

HISTORY OF PERFIN USERS

DOLPHIN SQUARE, LONDON W1 by Dave Hill.

D4360.05 (DS 9,9 4½mm) is identified with Dolphin Square, W.I. Some of our members may know this area more intimately than I.

It was planned initially by an American but he could not find the balance of the purchase price so Richard Costain, the builders, stepped in and bought the 7 acres of land on the Thames at Pimlico, the site of an old army clothing depot. The plan for 1250 bedsits with its own shops and social amenities cost over £1,000,000 in 1935. Costain was persuaded to fit out the flats for the middle and upper classes but the war and rent restrictions reduced the profitability. It was sold in 1958 to Maxwell Joseph for £2½ million who, shortly afterwards, sold it on again for a considerable profit, much to Costain's chagrin.

It was still a self contained community when I used to go there a few years ago, visiting the offices of a small consulting engineer. The basement had all kinds of shops. It must have made up for the loss of the servant class!

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HALLS OF DARTFORD, KENT by Arthur Smith.

The works of J. & E. Hall Ltd., was founded by John Hall senior in 1785, and there was no break in the continuity of the firm until recent years, when the existing refrigeration business was taken over by A P V Baker. Visiting the site of the old firm I found that B & Q AND MFI have large concerns on the site whilst a considerable part is still derelict.

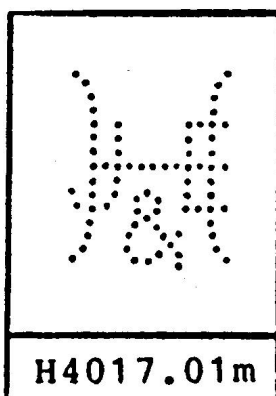
During the first century of their existence the works had been general engineering. With the development of refrigeration their work was mainly on the production of CO₂ and refrigeration machinery, together with the equipment for collecting and bottling CO₂. In 1897 Messrs Elders - shipowners - and Fyffes Ltd. - fruit importers - together with the Colonial Secretary, discussed with Halls the manufacture and installation of duplex CO₂ machines, air coolers and fans in ships. A contract was eventually given to Halls and two steamers were lengthened to carry the contract number of bananas in the insulated chambers and to allow space for refrigeration equipment.

The old system where bananas were packed in crates and carried on deck, except in very cold weather, was thus changed to transporting large quantities of them, together with other types of fruit, from all parts of the world.

During the early part of this present century, an ammonia compression system was developed as opposed to the CO₂ type. Business rapidly increased for installation on land in addition to marine requirements.

During the two world wars, work at Halls increased greatly and a very large work force existed. In the last 30 years various parts of the firm have gradually closed down and often one hears discussion of the old days at Halls. An uncle of mine was made redundant when his job as a pattern maker ceased on the section closing down.

John Hall was a remarkable man and at the time of his death in 1836 he owned the gunpowder works at Faversham, paper works at Chislehurst, and diverse works in other areas. One can well understand why the outstanding perfin, illustrated below, was adopted by him for his works of J.E. Hall (Ltd., Dartford).



Editor:- There still seems to be some doubt about the identity of this perfin. In the Illustrated Catalogue it is listed under the letter 'H', as it was in Tilles Catalogue.

It was not identified in Tilles nor has it been reported to Roy Gault to enter into our Tomkins Identity Catalogue.

John Coles mentions it in his Monograms and Designs Catalogue and so does John Nelson in his book, 'The Handbook of British Perfins', on pages 20 and 25.

Stamps are seen with Dartford postmarks I am told but can anyone come up with a proving cover? Send details to Roy if you have one.

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