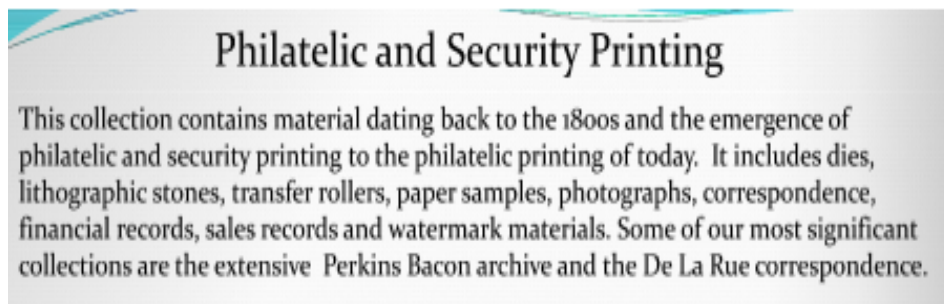


**The Arts Society Project  
to assist  
'The Royal Philatelic Society of London'  
in their digitising of the Archives of  
Perkins Bacon & Company, London, dating from 1828-1935**

-----  
A Volunteer's View  
James Phillips - The Arts Society Gainsborough And District  
-----

**BACKGROUND to The Royal Philatelic Society of London Archive Digitising Project:**

**The RPSL Archive Collection:**



Perkins Bacon & Company were one of the principal Security Engravers and Printers of national and international Banknotes, Financial and Government Documents, Postage Stamps (including the Penny Black) and commercial and private work including Labels, Business Cards etc from its starting in London in 1819 up until its collapse in 1935. Its archives date from 1828 to 1935.



The Royal Philatelic Society of London acquired the complete Archives of the Perkins Bacon business some years ago for research purposes and are now making the entire contents more easily available by digitising the various books, ledgers and documents to go On-Line, as they give a remarkable insight into the creation and development of Financial Institutions, Government Departments and Capital Raising projects in Countries throughout the world.

**Perkins Bacon: Security Printing**

- Security Printing from 1828 to 1935
- Most famous for printing the Penny Black postage stamp
- Postage stamps less than 5% of their output; their main business was bank notes and cheques
- Their great rival was De La Rue, who from the middle of the 19th century became dominant.



*Penny Black  
1840*



### The RPSL Digitising Project:

is to put the contents of the Perkins Bacon Archive Books and Documents 'On-Line' to enable complete access via the Website for Interest and Research purposes:

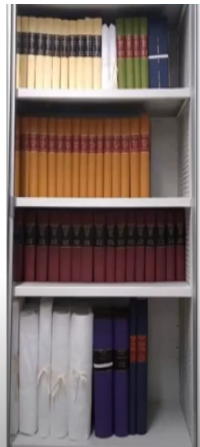
#### The Project

- Over the years, members have delved into the archive and extracted information related to their particular research
- These extracts have been published in various books
- However, we want the information to be accessible to a wider audience
- In particular, we want to unlock the contents to non-philatelists who wish to research companies and other collecting subjects.

The Books and Ledgers comprising The Perkins Bacon & Co Archive acquired by the RPSL are shown below:

#### Perkins Bacon: The Collections

- Letter Books
- Monthly Cash Books
- Account Books
- Daily Printing Records
- Hardening Books
- Printing Journals
- Printing Warrants
- Correspondence



