

HISTORY OF FIRMS USING PEREFINS

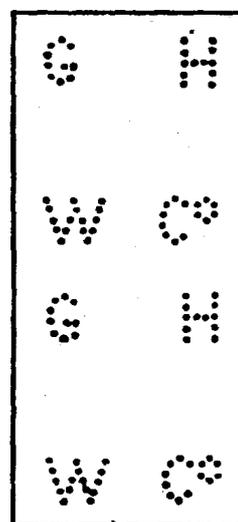
HITCHCOCK WILLIAMS & CO.

Dave Hill

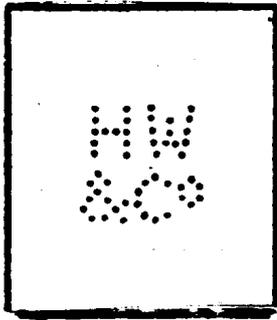
George Hitchcock revitalised an old-established firm of drapers in St. Pauls Churchyard at the west end of Cheapside. Cheapside was the traditional shopping street of the City of London before the development of the big West End department stores. Neighbours were Nicholsons; Cook, Sons & Cook; James Spence and Copestakes. All by the way users of perfin. Sloper's offices were at the other, east end, of cheapside. Fellow west countryman, George Williams had worked for Bridgewater's leading draper and joined Hitchcock's in 1841, both being recent evangelical converts. Williams helped Hitchcock build the business, dealing with the large staff of 150 in a benevolent manner. Williams married Hitchcock's daughter in 1855 and was taken into the partnership, now styled **George Hitchcock, Williams & Co.** Hitchcock was involved with the Early Closing Association, the Ragged School Union and the anti-slavery campaign.

In 1863 Hitchcock died and Williams became the sole proprietor: his sons joined the firm and it became Hitchcock, Williams & Co in 1892. It did not move to the West End but concentrated on wholesaling and manufacturing. By 1900 it had established a world-wide business (they controlled Bright & Co., one of Australia's largest stores) as well as branches in English provincial cities. Williams' family married into fellow evangelical families, Thomas Cook and Hodder & Stoughton. A great friend was Samuel Morley of I & R Morley.

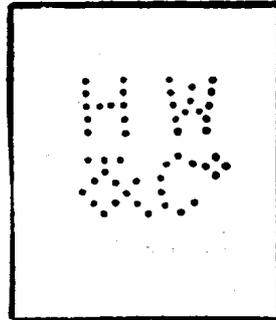
From Sloper's earliest records we find that the first machine made for sale to a client was No.2607, to perforate two stamps at a time. An impression (copied alongside) was taken on the 3rd April 1868, Sloper having been given permission to perfin stamps on 13th March that year. Cat. No. G2410.01M, this has yet to be positively identified with George Hitchcock, Williams & Co., as early covers are scarce.



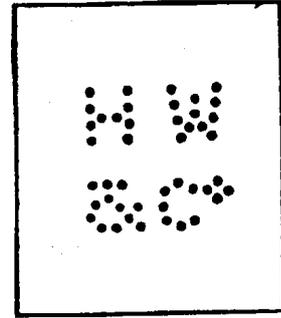
Hugh Vallancey had access to Sloper's records, and in his booklet on perfins in 1933, gave Hitchcock, Williams & Co. as the first firm that 'Sloper's had done continuous business with since the early days'.



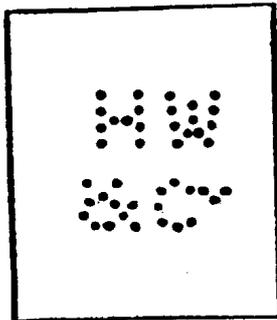
H7710.02
in use 1885-95



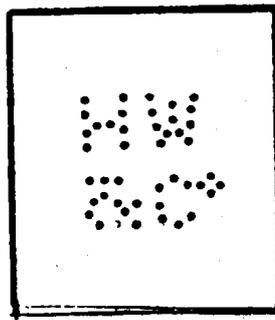
H7710.06
in use 1925-36



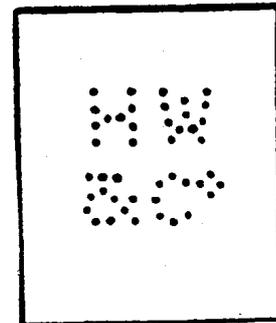
H7710.033M
in use c 1939
12x1 die-indicated in
Sloper's 1st Ledger?



