

For four years in the 1970s, the British Stamp Collecting Promotion Council produced perfins and special covers to help publicize stamp collecting. My first knowledge of such perfins came in late 1975 through the courtesy of Dr. Harvey Tilles (#7L) who generously sent me a cover bearing two of the special perfins and a special booklet with a pane of four perforated stamps stitched into it.

I tucked the cover and the booklet into a stock book and thought nothing more about them until late last year when another 1975 cover showed up in an eBay auction. I acquired it with a very low bid and dug out the earlier cover and booklet to mount them properly in my collection of personal and philatelic perfins.

I also turned to my colleague Rosemary Smith, editor of the *Bulletin* of the Perfin Society of Great Britain, to find out more about these perfins. Rosemary, it turns out, had authored an article in the British *Bulletin* in 1991 and generously shared that and some additional information with me.

That is when I learned that similar perfins were issued in 1976, 1977, and 1978—in each case to publicize a Festival of Stamps exhibition timed to coincide with the May 6 celebration of National Stamp Day. The date, of course, marks the introduction of the Penny Black in 1840.

The first perfin was issued at the 1975 Festival in London. The special cover for the event showed the Houses of Parliament and carried a se-tenant

The National Stamp Day Perfins of Great Britain

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Number 7 in the author's series on personal, philatelic, and vanity perfins.

pair of the 7p architectural heritage stamps (Scott 740-41) issued on April 23 of that year. The

chased only at the exhibition.

A block of four was included in a special souvenir booklet stitched along the selvedge edge of the stamps. The Sloper organization produced the perfin and only 80,000 were perforated. The booklet Dr. Tilles sent me is stitched in white thread. Rosemary says some booklets were also stitched in black thread—creating two distinct varieties of the booklet.

A similar perfin was used at the 1976 Festival. That year's cover shows three stamps (Ascension Island, St. Helena, Tristan da Cunha) superimposed on a map of the South Atlantic. The three stamps were not perfined. The only stamp perfined NSD/1976 was the 8½p telephone centenary commemorative (Scott 777) issued in March 1976. The perfin once again was created by Sloper and only 20,000 copies were made.

A souvenir letter card was issued for the 1977 Festival. The letter card shows the logo of the Queen's Silver Jubilee. The 8½p centenary of the Royal Institute of Chemistry (Scott 806), issued in March of that year was perforated NSD/1977.

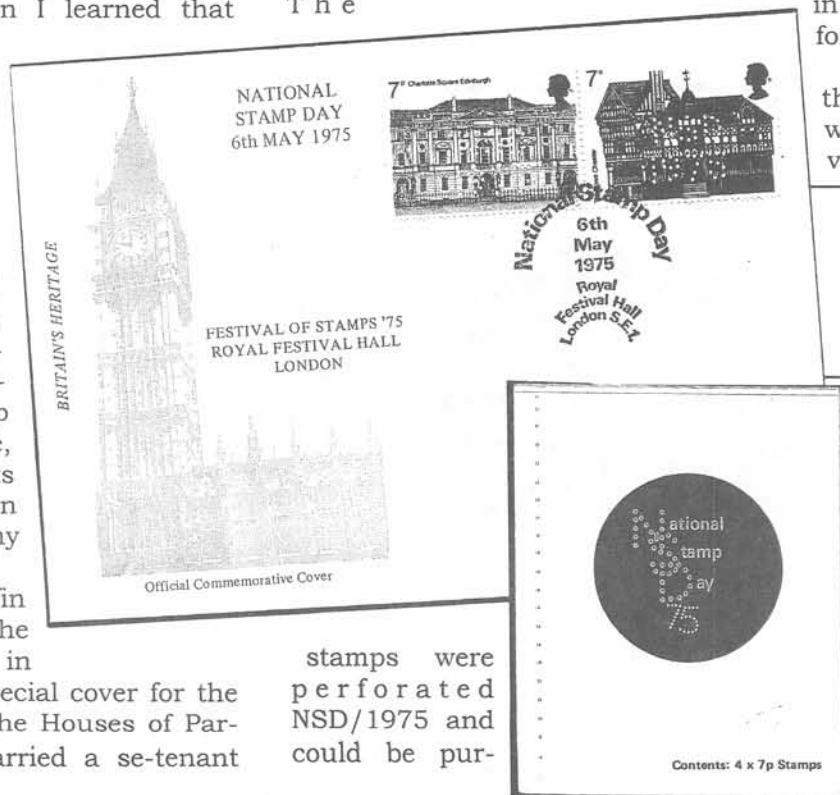
During the 1977 Festival, the Silver Jubilee stamps were issued and the 8½p value of the set (Scott 810)

was used on the souvenir letter card and was perfined SCPC (for Stamp

Collecting Promotion Council), thus creating a second philatelic perfin associated with the event.

The 1978 Festival was marked by a special cover showing a line drawing of the Royal Festival Hall below a colored logo of the National Stamp Day Union Jack. The 9p British

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stamps were perforated NSD/1975 and could be pur-

Each of the four NSD perfin differs slightly in design

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Architecture commemorative issued in March 1978 (Scott 831) showing the Tower of London was perforated NSD/1978.

In her article, Rosemary Smith says she learned that these four years were the only occasions when perforated stamps were used.

Sloper *probably* perforated the 1977 and 1978 stamps, but there are no records to confirm that fact. Smith says she learned that fewer than 20,000 stamps were perforated in each of those last two years.



The four NSD perfins are shown here. It should be noted



that while the NSD part of the patterns is fairly standard (leading to their association with the Sloper organization), the dates are quite different. The SCPC pattern illustrated here also looks more like a Sloper

produced pattern than do the 1976 and 1977 perfins.

The four NSD perfins and the SCPC perfin are excellent examples of the use of perfins to publicize a philatelic event. It is unfortunate that the perfin series hasn't

been continued.

*Our special thanks goes to
Rosemary Smith for
her assistance with this article.*