### THE START OF THE PROJECT

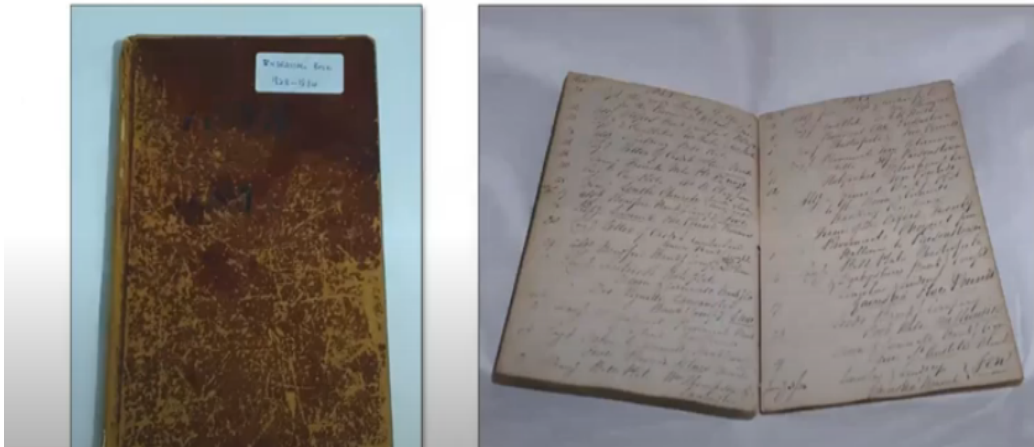
The RPSL have commenced the Digitisation Process of the Archive by working on the set of the **17 Engraving & Printing Books** which cover every working day of the Business from 1828-1935.

These individual Engraving Books are shown laid out below and each contains the Daily Hand Written Entry of Orders and various Instructions for the engraving and printing of Security and ancillary documents and other items from all over the world.

#### The Engraving Books



## The Engraving Books



Example of an Early Page  
from February 1829

and the Final Page in the last Book  
December 6<sup>th</sup> 1935 ending with "VALE"!

1829  
Feb<sup>y</sup>. 12. Draw<sup>g</sup>s. for 2 Cheque & Bills  
twice, Bank of Manchester  
13. Mak<sup>g</sup> up a form of "  
Five Pound Note, Casen Bk  
14. All<sup>y</sup> Publication to Pennoke's H<sup>o</sup>  
History of England.  
" Ref<sup>y</sup> Grotes Cheques  
" All<sup>y</sup> Draw<sup>g</sup>s. Manchester Bank  
16. D<sup>o</sup> Publications. W<sup>o</sup> Woodbridge's  
Maps  
17 - D<sup>o</sup> Publications to Two of Pennoke's  
Notes  
20 Engrav<sup>g</sup> Margin Die, Cumberland  
Union Bank<sup>s</sup>. Lond<sup>o</sup>.  
21 D<sup>o</sup> Sheriff's Bank. Five  
25 Engrav<sup>g</sup> Bill Plate, Cumberland Union  
Customers Note  
26 D<sup>o</sup> Bill Plate, Cumberland Union  
Banking Lond<sup>o</sup>.  
" D<sup>o</sup> Provincial £20. Toalbe  
" Ref<sup>y</sup> Guamey's Cheque, Portsmouth.  
28 Engrav<sup>g</sup> Cheque Plate, Manchester Bank  
March 6. D<sup>o</sup> Customers Bill Plate. Lond<sup>o</sup>  
All<sup>y</sup> Publication to Pennoke's H<sup>o</sup>  
History of Rome

November 1935  
1<sup>st</sup> Engr<sup>g</sup> value, etc. on p. of die 25 c. Costa Rica £8  
" " " " " 35 c. " £8  
11<sup>th</sup> " " " " " 40 c. " £8  
" " " " " 50 c. " £8  
Touching up 3 large texts for reproduction by H. & O.  
19<sup>th</sup> Engr<sup>g</sup> value etc on p. of die 2 Colours Costa Rica £8  
" " " " " 5 " " £8  
20<sup>th</sup> Ref<sup>y</sup> Sk Shaw Harriet, East African Expeditions 1<sup>st</sup>  
22<sup>nd</sup> Engr<sup>g</sup> crest on die Squirrel with acorn B. & M. Co. £1  
" proof for Cheque Holt & Co on steel £2  
" reference Dies on die & plate for H.C. U. of S.A. 30731  
25<sup>th</sup> Touching up 100 on pl 8 custom Costa Rica  
" " " " " 25 " " "  
" " " " " 35 " " "  
29<sup>th</sup> " " " " " 40 " " "  
" " " " " 50 " " "  
December 1935  
4<sup>th</sup> Touching up 100 on pl 2 Colours " Costa Rica  
6<sup>th</sup> Reuniting 3 of 2, steel pl. Bank of Australasia  
Vale

