on 28th Sep 1955, dating the stamp to c1954.

Inspection of the diadem shows it to be Type I with an incomplete top line.
but sadly, that doesn't help in further refining the die in use date range.

Note - A 2x2 block of the 2½d Wilding is also known with the Perfin, but does anyone now know of its whereabouts? If so, I would like to hear from you!

Percy Dalton was born in Whitechapel (4th November 1908) and, aged fourteen, began work as a 'barrow boy' in a 'street market' in Stepney. He appears in Kelly's London directories as a *fruiterer* in White Horse Street (1931), and as a *fruit salesman* in Spitalfields Market (1937). In 1940 he and other family members took premises at 50-52 Brushfield Street where they traded as *fruit merchants*.

Around 1950 (so just before the use of the Perfin) Percy Dalton came up with the idea of roasting peanuts in their shells and selling them in bags at football matches. I suspect that he'd been roasting them for some time, before hitting on the idea of selling them at sporting events. At the time they sold for 6d a bag.

On a personal basis, as a schoolboy in the Midlands in the 1950's and 1960's, I must confess that I don't recall coming across *Percy Dalton's Famous Roasted Peanuts*. Were they simply a 'Southern' phenomenon, or just for 'Londoners', or conceivably in plain sight and I just didn't see them?

© Perfin Society
Percy Dalton's Famous Roasted Peanuts
Page 1 of 3



Often the research into the family history aspect of the subject Perfin brings you into *direct contact with a descendant*, as was the case with:

- Percy Dalton - his son *Michael John Dalton*.
- The ‘Miss Kendall Covers’ - *Richenda Wakefield*, a distant relative of Walter Smith, Miss Kendall’s husband.
- Edward Tancred Agius - his great-grandson, *Peter Agius* (see the ‘Malta’ Perfin Study/Catalogue on the Perfin Society website).

1890-1905



O1710.01

There was even a spin-off from the contact with *Peter Agius* in that he told me that Alfred Agius (ETA’s brother), became a Benedictine monk at St Augustine’s College, Ramsgate. Known as *Dom Ambrose Agius*, he was their College Bursar in 1890 and would have been responsible for introducing the Perfin “OSB” (O1710.01) at the Monastery!



The important thing to remember in all of this is that you can be a ‘philatelist’ *without* ‘collecting stamps’, and by extension, you can also be ‘interested in Perfins’ *without* ‘collecting them’. Or to put a topical spin on it, you do not need to own the *1c British Guiana stamp* (which recently sold for £6 million) to write about it, and that owning a ‘rare’ Perfin is *not* a pre-requisite for ‘waxing lyrical’ about it!