

Jamaica Newsletter No. 13

By Thomas Foster

IT is gratifying indeed to see how many readers appreciate this 'letter' and take the opportunity of informing me of possible points of interest and sometimes, produce answers to the questions posed.

Recently, work has been progressing on a totally new listing of the Victorian issues and a study of the existing die proofs leads me to ask if anyone can say, with justifiable authority, whether or not there is any significance in the fact that De La Rue die proofs of this era, struck on standard-sized card, occur sometimes in the vertical, but usually in the horizontal, format? It may, of course, be just a coincidence but was there a possible reason?

The Tercentenary Exhibition. Commemorating the tercentenary of the establishment of the Jamaica Post Office, this event, held at the West India Reference Library in the Institute of Jamaica, was well attended by the public. The exhibition provided a large selection of differing aspects of Jamaican philately contributed by leading collectors in the island, the Americas and this country. In addition, there were several official exhibits and a large portion of the artwork created for many of the more modern issues. The Jamaica P.S. also brought out a colourful edition of their magazine, Jamaica Philatelist. Mail posted at the exhibition was cancelled with a special commemorative date-stamp, type TRD75, struck in black and designed by Mr. Stephen Hopwood, secretary of the society, to resemble one of the old 'fleuron' postmarks.

As a result of a suggestion made by the writer, a special TRD, type TRD76, was also used to cancel covers franked only with the 10 cents commemorative stamp depicting the then current Barneyside TRD41. The maker of this special die was instructed to manufacture as near a copy of the original as he could but although lettered 'Barneyside', the item differs in many respects and after the exhibition ended, it was withdrawn from use. Pursuing a similar idea on the first day, the current Discovery Bay type B1 dater was borrowed from that office and used at the exhibition post office to cancel covers bearing examples of the 5 cents stamp which showed the pre-stamp cover from Dry Harbour, this being the old name for Discovery Bay.

Postal History. Yet another copy of the KINGSTON K1 dater has turned up, this time in Canada and the fourth to be recorded. Dated January 1808, the marking is on a letter from Spanish Town to Bayleys Vale (the present Bailey's Vale), near Port Maria. In News Letter 7, I confirmed the existence of three of the very rare KINGS P11 dater so I was delighted, recently, to discover in a small lot of stationery purchased at a local auction, a fourth example on the revalued 1½d/3d postcard (1st setting), dated October 24th, 1885. Although issued in 1876, I believe it to be the earliest known date of use and I wonder how many of this postmark have been spurned by collectors in the understandably mistaken impression that it was part of a common Kingston marking?

Another recent discovery has been the third copy of the type T4, 'To PAY' hand-stamp, on a letter from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Kingston via St. Thomas, D.W.I., arriving October 12th, 1859. This hand-stamp, illustrated in News Letter 2, signified that there was 4d to pay on delivery, this being the 'all-in' packet rate charge operating between British Post Offices in the Caribbean and North America, which included all inland portages at either end. I can also report new late dates of August 3rd, 1894, for PORT ANTONIO P11a, and March 23rd, 1936 for LLUIDAS VALE PSQC1.

Probably the most important discovery to be made in the TRD field for a long time has been the unearthing, on part of a government message form, of an undated proof strike in purple of a previously unrecorded TRD26a for LONG ROAD, a post office of St. Mary which opened on December 28th, 1938. The first postmaster is on record as stating that no TRD was used

and, in all probability the permanent steel dater, DC1, arrived before the office opened and the TRD could be put into service.

Slogan Postmarks. A slogan postmark observed in use at the KINGSTON G.P.O., and at HALF WAY TREE since about December 10th last, reads 'K.A.S.C. /FIRE DEPARTMENT / CENTENARY' in three lines. As the first line abbreviation stands for 'Kingston & St. Andrew Corporation', it is possible that the slogan may have been used at the CROSS ROADS office, the only other office in the corporate area to possess an automatic cancelling machine, but I have not seen it used from there.

Two new slogans have recently appeared, the first being 'MORE SUGAR /MORE SUCCESS' set in a rectangular frame, seen used from about March 21st at HALFWAY TREE, KINGSTON and MONTEGO BAY. The second item, 'JAMAICA / HEART FOUNDATION' set in a rectangular frame, has been seen from April 4th at CROSS ROADS, HALFWAY TREE and KINGSTON. These lists of offices may possibly be incomplete and like most slogans, examples are very difficult to get in good condition due to poor inking and adjustment of the machines concerned.

