

# Jamaica Newsletter No. 22

By Thomas Foster

For some time now, I have been making an intensive study of the 1964 Definitive issue and would like to ask if any reader can show me proof of the following perforation formats on either this series or the decimal overprinted versions of 1969:—

- 9d—with Right Margin imperforate or with a single hole extension, and with Bottom Margin imperf. or perf. through?
- 1s—with RM imperf. or with BM imperf. or perf. through?
- 1s 6d and 2s—with RM perf. through and with BM imperf. or with a single hole extension?
- 3s—with RM perf. through and with BM perf. through or with a single hole extension?
- 5s—with RM perf. through or with a single hole extension, and with BM perf. through or imperf.?
- 10s—value with RM imperf. or perf. through, and with BM imperf. or with a single hole extension?
- £1—with RM perf. through or with a single hole extension, and with BM imperf. or perf. through?

There is little to report from the rest of the adhesive field except for the discovery of the current 4 cents and 5 cents definitives with the watermark inverted.

## Military Mail.

Readers will probably recall mention being made<sup>1\*</sup> that a British Army unit carried out exercises in the island during August 1968. Thanks to John Daynes of Burnham-on-Crouch, it can now be revealed that B.F.P.O. 602 operated for British troops exercising in the island between June 2nd and 30th, 1974, using British postage stamps and a dater inscribed, 'FIELD POST OFFICE 375'. Any information regarding the army units concerned, or examples or mail used, would be very much appreciated.

The research initiated by the Roses Caribbean Society into the various censor labels used in the West Indies area during World War II is proceeding well and as Jamaica leader, a lot of information has been forthcoming. Certain brief preliminary deductions can be made which may interest readers.

1. The first type of labels used in the island were those inscribed in two lines, 'OPENED BY /CENSOR', printed in orange or red on white or azure paper, both papers being used concurrently from September, 1939 until about July 1942. The labels bore no printed examiner's numbers and these had to be hand-stamped separately on the cover, taking the form of numerals enclosed in a small circle, struck in purple or violet ink, the highest number seen being '27'. Two sets of numerals were used, one having digits 4 mm high whilst the other had them about 6mm. in height. Letters bearing these labels are often found without the hand-stamped examiner's number and others exist which have code letters in the upper left corner, e.g., 'CC /M2', the meaning of which is not yet apparent.

2. As the examination service grew, Type 1 was gradually replaced with the standard P.C.90 label and these exist in several formats, all of which were used concurrently from 1941, to the end of the war. A space was included on them for an examiner's number, which was either printed, hand-stamped in various colours or inserted in manuscript, there being four main groupings:—

(a) The so-called 'English' type. The two-line legend reads, 'OPENED BY /EXAMINER 1234', printed in black. Several sub-types exist differing in the size and style of the lettering. This type was widely used in Great Britain<sup>2</sup> and although some Jamaican letters were undoubtedly opened and re-sealed on entry over here, it was also used by the island postal censorship. The examiners' numbers used, the highest seen being '7083', may eventually prove which items are truly Jamaican. Examples can be found in which the number is hand-stamped on

the label by means of the small, circular markings used with Type 1. The identification serial letters 'D' and 'D.I.' were later allocated to Jamaica and Type 2a exists with the letter 'D' inserted in manuscript before the number.

(b) As Type 2a, but with the number preceded by the printed serial letter 'D'. At least six sub-types exist, the highest examiner's number recorded being '8838'.

(c) As Type 2a, but with the legend in three lines, the number being preceded by the serial letter 'D' and an oblique stroke. Very few numbers are known for this label which was in use about 1944.

(d) As Type 2b, but with the serial letters 'I.D.'. At least five sub-types exist, the highest number recorded being '8849'.

3. A horizontal continuous sellotape strip label with the repeated legend printed in black as Type 2a but in smaller lettering. It does not have a serial letter and the highest number recorded is '9807', all being used between 1944-45. Some specialists claim this type was applied in the U.S.A., but I do not subscribe to this view for reasons too numerous to mention here.

Letters exist which have been opened and resealed more than once and an item in my collection has four different labels on it, these being applied in various countries en route. Letters from Jamaica can be found with the censorship labels of many countries including India, Egypt, Australia etc., and these are usually distinguishable from the types mentioned above. Labels on letters entering the Canal Zone exist printed in Spanish, 'ABIERTO POR CENSOR /DEFENSA CONTINENTAL /58097', and were presumably applied by the U.S. Censor. Letters to Haiti, a neutral country, can be found resealed by the Haitian censorship with labels printed in French.

Letters also exist which have been opened and re-sealed with re-use economy envelope labels, tied by strikes of various Jamaican censorship hand-stamps, but these are scarcer and appear to be of a military, rather than a postal, censorship.

From this preliminary work, it is evident that distinct examiners' numbers were allocated to Jamaica and it is easy to find the same numbers occurring on several or all types of label. These numbers also correspond to those on certain postal and military censorship hand-stamps that are less frequently seen on letters, and were probably applied by section leaders to items which needed more than a cursory examination.

Now that this study has begun, it would be a pity not to bring it to a conclusion: so, please, keep your information flooding in. Jamaica covers only, but please bear in mind that examples from the Caymans and the Turks and Caicos Islands will also be helpful as they appear to have been sub-offices of the Jamaica Censor.

## Postal History

As many Jamaican specialists will recall, British postage stamps were authorised for use in the island with effect from May 8th, 1858. Recent correspondence with a well-known London dealer has brought up the interesting point as to what is the earliest date for these stamps and my own records reveal that at least two May 11th, 1858 covers exist. These are both packet letters and as the sale of the new stamps was initially restricted to the G.P.O., and the May packet sailed on May 12th, 1858 it is probable that this will remain the earliest known date as it was customary to sell stamps to the public only on the day prior to the arrival of the packet and to deal with packet mail only during the arrival or stay in port of the packet. Can anyone produce an example on cover dated May 8th, 9th or 10th, 1858?

The 6th Commonwealth Education Conference was held in the Pegasus Hotel, Kingston, between June 10th and 21st 1974 and a TRD, at present untyped, was used there throughout that period. A new slogan postmark has also been observed in use at the Kingston G.P.O., reading: 'XXV ANNIVERSARY /O.A.S. 1948-1973' and current about May 6th, 1974.

<sup>1</sup> News Letter No. 3, STAMP COLLECTING, June 5th, 1969.

<sup>2</sup> See, 'P.C.90 Censorship Labels' by AR Torrance. (STAMP COLLECTING, April 25th, 1974).