

Jamaica Newsletter No. 12

By Thomas Foster

Although the present decimal currency issue has been on sale for only fourteen months, it will be replaced in January by a new definitive series comprising 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 8c, 10c, 15c, 20c, 30c, 50c, \$1, and \$2 values, but details of the designs have not yet been revealed. Also re-scheduled for appearance in that month is the Satellite Station issue but there is still no news concerning the Local Art and Tourism issues, originally due in June and August respectively!

The Postal Tercentenary issue came out on October 30th with the 3 cent value incorrectly dated "1705" instead of "1708" as, by the time this error was noticed, the stamps had already been printed. One feature of the designs is an absence of any white margin between the stamps, a new innovation for Jamaican stamps. I hope to report on the Tercentenary Exhibition and the special postal markings employed, in my next letter.

For the numismatist, a new \$5 coin showing the head of Sir Alexander Bustamante has been added to the current decimal range but as yet, is only being supplied in complete souvenir sets of coinage with 1972 dates.

Errors and Varieties.

I can now confirm that the watermark variety on the 3 cents Pirate stamp is sideways to the right as seen from the front of the stamp. Another item not previously mentioned, is the 2 cents Agricultural Society with inverted watermark. Both items are much scarcer than other recent watermark varieties and many collectors in Jamaica are unaware of their existence. The saga of the Coin Centenary issue still continues and the 3 cents value with sideways watermark has now been discovered from plate/panes 1A2A2A and 1B2B2B. In addition, stamps of this value from 1B1B1B have been found with the silver colour doubly printed, the variety appearing as a silver ring around the thick black line about the right-hand side of the coin. Due to the printing lay-out, this variety should also appear on 1A1A1A.

The 3 cents value of the 1970 Easter issue has also been found with a large blob of yellow colour appearing on Christ's Robe, apparently constant on R5/4 of plate/pane 1(x5), Thirkell H7. The 10 cents value of this set exists in three distinct shades, in one of which, the red colour is very pale and affects the Cross, the clothes of the women in the foreground and the general background of the stamp.

Probably the most interesting item, however, is the appearance of the 8 cents definitive with sideways watermark on a cream-coloured paper showing distinct traces of laid, entirely different from the stamps originally placed on sale. These definitives are on PVA, as is the paper variety, and it is possible that other higher values of the issue also exist on similar paper. I am assuming here that the sideways watermark error came about through using paper intended for printing the \$1 value which would then, because of its upright format, have a normal upright watermark. Incidentally, I believe I am correct in stating that this new cream paper has also occurred on stamps recently printed and supplied to other Commonwealth territories. The 10 cents definitive has also been found with a shift of the black colour to the right, leaving a light brown shadow around the left of the athlete, admittedly a minor variety, but quite distinctive.

Postal History.

It has now been established with some certainty, that two hand-stamps of the straight-line type J1 exist. At the moment, the dates of use of these have still to be determined but the main difference appears to be that in type J1b the pronounced foot of the letter "J" is square and the central "vee" of the letter "M" is shorter. Type J1a, is as illustrated in my book as J1. It is possible that these apparent differences may be due to wear but that contingency is receding. Incidentally, if anyone has copies of the 1891 and 1892 Post Office Guides, I would appreciate the chance of examining them as it is highly possible that they may reveal important information regarding postal rates.

I am still unable to illustrate the U.S. Army censor hand-stamp, M-USAC2, but I can depict two new markings of the same type, M-USAC3 in black ink and M-USAC4 in magenta, both struck together on a cover dated June 3rd, 1941.

Charles M. Baer,
Captain, Signal Corps,
Chief Military Censor,
WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ENGINEERS
JAMAICA DISTRICT
Type M-USAC 3
Type M-USAC 4
(in magenta) CENSORED

Postal Markings.

As a result of the recent article on Squared Circle postmarks¹*, I can report the following latest known dates:—

Type PSQC1. ANNOTTO BAY, December 18th 1897; CHAPELTON, October 21st, 1926; DEVON, 1916; FRANKFIELD, November 18th, 1926; HAGLY GAP, November 21st, 1926; LAUGHLANDS, August 22nd, 1911 and UP PARK CAMP, known between February 23rd, 1885 and June 30th, 1910.

Type KSQC1. Dater II, known between January 7th, 1885, and November 1st, 1892; and Dater IV, between January 24th, 1885, and February 2nd, 1891.

Type KSQC2. Dater I, earliest date January 2nd, 1890; Dater 2, May 10th, 1897; and Dater 6, July 26th, 1897.

I am anxious to examine and ascertain the exact type of the following postmarks, none of which I have ever seen:—

ALDERTON TRD, c.1908; ALLMAN TOWN TRD, c. 1967; ARCADIA TRD, c.1963-4.

Can anyone produce them?

Postal Stationery.

Can anyone confirm the existence of "Specimen" items of the first Queen Victoria single and reply postcards? Personally, I doubt whether they exist but it is possible. I would also like to know if anyone can produce examples of the K.E. VII ½d postcards on white card, such as were listed in Nicholson's 1928 handbook?

In 1940, the postcard rate to foreign countries was increased to 1½d and a card with the stamp in brown was issued shortly afterwards. The Post Office Guide of that year reveals that a similar reply card rate was also introduced. Has anyone ever seen a 1½d brown reply card and can anyone supply 1940-1 dates of either item? Incidentally, I am attempting to compile a listing of Jamaican unstamped airletter forms, that is to say, forms requiring an adhesive stamp to be affixed, and would appreciate the sight of any mint or used material of this type.

On September 1st, 1971, certain overseas postal rates were increased, the lowest rate for a Commonwealth surface letter or postcard becoming 6 cents. On postcards, the increase will probably be raised by affixing adhesive stamps as required. Although reply cards have not been on sale for many years, it has been found necessary to state that their use and issue will now be discontinued. The airletter rate is up to 9 cents and pending the issue of a new form, current forms are on sale with an adhesive 1 cent stamp affixed. The registration fee has also been raised to 10 cents, and this will eventually mean new registered envelopes, whilst at the same time, International and Commonwealth Reply Coupons were increased to 9 and 16 cents respectively !

¹ STAMP COLLECTING, September 9th, 1971.

New Postal Agencies. These have been opened on the dates stated at the undermentioned places using date-stamp types as given:—BARNEYSIDE, Westmoreland (January 15th, 1971), TRD41: COBBLA, Manchester (January 26th, 1971), TRD38c: GOLDEN RUN, Manchester (December 1st, 1970), TRD41.