

Jamaica Newsletter No. 10

By Thomas Foster

Possibly the most interesting news concerning Jamaica during the past year has been the recent resuscitation in the island of the **Jamaica Philatelic Society**, which had been more or less moribund since the death of the late Everard Aguilar. There was a large attendance at the first meeting, held in a Kingston luxury hotel, which was addressed by Mr. Winstone G. Brown, the Postmaster General, and it is to be hoped that fellow specialists in this country and the U.S.A. will join and support these local efforts to establish the society on a firm footing. A series of monthly meetings have been arranged, one auction has already taken place and the society will be issuing a journal at regular intervals.

It is also intended to hold a philatelic exhibition at the Institute of Jamaica to coincide with the Post Office Tercentenary celebrations in October-November and arrangements are already in hand to provide a special commemorative hand-stamp for the event. This will probably resemble one of the old pre-stamp markings and will almost certainly be made of steel and struck in black ink, instead of being the more usual commemorative temporary rubber date-stamp. The hand-stamp will probably only be used at the exhibition post office.

At this time, no firm details are as yet available regarding the shape or form of the **Post Office Tercentenary** commemorative issue to be released on Monday, November 1st, 1971 (the actual anniversary falls on Sunday, October 31st), but the set will almost certainly consist of five stamps instead of the proposed eight values and these will probably depict: (a) A view of the Kingston Post Office in Harbour Street, c. 1840; (b) A typical example of an early letter sent through the Inland Post—from Dry Harbour to Trelawney in 1793; (c) A fine example of a Dummer packet letter—carried by the Frankland in 1708; (d) An entire showing the use of Imperial postage stamps in the island; (e) A design showing Jamaica's most famous stamp—the 1/- pictorial of 1920 with inverted frame.

In addition, an illustrated first day cover will probably be made available. If appearing as anticipated, we should see a fine and interesting set of stamps but it is really a pity that the issue could not have been completed with the other three suggested designs, i.e., (f) A typical example of the many fine Jamaica Ship Letters that exist; (g) A depiction of the Jamaica Coffee House in London, which played such an important part in the early postal history of the island; and (h) A modern cover with a typical temporary date-stamp intended to show how the postal service has spread to the farthest corners of the island.

Other sets in the process of completion include a **Local Arts** set and a **Tourism** issue, the latter probably due for release in July.

Varieties. The criticism of current catalogue listings made in my last letter has resulted in the expected shoal of correspondence, the vast majority agreeing with my remarks which, as I pointed out at that time, only covered a small portion of what we thought should be included.

Readers may be interested to know that a hitherto unlisted constant flaw exists on the 1964 definitive 1d. Lignum Vitae value where, due to a misplaced speck of brown colour, the "G" of "LIGNUM" is converted neatly into an "S" and therefore reads "LISNUM". This flaw, admittedly of the "fly-speck" variety—but at the same time far better than other catalogued flaws, is of a similar nature to the three constant flaws existing on the 2d value of the same series, which were later retouched. It can be found on Plate/Pane 1C(x3), position R9/6, and naturally exists on the 1c/1d decimal commemorative as well. To my great delight, I find that I also have this same flaw on a 1964 booklet pane, thus confirming that these booklets were made up from normally-printed sheets. In the same way, the flaw should occur on coil strips of this value which were also made up from post office sheets and I would be pleased to hear from any lucky

owner of such a strip. Incidentally, position R7/4 on the same pane also shows a small constant flaw, this time a "White Tail" to the "G" of "LIGNUM".

Missing Colours. Still on the subject of varieties, I have now had the opportunity to examine what is believed to be the only known copy of Commonwealth C53a, on which the catalogue listing was made, i.e., the 1962 Independence definitive 4d with the yellow colour missing, affecting the bugle, tunic and turban of the private of the West India Regiment¹, and resulting in what could probably become known as the "White Bugle" variety.

This variety was found in a mixed lot of used Jamaican stamps bought from the island by a collector in this country and amongst the lot were two slightly overlapping copies of the 4d stamp used on a small piece of paper and postmarked with one of the Savannah La Mar cds of September 11th, 1962. It was not until the stamps had been floated off the paper that the missing colour was noticed and I have not the slightest doubt that it is entirely genuine. Two points of interest immediately spring to mind—was it a whole sheet with the colour missing or merely part of one? The centring of the two stamps shows that they came from different sheets but the normal stamp also has the yellow shifted about 2 mm. to the left, a variety which has been previously recorded on this value. Can anyone else produce an example of this "White Bugle" variety?

Incidentally, in order to show how such a prominent variety can be overlooked, I showed this item to three prominent Jamaica specialists at the recent Wakefield convention of the Yorkshire Philatelic Association and none of them noticed what it was until pointed out, even when the normal stamp was placed alongside it!

I also have a report, unconfirmed as yet, that the 1964 definitive 6d. Butterfly value exists with the yellow-brown colour missing and this should prove to be a spectacular variety if correct. Another colour variety as yet unmentioned in this column, occurs on the 5c/6d decimal commemorative which has been found with the blue colour missing, as on the unoverprinted stamp.

Postal History. For a change, I have little of importance to report in this field except perhaps, an earliest known date, October 24th, 1875, for GORDON TOWN, type P11, with the possibility that dates in 1874 exist! This date-stamp was reputedly sent to Jamaica in 1880 but I have already recorded dates as early as February 17th, 1876, in my postal history.

Due to the postal strike, I was unable to check on certain lots in the auction sale held by Robson Lowe Ltd., on January 13th, 1971, and I would be very grateful if the purchasers of lots 1411, 1414, 1420, 1426, 1429 and 1431 would get in touch with me.

¹ The design of this uniform was selected by Queen Victoria, who so admired that of the French Zouave regiments