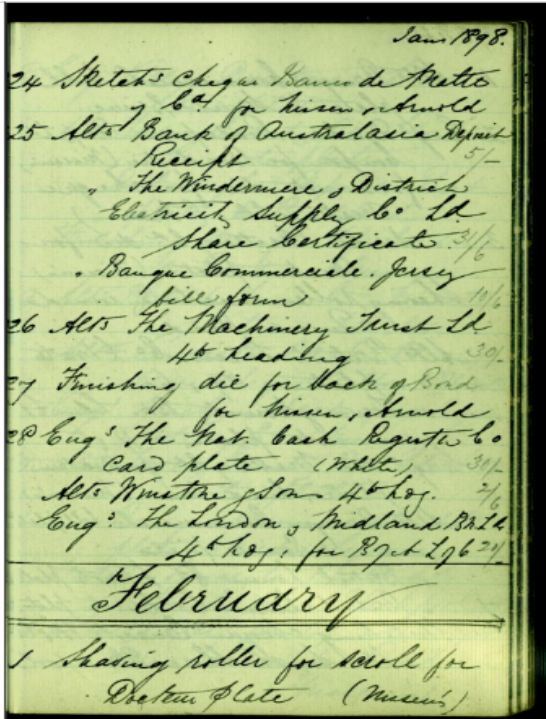
Each of the 17 Books is about A5 Size and contains between 100 and 300 pages. In total this amounts to about 3000 pages, and with something like 12-15 individual Daily Entries per page, there are approximately 40,000 entries requiring transcription..

The role of The Arts Society Volunteers was to identify, transcribe and type in for each of these Entries the Keywords which would be relevant for Website Searches.

## THE DIGITISING PROCESS

This started with the mammoth task of scanning each page of the Engraving Books individually into the Computer. Steve Jarvis, a prominent member of RPSL who is leading the IT part of the process, then organised each page to be set out with the original handwritten entry on one side and the other side headed with the dates covered on that page and space for the transcript of appropriate Keywords from each daily entry to be typed in by the TAS Volunteers.

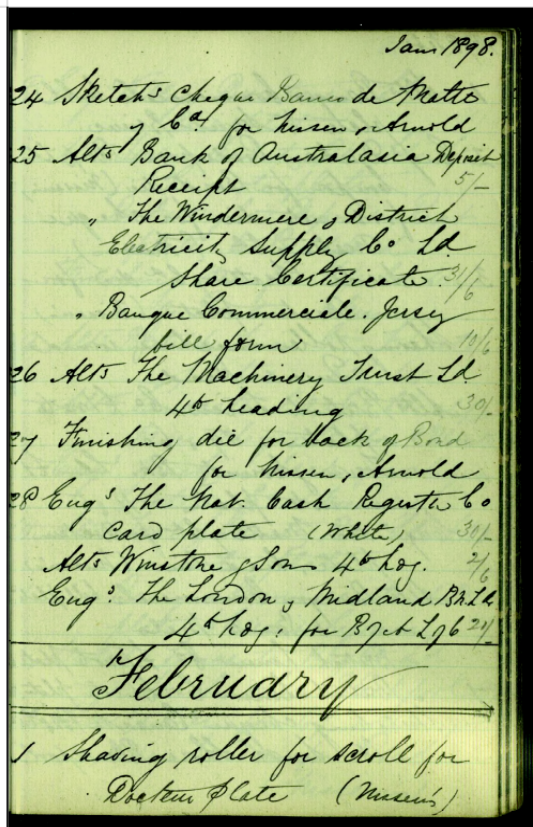
### Example of Scanned & Headed Page:



Page 121  
24<sup>th</sup> January 1898 to 1<sup>st</sup> February 1898

Keywords:

