

WHO WAS “MR STREETER” ?

Maurice Harp

I spotted this 4d brown plate 18 recently with the MR/STREETER perfin – M4900.01. The perfin is one of the nicest perfins that could be in anyone’s collection. This particular copy came from Terry Wood’s collection which is currently being sold and was finally sold for £77! The die was only used for a limited period and appears to be the only perfin die used by “Mr Streeter”

1882 - 1883



M4900.01

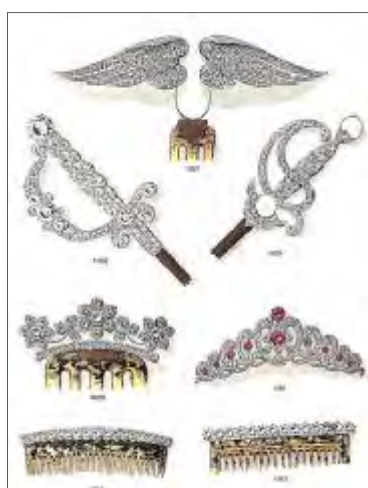
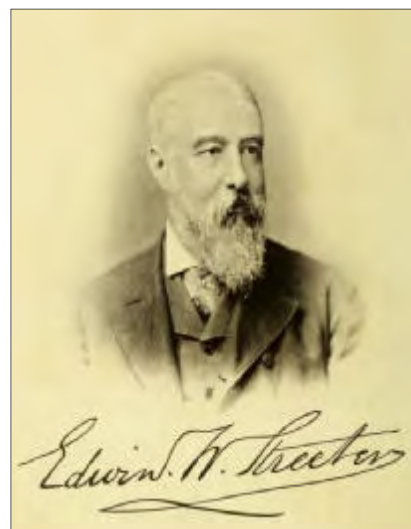


So I started wondering, who was Mr Streeter? So I turned to the Gault catalogue and found that we only have a provisional identity – Mr Streeter, Diamond Merchant & Goldsmith, 18 New Bond St, London W. {Est. 1670}. But just a “Mr Streeter” seemed a bit formal so I turned up the 1881 London Trade directory to see if I could find a bit more and was bowled over by the entry I found there.

Streeter, Edwin W. F.R.G.S. (gold medallist of the ‘Royal order of Frederic’ & holder of a special gold medal from H.M. the King of the Belgians), author of ‘Precious stones,’ ‘Gold,’ ‘Pearls,’ &c. (late Hancock & Co. Limited), pearl & diamond merchant, wholesale dealer in oriental & precious stones & sole introducer of 18-carat gold machine-made jewellery, watches & clocks, by appointment to T.R.H.H. the Prince & Princess of Wales & the Duke of Edinburgh; to the Emperor of Brazil & the crowned heads of Europe, 18 New Bond street W & 12 Clifford street W; also at Colombo, Ceylon.

Clearly this was someone to be reckoned with. The Hancock & Co Ltd referred to above were also jewellers and diamond merchants and also based in New Bond St.

Mr Streeter's full name was Edwin William Streeter (1834-1923). He worked for Harry Emanuel before setting up on his own account in 1867/8 in Conduit Street. He moved in 1873 to Harry Emanuel's old premises at 18 New Bond Street where he described himself as 'Diamond merchant, Goldsmith, Jeweller, Watchmaker'. [Harry Emanuel was also appointed by the Prince and Princess of Wales. This may be how Streeter could claim to be established in 1670]. He took a particular interest in precious stones and produced a number of books of famous diamonds and gem stones. In one of his books I found a photo of the man himself.



Streeter catalogue

Although he announced his retirement in 1884 and sold off much of his stock, he did not retire but admitted partners into his business which was now restyled Streeter & Co and became a limited liability company in 1895 as Streeter & Co Ltd. By 1904 E. W. Streeter was finally forced to retire due to failing eyesight. The premises and goodwill were transferred to the United Investment Corporation and the remaining stock was sold at Christie's.

When he died in 1923 at the age of 90 Edwin William Streeter, was described as the man who made his jewellery shop at 18 New Bond St. one of the most famous retail establishments of the world. He was the man who opened up the Kimberley diamond mines, founded the Broome (Western Australia) pearl fisheries and the Sulu Archipelago (Philippines) pearl fisheries and obtained a concession for working the ruby mines at Burma. With so many fingers in so many pies he was able to obtain some of the most famous stones of this period.

Why Streeter only used this one perfin for such a short time is not clear. Maybe perfins were a bit down market for a man with such rich clients.