



and

Longs

Perforations: the Hole in the Corner

Original written by Martin Brumby

As Packet Secretary, one task I have to carry out is to check through every book of stamps before it goes on circuit and again on its return. I check that everything is 'as described'. Most sellers are pretty reliable but the one area where errors frequently creep in, is **the identification of perforation varieties**. Even some respected and advanced philatelists seem to have some problems here. So perhaps it may be worth doing a little 'revision'.

The most comprehensive work on Austrian perforations is that by Dr. Helmut Pfalz and Mag. pharm. Helmut Richter: "Österreiche Spezialkatalog – Amtliche Zähnungen 1867–1906 (Published by the authors. APS Library No. 36). They point out, right at the outset, that the key for successfully collecting the different perforation varieties is an appreciation of the three basic perforation types (sheet or harrow perforation, row or comb perforation, line perforation) "and only secondarily an acquaintance with the perforation gauge". They go on to describe the different types as follows: -



Perf. 10 harrow

Perf. 13 x 12½ comb

Perf. 11½ line

Features of sheet perforation (harrow perforation)

"With sheet perforation, the perforation pins in the perforation machine are arranged in little rectangles or boxes (hence the German name Kastenzählung) the size of the individual stamps. There are as many of these boxes as the number of stamps in the printed sheet. Accordingly, with the downward stroke of the perforation apparatus, all the perforation holes in the underlying sheet of stamps are punched in a single process. From this mode of operation of the perforation machine it follows that **the corners of the individual stamps are all the same and of regular appearance and the individual stamps are all of an equal size.**" (my emphasis).

Features of comb perforation (row perforation)

"Comb perforation is today the most common kind of perforation. The pins are here arranged in the form of a comb. The perforation process is automatic. The perforation mechanism with the pins ordered in a comb shape rises after perforating the first row of stamps (thus perforating three sides of the top row of the sheet of stamps). The sheet of stamps is now advanced to the position of the next row of stamps, this is then perforated and so on to the last row of the sheet. With flawless operation the automatic perforation machine naturally also produces **stamps of equal size and each stamp, horizontally and vertically always exhibits the same number of teeth. The corners of the stamp, as with sheet perforation, are all equal and regular.** Irregularities in the operation of the perforator lead occasionally to shortened stamps or to stamps with broadened corners, which does not, however, thereby change the basic characteristics of the perforation."

It should be added that any really noticeable irregularity along these lines would be quite collectable in its own right.

Features of line perforation

"With line perforation the perforation device consists only of a single row of teeth, where the perforation pins stand out in a straight line. The upper edge is first of all punched with this row of pins, then the sheet of stamps moves forward the height of a row of stamps, the machine then punches the next row of stamps at the upper edge and so on, until the lower sheet margin is reached. Thus the sheet of stamps is perforated horizontally. Now the sheet of stamps is turned through 90 degrees and in the same way the vertical perforations carried out. Accordingly for a sheet of stamps of 10 x 10 stamps, 22 different processes are necessary. In this way, all the

classic Austrian stamp issues with line perforation had to have each individual perforating operation carried out, mostly by hand.

It is thus understandable, particularly through inaccurate work, that **the distances between the individual rows of holes slightly differ and therefore the individual stamps within the each sheet of stamps may be of different sizes. (So-called long or wide formats, often abused to produce dangerous fake perforations.) It is furthermore clear, that with such a mode of operation the perforation rows cross each other irregularly, the number of the teeth of individual stamps therefore varied according to size of the stamps and the various positioning of the perforator. Also the corners of the stamps when compared to each other, present a completely irregular appearance."**

Characteristics of the individual perforation types

Pfalz and Richter continue: "The characteristics of the corner perforations tell us whether we are looking at a stamp with harrow or comb perforation, or else one with line perforation. We can and must make this differentiation only by considering the perforations characteristics and without use of perforation gauges. The distinction between harrow perforation and comb perforation is therefore not important, because any confusion between these perforation types (perf. 9½ and 10 harrow or 13x12½ and 13x13½ comb) is anyhow impossible. To again explain the differences between harrow or comb perforation on one hand and line perforation on the other hand as clearly as possible, refer to the illustration above (regular corners with harrow or comb perforation, irregular with line perforation)."

