

Jamaica Newsletter No. 11

By Thomas Foster

One of the most remarkable things about the ever-increasing efficiency and advancement in security printing, is the still-lingering reluctance to discard the use of watermarked paper, especially when modern methods and machinery have made the production of forged stamps for postal purposes a most uneconomic and impossible proposition for the counterfeiter.

It is, therefore, getting increasingly difficult to see why Jamaica's postal authority goes to the heavy expense of providing paper with a distinctive watermark if that same device is becoming more and more impossible to see with the naked eye, or detect with inexpensive detectors. Since the introduction of the 'Multiple Pineapple J' watermark in 1964, it has become progressively more difficult to discern this watermark and both the Church of England and Pirates issues are printed on paper in which it is practically impossible, even on the sheet margins, to detect any trace of the watermark. It would perhaps, be interesting to hear what the printers and the Jamaican Post Office think of this and whether they intend reviewing the position.

Despite these comments, the presence of inverted watermarks on the 10 cents, 20 cents and 30 cents values of the Church of England issue has been discovered, largely through a very close inspection of the margins. It is, perhaps, rather cynical to say that the watermark appears much the clearest on the 3 cent value of this issue on which the variety has not, as yet, been found. I have also been informed, but have mislaid the reference, that two panes of the 3 cent Pirates stamp have been found with the watermark inverted. This stamp normally comes with the device sideways to the right as seen from the front of the stamp, so that the reputed variety presumably has it to the left as seen from the front. Perhaps the owner of these items, or my informant, will contact me in order that the variety can be authenticated?

The final discovery in this liquid situation, has been the finding in Jamaica of a complete post office sheet, 1A(x5), of the obsolete \$1 on 10s 'C-DAY' commemorative with the watermark inverted. The possibility must remain that other panes exist, probably on the unoverprinted form of the 10s stamp. Incidentally, it has never been established with any certainty as to whether there was a 'B' pane, i.e., 1B(x5), of this value. Has anyone ever seen this combination?

Printing Varieties.

These are very popular with readers and I have a larger than usual crop to comment on this time. I have recently been shown by an American collector, a mint block of the 1883-97 1s Single CA, SG 24, one stamp of which shows a large white flaw on the upper part of the 'E' of 'ONE'. This type of variety is almost always caused by the adherence of a small piece of foreign matter to the printing plate after inking has taken place and it is, therefore, almost impossible for the flaw to be constant, especially in the same position on other sheets.

I have also had the opportunity of examining the 1964 6d Butterfly definitive with the yellow-brown colour missing, as mentioned in my last letter. Three used copies were submitted, all postmarked at Claremont and they appear to have been affected by the same chemical action as that responsible for the colour changes seen on the 4d and 2s values of the K.G.VI series (see Jamaica News Letter No 6, June 11th, 1970). In this case, the yellow-brown is missing, the green badly faded and only the black and blue appear normal. One reader has put forward the interesting, and possibly correct, supposition that a modern fly-spray in the office may have been the cause!

We have still not seen the last of the semi-constant varieties found on the 'C-DAY' commemorative overprints. Now, the 4c/4d has turned up with the '8t' of '8th' omitted, R10/1, Plate/Pane 1B(x2). This variety was first noticed on sale about July 1970 and probably happened during the later stages of the

overprinting, as identical positional pieces of this value exist without the omission. So far, about 10 examples of the variety have been located.

Another 'missing colour' has also been found, this time on the 1 cent value of the National Heroes set, where the yellow has been omitted completely, thus affecting the flags on both sides of the frame. Of this error, 13 were found in a small office, part of a pane without selvedge which was being used in pairs to make up the receipt fee of 2 cents on documents and bills. These stamps were probably printed in sheets comprised of six Post Office sheets or panes, so the possibility must exist that another five panes of the error still await discovery.

From the U.S.A., comes news of the discovery of a complete pane of the 10 cent Telegraph Centenary with an additional grey printing offset two mm northwards, Plate/Pane 1B(x2). This may have been caused by a 'dry print' and here again, the variety would have occurred over the other panes comprising the printers' sheet.

The most important news, however, concerns the new 2 cent Blue Mahoe definitive, which promises to be as happy a hunting ground as its predecessor, the 2d Blue Mahoe, which possessed three fine plate flaws throughout its life. The new definitive has immediately produced a very good constant variety on R3/7, Plate/Pane 1A(x3), where the last 'E' of 'TREE' is damaged and clearly reads as 'TREP' R3/1 of the same plate/pane shows a small green dot alongside the first 'A' of 'NATIONAL', which I believe to be constant, whilst R4/7, Plate/Pane 1B(x3), has an area of blurred background stretching between 'MAHOE' and 'TREE'. In addition, the three central vertical rows of Plate/Pane 1D(x3) are printed in a much darker shade of green than the rest of that pane.

Postal History.

There has been a dearth of news in this field of late but I can report the recent discovery of a third copy of the Darrel & Barclay forwarding agents' cachet, Serial 12, FAC4, on a letter dated October 9th, 1843, from Cuba to London.

On a sadder note, the death occurred during the early summer of Dr. R. H. Blackburn of Preston, Lancs, for many years a very keen Jamaica specialist and postal historian who has provided many displays throughout Lancashire and the north-west. Although in bad health for many years, we shared a most enthusiastic interest in the same subject and his loss is a sad one.

Non-postal Labels.

Charity and publicity labels have always been popular in Jamaica and a considerable amount of July mail carried either one of two new colourful labels, respectively advertising the World Confederation of Teachers Profession and the other, issued by the Lions Club of Jamaica in aid of the blind. On reflection, use of the latter item was beautifully thought out.

Postal Agencies and Postmarks.

New agencies have been opened in the following parishes:

St. Elizabeth—Warminster (April 16th, 1971,) TRD41; and,

St. Catherine—Pennington (May 4th, 1971), TRD41.

The third Pan American Wheelchair Games took place in Kingston between July 17th and 22nd, 1971, and a suitably-inscribed temporary date-stamp, TRD41d, was used at the special post office in the stadium. Illustrated covers with the badge or crest of the Games were also on sale.

A new slogan postmark advertising 'Dental Health Week' has recently been used on both the Kingston automatic machines and was first noticed on May 3rd, 1971.

Finally, readers may recall the mention in a previous letter, Jamaica News Letter No. 3 (October 16th, 1969), of the various duties performed by railway station date-stamps in the past, such as postmarking stamps on letters and telegrams in addition to dating railway tickets, New date-stamps, closely resembling the current TRD's have recently been put into use and besides being

struck in violet, bear the wording 'Jamaica Railway Corporation' at the top and the name of the station at the bottom. I await, with baited breath, their first appearance on Jamaican postage stamps I await, with baited breath, their first appearance on Jamaican postage stamps!