

Jamaica Newsletter No. 18

By Thomas Foster

It is a long time since any varieties were reported in this letter so I am commencing with the news that S.G.221, the 1964 3d definitive showing the National Flag, has been found in mint and used condition with the yellow colouring completely missing. How such an item could have evaded detection until some ten years later is astounding! On S.G.294, the 5 cents value of the 1969 Christmas issue, mention can be made of yet another of the unimportant (but highly collectable) 'ring' flaw, which joins the letters 'T' and 'M' of 'CHRISTMAS' and is believed to be constant.

Whilst in Jamaica, I was also shown examples of SG320, the 3 cents Telegraph Centenary stamp of 1970, with the red colour missing over most of the stamp, resulting in large areas of yellow appearing instead of the more normal orange. This has a most remarkable effect and I would be interested in hearing from anyone with information concerning the plate on which it occurs. On the 1972 definitive series, the 10 cents, S.G.348, can be found with the watermark inverted and as this stamp was overprinted to become one of the 10th Anniversary of Independence issue, the same variety occurs on that stamp.

And then, on the 1973 Orchid issue, the vertical format stamps of the miniature sheet differ from those in the normal set by having the watermark sideways. On the 5 cents value, there is a 'ring' flaw to the right of the top flower on R2/5, Plate 1B, whilst on the 20 cents value, there is a 'White Spot' to the left of the top flower, R1/1, Plate 1D. In addition, a couple of botanical errors have eluded the various stages of checking. The background foliage of the 20 cents is quite wrong for *Oncidium pulchellum* which is an equitant type, whilst the flower stalk of the extra *Brassia*, drawn on the miniature sheet, should have come from the bottom rather than the top of the plant. As with the latest Mailboat issue, the colours of the separate stamps differ considerably in intensity from those of the stamps in the miniature sheets and the perforation is different.

Postal Stationery

Can anyone confirm the existence (with examples, please) of the following Queen Victoria items hand-stamped in black with the word 'SPECIMEN' in small letters measuring 23x3 mm:—

½d. Postcard on cream card.

½d. Reply Postcard.

1d. Postcard with framed border.

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Mr. L. P. Voller of Peterborough, has kindly shown me one of the privately-printed 'by approval' unstamped airletter forms with a nice little variety. It has a distinctive 'F' instead of an 'R' in the word 'AEROGRAMME' and on checking with my own copy of this airletter, I found that it also had the variety. The item in question was almost certainly printed by the Jamaica Times Ltd., and was widely used by various Jamaica Government departments during the 1960s. Should you come across further examples, please let me know.

Wartime Mail

The Roses Caribbean Society, that flourishing body of northern West Indian specialists, are carrying out a group study of the various censorship labels and markings found on mail emanating from the Caribbean during 1939-45. I have been asked to collate all findings relating to Jamaica and the Cayman Islands and would like to hear from anyone having covers resealed with gummed censor labels not already checked by me. The primary information required is the label serial number (if any), date, type of label, destination of letter and any censor hand-stamp on the envelope.

Postal History

Readers will recall that in my last letter, several new Dummer Packet Letters were listed that had been discovered in the Institute of Jamaica. Now, another one has turned up, this time as Lot 1610 in Robson Lowe's auction of May 2nd. Dated 1708, it is from the 'Heywood-Long' correspondence and is inscribed as being carried by the packet boat *Resolution*, the first recorded example of a letter carried by that particular boat.

I can also mention more findings in my research done at the Institute in the shape of earliest known dates of November 1st, 1782, for SAVANNAH LA MAR, type T2, and November 22nd, 1825, for BLACK RIVER, type T4a, the latter being some nine years earlier than previously recorded. In addition, I came across the first recorded example of LACOVIA type T4b dated July 12th 1836 which fills in another gap in our history. Letters addressed to the Jamaica Coffee House in London are always keenly sought after and I found one dated October 16th 1706 which is some two months earlier than anything known before.

Turning to the present day, most of the notes made on the more modern markings have been unscrambled and we find that new MSR /SC1 date-stamps are in use at the following postal agencies (all are in black unless otherwise stated) and replaced TRD's issued at opening:—

BIDDIFORD	PEDRO RIVER	REFUGE
LAKES PEN	PRESTON HILL	

In addition, the long-established post offices of Hampden and Old England have both begun using MSR /SC1 daters for the first time, replacing their old, worn double-rings. Furthermore, the list of larger officers employing the new indexed MSR /SC1 daters continues to increase and we find BOG WALK and MAY PEN using items with an index 'A', whilst MYRTLE BANK is using indices 'A' and 'B'. It still has to be established whether or not these letters indicate different date-stamps.

No new agencies have been opened of late but ALBION MOUNTAIN, earlier destroyed by fire, re-opened on November 2nd, 1973, using TRD51 struck in purple.

I can also report new T.R.D.s in use at the following older offices and agencies:—

AENON TOWN (type unknown), c. January 16th, 1968.

BIGWOODS, TRD41 (ii) in black, c. March 28th, 1968.

CROMWELL LANDS, TRD41 of opening dated October 17th 1966. The first time recorded and in my collection!

KALORAMA (type unknown) in black and purple, c. May 3rd, 1972.

MUIR HOUSE, TRD41, c. November 17th, 1967.

OLD HARBOUR, TRD41, c. January 29th, 1974. I came across this unrecorded item being used with TRD41d on the telegraph counter and occasionally on mails.

RACE COURSE, TRD41, c. December 7th, 1973.

SANTA CRUZ, TRD38b, c. February 4th, 1974.

WALKERS WOOD, TRD41d, c. August 30th, 1972.

WHITNEY (type unknown) in black, c. December 28th, 1972.