

Jamaica Newsletter No. 9

By Thomas Foster

Among a new stamp issues scheduled for 1971 is one commemorating the tercentenary of the establishment of the Jamaica Post Office in October, and probably consisting of eight stamps based on designs suggested by the writer. In the meantime, the 3 cent value of the Coin Centenary issue exists in two distinct shades of pink and on R3/1, Plate 1B2B2B, a nice little constant flaw appears in the form of a 'dot' below the '3', and is quite collectable. The new decimal definitives come in post office sheets (panes) of 50 stamps adorned by the printers' imprint at the bottom, often partly guillotined away.

1971 Catalogue Review. I have recently taken the opportunity of comparing the Jamaica listings given in S.G. British Commonwealth and Elizabethan catalogues, the Commonwealth Queen Elizabeth II and the B. & K. King George VI catalogues, with my own collection and records, and the following observations and criticism may invite comment.

When will editors cease the irritating habit of listing modern booklet panes by value, as in 'Q.E.II'? I have yet to find a dealer supplying Commonwealth booklets in this fashion even if I wanted them that way. 'Elizabethan' do show complete booklets at the end of their listing but, surely, the place for these is after the actual issue concerned? Again, as a collector for some 40 years and a specialist for 20, I have never fully understood why a so-called 'constant' variety listed in one catalogue, is not listed in the others. Examples of this are too numerous to mention and one wonders whether catalogue editors realise what is philatelically meant by 'constant'.

Nor is it possible to understand why catalogues do not list such errors as the imperforate 1d value of the 1956 definitive issue or the 2d value of the 1962 Independence issue, or the 'Double Perforation' variety of the 1964 definitive 1½d value, or the three missing colours found on the Commonwealth Games miniature sheets. And whilst on the subject of missing colours, why does not 'British Commonwealth' list the omitted blue and red colours in the 6d and 8d values of the 1964 definitive series? They are just as important and as rare as the missing blue in the 10s value of the same issue and that is listed!

Then we come to the question of the three constant, and equally prominent, plate flaws found on the 1964 2d definitive. Why should two of these be listed and the third mentioned only in a somewhat misleading note? In the decimal surcharges of 1969, the same three flaws still occur on the basic stamps, this time, two of them being retouched and surely worthy of listing fully? And on the July 1970 2 cent provisional, all three flaws remain, with the 'NA' variety appearing in both its original condition and, for the first time, its retouched state. Surely, all should be listed? And again, why does the Commonwealth continue to state incorrectly that the C67c shade of the 2d value only occurs on Plate/Pane 1D, when it is common knowledge that the stamp was printed in sheets of four panes, of which 1D was only one? And why do they make a similar mis-statement regarding the C72b shade of the 8d definitive?

Turning to the 1969 Decimal surcharges, this was specifically stated at issue to be commemorative only (the 2 cent of July 1970 being a provisional) in which case, why does not the Commonwealth Catalogue list it correctly as a commemorative set under 'S' numbers? And why do both catalogues neglect to include the 'Thick' and 'Thin' bars overprint varieties that exist on all values with this type of obliteration—the only constant varieties in the whole issue—yet at the same time include a series of minor, undistinguished miscarriages, only one of which (the broken 'c' on the 2 cent), is constant on more than a run of a few sheets? And why do not both catalogues list the Gum Arabic and PVA versions of the 2 cent value or mention that the Inverted Watermark, S.G.281E Ei, occurs only on the Gum Arabic paper?

And, is it not about time that Gibbons' 'British Commonwealth' listed the 'PENOE' plate flaw occurring on all printings of the 4d. Queen Victoria value in the same way as its famous sister, the 'Dollar' variety? And should not the equally well known and keenly sought after 'Bow' plate flaw, occurring on the ½d. green, S.G.107, be listed at the same time—and in its two states? And why not, in conjunction with the 'K.G.VI', list the 'T Guide' variety which occurs on the 1½d value of the New Constitution issue? After all, both catalogues list the same variety when it occurs as the 'Semaphore' on the Malta 5s definitive or as the 'Fishhook' on the Newfoundland 1 cent Coronation stamp!

