



Perforating the Silver Jubilee stamps

by **Harvey J Russell**

I purchased my first GB 1935 Silver Jubilee control block sometime in the mid-1950s and my last one earlier this year. In all that time, I was under the impression that Messrs Grover and Co Ltd were the only firm to provide the GPO's stamp printers with perforating machinery throughout the reign of King George V. Even when I got the special presentation card issued by Harrild & Sons Ltd for the Silver Jubilee, I thought that they only supplied a small part of the perforating machinery.

I have now found out that that assumption was completely wrong! In fact, several firms – possibly as many as four or five – supplied perforating machinery to the different stamp printers at various times. This article is written in an attempt to put right what I have wrongly stated in the past, so that it doesn't pass into stamp lore as truth – albeit I am a bit late!

The article written by Leslie Wilkinson - who is a Past President of the Great Britain Philatelic Society, and pre-eminent in the study of King George V postage stamps - which precedes this piece explains the main methods of perforating stamps in the UK during the period 1910-1935. Much of it is not relevant to the 1935 Silver Jubilee stamps, but some of the explanations therein will help those of our number who may not be familiar with the perforating process, to better understand just how this part of the manufacturing process was undertaken.

Some of the information given in the preceding article* is very relevant to the Empire Silver Jubilee stamps printed by Waterlow, and Bradbury, Wilkinson. For instance, from the records we know that Grover drilled perforation master plate No.350 for "Waterlow & Sons (Mr Clifford) Finsbury" which was described as "Colonial Commemorative stamp (GV) 1935 – 6 stamps across, 24x16 perforations, with No.8 pins". These pins were described and illustrated in the previous article (21.0mm long x 1.020mm wide). (They would, therefore, give a perforation hole slightly larger than 1.020mm or 0.040inches) To this record was later added "also for BW & Co Ltd".

From this master plate three perforating heads were prepared for Waterlow's: Heads No.2254 and 2255 on 20 Oct 1934, and Head No.2259 on 8 Dec 1934.

Two perforating heads were then prepared for Bradbury, Wilkinson: Heads numbered 2257 and 2258, both on 7 Nov 1934. In addition to this, and also on 7 Nov 1934, Grover supplied Bradbury with a "new set of perforating plates (3) 6 stamps: Colonial Commemorative GV and alter perforating head to receive same, in connection with master plate No.197." MP 197 was originally prepared on 6 June 1918 for Bradbury, Wilkinson in connection with the Seahorse high value GB stamps which they had then started printing. (Apparently, it was normal practice to adapt perforating heads for other purposes, and even other customers.) In fact, Master Plate 197 had been adapted from MP93, originally supplied to Waterlow Bros & Layton on 12 Dec 1913 for the seahorse stamps which they had just started to print!

Three perforating heads were therefore supplied to both Bradbury, Wilkinson and to Waterlow's for the 1935 Silver Jubilee stamps, but none to either De La Rue or Harrison's. In fact, Grover's did not supply DLR with perforators until 1941.

Thus, the special presentation folder issued by Messrs Harrild & Sons Ltd bearing a complete set of the GB issue, and stating: "*...Messrs Harrild & Sons take a particular pride in this issue as Harrild Postage Stamp Perforating Machines were used for the production of very great numbers of these historic stamps. Messrs Harrild & Sons Ltd were instructed to produce a series of Special Punch Boxes for the shape of the stamp selected, the most exacting standards of workmanship being required, so that this Jubilee Issue should surpass, if possible, the existing technical excellence of British Stamp production.*" was actually stating what had been under my nose all the time, but which I had ignored, that Messrs Harrild & Sons supplied the perforating machinery for the GB issue, not Grover & Co Ltd!

**The article referred to here as "previous" can be seen in full at*

<http://www.leswilkinson.co.uk>

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