

# THE BRITISH WEST INDIAN PHILATELIST

EDITED BY E. F. AGUILAR

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# BRITISH WEST INDIAN PHILATELIST

ISSUED QUARTERLY

EDITOR E. F. AGUILAR  
P.O. BOX 406. — KINGSTON.

VOL. I.

SEPTEMBER 1949

NO. 1.



*Silver Wedding Varieties*

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**Introduction:**

The British West Indian Philatelist's first issue, and which shall be issued quarterly.

This magazine will deal mainly with B.W.I. Islands, Post and Temporary Marks, First Flights, and articles of general information on all the islands of the Caribbean (Bahamas, Bermuda and Br. Honduras are included in the West Indian Group). At a later date, it is hoped to increase the size of this magazine, but due to paper restrictions, this will not be possible for sometime yet. At least two small auctions will be held during the year, between 60 to 120 lots each, and will be mostly British Commonwealth and Colonies.

Any suggestions or information that readers may have, will be gratefully received.

## **News Here And There**

### **British Guiana – Georgetown PO Building**

The Post Office which was destroyed by the 1945 fire is now being rebuilt. The new Post Office will be a three storey building of reinforce concrete, which is estimated to cost about £300,000. This building will also house the telephone exchange, the Cable offices and a number of offices for the Government. The building is being built by Messrs. Ash & Watson, Trinidad Contractors.

### **Jamaica – Kingston PO Conditions**

There has been much complaining about the conditions at the G. P. O., a little while back the press took the matter up, and the following were a few of the figures for 1948.

The Post and Telegraph Departments employ 1294 persons, which consists of the General Post office, nearly 400 District Post Offices and 60 odd Postal Agencies. Last year it handled upwards of 20,000,000 letters, 250,000 parcels and 650.000 telegrams. This represents an increase generally of approximately 10 times for the past forty years.

Chief complaints by the public, are the delay in handling and forwarding of mails. For instance an Air mail letter from London is delivered in three days-yet a letter posted at Cross Roads P.O. to an address at Half Way Tree (2 miles away) has taken 6 days for delivery.

The G.P.O. occupies offices at the Barry Street end of the western block of Public Buildings. Built after the 1907 earthquake little improvement has taken place since.

### **Philatelic Congress, UK – Attended by LCC Nicholson.**

Mr. L. C. C. Nicholson attended the thirty-first Philatelic Congress, (representing the Jamaica Philatelic Society) which was held at Southport, under the auspices of the Manchester and Manchester Central Philatelic Societies, from May 24-27, which from all accounts was a great success.

### **Bahamas – 1948 Eleutherian Issue Sales Disappointing**

Reports from collector states that the sales of the Eleutherian stamps have been very disappointing. No small wonder seeing the amount of high valued stamps in the issues.

### **Investigation of Rust on Stamps and Album Leaves**

Mr. Ray R. Hirt of the N.Y. State College of Forestry is at present testing out a number of stamps and album sheets, as to the cause of rust. In the tropics an album with the ordinary machine paper will show signs of rust in four or five years-while the better class handmade paper about seven. All philatelists in tropical countries, we are sure, will eagerly await his results. May we wish him every success.

### **Col. HG Reid of Caribbean Philatelic Society, St. Lucia Visit to Jamaica**

Colonel H. G. Ried, head of the Caribbean Philatelic Society will be visiting Jamaica sometime in 1950 to have the third Caribbean Philatelic Meeting which will be held in Jamaica. As yet no dates have been fixed, but if it does mature. let us hope the Jamaica Philatelic Society will put on an exhibition at the same time; similar to what was carried out in Trinidad.

## Labels and First Flights to and from Jamaica (Part 1)

By E. F. Aguilar

A little while back, looking through some old Gleaners at the Institute of Jamaica, for information on certain air mail flights, I came across what may be the first flight of an aeroplane in the island. Mr. Jessie Seligman, an American Aviator, made a flight in his Monoplane from Knutsford Park on Wednesday 20th Dec., 1911. There was a large turnout of spectators awaiting to see Mr. Seligman take off, but due to the very high wind this was put off for a few hours until the wind subsided, after which the large crowd had the opportunity of seeing for the first time in their lives a plane taking off, and flying for about five minutes before landing again. After the flight Mr. Seligman said "It was the worse flight he had made in his life as far as weather conditions go." There were a number of successful flights following.