It should be added that a stamp with irregular corners CANNOT be harrow perforated. Whilst, by a fluke, the strokes of a line perforator might yield a fairly regular corner to a single stamp (see the lower left corner of the stamp illustrated above), it is almost impossible that any specimen might be found with four regular corners, especially when checked under a magnifying glass.

Our authors continue: - "Frequently these characteristic distinctions are not considered when examining the perforations of the individual stamp. The beginner measures straight away with the perforation gauge - without paying attention to the characteristic corner perforations - and is led astray, when considering an 1867 stamp measuring perf 9 or an 1883 stamp measuring 10½. The beginner then is led from the fact that no harrow perforation 9 or 10½ is recorded, although there are line perforations in these gauges, to firmly resolve that the stamps examined must be line perforation 9 or 10½. The beginner should therefore consider the following:

"Through the long period of use of the harrow perforation machines (particularly the issues of 1867 and 1883) inaccuracies emerged. Perforation pins had become worn or broken and had been renewed inaccurately. The imperfections with the old harrow perforation machines had become so great, in the case of the 1883 issue, that eventually sections of the perforation pins were broken out and replaced with too many or too few new pins, so that the number of perforation pins on corresponding sides of the perforation rectangle were not all equal [**]. It is thus clear, that under these circumstances the perforation fluctuates and the perforation gauge does not help much at all. [++] Thus for the collector of perforation varieties of old Austria, once again the most important basic rule is repeated:

*Before using perforation gauges it must first be ascertained whether the stamp is harrow or comb or, alternatively line perforated. If the stamp has the characteristics of harrow or comb perforation then that is what it is. But if it has the line perforation characteristics, then it is line perforated, irrespective of what it measures on a perforation gauge. In this case an 1883 stamp with irregular corners measuring 9½ **must be perf. 9** or 9¼ line, one measuring 10 **must be perf. 10½ line**. And conversely, an 1883 stamp with regular corners **must be perf. 9½ or 10 harrow.**"*

[** Such a case is described as "irregular sheet perforation". With the ordinary sheet or harrow perforation the number of teeth or perforation holes on each stamp above and below is exactly the same, likewise on the right and on the left. The irregular sheet perforation, which occurs exclusively with the issue of 1883, breaks this rule. See Pfalz & Richter - or Ferchenbauer.][++ It is also worth pointing out that the 'perf. 10 harrow', more often than not actually measures 10¼!]

Compound Perforations

"Compound perforation is a sub-type of line perforation. This derives from the case where the same sheet of stamps is perforated by two different perforators in different directions. First of all the horizontal perforations are carried out with one perforator across the sheet of stamps, then the same sheet of stamps for the vertical perforation is inserted in another perforation machine. If the two machines use lines of pins set at different intervals, the perforated sheet of stamps shows horizontally one perforation and another vertically. A stamp in normal compound perforation thus shows above and below one gauge and down both sides another.

Sometimes it also happened during normal line perforation that a line of perforations was not properly punched. In consequence stamps remain joined together and are described with the familiar philatelic term 'Imperforate between'. "

Polish Town Cancels Prior to 1918

From the 1790s until 1918, Poland was partitioned among Austria, Prussia (later Germany) and Russia. During this period, Poland did not issue any stamps (except for a brief period in the early 1860s in the Russian sector). Thus stamps of the occupying powers were largely used in Poland prior to 1918. Below are a few examples of this usage, as evidenced by the town cancels.

Austria



Krakow (German: Krakau) cancel on Scott #43. Krakow, one-time capital of Poland, was the largest city in Austrian Poland.



Tarnow cancel on Scott #92. Tarnow is about 80 km east of Krakow.



Przemysl cancel on Scott #73. Przemysl is in far southeastern present-day Poland.



