

Jamaica Newsletter No. 29

By Thomas Foster

Postal Stationery

The dangers of purchasing unrecorded errors without first obtaining expertisation or advice from fellow specialists has again emerged and, once more, the victim is an American collector!

The item in question, a mint ½d /1d revalued Reply Paid Postcard of 1890 with inverted surcharge on the return half, at first glance appears authentic but comparison with copies of the normal overprint soon reveal that the surcharges on each card are bad. The forgeries are slightly shorter in length, whilst the letters are thinner, thus making more space between the lettering than in the real thing. A little knowledge as to how these cards were overprinted would have revealed immediately that it is impossible for one surcharge to be normal and one inverted. It would be interesting to learn if anyone else possesses copies of this bogus 'forgery' and it should not be overlooked that the fraudulent inverted surcharge may also have been applied to the single revalued postcard of the same date.

Since last year's increase in the postal rates, only one item of new stationery has been seen by me, this being the 2 cent postcard in the same design as the old 1 cent card but printed in dark blue. I have no details of the date of issue.

Another interesting item of official postal stationery is used by Jamaica International Telecommunications Ltd., and takes the form of a printed telegram envelope in blue and white, used for delivering telegrams received from overseas via the Jamintel link (see the stamps of 1972 and my article, 'Jamintel Earth Satellite Station', STAMP COLLECTING, April 6th, 1972). These envelopes often carry a purple office handstamp bearing the name of the company. I have a small quantity of spare copies of this item and whilst stocks last, would be pleased to pass them on to genuine Jamaican collectors who would like them.

Postal History

The recent discovery in Canada of certain pre-stamp correspondence from Jamaica has supplied some new data and a completely new handstamp. The latest known date for type J3 is now 1777; and earliest dates of January 15th, 1800 and October 25th, 1816 for type J5 and F5 have been recorded. It is also apparent that FALMOUTH had two handstamps in the T2 classification, the present listed item becoming type T2a whilst a new handstamp, measuring 56x5 mm., to be listed as T2b, has been found on a 1797 ship letter from the U.S.A., to Port Maria, landed at Falmouth! Furthermore, another letter reveals a new latest date of April 21st, 1869 for both GAYLE in type P8 and SALT GUT in type P10c, some seven and nine years later than previously known.

I have a registered letter in my collection which has always puzzled me and which, to the best of my knowledge, may be unique! Dated in December 1938, from Ecuador to Liguanea, it has an automatic machine cancellation of the Kingston G.P.O. reading 'REGISTERED' enclosed in an oblong frame.

I cannot imagine any circumstances whereby registered letters were fed through an automatic cancelling machine, either in transit or at source, and would appreciate comments or sights of other examples.

'Birmingham' Postmarks. Those of you who digested the article on 'Birmingham' postmarks in STAMP COLLECTING of November 4th, 1976, may be interested to know that two other marks of this type have been identified, one an omission on my part, the other, a new discovery.

BOG WALK was issued with two B1 daters, probably at the same time. B1(i) has the spacer bars at left and right measuring 10½ mm and 12½ mm respectively, and is known used from June 7th, 1945-76. In B1(ii), the bars are 13½ mm and 13 mm in length and the lettering is smaller, it being known from 1945-September 24th, 1969.

LIGUANEA also had two daters differing in the lengths of the spacer bars. B1(i) has bars about 9½ mm long with squarish spaced lettering and is known from October 1st, 1941-March 6th,

1967. B1(ii) has thin, tall letters with 14 mm bars and is still in current use. It was issued at a later date than B1(i).

New TRDs have been issued to some offices and agencies during the past year, all struck in purple unless otherwise stated and in the following types with earliest dates:

TRD41. ABERDEEN, August 19th, 1976; BREASTWORK, March 29th, 1976; BURNT SAVANNA, TRD41(ii), January 17th, 1976; CAMBRIDGE, July 12th, 1976; GEORGES VALLEY, March 14th, 1976; HARMONY VALE, December 15th, 1975; MALVERN, TRD41(ii), January 1975; PORTER'S MOUNTAIN, TRD41(ii), November 30th, 1975; RIVER HEAD, September 1975, and SPRINGVALE, TRD41(iv), August 18th, 1976.

TRD41d. BALACLAVA, January 1976; BRAINERD, October 25th, 1975; BRANDON HILL, September 10th, 1975; CARRON HALL, July 16th, 1976; COXWAIN, black, January 3rd, 1976; DANVERS PEN, January 5th, 1976; FORT GEORGE, December 5th, 1975; FRANKFIELD, November 1st, 1975; HADDO, July 17th, 1975; HAYES, July 17th, 1975; INNSWOOD, September 22nd, 1975; LYSSONS, January 2nd, 1976; MONTEGO BAY No. 1, October 13th, 1975; PAPINE, TRD41d(ii), August 3rd, 1975; ROCK HALL, TRD41d(ii), January 5th, 1975; ROWLANDSFIELD, April 13th, 1976; SPALDINGS, October 1st, 1975; and TIVOLI GARDEN, black, June 2nd, 1976.

The BREASTWORK and TIVOLI GARDEN items are incorrectly spelt and should have a final letter 'S', whilst the BURNT SAVANNA dater differs from the previous sub-type in having no final letter 'H'. SPRINGVALE TRD41(iv) has no comma after the name, whilst MALVERN TRD41(ii) has the asterisks at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. instead of 3 p.m. and 9 p.m. ROCK HALL. TRD41d(ii) is a new dater thus differing from TRD41d(i) which was in black ink and distorted whilst the PAPINE and PORTER'S MOUNTAIN markings can be identified from the earlier versions by their dates.

MSR /SC1 type daters have been issued for the first time to the following offices and agencies, struck in black unless otherwise stated:

ARMSTRONG, January 15th, 1976; CENTRAL VILLAGE, purple, October 23rd, 1975; FRUITFUL VALE, August 23rd, 1975; GLENGOFFE, November 1975; HAGLEY GAP, April 20th, 1976; and YORKTOWN, purple, December 4th, 1975.

Censored Mail

I have recently been shown what I believe to be the first proven censored letter from civilian sources in the island during the 1914-18 war. It is a registered item dated June 1917, addressed to London and carries on the obverse, the small blue oval handstamp of the General Staff Office, Jamaica, a marking which is often seen on correspondence emanating from that wartime establishment. In this instance, however, there is a manuscript 'Censored /TJN' penned over the handstamp and I wonder if anyone else possesses similar examples? Until now, the marking referred to has always been treated as a unit handstamp but it may well prove to have been used by the postal censorship branch of that office with the manuscript insertion as an afterthought.

Those of you who purchased the book, 'West Indian Civil Censorship Devices in World War II' on my recommendation¹, now reprinted owing to demand, will have noticed that the Jamaican section includes the official form, 'P.C.23 /D', illustrated as type M-PCL12, used for returning to the sender letters that had not been passed by the censor. Such letters bearing this label; also had a further form inserted in them, 'P.C.20 /D', printed in black on green paper, to the effect that the writer had contravened Jamaica Defence Regulations requiring that the sender's name and address should appear on the outside of letters despatched overseas. This form will be listed as type M-PCL12a. Incidentally, it has long been contrary to post office regulations, as in many other countries, not to include the name and address of the sender on any letter!

¹ Published by The Roses Caribbean P.S. and available from Harris Publications Ltd., 42 Maiden Lane, London WC2 7LW at £3.20 post paid.