Three district offices in the corporate area of Kingston and Lower St. Andrew have recently installed cancelling machines, these being CONSTANT SPRING, HAGLEY PARK and LIGUANEA. The earliest dates of use appear to be mid-November last and all three machines differ from those used elsewhere in the island in having the dater at the right and the wavy lines at the left, as in the transposed types used in Great Britain.

Fiscal Stamps. Can anyone produce proof of use, in a fiscal capacity, of the 1d. Revenue stamp, SG F1, prior to 1865? It has been stated in existing handbooks that this was the case but I pose my question because die proofs of this stamp, inscribed 'AFTER' and 'BEFORE HARDENING' are both hand-stamped, 'Feb. 1 1865'. Gibbons, quite rightly in my opinion, state that the date of issue was 1865.

New Postal Agencies & Modern TRD's. These have been opened on the given dates in the following parishes, using TRD's as stated:—

SPANISH COURT, St. Andrew, January 5th, 1972, TRD41.

PLATFIELD, St. Mary, December 3rd, 1971, TRD41d.

DROMILY, Trelawney, December 17th, 1971, TRD41.

MCFIELD, Westmoreland, January 21st, 1972, TRD41d.

RESOURCE, Manchester, January 25th, 1972, TRD41d.

SILENT HILL, Manchester, February 1st, 1972, TRD41d.

YORK TOWN, Clarendon, July 1st, 1970, TRD41d in black.

The village of YORK PEN was officially renamed YORK TOWN with effect from the given date but a TRD was not available immediately and during the interim period, the current York Pen daters continued in use, occasionally having the 'PEN' altered in manuscript to 'TOWN'. The earliest known date of the TRD is March 8th, 1972.

During the past few years, TRD's have also been used at the following established offices and agencies, this being the first time that some of these particular markings have been recorded:—

ANNOTTO BAY, St. Mary, TRD41, black, c. February 27th, 1968;

BANGOR RIDGE, Portland, TRD41, purple, c. May 13th, 1968;

BELLAS GATE, St. Catherine, TRD41, black, c. January 9th, 1968;

BICKERSTETH, St. James, TRD61, purple, known March 28th, 1963;

CAVE, Westmoreland, TRD41(i), black, c. October 7th, 1967;

DIAS, Hanover, TRD41, black, known March 13th-21st, 1968;

MARLBOROUGH, St. Mary, TRD41, black, c. August 24th, 1967;

MARTHA BRAE, Trelawney, TRD41(ii), purple, e.k.d. November 19th, 1969;

MOORE TOWN, Portland, TRD41, black, known June 1st-18th, 1968;

MYRTLE BANK, Kingston, TRD41(iv), purple, e.k.d., January 26th, 1972;

NUTFIELD, St. Mary, TRD41(ii), purple, known February 1st-14th, 1965.

CAVE TRD41(i) differs from TRD41(ii) in having 'JAMAICA' closely spaced. MARTHA BRAE TRD41(ii) has the word 'JAMAICA' 24 mm. in length instead of the 27 mm. of TRD41(i). MYRTLE BANK TRD41(iv) differs from TRD41(iii) in having no comma after the office name, whilst NUTFIELD TRD41(ii) differs from TRD41(i) in the length of 'JAMAICA' and came into use when that dater became distorted and damaged through being used with black ink. Bickersteth postal agency opened in December 1962 and no TRD usage has been previously recorded from here.

Another new discovery in this field comes from the much older office of CROOKED RIVER in Clarendon Parish, where a part-strike of an unrecorded TRD14 in purple, dated August 30th, 19??, has been found for this establishment which opened on August 24th, 1910.

Finally, can anyone produce for my examination and verification of type, copies of the following TRD's, none of which I have ever seen:-

BAILEY'S VALE, c. 1961;	BEVERLEY, proof of 1954;
BAPTIST HILL, c. 1966-7;	BIG PEAR TREE, c. 1961;
BARNSTAPLE, C. 1958;	BORDER, c. 1967;
BECKFORD KRAAL, c. 1927;	BOURBON, c. 1966 only;
BELFIELD, C. 1909;	BRENARD, C. 1909;
BELLAS GATE, c. 1923;	BROWN'S HALL, c. 1922.