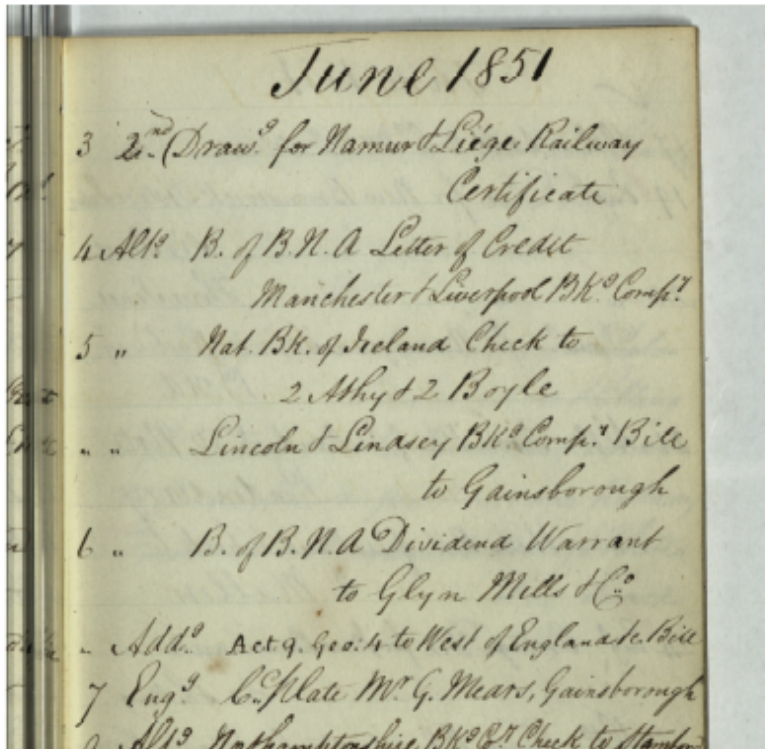
Consecutive pages were then combined into Batches of 10 pages each for distribution to the TAS Volunteers for the Keywords to be transcribed and added as below:



Page 121  
24<sup>th</sup> January 1898 to 1<sup>st</sup> February 1898

Keywords:

[Banco de Matte y Compania Nissen & Arnold](#)  
[Bank of Australasia](#)  
[The Windermere & District Electricity Supply Company Limited](#)  
[Banque Commerciale Jersey](#)  
[The Machinery Trust Limited](#)  
[Nissen & Arnold](#)  
[The National Cash Register Company Card Plate](#)  
[Winstone & Sons](#)  
[The London & Midland Bank Limited](#)  
[Docteur Plate \(Nissens\)](#)

**Example of a Completed Page:**

Page 151

3<sup>rd</sup> June 1851 to 16<sup>th</sup> June 1851

Keywords:

[Namur & Liege Railway Certificate](#)  
 Bank of British North America }  
 Manchester & Liverpool Banking Company }  
 National Bank of Ireland [Athy Boyle](#)  
 Lincoln & Lindsey Banking Company Gainsborough  
 Bank of British North America Glyn Mills & Company  
 Act 9 Geo. 4 West of England  
 Card Plate Mr G Mears Gainsborough  
 Northamptonshire Banking Company Stamford  
 Bill of Lading [P. Tagliavia Palermo](#)  
[P. Tagliavia Palermo](#)  
 Large Tobacco Wrapper  
 Knaresborough  
 Ulster Banking Company Donegal  
 Glyn Mills & Company Bristol }  
 West of England & South Wales District Bank }

When the Volunteer had completed the 10 pages of The Batch, this was returned to Vivienne Jarvis (TAS) for checking and tidying up and another Batch to be worked on was sent back to the Volunteer by return. Verification of the work submitted was then carried out by RPSL Members with their specialist knowledge before being made ready for the RPSL Website.

(See the Video referred to on P.9 for Steve Jarvis' detailed explanation of the RPSL IT preparation for the actual method and creation of the range of Search options available etc. on the RPSL Website)

The various orders from all over the World in the Engraving Books and revealed by the transcribing process include:

#### Recent Discoveries from Engraving Books

Frank Walton RDP FRPSL

#### Contents found so far

- Banks (cheques, notes, ...) from UK, North America, South America, South Africa, India, Australasia
- Bills of Exchange & lading
- Card plates for various individuals and companies
- Playing Cards: 'Old Frizzle' Ace of Spades, Wrappers
- Plates & frontispieces of novels
- Shares Certificates (e.g. Birmingham & Gloucester Railway Company)
- Labels for commercial products (soaps, lotions ...).

