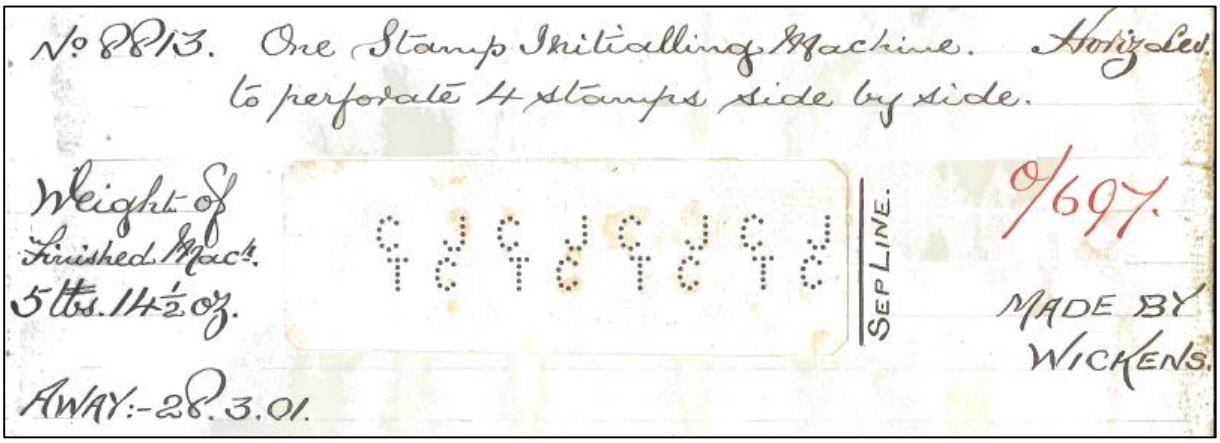
HERBERT WICKENS - A SLOPER WORKMAN.

Roy Gault

In entering up additional information for Section '**C**' of the GB Perfins Catalogue, my attention was drawn to what I'd written in the module for "**CJ/TC**" (C4000.01M), and then promptly and completely forgotten about, the fact that ***Herbert Wickens***, one of Sloper's workmen, was paid 6½d per hour, and took 25 hours to make a Press! The reference comes from Sloper Ledger '1' which covers machine numbers 8757 (dispatched 22nd August 1900) through to number 60631 (dispatched 26th June 1907). It should be noted that there is a giant leap in numbering from 9286 to 59244! The press involved in our case is press number 8813 shown below (not to scale).



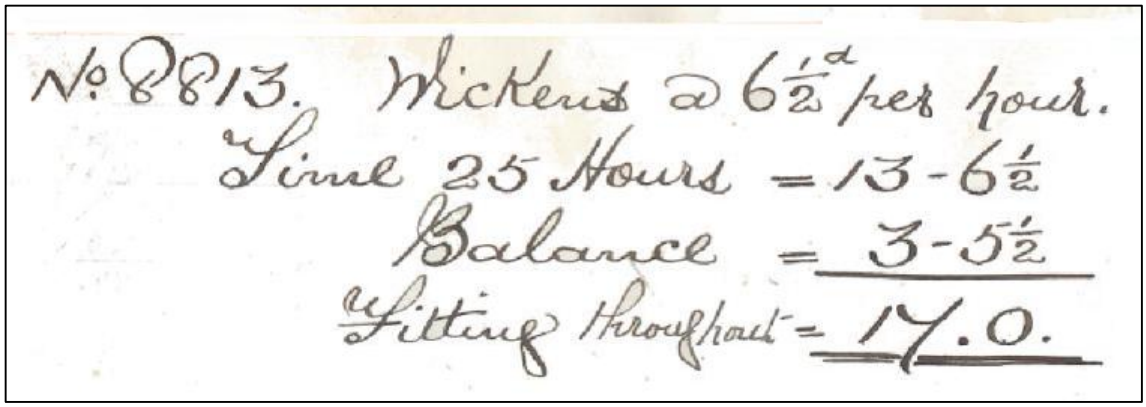
John Mathews has researched some of the workmen who worked for 'J Sloper and Co', (see B333, Dec 2004), and found '***Wickens***' as a 21 year old 'Mechanical Engineer' living with his family in Hampstead in the 1901 census. The first reference to him in the Sloper Ledgers is having made m/c #8775, which was dispatched to the customer 10th January 1901. The last reference to '***Wickens***' is for m/c #8937, dispatched 26th May 1902. However, this was also around the time that the maker's name was no longer added to the ledger, so he may well have continued working for Slopers for some time afterwards.

Entries in the various UK Censuses can be readily found for ***Herbert Wickens*** in 1881, 1891, 1901, and 1911, as well as the 1939 Survey. I was also lucky enough to find his marriage in 1910, along with his demise as late as 1970! Crikey, had we have known then what we know now, we could have actually spoken to him!

Herbert Wickens probably didn't work for '***J Sloper & Co***' for very much longer after 1902, as by the time of the 1911 UK Census he's described as a 'Motor Fitter' working for a 'Motor Bus Company' (aged 31), living with his wife Agnes M Wickens who he had married the previous year. Both were alive (and presumably well) in the 1939 Survey which gives his date of birth as 14th December 1879, and profession as a 'Fitter & Turner' with the '***London Transport Passenger Board***'. The last record I could find for him was his death which was registered 1st Qtr 1970 at Poole in Dorset, with his DoB confirmed as 14th December 1879.

Herbert C Wickens (1879-1970)

But back to the ledger entry which, unusually, shows his hourly rate of 6½d - this would equate to around £3 today.

