

Jamaica Newsletter No. 25

By Thomas Foster

It is always sad to record the passing of a fellow philatelist and as I have enjoyed a long friendship with Lloyd H. Brandon of Kingston, during which time we have maintained regular and voluminous correspondence, I must mention his demise on March 25th after a long illness. Lloyd was probably the oldest member of the Jamaica Philatelic Society and much of the information that has appeared in these letters in the past has resulted from diligent enquiries made by him on my behalf, or from careful notes made on day to day happenings.

As a member of the family firm, he was in a good position to take advantage of the large amount of commercial mail that passed through the office and followed in the footsteps of his uncle, the late H. J. Brandon, whose well-known Jamaican collection was sold in London during the 1950's. I well recall Lloyd relating a story of how his uncle had, in earlier days, turned down the chance of acquiring a mint block of twelve of then current 1s pictorial of 1919 with frame inverted, because the potential seller required the sum of 5s per stamp for the block! To his daughter, Nicola, may I extend on behalf of his many friends, our sincere condolences.

Continuing our saga of the 5s King George VI issue, line perforated 14, yet another copy has been reported, this time clearly postmarked at the Kingston G.P.O. on January 8th, 1942 and thus the earliest yet to be recorded by me. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who can produce an earlier date.



In my last letter (page 123, March 13th), mention was made of the existence of a previously unknown pictorial essay, carried through to die proof stage, in sepia and black for an 8d value of the 1919-23 series. With the permission of the National Postal Museum, I can now illustrate this item which features the Ferry Inn in 1840.

I wonder how many Caribbean collectors reading this epistle belong to specialist West Indian societies? My reason for speculating comes as a result of spending an enjoyable weekend in the company of other enthusiasts at the recent Roses Caribbean P.S. Convention in Carlisle during which those attending, besides putting up with each other's company, had the opportunity of inspecting and talking over a wealth of material from some of this country's foremost specialist West Indian collections, including several fine displays of Jamaica. As territories in the 'foreign' Caribbean and its peripheries are also catered for by the 'Roses', it was not therefore surprising to find displayed by one of its members, a well known Jamaican enthusiast, the beginnings of a specialised collection of Martinique, which aroused a lot of interest, especially that of a Spanish waiter dispensing refreshments, who had spent some time on the island. (*Non For the uninitiated, the 'Roses' society caters basically for B.W.I. specialist collectors in Lancs. and Yorks.—it has nothing to do with lime-juice, except that its members may drink this 'wine of the West Indies'*—EDITOR)

Postal Stationery

As a result of the request in my last letter, I can now record an example of the 1d 'Floriate' provisional postcard clearly

dated April 17th, 1877, nearly a month earlier than that previously recorded. Beat this, if you can!

On May 1st, Jamaican postal rates were raised again and roughly speaking, everything is doubled in price. This will no doubt mean a completely new series of postal stationery and these changes will be mentioned in a later letter.

Postal History

Another good strike of the very rare dater, K1, has been found on a letter to Great Britain dated March 3rd, 1808, making about six examples now known. This particular letter also carries a strike of the fleuron type, F1, which intrigues me very much as the letter originated in Kingston and I cannot understand why both markings have been applied. I have also been shown a letter of 1824, written by a surgeon on board H.M.S. Seraphis at Port Royal, where it was acting as the station convalescence and store ship. The letter bears a beautiful non-postal strike of a datestamp similar to the Kingston types K2, and K2a, inscribed 'VICTUALLING' at the top and 'OFFICE' at the bottom, and obviously the work of the same manufacturer. Other markings of this type are known to me and in these modern times would supposedly be called military unit handstamps. I would welcome information regarding similar markings.

I have recently heard that a postal agency has been opened at NEW YARMOUTH and hope to have details later. The following new TRD's have been recorded in use at established offices and agencies, struck in purple ink unless otherwise stated:—

AENON TOWN	TRD41	c. January 16th, 1968
FLETCHERS LAND	TRD41d	c. February 1975
KETTO	TRD41 (ii)	c. 1974 in black
LACOVIA	TRD41	c. March 20th 1974
PRINCESS FIELD	TRD41 (ii)	c. May 1st, 1974 and
ST. ANNS BAY	TRD41	c. September 30th, 1974

In addition, the Tax Administrators' Conference mentioned in my last letter, used a TRD41 lettered 'C.I.A.T. 8th 1974' between the dates stated (May 27th—June 1st, 1974). The recent Commonwealth Conference held in Jamaica has also been responsible for the appearance of four nearly-identical TRD's. The various meetings were held in the Pegasus and Sheraton Hotels in New Kingston and a special post office operated in each hotel, each using one of the TRD's mentioned. In addition, two further TRD's were used at the Kingston G.P.O. Philatelic Branch to postmark first day covers. All four TRD's are distinguishable. TRD80 (i), used at the Pegasus Hotel, has the wording 'Commonwealth Heads of Govt Meeting' and the inner upper arc terminates at the left side below the letter 'W'. TRD80 (ii), used at the Sheraton Hotel, has this same arc terminating below the letters 'EA'. TRD80 used at the G.P.O., has a distinct bulge in the lower inner arc directly above the letter 'J' of 'Jamaica' but as yet, I have not seen the other dater, designated TRD80 (iv). Both hotel TRD's will probably be quite scarce as access to those buildings was only to those holding special security passes.

New steel datestamps, type MSR /SC1, replacing TRD's of opening or old 'Birmingham' type postmarks have been used at the following offices or agencies, struck in black ink unless otherwise stated:—

AIRPORT MONTEGO	c. September 24th, 1973
CONCORD in purple	c. May 4th, 1974
PRINCESS FIELD	c. February 8th, 1974
WAIT A BIT	c. November 4th, 1974

Finally, Bob Topaz, reporting from Boston, Mass in New England, mentions that Fletchers Land, one of the busiest agencies in Kingston, is using a steel dater, type B3 /NB1a. This type of postmark has not been issued to establishments for at least 15 years and the agency, since opening in December 1969, has never used anything else but TRD's. As Bob so rightly says, this must be one of the major Jamaican postal history surprises of modern times.