

# Jamaica Newsletter No. 8

By Thomas Foster

There was quite a furore when the Independence overprints of 1962 were found to have been applied to stamps with the Block CA watermark which replaced the old Script version. I am convinced that most of the values with the Block watermark never saw Jamaica (or at least, not until a philatelic demand arose for them) and this is borne out by the fact that only the ½d, 3d, 1s and 3s values are known used prior to April 3rd, 1964, which was the Crown Agents' official release date in this country. I can now confirm that the ½d and 3d stamps were in use as early as December 3rd and 17th, 1963, respectively, thus antedating the information given in the Gibbons and Commonwealth catalogues. Incidentally, I have seen the 3s value with the top of the letter 'C' in 'INDEPENDENCE' very clearly broken.

As a result of mentioning the 'Tablet' flaw on the ½d value of the 1905 Arms set, I have also been shown what is probably another constant variety on the same stamp; this time, a break in the frame of the Arms vignette, just above the 'T' of 'POSTAGE'. Once again, can anyone locate this, or the previous, variety on the sheet?

**Coils.** The four G.P.O. coil machines, also mentioned in my last letter, began dispensing the 1d, 1½d, 3d and 6d stamps on December 20th, 1966. These four values of the 1964 definitive series were produced in panes of 60 stamps, i.e., 10 rows of six stamps and as the machines delivered the stamps sideways, the coils were manufactured by the printers from normal sheets by joining horizontal rows of six stamps with the edging to provide continuous rolls. Joined pairs occur, therefore, after every sixth stamp and coil items can be further identified by two small indentations at the vertical edges, caused by the prongs of the machine as the roll moved forward whenever a coin was inserted. In addition, the rolls of stamps were separated by guillotining and the horizontal perforations are often found trimmed as a result, but this cannot be regarded as definite proof because the 1d and 3d stamps exist in a similar condition from booklet panes. I have still no knowledge as to the size of these coils or whether 'leaders' were used. The machines are not at present in use.

**Fiscal stamps used for postage.** Once again, a new crop of faked items are in circulation, probably as a result of the disposal of well-known collections during the past decade. Consequently, I have been shown, from widely separated sources, examples of the 1s fiscal stamp, S.G.F7, bought as postally used, that have been cleaned and then cancelled with genuine strikes of the large SPANISH TOWN squared-circle date-stamp. The date in all those seen usually reads '1881', but as this postmark was not issued until 1900, the faker was evidently not a postal history student!

It cannot be too strongly stressed that purchasers should employ a great deal of caution when acquiring postally-used copies of Jamaican fiscal stamps, especially the higher values, and there are dealers today who should know better than to put such items on the market as genuine, postally-used items. The faker evidently had access to post office equipment, as these 'wrong-uns' can be found with genuine strikes of different Spanish Town, Half Way Tree, Port Royal, Kingston and other date-stamps. If in doubt, a simple 'lamp' test will usually indicate whether or not a fiscal cancellation has been removed from the stamp and it is usually much cheaper!

**Charity seals.** Jamaica has issued these attractive little items regularly every Christmas since about 1920 and country people conscientiously use various religious seals and stickers on correspondence. The seals are usually placed alongside the stamp(s) and they are often found cancelled, or tied to the cover, but I am willing to gamble that there are few Jamaican specialists who possess a full range of covers showing them used at the correct time! Until a few years ago, one simple

design was used annually but in 1969, the complete design was spread over a block of four seals and this year, every seal on the sheet is completely different! Still, they are being sold for a good cause.

## Postal History.

SAVANA  
LA MAR Type T1

The latest pre-stamp mark discovery originated from Savannah La Mar, where I can report the type T1 hand-stamp used from that office on an entire to Edinburgh dated September 2nd, 1780, with the spelling in two lines reading: SAVANA/LA MAR. This is the only recorded example of a post town using both the T1 and T2 hand-stamps and it would, therefore, appear possible that other offices employed both types.

At the time of publication of my postal history, I had a number of unconfirmed items which I decided against including until more concrete evidence came to hand. At the same time, and against my better judgement, I took at face value details assumed by previous writers on the subject concerning two early 19th century offices, about which I could find no worthwhile, fresh or confirmatory information.

Mrs. Pamela Taylor, of Naples, Florida, has now shown me details from old Jamaica Almanacks of years not previously seen by me, which confirm that a post office existed in the early 19th century at BOG WALK and that it was yet another of those offices which opened about 1812 and closed before 1818, as a result of the economy cuts in the inland post made during that decade. In all probability, it used a T3 hand-stamp. The same almanacks also reveal that the old office of BLUE MOUNTAIN (one of the two offices referred to in the previous paragraph) was, in fact, located on a sugar plantation in the Blue Mountain Valley of St. Thomas in the east and not in Westmoreland as had been previously thought.

**Military mail.** I am now able to state positively that the postal agency in the Gibraltar Camp opened on November 1st, 1940, with W. G. Campbell as postmaster. The agency was supplied with the Kingston DCK1e-4 date-stamp<sup>1</sup> at opening and this was used by Mr. Campbell for cancelling all mail until the B2a dater was issued in early 1943.

**Airmails.** Readers may be interested to learn that the local airline, 'Air Jamaica', inaugurated a service from Kingston to Chicago and return on June 1st, 1970. With the consent of the postal authorities, 50 items of mail were carried on the outward flight only, franked with 10 cents in postage stamps—the current airmail rate Stateside. Besides bearing the Kingston S.C.1 and Chicago daters of June 1st, these covers are also hand-stamped on obverse and reverse with the old oval 'FIRST FLIGHT/AIR JAMAICA' cachet in purple ink, dated the same day.

**New Postal Agencies.** These have been opened in the following parishes on the dates stated, employing the date-stamps quoted:

HANOVER - MILES TOWN (August 28th), TRD41d and,  
PIMENTO GROVE (August 29th), TRD36a.

MANCHESTER - BLUE MOUNTAIN (September 8th), TRD36b  
and GREEN MOUNT (August 25th), TRD41. PORTLAND-  
FOLLY (September 11th), TRD41.

ST. CATHERINE - BELGAR (September 9th), TRD41.

ST. ELIZABETH - BURNT GROUND (September 22nd) TRD36b.

<sup>1</sup> See STAMP COLLECTING, June 5th, 1969