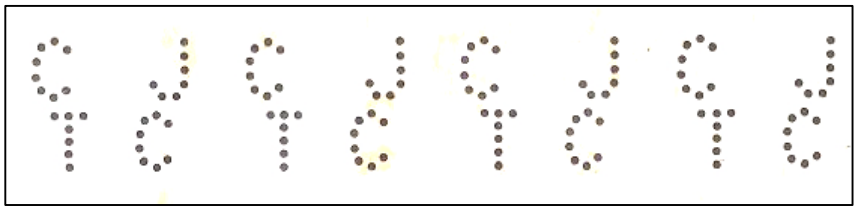


What we don't know is how many hours a week Herbert had to work, although there is another entry nearby in the ledger for a certain 'Boyall' (an un-researched employee) who earned 10/- per week.



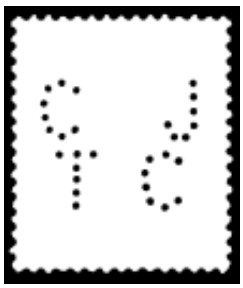
The ledger entry for Presses #8808 & #8809 lists a charge for 'Boyall' of 10s 2d for 54½ hours of work, so his hourly rate in round figures would have been 2¼d, with a working week of around 53½ hours, almost certainly over a period of six days, Monday to Saturday. Clearly 'Boyall' wasn't anywhere near as skilled as 'Wickens', and may well have been an apprentice.

However, there is a problem in that the die made by Wickens in **1901** is ***not the same*** as our "**CJ/TC**" (C4000.01M), which is known used around 1890 - indeed, one example is dated 10th September **1891**!



As can be seen below, our "**J**" is thinner, and the lower "**C**" is much more rounded, and as far as is known, the 'mystery' die has not yet been reported on any postage stamps, either GB or world-wide.

1890-1926



C4000.01M







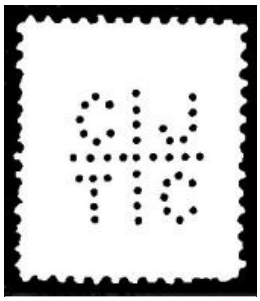




Note that the 'one and a bit' patterns on the large format stamps point to the die being ***multiheaded***.

The user is known to have been the '***China & Japan Trading Co Ltd***', 4 & 5 East India Avenue, London EC, which was reported by ***Bert Johnson*** in B264 (June 1993) on a cover postmarked 16th May 1895, London EC. Between December **1917** and December **1919** the company became known as the '***China, Japan & South America Trading Co Ltd***' at the same address, but by December **1927** the company is not mentioned, presumably it had gone 'out of business'. Unfortunately, I can find out very little about the company from the Internet, other than it was an Anglo-American company.

Perfins weren't officially sanctioned for use in the USA until 9th April **1908**, so the 'mystery' press wasn't made for use there, although the company did use the Perfin C177.5 in New York (see below). The US Perfins Catalog (Stephen Endicott, 2018) tells us that the earliest issue the Perfin is known on is the 1902 1c to $1 definitive series, and the latest issue is the 1917 Washington-Franklin issue (Perf 11). Just two consecutive dates are known, 23rd & 24th June **1920** (the 23rd June window cover is shown below). The Perfin is rated **C+** which means 41-70 known copies, where a '**D**' rating is considered as 'Average'.



C177.5 C+



Scott 303



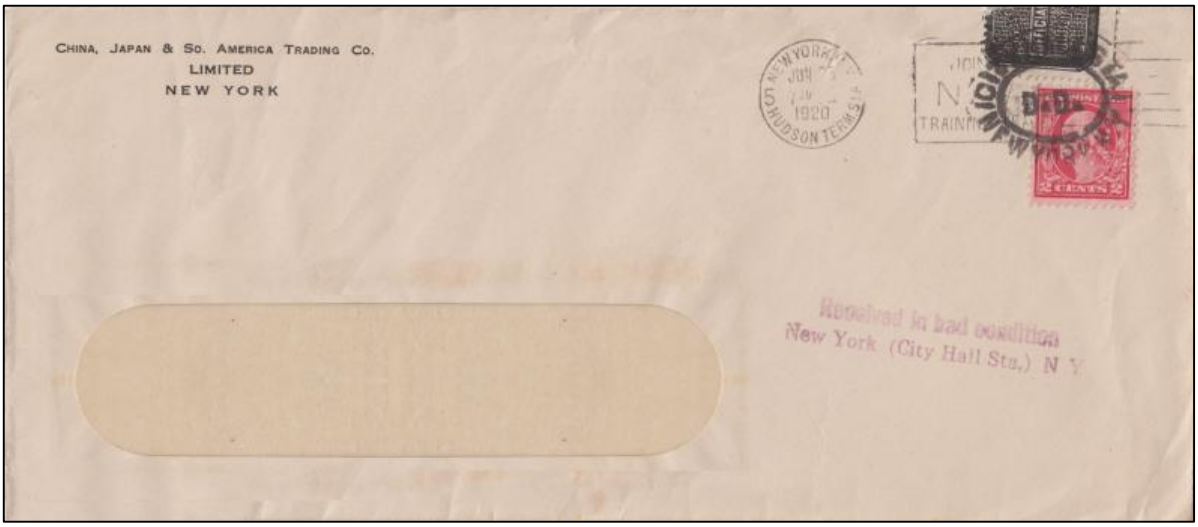
Scott 319



Scott 518

Stamp images courtesy of Steve Endicott.

Note: The Internet shows 1888 & 1894 inter-company covers sent from their 'China & Japan Trading Co Ltd', ***Yokohama*** office, to their ***New York*** office at ***34, 36 & 38 Burling Slip***, New York, USA.



This 1920 window cover (courtesy of The Perfins Club website) shows their post December **1917** extended name, '***China, Japan & South America Trading Co Ltd***'. If you can add anything more to the story, ***I'd be more than pleased to hear from you!***