

Jamaica Newsletter No. 31

By Thomas Foster

The specialist Jamaican dealer, Mr. C. P. Winard, has kindly shown me an example of the unissued 1921 6d 'Slavery' stamp on MCA paper, with *watermark reversed* and the 'Specimen' overprint reading upwards! I have never previously recorded it but, presumably, at least one sheet of this watermark variety must have existed?

Unless one collects British stamps, there is a tendency to disregard the gutter-pane pairs now existing and it comes as a surprise to realise that similar items can also be found on Jamaican issues. Most specialists are aware that the KGVI definitive lower values were originally supplied in unseparated pairs of horizontal panes from which used pairs can be found and more often, mint inter-panneau blocks. I have recently come across another item of this kind which is probably not recorded anywhere.

The piece in question is a used horizontal pair of the 1929 1½d value, with a 12mm. gutter margin between stamps, proving that this value was supplied in undivided horizontal pairs of panes! A feature of this pair, probably constant on others that exist, is the vertical perforation on either side of the gutter, which is further away from the design than on the other vertical rows. Whilst the 1½d value was widely used for Empire mail, the 1d value was even more in demand for the internal rate and it would be reasonable to assume that this stamp was supplied in the same fashion. I would be interested to hear from anyone possessing similar material of either this or any other issue apart from the Queen Victoria and KGVI definitives.

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that certain lower values of the KGVI series, produced by Waterlow & Sons, were also printed in sheets comprising pairs of panes but it is difficult to prove this without the evidence of plate markings on the sheet margins.

The original printing plates did not bear plate numbers of any kind and it was not until the manufacture of replacement plates that numbering commenced, the new plates being numbered '2' and soon. Taking the 3d value as an example, the two panes were printed side by side, each bearing the *same plate numbers* which differ slightly in position when compared with each other. The right-hand pane does not have cutting guide lines at the right bottom corner and the position of the two small perforation guide lines and the centrally-placed perforation guide cross are to be found on the third vertical line of perforations, i.e., between vertical stamp rows two and three, instead of between the fourth vertical line perforations, i.e., vertical rows three and four.

Similar differences exist on the other values and confirmation or additional information to these findings is badly needed. The fact that two otherwise identical panes existed on each sheet, was the reason why the 'Exhaust Pipe' flaw on the 6d value and the 'Broken Chimney' flaw on the 1s value, are only found on certain positional blocks from the same plates!

On more modern subjects, at a recent meeting of the Jamaica Philatelic Society, Mr. Rupert Knight, the Postmaster General, confirmed that Post Office policy will be to maintain a moderation in stamps of no more than four issues in any one year. A certain amount of criticism had accrued because no United States bicentennial stamp had been issued but this had been decided against after the completion of preliminary work. He was disappointed that, as a foremost member of the Commonwealth, Jamaica had not issued stamps to commemorate the Silver Jubilee. He ended by saying that the Post Office tended to be generally overlooked in national planning and stressed that no interference of any kind occurs with correspondence coming into, or moving within, the island, although regulations regarding financial matters on external mail had to be carried out.

Postal History

During the compilation of my book on Jamaican postal history, the opportunity was taken of inspecting practically every collection of note in the world! The collection formed by the late John M. Spence of Baltimore was sold at auction in the U.S.A. shortly after the war, but I was never able to trace any items from that source and was, therefore, interested to see this collection when it appeared in Harmer's sale of March 21st, after lying dormant for many years. As a result of the sale, two new items can be added to our listings and several dates of use extended.

LACOVIA, type T4a, is now known as early as April 11th 1827 whilst ANNOTTO BAY, type P3, has been found used in 1864! FALMOUTH, type P10c, has a latest known date of April 7th, 1865 whilst the COMMERCIAL ROOMS handstamp, type CR8, has been recorded used on July 8th, 1843. Another forwarding agent's cachet, that of J. A. Garcia Del Rio of KINGSTON, type FAC5, can be predated to March 1851. The most remarkable item however, was an unrecorded FALMOUTH SHIP LETTER marking, type SL8, for March 28th, 1845 which, although illustrated in the catalogue, was wrongly said to be '*an earlier date than recorded by Foster*'.

My given date of course, referred to type SL6 from that office and there must be some reason why a describer can make such an obvious mistake!

Yet another unrecorded item was a 'Too Late' postmark applied at the BLACK RIVER office on August 28th, 1848. This new handstamp will now become type TL6, whilst the present TL6 which it resembles closely, only having larger proportions, will now become type TL6a. Incidentally, it too was used at Black River! Another item acquired recently was a first day cover of the 1937 Coronation issue, beautifully cancelled with the SOUTHFIELD P11 datestamp and almost the latest known date. It is certainly strange to find a postmark issued in 1876, cancelling a relatively modern f.d.c.

Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Yet another new discovery is the single-circle dater, 'T.P.O.3' (Fig 1) This item, without plugs, is actually in my collection and has evidently seen much use. Presumably, 'T.P.O.1' and 'T.P.O.2' also existed but I have never seen either and would welcome news of their use. They would have been used on the railway trains operating between Kingston and Montego Bay or Port Antonio and at one time. Other T.P.O. daters were restricted to a particular service.

In the later years of use, these limitations went by the board and it is common to find railway T.P.O. markings used on the wrong service.

Military markings appearing on mail have always been of exceptional interest to me and I am delighted to be able to illustrate (Fig. 2) a handstamp which was one of ten similar items recorded in the Proof Book of Steel Datestamp Impressions, as being despatched from the United Kingdom on November 25th, 1920 to the Command Paymasters at Jamaica, Baghdad, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Ceylon (2), Hong Kong, Bermuda, Singapore and Cape Town. At first sight, they would appear to be unit handstamps of a non-postal nature but, if so, why were they provided through Post Office channels? It is far more likely that they were supplied to the various commands for

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authorising free postage on mails etc., but I have never seen the Jamaican item so used and would be very pleased to hear from anyone having examples of any of the others on mail, or having a better suggestion for their use. Except for official Post Office mail, Jamaica has never permitted the use of free postage on correspondence going outside the island and it is possible that, if these daters contravened regulations, they were never used!

The HADDINGTON **postal agency** closed on January 3rd 1977 when the new agency at nearby WATFORD HILL opened: so far, no postal markings from the latter have been seen. The only new temporary postmark to report is TRD41d in purple, for MEADOWBRIDGE in St. Andrew, dated February 10th, 1977.

Postal Stationery

That in current use includes a 2 cents postcard printed in deep blue in the same design as previously, plus an 18 cents airletter form similar in all other respects to the old 9 cents item. The 5 cents plus 20 cents registered envelopes are still in use with the small size, having a bright blue interior with colourless gum on the flap and a very bluish exterior appearance. The larger size has a pale blue interior with yellow gum and a normal appearance from the outside. Both carry the 'MCCORQUODALE PRINTERS Lm.' imprint. I have not yet seen any registered envelopes for the current 10 cents postage plus 40 cents registered rates and would be pleased to hear news of these. I cannot, at the moment, supply date of issue for any of the above items.

The 1 cent and 2 cents newspaper wrappers are still in use, although they have to be uprated by means of adhesives and meter frankings. The latest supplies seen of the former are in a very pale yellow-green which differs greatly from the original issue, whilst the 2 cents is in bright red as against the original dull red.