With the starting of the Great War in 1914, it was only natural that Jamaica wanted to do what little she could by contribution. Mr. Lewis Ashenheim then founded the "Jamaica War Stamp League" which in 1916 the name was changed to "Jamaica Patriotic Stamp League"; object of the League was to help and assist the British Red Cross Society, The Jamaica Aeroplane Fund, and a fund for the relief of Polish Jews.

The design of the labels was by Mr. Dennison, showing an aeroplane and a Red Cross (as photo) printed on white wove paper, with a perf. 12 unwatermarked. A sheet was of 100 labels 10 x 10 and appeared on the first of December, 1915. There was much comment as regards the labels not bearing the name of the country, and it was thought best that the remaining stocks should be overprinted with the word "Jamaica". The job of overprinting the labels was given to the Gleaner Co. Ltd., of Kingston, and it was not long before the second issue appeared.

The second issue was put on sale on 22nd December, 1915, which was of the same label except the addition of the word "JAMAICA" in red. There are no varieties known to me, but one can find defects in the first "A" of "JAMAICA". These first two issues are not easily found now-a-days.

The third issue with the "Jamaica" in black (as photo) appeared on sale the 15th January, 1916, and a number of varieties are known, such as the overprint in purple, which is difficult to find now. Also in the purple overprint the first letter "A" of "JAMAICA" is defected, this defect appears as well in the last issue and from the number of copies seen, it seems that the letter was not hitting squarely.

The labels in the black overprint are the commonest, usually postmarked but to find it used on envelope tied with a postmark is quite difficult. One can find the double and inverted overprints in this setting, but these varieties are rare. The defected first "A" of "JAMAICA" also appears again, while also the last "A" can be found with the same defect. Booklets were made up locally (from what information I have been able to obtain) of two pages of six labels. As the Gleaner Co. Ltd., did the overprinting, it's only natural that these booklets were prepared by them also.



The fourth issue which has the addition of the word "HALF PENNY" in black, was issued on the 11th March, 1916-the only defect known of, and one which appears to be a freak, is the broken making it look like the letter "l".

These labels were all printed by Messrs. Dennison Manufacturing Co., Framingham, Mass., U.S.A., and during the period of issue in Jamaica the fund was benefited by more than £50,000.

All these labels were on sale at the post offices for id each but paid no postal duty, and are therefore without philatelic status, but not lacking of philatelic interest.

In 1916 the residents of Kingston and St. Andrew were again treated to a number of air displays, once again by an American Aviator-Mr. DeKor who landed, his plane at Knutsford Park, and put on a number of air shows, all were well attended, and from which he gave part of the gate receipts to the War Aeroplane Fund.

February 1919 the island was visited by four sea planes of the American Naval Forces, the planes landing in Kingston Harbour.

With the war over, there was a long gap before flying really I got hold of the interest of the local people. Major Nathan on his visits to the island would bring out his "Moth" and it was a pleasant sight seeing the little plane flying around the plains of St. Andrew. Capt. Holland returning from Canada brought out a Canadian Vickers seaplane which was moored at Greenwich Farm. This plane was able to take four passengers, and on a Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning, one could see more and more new passengers going up for their first plane trip. It was not long before a small group got very interested and formed a company, calling themselves the Caribbean Airways Ltd.

Another seaplane was ordered in 1928 and on its arrival was used for carrying passengers on short trips.

On the 6th Oct. 1929 an attempt was made for the first flight from Canal Zone to U.S. via Jamaica, this flight failed as the plane ran into very heavy winds on nearing Jamaica and was forced to turn back, landing once again at Canal Zone. All the mail was then sent by sea mail. On each envelope, in a square 39 x 39 mm. in purple ink, is the following CANAL ZONE-U.S. via Jamaica "Aviator encountered impossible weather conditions nearing Jamaica compelling return. Mail re-dispatched by steamer."

At the end of November 1930 Pan American Airways Inc., announced the inauguration of the world's largest scheduled water route, from Miami to Cristobal via Cienfuegos and Kingston.

The Commodore flying boats that were used were of a dual motor monoplane type, with a wing span of 100 ft and seating for 32 passengers.

Airmail would be received by Jamaica being a member of the International Postal Union, but arrangements had to be made as regards to outgoing mail with the Caribbean Airways as they now held the franchise.

