

A Note about the City Of Sheffield Perfins

by Rosemary Smith

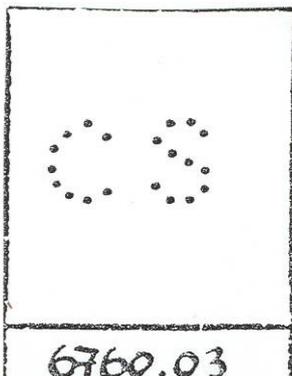
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Perhaps I had better begin by explaining that perfins are stamps which are perforated through the stamp with initials, numbers, designs, full names etc. The original intention of the idea of the perfin was to prevent the theft of stamps by company employees.

In the list of Council perfin users, compiled many years ago by the Perfin Society of Great Britain, the City of Sheffield was credited with but one perfin - CS with 9, 11 holes and 7mm high. The Perfin Society catalogue number is C6760.03.

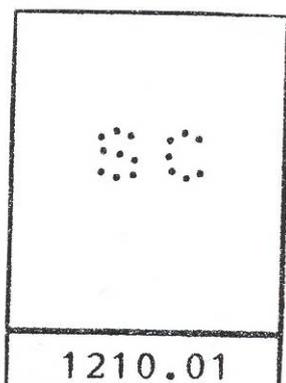


The list also stated that the perfins were produced by the Council's Printing and Stationery Department on a hand-operated *Jean Sauven 153/400* machine which perforated across 12 stamps at once. This I know to be correct as I

visited the office, many years ago, where the machine was used and was fortunate enough to have a sheet of paper perforated CS x 12 for me to add to my collection.

The City of Sheffield is said to have introduced perfins in 1941 but I query the use of C6760.03 (CS) as early as 1941. As far as I can discover from examining hundreds of loose perfins and many covers, the earliest use of this perfin is March 1942. I have in my possession 8 fronts from Valuation Forms sent from the Chief Valuation Officer of Sheffield.

One of our late eminent Sheffield Philatelists, Eric Buckley, had hundreds of these forms and I was allowed to check through them. (I now see these scattered throughout the country in dealers' boxes!). The perfin on these is SC with 9, 7 holes and 4½mm high - S1210.01. The values are ½d and 1d KGVI dark colours and the dates were from 19 June 1941 to 16 Feb. 1942. The perfin is a typical Sloper type die.



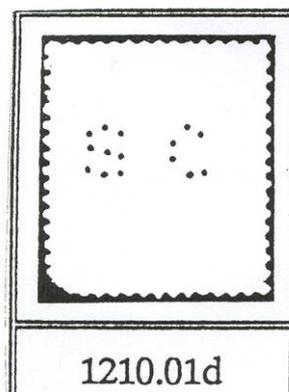
Joseph Sloper was the inventor of the perfin machine in the 1850s and Sloper's Works were in West Hampstead, London, perforating stamps there until the 1990s. The S1210.01 (small SC) was used by many Councils and Corporations with names beginning with S.

Sloper's Works were bombed in May 1941, partially destroying the premises. Following that, most of the perfins coming out of Sloper's were on KGVI light colours and were 'provisional dies': that is dies hastily put together with letters salvaged from the bombing until normal business could be resumed.

It could be argued that the first perfins used by the City of Sheffield were from Sloper's (i.e. S1210.01 with dates June 1941 to Feb. 1942) and the Corporation had enough perfined stamps to last until their own city was bombed on 12 and 13 December 1941.

However, a very small number of the 'Valuation Form' fronts from Eric Buckley had a rather peculiar perfin. This was the

normal 'S' but the C appears to be a letter B with pins removed to make it look like a C. Clearly a Sloper Provisional die. The Perfin Society catalogue number is S1210.01d, the letters are SC, 9,6 holes and 4½mm high. The dates in my collection for this die are 3 November 1941 to 16 February 1942.



When Sheffield was bombed in 1941 a great deal of Council equipment was destroyed and had to be replaced and I contend that it was at this point that the Council purchased their own perfin machine, the Jean Sauven, this time with the distinctive large letters CS, used only by the Corporation of Sheffield. The idea of large, expensive, numbers of stamps being posted from war-torn London to Sheffield, with the uncertainties of transit, must have made the cost of their own machine the cheapest option. I have only two values, the ½d and 1d in KGVI dark colours with this CS perfin, all the rest are light colours, changed colours or QEII.

The later CS perfin is very common on definitive stamps and many

commemoratives are found too. I have just one KGV1 commemorative with this perfin, the 2½d Victory - SG.491. For QEII I have the 4d Churchill, 4d Lister, 4d Battle of Hastings (SG.705, 706 & 710), 10d Rowland Hill and 12p & 17p 1985 Xmas. I am sure there are many more. My highest value of definitive is the 17p which would take their use up to about 1986.

I should be very interested to have earlier or later dates than the ones quoted for the two SC perfins with Sheffield postmarks, on or off cover, and higher values of the large CS perfin.

Rosemary Smith is a member of The Sheffield Philatelic Society, and the Editor of *The Perfin Society Bulletin* for The Perfin Society of Great Britain. Contact details can be found at www.angelfire.com/pr/perfinsoc

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The Sheffield Philatelic Society meets at 7.15 pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month (except August) at the Central United Reformed Church, 60 Norfolk Street, Sheffield, S1 2JB.

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