

Jamaica Newsletter No. 30

By Thomas Foster

A used block of the rare K.G.VI 5s value, line perf. 14, was recently sold at an auction of the Jamaica Philatelic Society, as a normal! I am aware of its date of use but, if nothing else, it confirms that this particular stamp was placed on sale within the island.

The 1956 definitive low values, with their unusual combination of three panes, or post office sheets, to the printer's sheet, make plate block hunting sometimes worthwhile. A recent acquisition was a block of the 2½d value, Plate/Pane 1A-3A, previously unrecorded on this denomination, which also means that 1B-3B and 1C-3C must also exist if anyone can turn them up? Of the same issue I was recently given a mint block of the 8d value, very badly perforated horizontally with the misplaced perforations running midway through the name of the colony. Of minor interest perhaps, but what an eye-catcher.

I have recently been shown, from an impeccable source, a used copy of the 3 cents current definitive which appears to have the yellow colour completely omitted, resulting in the ground surrounding the bauxite plant, appearing normally in brown, now being in purple-red, whilst the background is in blue instead of emerald-green. This is not the first time that modern Jamaican stamps have been discovered with the 'yellow' missing and it would be interesting to hear from anyone with other examples of this variety.

According to official figures, postage stamp sales during 1975-76 amounted to J\$4,714,870, just over J\$14 million more than in the previous financial year. This will no doubt help to finance the new J\$10,000,000 Sorting Office to be built on South Camp Road in Kingston and the Western Delivery Office at Maverley in Lower St. Andrew, in addition to the new post office to be erected and opened at Independence City in Portmore, St. Catherine.

New stamps for release in 1977 will be limited to four issues, including, '17th Century Maps of Jamaica' issued on February 28th; 'Butterflies', on May 9th; the '6th Scout Jamboree', on August 5th and a further issue to appear about November which will probably be a Christmas set devoted to the modern 'John Canoe' dancers.

The 1976 Christmas issue, featuring a second series of Belisario prints of old 'John Canoe' dancers had a first day cover designed by Stephen Porter of Kingston who is also responsible for the design of all the official f.d.c.'s from the Buccaneer issue of 1971 to date. In addition, the Franklin Mint commissioned a different f.d.c. from him, destined to bear only the 50 cents denomination, to be distributed by the philatelic bureau of that agency, 75,000 completed covers being produced. Despite this, I am assured from well-informed sources that it is the intention of the Jamaica Post Office to remain distinctly conservative with its stamp-issuing policy. Jamaica realises the harmful effects which would arise following commercialisation as in some other former British West Indian territories, and handling by agents other than the Crown Agents.

So far, the Jamaica Post Office has had a free hand in deciding the direction of their policies without influence from other Governmental bodies.

Military Mail

I have recently been shown two further covers from the Canadian Army posted in Kingston on November 4th, 1942 and January 4th, 1944. Both are to Canada, respectively from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Irish Fusiliers of Canada, and each bears identical strikes of the 'MILITARY CENSOR / 'Y' / FORCE / No. 10' handstamp as in illustration 'A' of Newsletter No. 28. The discovery of this new censor number confirms that this type was a base censor mark applied at Up Park Camp. It could not have been a unit censor marking owing to its occurrence on correspondence from more than one unit.

I have also acquired a new type of Postal Censorship Label which will become type M-PCL13 and whose use appears self-explanatory. It is designated 'P.C.5' at top right with the three-lined legend in black ink reading, 'This cover was /open when it reached /the Censor', printed on a yellow label measuring about 112mm x 108mm and enclosed in a letter censored and resealed in Jamaica during February 1944.

To continue research on this censorship programme, I am anxious to examine the notebook which accompanied and formed part of the Cayman Islands censorship material sold as Lot 401 in the 'Cameron' sale at Robson Lowe on November 5th, 1974. This lot was sold to a London dealer and I would be extremely grateful if the purchaser would get in touch with me at his earliest convenience.

Postal History

Another recent acquisition is a slogan postmark used at the Kingston G.P.O. on November 30th, 1965, reading 'BUY / JAMAICAN / THIS CHRISTMAS' in two unframed lines. Can anyone else report further examples of this marking, which has not been previously recorded? I have also been shown a large four-lined purple handstamp on a cover of November 1967, reading 'MISTREATED IN THE / JAMAICA POST / MISTREATMENT / REGRETTED' enclosed in a rectangular frame. Once again, details of other examples would be appreciated.

During September-October 1976, many letters originating from various insurance companies in Kingston were hand-stamped with a large circular purple dater advertising the 'SECOND CARIBBEAN INSURANCE CONFERENCE'. These are non-postal private handstamps applied by the companies concerned, usually occurring on meter-franked letters and should not be mistaken for T.R.D's.

The Roses Caribbean Society based in the north of England, publish every year, a well produced little magazine dealing with various specialised West Indian topics and the December 1976 issue contained an up-to-date article of mine dealing with the 'Street Letter Box Postmarks of Jamaica'. A number of these magazines remain and may be obtained from Malcom D. Watts, 'Good Intent', 18 Linden Way, Wetherby, West Yorks, LS22 4QU, price 50p post free, in the U.K.

For the opening of the LUFTHANSA LH492 'DC10' service between New York and Kingston on April 8th, 1976, special first flight covers exist with the cachet struck in three different colours. I have not yet seen cacheted covers for the return flight from Kingston and would appreciate details of any known.

My apologies to those correspondents who have not yet received their 'JAMINTEL' envelopes as mentioned in my last letter. Supplies of these were limited but should further copies come to hand, they will be sent on. No further requests, please.

Jamaica has at last got itself a stamp dealer. Mr. E. S. C. Valentine, formerly of Scotland, is now operating from 6 Abbeylea Road, Kingston 10, and will doubtless be interested to hear from customers outside of the island, quite apart from handling local trade.

Finally, a delightful little postscript in these days of Women's Lib! Mr. Keith DePas, Assistant Postmaster-General, informs us that regardless of sex, Jamaican postmistresses are referred to as Postmasters and not Postmistresses!