See Examples of the range of Finished Printed Products on pp. 6,7&8

**Examples from Perkins Bacon's Initial Entry in the Order Book to The Finished Printed Product**

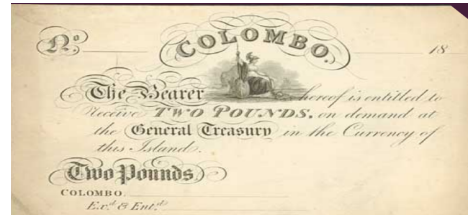
1833 Jun 3<sup>rd</sup>. Order for Drawing Lincoln & Lindsey Banking Company £5 Note

June 3 1833  
 Drawn Lincoln & Lindsey Banking Company } Five  
 Litter Bill



1838 Dec 4<sup>th</sup>. Altering 'His' to 'Her' Majesty- William 1V to Queen Victoria on Colombo Certificates

4 " " The Honourable Secy  
 V. Atty. The Colombo Certificates  
 (don en photo) His to Her Majesty



1858 June 10<sup>th</sup>. Engraving Dies for Provincial Bank of Ireland Carrick-on-Shannon £1

Nov. Ireland (Cheque to Carrick-on-Shannon)  
 Eng. dies for Carrick-on-Shannon Prov Ireland Notes

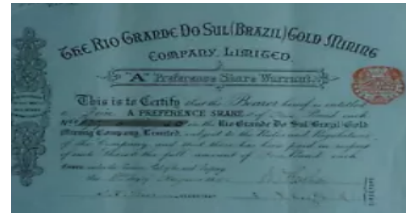
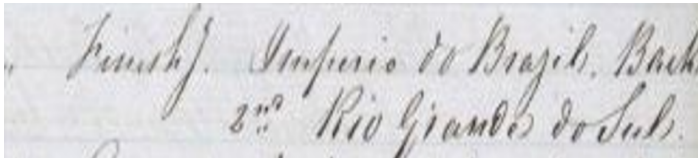


1840 April 8<sup>th</sup>. Finishing Engraving Plate - Queen's Head 1d – Penny Black Issued May 1840

✓ Finishing - first Plate  
 Queen's Head



1838 March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Brazil Rio Grande do Sul Gold Mining Share Certificate

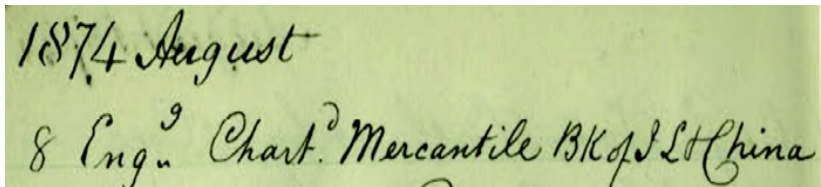


7  
Examples Continued

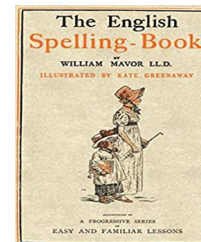
1844 Apr 11<sup>th</sup> Altering Jamaican Railway Share Certificate 1845



1874 Aug 8<sup>th</sup>. Engraving 5/- Note for Chartered Mercantile Bank of India London & China



1829 Jan 21<sup>st</sup> Engraving 'Mavors Spelling Book'



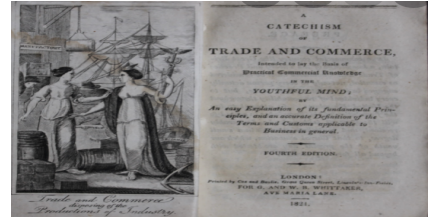
1829 Oct 5<sup>th</sup> Engraving Label for 'Rowlands Macassar Hair Oil' (Derivation of Antimacassar)