The first flight was to be on December 3rd and Pan American had chosen two of their veteran pilots namely Lieut. Commander Ed. Schultz who would be at the controls on the Southbound plane, while on the return trip Capt. Basil Rowe. It is of interest to note that Commander Schultz was a Squadron Leader in the R.N.A.S. during the war.

Each of these Pilots had over 7,000 hours of flying record.

On the morning of the 3rd December a large and representative crowd was down at the P.A.A. barge which was first moored off No. 2 pier, and later moved to Bournemouth to welcome the first plane. Among those present were the Hon. A. E. DaCosta (Custos of Kingston), Mr. J. F. Kiefter (Manager of the United Fruit Co., in Jamaica), Mr. Paul Squire (American Counsel), Mr. R. H. Fletcher (Postmaster General of Jamaica). At 10 o'clock sharp the plane was sighted, and ten minutes later had landed and drawn alongside the barge. shortly after the first bag of mail was landed.

(Continued next Issue)

## Jamaica Philatravelogue

### **From Port Royal Across Jamaica To Montego Bay (Part 1) By J. M. Nethersole**

How fortunate that the coining of words, if a literary sin, is not a criminal offence!!!

This pilgrimage begins at PORT ROYAL - not its original name, which was, up to Restoration, POINT CAGUA, but, as PORT ROYAL, a name which conjures up a picture of Pirates, Buccaneers, Doubloons and Pieces of Eight, Puncheons of rum and all varieties of vice, violence and villainy.

Certainly, retribution for these excesses followed in the after years, for in 1692 a cataclysmic earthquake caused the sea to swallow up four-fifths of the Town, leaving only two hundred out of three thousand houses undamaged; the inhabitants rebuilt, only in 1703, to experience a devastating fire, followed, in 1772, by a storm of maximum rating-fire again in 1816 and hurricane in 1860. This "Wulli Wa" seems to have been the last straw, especially with the rise in importance of Kingston. across the Harbour, and today PORT ROYAL, once regarded as the "richest spot in the universe", is now virtually only a Coaling Station and the Quarantine Point at when incoming ships receive their clean Bill of Health before proceeding to the Docks of KINGSTON.



PORT ROYAL is a very old Office from Postal History point of view - its first date marks from 1833, and with the advent of adhesive stamps used Obliterator A 67. PORT ROYAL is pictured on the 6d stamp of the 1919-29 Pictorial issue, which shows ships lying at anchor off the Port.

Were we ultra-modern and air-borne, the journey across the Harbour would have appeared to us is shown on the 9d value of the 1939 Geo. VI issue.

But we propose to go by road along the seven-mile strip of the PALISADOES, and not so far along we come to the site for the PALISADOES AIRPORT Post Office to be opened someday with full Postal and telecommunication facilities especially provided for travellers by aeroplane.

The Palisadoes Road meets the Main Road, Kingston-Morant Bay at a point about four miles from KINGSTON, and at this junction we turn left or westwards in the direction of the Capital-Not the original Capital, but so, officially since 1872, ousting SPANISH TOWN from that distinction.

KINGSTON had, long before then, in 1703, been incorporated, complete with Charter and it's Post Office established from 1702.

Before getting to KINGSTON proper we pass a small District Post Office, WINDWARD ROAD-opened on 1st April, 1909, and, as its name suggests, on the Road of that name "to windward" (i.e. east) of KINGSTON from which quarter blows the prevailing south-east wind, known for obvious reasons as "The Doctor."

Now actually in KINGSTON, in East Street, we find the INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA, part of which, the New Museum Building was completed in 1941 and is portrayed on the 3d and 10/- values of the New Constitution Issue of 1945.

Our route thence, happily takes us to the MYRTLE BANK HOTEL, where we can fortify ourselves against the rigours of our journey (140 Miles of careful driving with the wine of the country and/or others).

On January 16th, 1901 there was set tip in this Hotel, for the convenience of guests, a Post Office with full Postal and Telegraph facilities, but since then the business area of the City has spread up to, and beyond, the Hotel and the Office now is of even more use to commercial interests than to guests.

