

Jamaica Newsletter No. 14

By Thomas Foster

IT is not very often that one can record a major find amongst the extensively-studied King George VI issues of any Commonwealth territory but the seemingly impossible has happened, as a line perf 14 variety of the 5s definitive has been shown to me. The existence of this perforation variety was mentioned initially in a footnote to the 'Two Reigns' listing of 1964 but was omitted subsequently and it would be interesting to know the reason why?

De La Rue, of course, used at least two line perforating machines, gauging around 14, on about 18 wartime colonial issues, the 'Instanta' gauging these at 14.1 and 14.1x13.8 respectively. The 5s Jamaica stamp was originally issued comb perf 14 (13.8x13.7) before changing to comb perf 13 (13.3x13) in 1949. The new item gauges exactly 14, a marginal copy and a corner block of four being known to exist. The plate numbers are unknown but as all the stamps of this value were printed from the same plates, this is of little consequence. The shade is interesting as the vignette is greyish-blue, similar to that of S.G.132ab, but the frame is much more reddish-orange than any of the many shades that exist on this stamp. Can anyone produce other examples, especially dated items which would enable this problem child to assume its rightful place in the family tree?

I find that posing queries brings out the devil in most of you and it is seldom that any posers go by without an answer of some kind being forthcoming, so here are two more! First, can anyone confirm the existence of the 1946 Constitution booklet of 1½d. stamps stapled at the right hand side instead of at the left? Secondly, according to my calculations, which have been known to be wrong occasionally, the following plate number combinations should exist for the 1953 Coronation stamp in addition to those already recorded: 1A-2B, 1A-3B, 1B-5A, 1A-6B and 1B-2A. Who amongst you have these in your collections?

Although the stamps are obsolete, the overprinted Decimal issue story is by no means completed as I can report that a special printing of the basic 10s and £1 definitives of 1964 was made in 1970 for overprinting purposes. This printing, which consisted of only 12 sheets of each of the two values, was intended to be held as a small reserve by the Kingston G.P.O., pending the reception of the J\$1 and J\$2 values of the 1970 Decimal series. These special printings can only be distinguished with certainty by the fact that neither original or overprinting sheet numbers appear on the sheets. The normal sheets show these numbers in black and red respectively, with certain exceptions as are to be found on the 2c/2d and 10c/1s values. In addition, the printing plate of the 10s value had worn slightly by this time and is apparent when the stamps are examined.

The 1970 Decimal definitives are themselves most interesting and not at all as straightforward as they appear to be. PVA and gum arabic-backed papers were used in their manufacture with two watermark positions and at least two types of paper, that of the stamps backed with PVA having a laid appearance under low magnification, probably caused by the application of the adhesive. As it is quite possible that more than the 8 cents value exists on different papers, I append my observations on this issue in the hope that an inspection of other material might reveal further varieties:

- 1 cent White PVA paper, horizontally laid. Wmk. Upright.
- 2 cents White PVA paper, vertically laid. Wmk. Sideways to right as seen from front.
- 3 cents White PVA paper, horizontally laid. Wmk. Upright.
- 4 cents White PVA paper, vertically laid. Wmk Sideways to right.

- 5 cents White PVA paper, horizontally laid. Wmk. Upright.
- 8 cents (a) White PVA paper, horizontally laid. Wmk Upright;
(b) Yellowish Cream PVA paper, horizontally laid.
Wmk. Sideways to right.
- 10 cents White PVA paper, horizontally laid. Wmk. Upright.
- 15 cents Toned PVA paper somewhat resembling the 8 cents
(b), horizontally laid. Wmk. Sideways to right.
- 20 cents. White PVA paper, vertically laid. Wmk. Sideways to right.
- 30 cents White Gum Arabic paper. Wmk. Upright.
- 50 cents White Gum Arabic paper. Wmk. Upright.
- J\$1 White Gum Arabic paper. Wmk. Sideways to right.
- J\$2 White Gum Arabic paper. Wmk. Upright.

A new printing of the two top values is on order and it is quite possible that this may appear on white PVA paper, possibly with sideways watermark in the case of the J\$2. If so, they should have a short life as the new high values definitives are due this month.

Varieties. A number of minor, but constant, plate flaws can already be reported on two values of the new definitives. On the 2 cents, there are dots in the value on stamps R9/1 from plate/pane 1E and R1/1 from 1B. On the 8 cents, stamps R5/8-9 from 1C show a series of red dots whilst there is a prominent yellow dot on R2/4 from 1E. In addition, R4/5 from 1F shows a similar white dot and there is a black imprint of sorts on R5/9 of the same plate/pane.

An unusual missing colour variety also occurs on the official cover sold for use with the Tercentenary issue, where the 'pink' is missing, affecting the humming bird and the aircraft of the colourful cachet. Only a very few examples of this item are known.

Postal History. New material reported includes an earliest known date of March 4th 1875 for KINGSTON (K12-A), and a latest date, of May 29th, 1911, for ORACABESSA (PSQC1).

Postal Stationery. New 9 cents airletters and 'F' sized registration envelopes with amended rates (10 cents registration plus 3 cents postage), and wording, are in the course of preparation and should be appearing soon. For some time past, old stocks of both items have been in use with adhesive stamps added.

New Postal Agencies. BREASTWORKS, in Portland Parish, opened on May 5th, 1972, using TRD41d. This agency was originally scheduled to open on September 19th, 1971, but the final decision was delayed.

New TRD's and current postmarks. The Jamaica Heart Foundation slogan reported in my last letter was also used at MONTEGO BAY and exists used during May 1972. The SAVANNAH LA MAR wavy-line machine cancellation was used with purple ink on February 19th, 1972, whilst the MAY PEN machine is also known in this colour on at least two occasions, such usage being most uncommon. HAGLEY PARK was also using one of its daters, type SC1e, in purple on September 26th, 1971.

The major new find in this field has been a single-circle, type SC1a, dater for THORNTON, incorrectly spelled THORTON. TRD61, used at the opening of this office has a last known date of February 17th, 1964, and the new dater was its replacement and is known used on March 5th of that year. A replacement dater of the same type, SC1b, was issued on December 18th, 1964, and this has the correct spelling.