---

1829 Feb 5<sup>th</sup> Publication Pinnocks First Catechism of Trade

5. Altly Publication Pinnocks. 1<sup>st</sup> Catechism



---

1829 Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> Engraved Ace of Spades Playing Card for 'Tax Paid' Stamp—"Old Frizzle"

Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> Ace of Spades, "Old Frizzle"

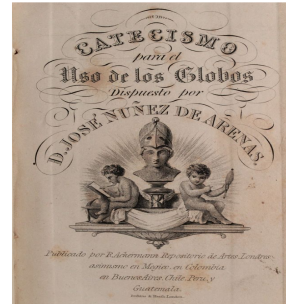


8  
Examples Continued

1829 January 10<sup>th</sup>. Frontispiece for Ackermans 'Catecismo Uso de los

Globos'

1829  
Jan 10<sup>th</sup> Engraving. Catecismo para el  
Uso de los Globos. Ackermann

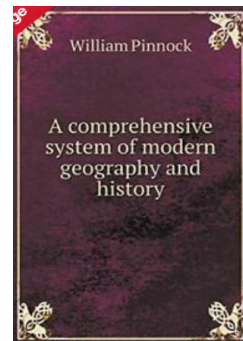


(Perkins Heath)

---

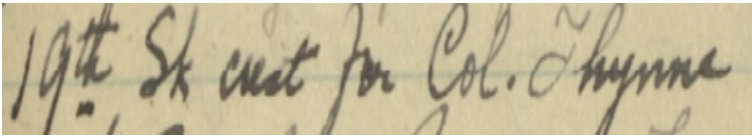
1829 January 30<sup>th</sup>. Pinnock's Geography & History

30 altly Publication to Pinnocks  
Geography

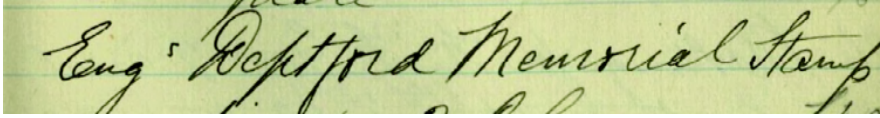




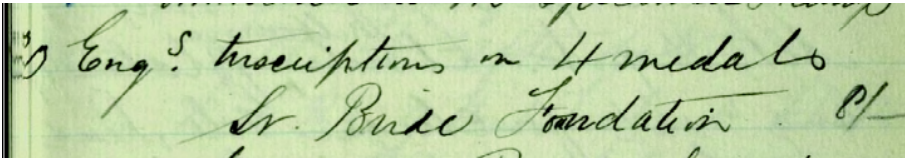
1934 19<sup>th</sup> June. Sketching Crest for Colonel Thynne



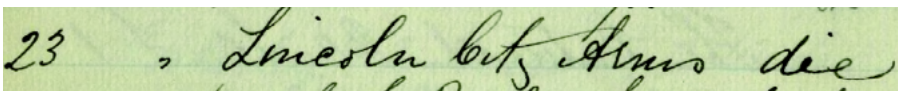
1919 July 8<sup>th</sup>. Deptford World War I Memorial Stamp



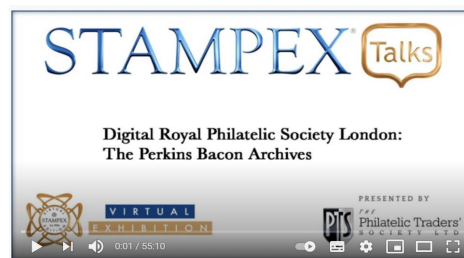
1902 July 30<sup>th</sup>. Transcriptions on 4 Medals for St Bride's Foundation London



1902 July 23<sup>rd</sup>. Engraving Die for City of Lincoln Arms



**Available Video:**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qOvbKL08GU> This is the Link to The RPSL Video "Virtual Stampex to Members 2021" which is a presentation by Frank Walton RDP RPSL about Perkins Bacon and Company and the proposed digitisation of the Archives. It gives an informative background and includes more detailed information on the Project and the Involvement of The Arts Society.

