

GREAT BRITAIN PRE-CANCELLED PERFINs

Mike J. Burrows

[Ed:- Over the years Mike Burrows produced many excellent articles for our Society Bulletin. This article though was written for the US Perfin Bulletin in May 1979 and never made an appearance in our Bulletin.]

In Great Britain no precancels in the style known for Belgium, France and the United States, exist. Instead the precancel takes the form of a special postmark. Some companies such as W. H. Smith & Sons, Wm. Dawson and H. S. King were issued with their own cancel and these have been dealt with in other issues of the Bulletin.

But what of those companies that were not issued with their own distinctive marking? Well, in 1870 the members of the Provincial Newspaper Society approved a plan to send stamped wrappers to their local post office during the day to be cancelled and returned for use later in the same day. This, of course, meant that the Post Office could postmark the wrappers during a quiet period and thereby relieve some of the congestion during the hectic posting periods. The publishers obtained the advantage of being able to post later than the general public.



SIX O'CLOCK P.M.: THE NEWSPAPER WINDOW AT THE GENERAL POST-OFFICE

To give some idea of how important these arrangements were – one of the sights of London was the mêlée and confusion at the Newspaper window of the General Post Office. Indeed, to go and witness this spectacular event was considered a must in the itinerary of the well-to-do Victorian tourist, as the contemporary engraving above shows.

Over the years some changes were made to the London cancels used for these newspaper wrappers, especially in the number of radial bars, which can vary from 6 to 10 bars. Illustrated below are a few of the types you may come across. The dates which appeared under LONDON have been omitted in the illustrations.



Some of the publishers had the added advantage that instead of sending the wrappers to the local post office, the post office sent an employee along to the publishers' premises to stamp the wrappers.

From records kept of the perfins noted having the London pre-cancellation, I find that some can be identified as being of newspaper publishing origin. Of course these same perfins can also be found with other cancellations when used for ordinary mailing purposes.

Also, in the provinces, no special postmark was used for this special service that can be definitely allotted to this duty. (This only applies in the context of precancelled perfins). As yet no example has been noted by me on postal stationery which was issued from October 1st 1870, and which has been perfined.

[Ed:- Mike then appended a list of perfins that he had seen bearing these pre-cancellations. I have amended it slightly to reflect current catalogue numbers and additional identity information that has come to light since the article was originally published.]

Die	Lettering	User
B3070.01	BGL	Lennon Ltd, London SE1
B7210.01	BTJ	The British Trade Journal, 24 Mark Lane, London EC
B7580.0?	B&W	14,14,14 (III) 4½ exact die unknown
D4710.03	DT	probably used by The Daily Telegraph, Fleet Street, London EC
D5360.01	D.X.	The Daily Express, St Bride St, London EC
E1720.01	E.G	The Estates Gazette Ltd, 200 Fleet Street, London EC
E4660.03	ET	Mike Burrows listed this die as T0010.08 but it is now known to be a partial of ET (E4660.03) used by the Electrical Times, Chancery Lane, London WC
G4210.02	GRAPHIC	The Daily Graphic, Tallis House, Whitefriars, London EC4
H0210.0?	HAG/&Co	exact die unknown, provisional identity of H. Alabaster, Gatehouse & Co.
I1580.01	ILN	The Illustrated London News & Sketch, Milford Lane, Strand, London
K0010.0?	K	10 pins probably K0010.09 used by Kemsley Newspapers Ltd, London EC
L4380.03	L&P	London & Paris Exchange Ltd, Moorgate Street, London EC3
M4410.0?	MP	the die is probably M4410.01M used by the Morning Post, Strand, London WC
S6440.0?	S&S	11,12,11 (IIIa) probably S6440.03 reported with NPB cancellations
S7180.01	STB/PL	St. Brides Press Ltd, 24 Bride Lane, Fleet St, London WC1
T1940.02	TGL	The Gentlewoman Ltd, 1 Arundel St, Strand, London WC
W1970.01	WD/&Co.	William Dunn & Co, Broad St Avenue, London EC2
W2040.03	WD/&S	William Dawson & Sons Ltd, Pilgrim St, London EC
W3800.03	WHS	W H Smith & Sons Limited, Strand, London WC2

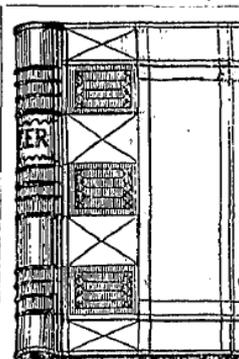
[Ed:- Mike also produced a follow-up article in the September issue of the US Perfin Bulletin in which he reported another perfin die with a precancel.]

Illustrated is a further example of another type of precancel obliterator that was allocated to W. H. Smith. Recently, a single Queen Victoria 1/2d vermilion of the "Jubilee" issue was found to have a similar cancel, except the inner ring was 19 mm in diameter, instead of 20 mm in the illustration below. Most of the date of the cancel appears on the stamp – 9 JY 9?



Ed:- In an unpublished letter from Reg Powell to Mike found in the Society library Reg Powell reported another copy of a 1/2d vermilion with the same "R" perfin dated 1 FE 93 and another copy on a KEVII 1/2d blue green. The die appears to be R0010.13a, known used between 1890-1918, but the user is as yet unidentified and it is not clear why W. H. Smith would have used a letter R perfin. If any members can report any other perfinned stamp with these precancel obliterator please let the Bulletin editor know.]

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