Cieszyn cancel on Scott # J36. Cieszyn is in the south of Poland, on the border with the Czech Republic.



Lwow (German: Lemberg) cancel on Scott #82. Lwow became Lviv, Ukraine after World War II.

Germany



Poznan (German: Posen) cancel on Scott #3. Poznan is one of the largest cities in Poland.



Leszno (German: Lissa) cancel on Scott #92. Leszno is about 80 km south of Poznan.



Wroclaw (German: Breslau) cancel on Scott #68. Wroclaw is the largest city in western Poland and became part of Poland after World War II.



Szczecin (German: Stettin) cancel on Scott #37. Szczecin is in the northwest corner of Poland, and became part of Poland after World War II.



Gdansk (German: Danzig) on Scott #39. Free City of Danzig between World War I and World War II

Russia



Warsaw (Russian: БАПЛИАБА, pronounced Var-SHAH-Vah) cancel on Scott #88).

Article by:
Stanley Bartnikowski

Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm., Rod Gabel presiding. 17 Members and 1 guests present.

Officer Reports

Secretary's report – Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted without being read.

Treasurer's report – Total club assets are \$12, 154.81 .

Program VP's report – Tonight is volume 2 of the "Story Behind the Stamps". On June 19-20th, OKPEX will be held in Oklahoma City. On June 24, Skip Ely will give a presentation on stamps featuring American painters. The next TSDA bourse will be held June 26-27. A Board Meeting is scheduled for July 8th. A new DVD from the APS will be played at the regular meeting that evening. Geoff Owens is working on a presentation July 22nd with the tentative title, "Are you paying too much for your castle?"

Club exhibits – Paul Witthoef indicated he would need to know the page titles in September for the Mid-Cities November show. He also indicated 2 to 4 page (non-competitive) exhibits were also welcome.

Announcements

Jack Urish and Dave Kaiser offered items for auction.

Trivia/Show & Tell

- Perry Denton discussed a \$1000 catalog penny he discovered in a bank bag.
- Jack Urish described cinderellas relating to territories lost by Germany after World War I.

Door Prizes/Album Drawing

•Stan Bartnikowski, Chris Sortwell, Stan Sutkin, Perry Denton and Jack Urish graciously donated door prizes for the membership. The album drawing was held.

Program

Stories behind the stamps were provided by Mike Smith (Fiji) , Stan Bartnikowski (Zgierz, Russian Poland cancel), Tom Siegel (1587 Italian letter), Stan Sutkin (Haiti C5, the citadel pictured and its builder Henri Christophe), and Jack Urish (stamps labeled Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Gott with the latter replaced by Ein Führer by Austria).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm.

May 27, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm., Rod Gabel presiding.

18 Members and 1 guests were present.

Officer Reports

- Secretary's report – Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted without being read.
- Treasurer's report – None today.
- Program VP's report – Tonight , the first a semi-annual auction will be held. On June 10, the program will be "the story behind the stamp". Geoff has 3 volunteers and is looking for 2 more to give a 5 minute presentation on a stamp and the story behind it. On June 24, Skip Ely will give a presentation on stamps featuring American painters. The next TSDA bourse will be held June 26-27.

Announcements

- Rick Houghland has stamps for sale.
- Perry Denton has black stock sheets for sale.

Trivia/Show & Tell

- Fernando Torres described a nice copy of US Scott 122 that he purchased, but found out was reperfed.
- Jack Urish described an apparent Italy Scott 21, that was sent to Sismondo for expertization. And found it was a partially reperfed Sardinia stamp.

Door Prizes/Album Drawing

•Stan Bartnikowski, Paul Witthoef, Rod Gabel, Perry Denton, Tom Cunningham and Jack Urish graciously donated door prizes for the membership. The album drawing was held.

Program

- Tom Cunningham conducted the club semi-annual auction.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Stamp & Tongs

APS GOLD AWARD

Dallas-Park Cities Philatelic Society Newsletter

Rick Houghland, Editor

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