

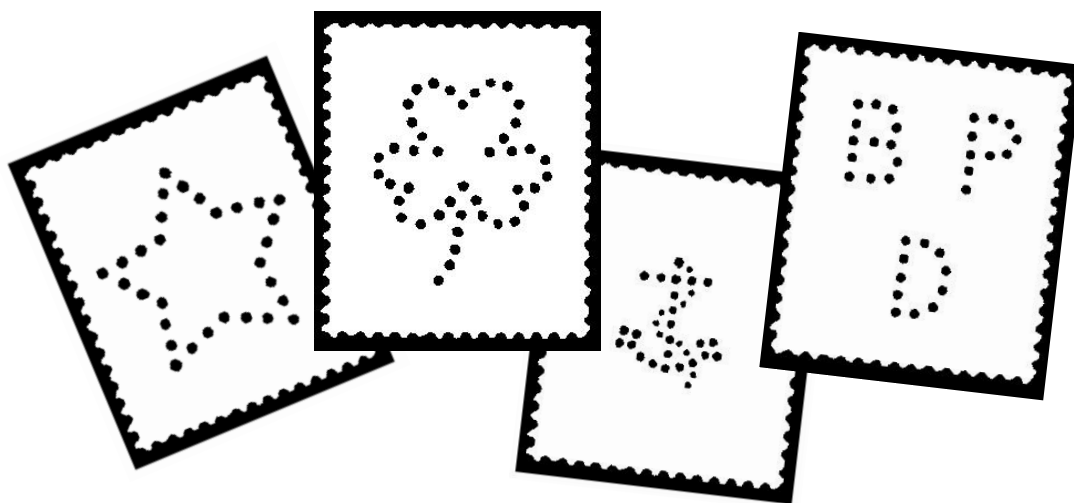
## Stamps with holes!

The small punched holes which you can find in some postage stamps, in the shape of letters or patterns, were to show the stamp was owned by a certain company or organisation.

The holes were to try and stop people stealing the stamps from the organisation. Only the organisation should be able to use the stamps. No one else should use them or exchange them for cash.

These holes are called perfin. The name perfin comes from **PER**Forated **INI**tials.

There are many different perfins. In the UK, they were used on stamps from 1868. They are not used today and most companies stopped using them in the 1960's.



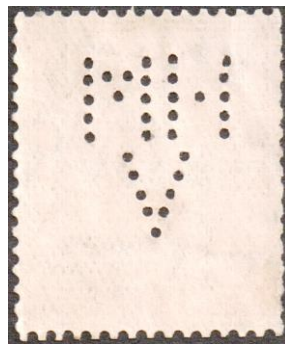
Some of the images you may see on the back of postage stamps.  
Images - Copyright © by The Perfin Society of Great Britain

Read on for:

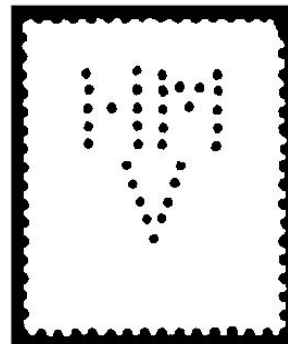
- more information on perfins;
- play a matching game;
- enter the 'design your own perfin' challenge.

## More about perfin

When looking through old stamps, you might find some with tiny holes in them. They can be difficult to see but hold them up to the light or place them against a dark background. The holes will form letters or designs and the stamps are called perfin. The perfin will, of course, appear backwards on the back of the stamp.



actual back of stamp



perfin mark

This is a stamp of King George V. The perfin is HMV and dates from around the 1930's. HMV stands for His Master's Voice, the Gramophone Company which later became the HMV music store.

The stamps were just normal postage stamps but a company would purchase a special hole punch machine made with their design and punch through the stamps. This mark made sure the stamp belonged to them.

The hole punch machine (perforating machine) was first designed by Joseph Sloper. He invented the machine to be used on bank cheques, railway tickets and other paper items. From 1868, perfin machines for postage stamps were produced.

Stamp collecting can be a great way to learn about many different subjects. Stamps with holes in them are really interesting because they have another level of history. If you like investigating, you might like collecting perfin.