At last we tear ourselves away from the (liquid?) comforts of the MYRTLE BANK HOTEL and driving up King Street from the uttermost (South or sea) and we see the Statue of Sir Charles Metcalfe, an able and progressive Governor of the Island from 1839 to 1842. This monuments unique as being the only memorial of its kind erected to 'he Colony in appreciation of the services of Governor. The statue is reproduced on the 3/- denominations of the 1921-29 Pictorial Issue, - parenthetically, not-so-common a stamp in well-centered Mint condition, but this is in keeping with the amount voted for the



Memorial. £3,000!!! Next we pass, half way up, the nerve centre of the Jamaica Postal System, the General post office-since 1913 (today housed inadequately in the Western Block of the (strictly Utilitarian) Public Buildings. Two hundred yards up the street lie the Parade Gardens, of which the less said the better, occupying some ten acres of valuable space; at the South end of the "Gardens" (the apostrophes are merited) we see the statue of Queen Victoria-unveiled on the occasion of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and reproduced on the 1/- stamps of the 1919-29 Pictorial Issues. This denomination of the M.C.A. paper (vide Illustration) with the inverted frame provides the highlight of Jamaican issues. The last auction price was £390.

Close by, is the Kingston Parish Church, where among other monuments of historical interest, is that erected to the Memory of Admiral Benbow, who died of wounds at Port Royal in 1702 after his unsuccessful naval battle with DuCasse off Santa Marta earlier in that year, and was buried in this Church.

At the Northern end of East Street is the Kingston Race Course, an area of some sixty acres. Immediately above the Race Course, where Wolmer's School and the Mico Training College now stand, was the site of the JAMAICA EXHIBITION of 1891 commemorated for collectors on the ½d value of the 1919-29 Pictorial Issues.

A Post Office was set up in the grounds, operation from January 16, to May 16-Examples of the special postmark of the temporary office are very scarce indeed. Incidentally, the venture was not a financial success.

Due East of the site of this Exhibition lies the suburban district of ALLMAN TOWN which was given its Post Office on January 3rd, 1939. The steel date-stamp which succeeded the Temporary Rubber Date Stamp was one of the first examples of the new or "Birmingham type" which is gradually replacing the familiar "Double rings" as they become worn out, at the several offices. Besides those suburban offices so far mentioned there are in Kingston and Lower St. Andrew:-

LASCELLES	Originally	
MYERS WHARF	"	
VINEYARD TOWN	"	VINEYARD PEN
JONES TOWN	"	JONES PEN
WHITFIELD TOWN	"	WHITFIELD PEN
DENHAM TOWN	"	SMITH VILLAGE
LIGUANEA	"	HOPE

The next Post Office on our itinerary is CROSS ROADS. On January 4, 1909 the Post Office at UP PARK CAMP was abandoned and CROSS ROADS opened in its stead. UP PARK CAMP was one of the Obliterator stations dating from 1884 and using A38 the former Falmouth mark UP PARK CAMP Temporary Date Stamp is well known.

Our road leads Northwards and a short two miles on stir way we reach HALF WAY TREE. Some Chronicles ascribe the name to the fact that it was just half way between the seashore Military Barracks at GREENWICH and those at STONY HILL, further North. But this would seem to be incorrect, for Long, the historian, wrote in 1774. "The Village" of "Half Way" Tree is situated . . . at the intersection of the three roads which lead to Spanish Town, St. Mary and St. George and it is definite that troops were not stationed at Stony Hill until 1779. The Narrator can recall his father, in the early 90's pointing out to him the trunk (only) of a tree there as being THE TREE.



HALF WAY TREE was an old "obliterator" station dating from 1873, using G. 13.

From HALF WAY TREE we veer west making for our next postal point SPANISH TOWN. The Railway lies somewhat to the south of our route, were we using that method of transport we should pass through GREGORY PARK and GRANGE LANE, stations of the Line.

This railway line runs through the extensive banana and cane properties of the United Fruit Company in the Parish of St. Catherine, and the scene of the centre design of the current 3d of the 1939 George VI issue occurs daily on any banana plantation in this area.

The boundary between the Parishes of KINGSTON and ST. CATHERINE lies a little East of the FERRY INN, the burnt-out shell of which is still standing, and a quarter mile west, there still grows, luxuriantly, an high Cieba. TOM CRINGLE'S TREE, INN and Tree mentioned in Marryat's novel of early Jamaica days.

The Parish of ST. CATHERINE gets its name from that of Catherine of Portugal, wife of Charles II.

