

## CARRON COMPANY

by Ian Burns

Carron Company began when the first furnace was fired on the 1st January 1759. It was gradually built up to become one of the largest iron foundries in Britain. In its early life it was famous for its Carronade, built originally in 1778, and used by such people as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Nelson and also sent all over the world. It was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1773. Throughout its long life it has made a great variety of products.

The catalogue lists 3 dies for the company. Two are different sizes of C/CC and the third is C<sup>n</sup>C<sup>o</sup>. My comments here are about the two dies of C/CC. I feel I must disagree with the learned people who originally assigned the die as C/CC. I think it should be CC/C. My main argument for this is purely the fact that the company's address is Carron Company, Carron, Falkirk - Carron being a district on the northern outskirts of the town of Falkirk. The CC thus being for Carron Company and the lower C for Carron, the district. I have also found all my perfins to measure 5½ mm high.

I have checked through my perfins and find that, on close examination with a lens, I have the following:-

Upright die	19 stamps	16 pierced from the front	3 I cannot tell
Inverted	8 "	8 "	" " "
Reversed	11 "	9 "	" " back 2 I cannot tell
Inverted, Reversed	29 "	25 "	" " " , 2 front, 2 I cannot tell

These findings, I feel, definitely support my theory as the majority of times that stamps are perfinned they will be done face up. Having seen the machine, and used it, it was obvious that, if many stamps were to be done, they would have to be folded so that several thicknesses were done at once as the machine has only 2 dies.

The earliest stamp in my collection is KGV 1½d block cypher of 1924. Unfortunately no date-stamp can be seen and already some of the pins are blind. By the photogravure issue of 1935 the machine has been repaired as the perfin is now complete. Deterioration continues through until, by 1952, only 2 pins are clear. By 1955 the machine has again been repaired and is in poor condition by 1961. Improved again by 1966, although we have both dies on a 4d Robert Burns stamp and it shows one poor die and one a bit better. By 1969 one die is again very poor. Some slight improvement has been made by 1973/4 as again we have both dies shown on a 3½p Wedding stamp of 1973 and then a 4½p Xmas stamp of 1974.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date of . issue</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Pins</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Postmark</u>
1	18/3/35	3d	Complete	Reversed	-
2	1/9/41	½d	5C 1B 2M, 5C 3B/4C 2B 2M	Upright	-
3	3/5/51	2d	3B 5M, 1C 5B 2M/1C 5B 2M	“	Receipt 15/10/52
4	6/9/55	2d	7C 1B, 7C 1B/6C 1B 1M	“	Receipt 29/11/52
5	15/9/59	2½d	5C 1B 2M, 5C 3B/4C 2B 2M	Inverted, Reversed	-
6	4/10/61	2d	2C 4B 2M, 5B 3M/6B 2M	“ “	-
7	25/1/66	4d	(Robert Burns) (2 dies) (Left die) 2C 3B 3M, 8 part B/7 part B 1M (Right die) 4C 1B 3M, 6B 2M/4C 3B 1M	“ “	Feb 1966
8	27/8/69	2d	1C 4B 3M, 6B 2M/all 8 part B	Reversed	-
9	14/11/73	3½p	(Wedding) (2 dies) (Left die) 2C 3B 3M, 8 part B/7 part B 1M (Right die) 4C 1B 3M, 1C 6B 1M/4C 3B 1M	Inverted. Reversed	4 Dec 1973
10	27/11/74	4½p	(Xmas) (2 dies) (Left die) 5C 3M, 7C 1M/6C 2B (Right die) 4C 4M, 1C 3B 4M/4C 4M	Inverted Reversed	23 Dec 1974

Abbreviations –

C – complete

B – Blind

M- missing



I have a cross-section of Upright, inverteds etc, right through the years from 1924 until my newest stamp, a 12p of 30th June 1980, so it appears that the stamps have been folded for perforating ever since the machine was first used.

Then I first saw the machine, in July 1980, it was in fairly poor condition. The left die had only 3 pins in each C operational and even then they give a blind strike, the right die had one pin in one of the upper C's broken and jammed so that the stamp could not be inserted properly. The lower C shows 7 of the 8 pins. By this date nearly all mail from the company used meter marks although any late mail used stamps which were perfinned.

According to my informant, who was about to retire after 50 years with the company, he had used the machine when he started in 1929 as an office-boy. However, no further information was available as to the date of purchase of the machine.

The company has since gone into liquidation, in 1982, and I have no idea what happened to the machine. I did contact the liquidators but to no avail. Thus came the sad end of a once-great company.