Further information:

The Perfin Society of Great Britain at [angelfire.com/pr/perfinsoc](http://angelfire.com/pr/perfinsoc)

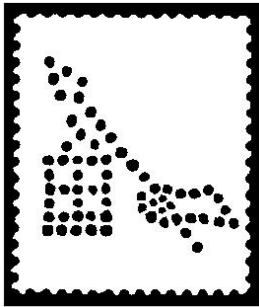
Perfins video on [@ExploringStamps](#) YouTube channel



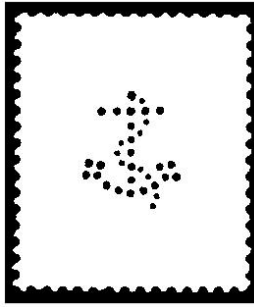
## Match the perfin

Usually a company or organisation would use the letters in their company name or the design in their logo for their perfin.

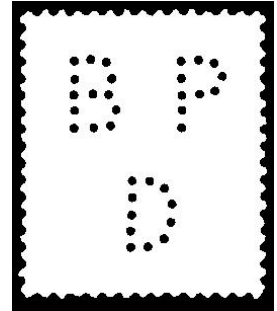
Look at the designs or initials on the perfins below. Try to match the correct perfin to the company from the list provided.



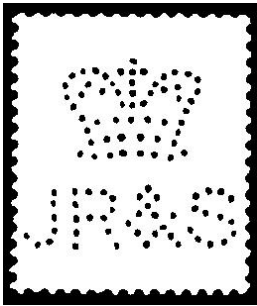
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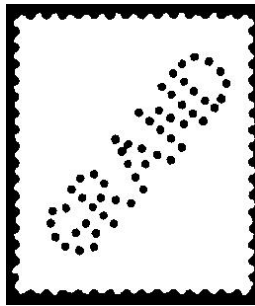
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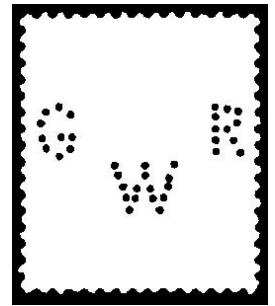
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The Grand Hotel, London

The Boots Pure Drug Company (known as Boots the Chemist today)

Great Western Railway Company

Clark & Co. Cotton Manufacturers, Anchor Thread Works

Crown Tube Works - James Russell & Sons Ltd

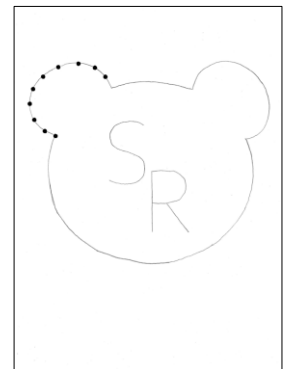
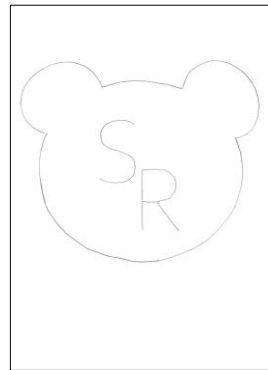
Salsbury & Sons Ltd, Lamp Manufacturers

## Design your own perfin

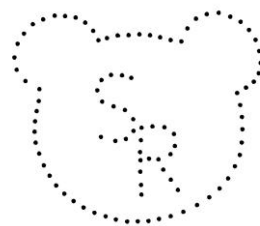
Now design your own perfin – a design that is special to you or a design that includes your initials. Special perfin machines were used to punch the holes in the stamps. It will be difficult for you to find a punch small enough to make your design on the size of a stamp but you can make a large example. I made this design because I work on an education programme about giant pandas. It is a giant panda with my initials inside.

- Take an A5 or A4 piece of white paper and draw your design in pencil.
- Using a long arm single hole punch, punch along your outline. If you don't have a long arm punch, then you may be able to fold your paper to reach parts of your design. Just take care not to punch in the wrong place.

Adult help may be required.



- When you've punched around your design, erase the pencil lines.
- Take a photo or a scan of your design. Place a black background behind your design so that it can be clearly seen.



Entries will receive a GB perfin stamp and a mixed world packet of stamps – while stocks last, so don't delay! It would also be lovely to see entries from around the world but the offer of stamps is only available to the UK due to postage costs.

Parents or teachers email the photo or scan of the entry stating permission to post the pictures. Please provide first name, age and a postal address if you wish to receive the free stamps. Challenge is aimed at upper primary & secondary level but entries encouraged from all ages. For younger children, adult help is advised when using hole punch.

Send to [stampit.asps@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stampit.asps@hotmail.co.uk) with Perfin Design in the subject title.