Postal History. It has now been established that two hand-stamps of the T3 type were used at FALMOUTH. The first of these, T3a, measures 39 x 11 mm., has no short line below the letters 'JA' and is known used from November 1802 to December 1815. Type T3b, measures 40 x 11 mm, and has slightly smaller and squarer lettering, the F, L, O, U and T being noticeably different, with a short line below the JA. It is recorded from February 1808 to March 1833. I can also report the discovery of the first recorded OCHO RIOS T4a hand-stamp on a letter dated October 3rd, 1836; a previously unrecorded FALMOUTH P10 state of November 13th, 1863, and a second copy of the extremely rare MANDEVILLE paid marking, PD12, on an entire dated August 27th, 1841.

Fellow specialists will be aware that I have always been dubious of the claims of TP3 to be a Jamaican marking and it is usually struck on letters to Jamaica from St. Thomas Danish West Indies, or British Post Office in the Caribbean, without apparent reason. Indeed, I had a continuous conflict of opinion with the late J. Alfred Birch over it, he stating it to be Jamaican whilst I insisted it was D.W.I.

FAC 10

Evidence now to hand suggests that this hand-stamp was applied at B.P.O.s in St. Thomas and elsewhere, to indicate the share of the packet postage due to the Jamaica Post Office for carriage within Jamaica. It is, therefore, an accountancy hand-stamp and not a 'To Pay' marking.

I can also record new manuscript forwarding agents cachets of 'J. A. Garcia del Rio, Kingston', dated December 12th, 1850, becoming serial 13a in our listing and 'R. M. Harrison, U.S. Consul', of 1833, to be listed as serial 15. Three further hand-struck F.A.C.s have also turned up, the first being that of 'Geo. Solomon & Co., Kingston', dated 1860 and struck in blue, to be listed as serial 16 and illustrated later as type FAC 8. The others were those of 'Wright, Armstrong & Cmpy, Kingston', struck on an adhesive label affixed to a small portion of cover dated c. 1851, which will be listed as serial 18 and illustrated as FAC 9, and 'Jamison, Soutar & Co.', on a letter dated May 23rd, 1866, to be listed as serial 19 and illustrated as FAC 10.



Misdemeanours. The pedalling of clever, but stupidly inexpert, postal history fakes still continues and is especially prevalent in the U.S.A. I was recently shown what looked at first sight to be a very fine entire from Kingston to Clarendon bearing a strip of three British 1d reds cancelled with the rare type 03 'A01' obliterator of Kingston. One stamp appeared to have been removed from the entire and as the correct postal rate was 4d, it could be assumed to have been a 1d stamp. In actual fact, I was

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able to inform the intending purchaser that the item was faked; the entire and both Kingston and Clarendon daters were genuine as were the strip of three 1d reds and the 03 obliterator, but theirs was not a legitimate marriage

The faker had evidently had this valuable and genuine strip to hand and sought to enhance its value by placing it on a suitable entire, acquired, or already in his possession, and bearing a strip of four 1d reds lightly tied with the comparatively common type 01 'A01' obliterator. He removed the strip of four and substituted the strip of three, leaving the space where the fourth stamp had been in order to make the entire appear genuine from which a 1d stamp had been removed, at the same time endorsing this space with the pencilled annotation, 'A01 Kingston'. He apparently did not realise that the 03 obliterator was not sent to the island until April 30th, 1859, and could not have been in use until about the middle of May, whereas the entire and its date-marks were of January 1859!

New Post Offices and Agencies. The agency at CARMEL in the parish of Westmoreland, was upgraded to post office status with effect from November 2nd, 1970, and new agencies have been opened as follows:—

HENDON. St. James (October 23rd, 1970), using TRD41.

GOLDEN RUN. Manchester (December 1st, 1970), type of dater not yet known.