I have had several requests to include new TRD's brought into use at existing offices and agencies and will signify my agreement by beginning this service with a list of those noticed during 1971. The earliest known date is given in each case and unless otherwise stated, the markings are always struck in purple ink:-

PLEASANT VALLEY, Clarendon, TRD41e, black, May 27th;
LIGUANEA, St. Andrew, TRD41d, black, September 14th;
LIME HALL, St. Ann, TRD41d, black, January 12th, 1972;
BELLAS GATE, St. Catherine, TRD38c, October 25th; and
CHATHAM, St. James, TRD41d, black, August 28th.

OLD HARBOUR BAY TRD41, first issued in 1964 in purple, was still being used on August 12th, 1971, in black and on January 19th, 1972, appeared struck in purple. SHELLEY PIECE TRD41d, recorded in my last letter, exists struck in either black or purple. MYRTLE BANK TRD41(iii), issued when the office re-opened on May 26th, 1970, is still in use although it has been in a damaged condition for a long time and held together by oft-renewed elastic bands. Strikes of this dater in 1971 usually show the band appearing across the face of the marking and these manifestations change position at frequent intervals! Presumably, they should have used stronger elastic!

Lithography to the fore. In the past, it has been readily assumed that lithography was unsuitable for large printings of modern stamps and it is, therefore, surprising to find that this method of production has been selected for a Jamaican definitive issue, in place of the more usual photogravure.

The first two values of the new set by Format International were released on April 17th and are very colourful. No special first day cover was used on this occasion and the 10 cents value, depicting an attractive air hostess of Air Jamaica, is evidently produced in printers' sheets comprising six panes, or post office sheets of 25 stamps, these plate /panes being numbered 1Ax4, 1Bx4, 1Cx4, 1Dx4, 1Ex4 and 1Fx4 respectively. It will be most interesting to see what flaws develop throughout this issue and as new plates are prepared and put into use from time to time, these could, no doubt, be short-lived. Already, there is a prominent constant flaw on plate /pane 1Ex4, R1 /4 (Thirkell, B11), where there appears to be extensive damage to the right-hand side of the tail fin.

Varieties and Plate Flaws. Once again, I have a rather full list of these and despite what one often reads in the philatelic press, I fully believe these items to be highly collectable, providing one uses sound judgement as to what constitutes a flaw of importance and not forgetting the inconstancy of the 'confetti' varieties, etc.

The 2d. Blue Mahoe of the 1964 issue is well known for the three constant plate flaws which occurred during its normal and overprinted life. Yet another previously unrecorded constant plate flaw has now been discovered on plate /pane 1Dx3, R6/2 (Thirkell CD5-7), consisting of a continuous green line extending from Port Royal to the 'TI' of 'NATIONAL', giving the Port Royal peninsular on the background map of the island a distinct 'forked' appearance.

Further examples of the 3 cents Coin issue have been found showing the doubling of the silver colour affecting the top of both coins instead of the right hand sides as reported on a previous occasion. The 1 cent Hero stamp has now been found with the vertical perforations misplaced to the left and slightly infringing the design.

Next, we have two nice constant flaws occurring on the Decimal Definitives of 1969 which, although having the same designs as the 1964 £.s.d. issue, were printed from completely new plates. On the 8 cents value, plate /pane 1Ax2, R10/4 (Thirkell B2), there is a small white 'extra cloud' to the right of the ship's mast, the flaw occurring on both normal and sideways watermarked papers. On the 20 cents value, plate /pane 1Ax3, R9/3 (Thirkell A4), the flaw consists of two small vertical parallel dark blue lines immediately to the right of the 'G' of 'MINING'.

An error of a different kind occurs in News Letter No. 12 (published December 16th, 1971), when in reporting the inverted watermark on the 3 cents Pirate issue, I erroneously stated that the inverted watermark read sideways to the right. To clear this matter up, the normal watermark is sideways to the right as seen from the front of the stamp, the inverted watermark being to the left as similarly viewed.