

A PERFINNED FISCAL FORGERY

Roy Gault

This perfinned Tasmania fiscal forgery appeared in the ‘South Pacific Perfin Bulletin’ #145, April 2024, under the title ‘*Forgeries of Tasmanian George and Dragon Stamps - with a Perfin twist*’ by Ian Spencer and David Coath, itself taken from the Bulletin of ‘The British Society of Australian Philately’, Vol. 79 #2, April 2024.

1888-1890



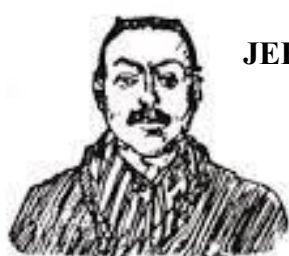
H7620.06

In essence we have a forgery of a 2/6d Tasmania Fiscal in Red with a forged? Hobart Tasma(nia), NO 19/88 cancel. And as if that's not enough, it also has the Perfin “H.W” which is a match for GB H7620.06. The Perfin is only known on two GB stamp values (the ½d vermilion and 1d lilac, both intended for inland use) , one of which is postmarked London WC, 9th February 1889, hence the 1888-1890 date range. Unfortunately, the user is as yet unknown.

But how do we know the stamp is a forgery? Fortunately, it's well documented on the Internet, for example on Evert Klaseboer's website © (<http://catalogue.klaseboer.com/vol1/html/jeffreys.htm>). Here are two further colourways of the forgery, violet and orange (courtesy of Evert Klaseboer), along with an example of the genuine article in Red. The ‘G’ of Shillings is top-dead-centre (TDC) on the genuine stamp, and the buttocks of Saint George are noticeably curved on the forgery!



The forgery was just one of many such forgeries perpetrated by the so-called '**London Gang**', a topic admirably covered in depth by **Michael Peach** in his article in the G.S.M. [The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada] in February 2016. I quote the salient facts with full acknowledgement ...



JEFFRYES

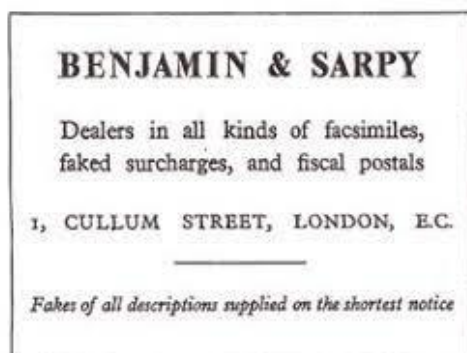


BENJAMIN



SARPY

The 'gang' comprised three members, **Alfred Benjamin** (1863-1924), **Julian Hippolyte Sarpy** (1860-1910), who were in business together as 'Benjamin & Sarpy', together with the actual forger **George Kirke Jeffryes** (1867-1939). All three were convicted of 'conspiracy to defraud and cheat by selling forged stamps' at the Central Criminal Court in London, 14th March 1892. Their punishment was 6 months hard labour for Benjamin and Jeffryes, and 4 months for Sarpy. The initial arrests on Christmas Eve, 1891, were at the instigation of the 'Philatelic Protection Association', who had Charles J Phillips (owner of Stanley Gibbons) as their secretary.



After their release, both Alfred Benjamin & Julian Sarpy continued selling genuine stamps and 'facsimiles' (at double the price) from their old address at 1 Cullum St, London EC.

As for Jeffryes, he became a seeds salesman at Covent Garden, then a Greengrocer in Grove Rd, Bow, before moving to Newcastle-upon-Tyne around 1900 where he became a manager for 'Sutton & Co', a General Carrier. In the 1921 Census he's a Shipping Agent.

Now a forger is not likely to have gone to all that trouble to produce the forgery only to apply a Perfin and so reduce its value dramatically, but could it be that "**HW**" himself - the user of the Perfin - was also a stamp collector, even a dealer, and it was he who applied the Perfin?

As stated previously, the trial was covered nationally in newspapers, and transcripts exist of the proceedings at the Old Bailey in **1892**, which I quote from below.

GEORGE FREDERICK CLAYTON - a postman - said ...

I met Jeffreys and Benjamin in 1889 in Benjamin and Sarpy's shop, 1 Cullum Street; he showed me some Tasmanian stamps, and said that they were the latest. I said that they were very good forgeries.