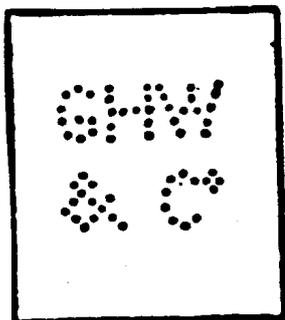
H7710.03dM
in use c 1945
12x1 die



H7710.03aM
in use c 1949
12x 1 die?



H7710.03bM
in use ?
12x1 die
in Sloper's 2nd Ledger



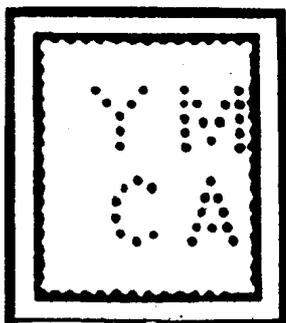
G2420.01? in use ?
unidentified but does it fill the gap 1896-1924?

There is no wartime provisional listed in Ledger 1. A single die is indicated but is not known(?).

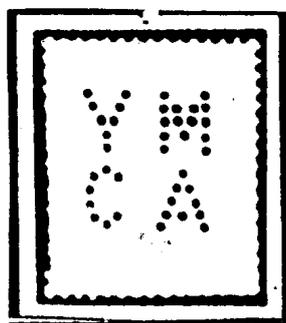
George Williams is regarded as the founder of the Young Men's Christian Association. The first meeting was held at Hitchcock, Williams & Co's offices in 1844. The name was the idea of another employee: the meetings developed into the London Central YMCA. Initially there were aimed at young shop assistants and the like as an alternative to the public house and music hall.

Hitchcock was treasurer until he died when Williams succeeded him. He was also the second president after Lord Shaftesbury died. He was responsible with S Morley, J D Allcraft and others for the purchase of the Exeter Hall for the YMCA, to save it from becoming another music hall. Williams was a delegate to YMCA conferences all over the world almost up to his death in 1905. At that time he was president of 39 charitable societies and had an interest in many more. In 1894 he had been made a Freeman of the City of London and was knighted. He is buried in St Pauls.

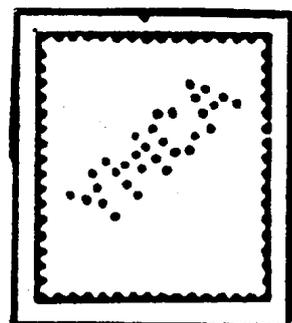
In 1951 the business became a private company and in 1984 it closed, a victim of the economic recession. Gordon Williams was a director at that time, the 5th generation.



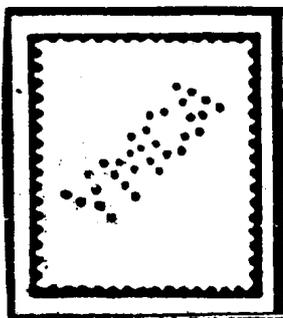
Y0720.02
in use 1896



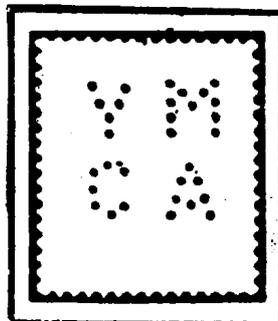
Y0720.03
in use 1915



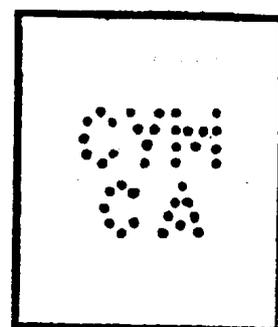
Y0710.01a
in use 1918-36



Y0710.01
in use 1930-39



Y0720.01
in use 1945-60



C8780.01
in use c1925
London Central YMCA