

## PERFIN SOCIETY PACKET

Colin Fountain

I was interested to read Dave Hill's comments in Bulletin 325 about his difficulty in obtaining different perfins for his collection and the expense of doing this through the auction. My problem is that despite monitoring the prices in the auction and submitting bids based on these, in recent auctions I have been invariably outbid and I get nothing new for my collection. Some newer members of the Society have told me that they are experiencing the same problem.

I believe that one way of enabling members to purchase individual stamps for their collections would be to re-start the Perfin Society circulating sales packet. Dave Hill is still officially the Packet Superintendent, but he had to cease the packet some years ago because of a severe lack of material to circulate. I would be willing to run a packet if it is the members' wish to resume this facility. I had experience of running a packet for a local philatelic society a few years ago. Dave Hill is agreeable to me taking over this role, if I can get sufficient support from members.

This would depend on a steady flow of saleable material to circulate (i.e. not common Machins). So can I ask members who would be willing to supply booklets of individually priced perfins, identified perfin covers etc. to please contact me with an estimate of the amount of material which they would be able to provide, so that we can gauge the viability of this idea. The society would deduct a commission (possibly 10% of amount sold) and vendors would be responsible for postage on their material to and from the packet superintendent.

My address is 2 Harvard Close, Wellesbourne, Warwick, CV35 9LG e-mail: [cfountain@supanet.com](mailto:cfountain@supanet.com)

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There has been a number of comments from members about Dave Hill's query on increasing our collections without breaking the bank account, or buying in bulk and finding a disappointingly few new additions to our collection. In his letter, Gianni Sironi made a suggestion to help bring in

more replies from members (helping the Editor at the same time!). He suggested that each year we propose a subject and give an award to the best answer or opinion which is sent in about the subject. A good idea and from the comments received about auction lots and value of perfin, this would have been a good subject to choose.

The following are some of the comments.

From John Strange:- "The trouble with stamp collectors/philatelists/ perfin specialists is that by our very nature we tend to be hoarders. I have tried over the years to resist the temptation to accumulate surplus material, and am now reasonably disciplined in offering it to others.

You say that you are a '30%' collector; I reckon that I can only raise '8%'. I am looking for much more than you, for example, and without throwing money optimistically at auction lots, my collection creeps up in volume.

We all work hard to analyse each perfin to the best of our knowledge, collect it, including DDF's if required, and after that it is no problem to put any duplicate in a stock book headed with its relevant details. Should another duplicate appear, I am pleased to send it to the Society as encouragement to a new collector.

The tricky bit is circulating your surplus. I have printed a list of this, asking a 'perfin for a perfin', taking a risk on whether I already have it, or not. So far, the system is working well for me with a small collection, and is not expensive to operate. How many other collectors have a list of stock for exchange or sale?"

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In reply to a different comment in a recent Bulletin, John Marriner has this to say, "If I may comment on a previous article in the Bulletin, closer to our hearts, money, or the cost of items that carry a perfin. During the past 12 years or so since I have seriously collected these items, the stamp dealing fraternity has woken up to the fact that they can now sell that "useless" stock. Not useless to us but fascinating little gems. So the usual laws of supply and demand in our capitalist society takes over and up goes the cost. We all offer opinions on this matter, but by how much has

all the other "costs" in life increased? As the "value" of anything is only what a purchaser will pay, simple economics illustrates that someone out there is willing!

Recently in one of our Society auctions I was successful in obtaining a KEVII 1d red with the perfin "crown/BT, not the best copy I have seen, so when a dealer/auction house offers mint QV stamps with the same perfin at £20-£25 each I think that is not too excessive. No doubt others will have contradictory opinions, but you have to pay for quality, and the "good old days" are gone for ever."

Whilst on the subject of the Society Auction, John Marriner says, "I would like to express an opinion on a matter that Dave Hill brought up in a previous Bulletin on the matter of lot description in the auctions. I was successful in auction 3/2003 to obtain a lot described, "KG V ADD "all damage slight" 100(5)." But on closer inspection 16 not 5 of the stamps were damaged, the worst being trimmed on almost four sides, my perception of "damage slight" being at odds with the vendor. There was duplication x 5, and my mathematics is obviously different as well as the lot only containing 97 items. At least my "usage" rate was better than Dave Hill, cost £17, and resulting in 19 new dies and 31 new face. But, referring back to Dave's initial comment, we are only deceiving fellow collectors when we do not describe a lot correctly."

Dave Hill has added another comment on the subject this month too:- "In our own auction, I have noticed how few lots there are of over 100ADD, and those are QEII. Most QV and Edward VII are 50ADD or less, which means there is more chance you will already have those 50 dies. But then I have found it difficult to make up even medium sized lots myself. Looking back there were certainly more big lots years ago but even Harry started with just 150 lot auctions. He really began getting more/bigger/better lots in the late 80's early 90's. Which begs the question, are there fewer perfins in circulation? Membership numbers are much the same, but is members' interest greater, are there more people chasing a finite number of perfins?"

I only joined in 1989, but I got the impression from older members that perfin collecting was cheap, not so much in money terms but the value was inconsequential and was not a consideration. Hence the low estimates

many of us set in the auction. When other collectors still thought of perfins as damaged stamps, you could hardly have a "rare" damaged stamp! In the same way I have a (dormant) early GB collection, formed before I took up perfins, mostly from "spacefillers" and I resolutely refuse to set any value by it.

Is it part of the price we pay for perfins becoming respectable? Then again many of us are still willing to swap on a one-to-one basis, irrespective of "rarity". Incidentally, I had no takers for my wants list a few months back and have disposed of most of my swaps."

As Editor, I would like to put in my two penny-worth here. "A couple of years ago I had the privilege of being asked to sort out the perfins of two members who were wanting to sell their collections. One collection was on behalf of the wife of a deceased member, the other from a member who, although still very much concerned with the well-being of the Society, had changed his collecting interests. It has been a long job because I have gone through the letters one at a time, starting with the letters published by Roy Gault in the New Illustrated Catalogue. I have checked all the dies and values against the catalogue and over the last two years have sent many hundreds of new details to Roy to add to future catalogues.

I have been allowed to buy any perfins, which I needed for my collection but the remainder have been put into the auction. I have put these together in 'letter lots', 2/3/4 letters in one lot. These have been DDF with, in one collection, very few damaged but I hope my estimate of damage has been accurate to 3 or 4 out of the 300 or 400 perfins in the lot.

As to price, I have continued with my own belief that all lots, if accurately described, will find their true level of value in the bidding. Members know what they want, how much items are worth to them, and how much they are prepared to pay. I therefore put an estimate on the lots at which I would not be prepared to sell for less. The vendors and buyers of these lots have all been very happy with the outcome. However, these were collections, not duplicates from a collection, (the duplicates were sold as such), and it behoves sellers to describe duplicates/ common/ QEII etc in more detail."