The Video is also available on YouTube – Search: "Stampex Perkins"

Extracts from the Video are included in this Article with the Kind Permission of RPSL.

=====

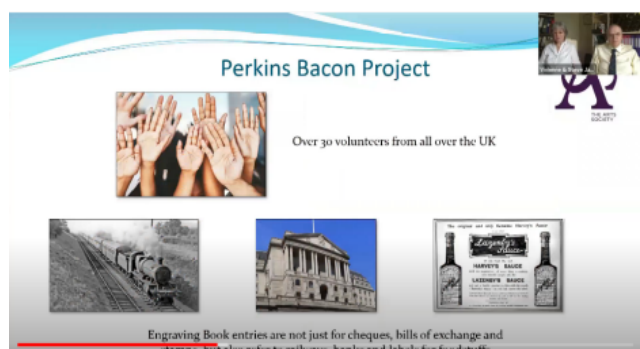
**THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE ARTS SOCIETY:**

Vivienne Jarvis of The Arts Society Test Valley and the TASTV Heritage Volunteering Rep was aware of the huge scanning project being undertaken for the RPSL through her husband Steve, who as mentioned on P.4 was leading the RPSL initial IT Setting up of the Project. The RPSL had assumed that they would have to ask their own Members to do the Transcribing of the Keywords from the Engraving Books and so were delighted beyond measure when Vivienne, realising this was an opportunity for The Arts Society to work on a prestigious project alongside the RPSL, agreed to seek approval from The Arts Society for involvement

Vivienne contacted Florian Schweizer, Chief Executive of TAS, who agreed that the idea was appropriate for consideration as a National TAS Heritage Volunteering Project and forwarded details to Membership Manager Joanne Martin and Hilary Olleson, Head of Heritage Volunteering. They asked Steve and Vivienne to talk about it at an HV Reps Zoom Meeting following which Vivienne made a formal Application via the 'New HV Project Form', including a statement from the RPSL, and this was then forwarded to HO for the Project to be agreed and registered.

Details were then circulated to TAS Area HV Reps for these to be passed on to their Local Societies who advised any members interested in Volunteering to contact Vivienne.

## The Arts Society



cont'd

## 10

There was interest from 34 Volunteers and in early January 2021 they were sent an overview of the project and a Guidelines Document. Vivienne stressed that those working on the project could do as much or as little as and when they wished – there was no pressure and Vivienne was always available with ready assistance and encouragement.

A Batch of 10 pages for transcription was Emailed to each Volunteer; as these were completed and returned, details were entered on Spreadsheets, checked and forwarded to RPSL for verification and eventual Website publication when a book had been completed. Vivienne kept careful track of where and when Batches had been sent to the Volunteers and returned etc., and ensured they were kept efficiently supplied with Batches.

10 Volunteers dropped out at various stages as may be expected. Among reasons some found the Project to be not what they had anticipated and some found the IT difficult. Initially, during Lockdown the work rate was quite fast. Obviously the output and quality of work among Volunteers was varied but that did not present a problem. As Lockdown eased the return rate slowed a little but the period of 6 months to completion which had been roughly estimated was achieved with all 17 Engraving Books having been completed by TAS and forwarded to RPSL by the end of June.

The 'HV Project Completion Form' was duly filled in and sent to HO who have signed it off.

Conclusion:

The RPSL is delighted with the standard of work and absolutely thrilled to have had The Arts Society involved in their Project.

Frank Walton of RPSL, who presents the Stampex Video of the Project referred to on P.9, adds " This has been a fantastic partnership between The Arts Society and The Royal Philatelic Society of London. Without The Arts Society this would simply not have happened, and we are immensely grateful to Vivienne Jarvis and her friends the Volunteers in The Arts Society for getting involved"

Other contributors in the RPSL Video echo these sentiments and agree that this is an example of how the forming of partnerships such as this amongst Organisations is mutually beneficial and that the link between The Arts Society and The Royal Philatelic Society of London will continue.