RUDOLPH MEYER - a managing clerk to 'Shankes & Co', shipping agents and continental carriers - *I have been for some years a collector of stamps. I have known 'Benjamin & Sarpy' 4 or 5 years.*

JULIUS CYRIAX - one of a firm of manufacturing chemists, of 16 Coleman Street, City - *I was a collector of stamps for some years up to 1890. I knew Benjamin, in partnership with Bannister, in Bell Alley, and I bought a number of stamps from them up to about 1886.*

DOUGLAS MACKENZIE - employed by his brother, a 'West Indian' merchant in the City - *I have been a stamp collector sixteen years. For three years I have known 'Benjamin and Sarpy', and Jeffreys some time before that. I have occasionally written for the Philatelic Journal. I have been interested in finding out particulars about forgeries.*

EDWARD DENNY BACON - I live at Ilford, and am one of the firm of 'Bacon & Hastings', of 41 Seething Lane, malt factors. *I am an expert in postage stamps, and was secretary to the Philatelic Society of London for some years; also honorary treasurer. I have been a collector for the past twenty years, and have written a good many papers upon stamps.* He goes on to talk about forgeries in a famous collection, and makes the comment that *the 'Sydney Views' are very good forgeries, and likely to deceive the postal authorities. I believe they could be used for letters in Australia as they have not been withdrawn, and could be used for postal purposes.*

All of these comments encouraged me to look for a stamp dealer (or collector) who had the initials "HW" and traded in London WC, but with little prospect of ever finding one!

The 1891 London directory didn't list anyone with the requisite initials under 'Stamp Dealers', so I turned to the **1895** edition and searched for 'Stamp Dealer'. Imagine my surprise when this popped up, which I nearly missed!

Williams Henry, stamp dealer, 61 New Oxford street WC

My attention then turned to the newspapers in the hope of finding something - and I did, as this was their advertisement in a newspaper for 6th April **1895**.

But how come I'd missed him in the **1891** directory, when the GB Perfin is known dated 9th February **1889**? I searched again, but this time looked for '61 Oxford St', and found a Wine Merchant (and Florist) at the address by the name of ... Jeullien Hyppolite!

STAMPS
Catalogued 12/- Free!
With each of the three following packets we give a magnificent Set of Stamps free.
The Three Packets for P.O. for 1s. 3d., or 16 Stamps.

100 STAMPS , including Mozambique (catalogued 1s.), Azores (rare surcharge), Ecuador (rare obsolete), Bulgaria, United States (Columbus), Austro-Italy (1st issue), Bosnia, Roumania (obsolete), Tunis, Cuba, Wurtemberg (Official), etc., post free, 4d. Set of 10 South American Free.	4d.
125 STAMPS , including Cashmere (rare used) S. Thome (catalogued 1s.) Honduras (obsolete), Deccan (Indian State), Bolivia, Dutch Indies, Servia (1890), Jamaica, Luxembourg, Brazil, Chili, etc., post free, 5d. Free Set of 5 Venezuela (catalogued 5s.).	5d.
150 STAMPS , including Iceland (rare), Persia (scarce), Uruguay, Constantinople Sweden (Official), Porto, Rico, Italian Colonies, Monaco, Denmark (1st issue), Ottoman Empire, Natal, Egypt, Japan, Australia, etc., post free, 6d. Set of Costa Rica (catalogued 6s.) Free.	6d.

APPROVAL SHEETS. PRICE LIST FREE
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61, NEW OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.C.

Jeullien Hyppolite. 61 New Oxford street WC

The directory entry is missing the surname Sarpy (either by accident or design), but this must be the same person as **Julian Hippolite Sarpy** (a native of New South Wales) who had not long returned from what we now call Australia (perhaps from a Wine trip?) in **1888**.

In conclusion, I would say there was a reasonable chance that **Henry Williams** perforated the 'St George & Dragon' Tasmanian fiscals (obtained from 'Benjamin & Sarpy') with his own perforator knowing them to be 'fake'. We don't know when this was done, but could easily have been carried out *after* the trial and incarceration in **1892**.

The Perfin is rare on GB Postage stamps, but hopefully more will surface extending the date to **1895**, after which Henry Williams disappears from the record. Sadly, the name is too common to attempt a family history search to find more out about "HW" himself.