=====

**See P.11** for "A Volunteer's View of The Project" :

**A TAS VOLUNTEER'S VIEW OF THE PROJECT**

Following retirement as a Chartered Surveyor I have enjoyed being involved as a volunteer in several Heritage related projects for various local organisations, mostly regarding the history of the land and buildings in my home county of Lincolnshire. The opportunities to work casually as and when it fitted in with other activities were always welcome.

In December last year Margaret Forster, the HV Rep for The Arts Society Gainsborough and District, sent out details of a project for Volunteers to assist The Royal Philatelic Society of London in their Digitising of the records held in their Archives. It was the chance to work for this important Organisation on the documents of the Security Printers and Engravers, Perkins Bacon & Company, London, involving entries in their Order Books 1828-1935 from clients and Countries around the world during this period of incredible international growth and progress. It was evident from the detailed articles on Google that Perkins Bacon was a Company with a most interesting history and which was an integral part of the international development of Nations, Businesses, Financial Institutions, Transport and Infrastructure etc., which are all referenced in their Archives and which can be seen in the daily orders received for the associated printed matter in it's various forms.

The opportunity to work on the computer at home, especially during the Covid Lockdown restrictions on other activities, was ideal and I joined in. Vivienne Jarvis of The Arts Society Test Valley, the Leader of the Project for TAS, explained that the Volunteers were to Transcribe and type in Keywords for future Website use from the daily entries in the original handwritten Engraving & Printing Order Books. After further Guidance, in early January 2021 I received my first Email with an attachment containing the initial Batch of 10 Pages of the Engraving Book Entries for transcription.

'Translating' the script written by a clerk in the 1820s, maybe with a quill pen, into a type-written computer-literate summary for the World Wide Web 200 years later seemed most interesting and worthwhile!

The script was mostly clear and legible and entries disciplined and consistent. There were phrases, shorthand and other abbreviations which needed closer attention but which became clearer with experience, and the repetition of Names, Organisations, Companies, Banks and Countries gradually made the job easier and faster.

It was emphasised that the exercise was not a full transcription of the entries but an extraction of the Keywords likely to be entered for Searches on the RPSL Website by Researchers and other interested parties. This became a more natural process as time went on and the actual typing in on the computer of the appropriate words on the pages was straight forward. These 10 pages were then saved and returned to Vivienne by Email as an attachment and a fresh Batch for working on was sent back by return, and the process continued.

I particularly enjoyed the wider aspects which the Project allowed, such as: musing on the times when the scripts were written and the lives and circumstances of the Clerks; noting that 'days off' were few and far between; the personal element such as mistakes and crossings out; imagining the Perkins Bacon 'Factory' and the talented people necessary for firstly producing the essential artwork then the detailed steel engraving blocks and finally the printing of the finished articles and seeing the fluctuations in the business evidenced by the varying number of daily orders entered in the Engraving Books through the years.

**cont'd**

## 12

The items produced by Perkins Bacon covered the tremendously wide variation of official documents and items for established and emerging Countries, Institutions and well-known major construction and transport projects and comprised the vital paperwork which was essential before their development could progress.

Starting up of various Railway Companies, well known Businesses, Private and National Banks, historic Regions and States which have subsequently disappeared, gentry and prominent personalities of the Victorian era requiring business cards, labels for patent medicines and household appliances, postage stamps and similar constantly needed items for countries throughout the world and references to international events including World War 1 were all referred to in the Order Books during the period.

All these built up an interesting picture of change and development nationally and internationally during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the influences of which are still affecting our lives today.

The format of the Entries altered little apart from the different handwriting as the Clerks changed and my output increased with familiarity. There was always the challenge of a) deciphering some only partly legible words in the script and then b) looking them up on Google to put them in

perspective. This I found entertaining and sometimes not unlike a cryptic crossword clue. It was very satisfying to find a word which seemed to make no sense, but which turned out to be something such as a long lost Indian State or an obscure long gone Bank in South America or a Patent Hair Oil made in Manchester in 1832!

Altogether I found this a very satisfying project to do knowing that this small but important contribution is helping to create full efficient use of The Royal Philatelic Society of London Archives for the years to come.

***James Phillips TASGAD July 2021***