Thirteen miles of driving has now brought us to the chief town of the Parish SPANISH TOWN. This was the first English Capital of the Island. the residence of the Governor, removed thence from POINT CAGUA (PORT ROYAL) in 1664 by Sir Thomas Modyford, and also the Seat of Government until this was in turn, after two abortive attempts transferred to KINGSTON in 1872,

(Continued next Issue)

## Jamaicana

### Jamaica George VI 1½d-An Autobiography

(From the Jamaica Philatelist)

What an interesting little fellow I am, I first saw the official light of day on October 10th, 1938: 1 defray the current charge for local postage, on a single letter up to 2 ounces in weight, and since my birthday millions of me have been printed, and so used.

I have appeared since then in all manner of guises, unaltered as to Comb perforation, but with plenty of variety in other respects. I am known with Plate Nos. 1, 2, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, with some sheets perforated right through the edgings, at other times leaving the edginess untouched. Latterly, on plates 3C, 3D, and 4D can be seen signs of wear or retouches.

As to shades, Oh my! I am a Jezebel: I have painted my face in all shades of true brown, faint brown, light brown, medium brown, dark brown, very dark brown, chocolate brown; even on my birthday I also used the red-brown cosmetics, and right through the gamut I went: light red-brown, medium light red-brown, dark brick, almost maroon, and so on. What amuses me is to listen to collectors arguing on shade merits, especially when I have seen on the same sheet (of my cousin the 1d red) stamps of a deep scarlet contiguous with stamps of true carmine: like little Audrey, I laugh and laugh, and laugh and laugh.

My amusement is even more pronounced when I realise that one of my multitudinous shades is an alleged rarity., just as another cousin our 2d George VI laughed himself off-centre when he, in turn, for three years was classed as a comparative rarity, after his printers had abandoned adorning his edges with the 121 "Line" perforation in favour of the compound "Comb." For those three years cousin 2d was on sale "At face" at every post office in the colony, while collectors abroad paid much, much more for him. Ho Hum!! I wonder how they felt when the bottom dropped out?

Mind you, our local collectors did well out of that, selling sheets of sixty, which cost 10/- for £2, per sheet, was definitely good business, some of them must have made enough to have paid for even the high values of the Silver Wedding Cavalcade!!

Yes, I am a great boy, I still keep collectors (in Jamaica) guessing as to which of my red brown shades is this rarity, "you pays your money and you takes your choice".

Of course the situation is complicated by the method of distribution practised by the Crown Agents, who allow dealers in the U.K. to purchase, direct, colonial stamps as they are issued, without such stamps ever reaching the colony at all, and bearing in mind the extreme likelihood of there being variations of shades of the printing ink in any large batch of thousands of sheets, it is quite possible that a particular shade may prove, never to be in truth and in fact, a stamp "issued for postal services in its particular colony." It would also happen that in a batch allotted to a particular dealer there may be one sheet which showed some minor colour vagary on the part of the printer and that dealer might consider that as he had only got one sheet it was a sheet of scarce shade, irrespective of the fact many thousands sheets of that same shade may have gone out to the colony and be there as common as dirt. What the dealer offers for sale is entirely his own business; however, I am still laughing and I offer a prize of 25, heavily-postmarked, off-centre, damaged, and stained copies of myself to anyone who can solve this riddle:- "Why of the round half dozen or so of my red brown shades should any particular one be dubbed a rarity?"

The appropriate clichés are:-

- (1) "One collects what one wants to collect"
- (2) "A 'variety' is worth exactly what a specialist is willing to pay."
- (3) "There's one born every minute".

## The Silver Weddings Of The B.W.I.

### *Silver Wedding Varieties*

The first of the Silver Wedding stamps to appear on the market were the Turks Islands with the values of 1d and 10/-. The low value was reproduced by Photogravure by Messrs. Waterlow and Sons Ltd., with a Comb perforation of 14 x 15. A Plate setting of "1" immediately beneath the second stamp from the right hand bottom corner, will always be found. The high value was recessed by Messrs. Bradbury Wilkinson & Son Ltd., with the usual plate setting of "1" and/or "1A" in a similar position as the low value. Perforation 11½ x 11 Comb, Watermark multiple script CA-which applies to all issues in the Br. West Indies except that duty plate, being different. No less than eight colonies had Pound values while most of the other islands had a top value of 10/- except the Leeward Islands, and Barbados, which had 5/-.

From the general reports, all the Islands seemed to have had very poor sales, mainly due to the very high values imposed on the small collector. Long before these stamps were put on the market there was a general outcry by both stamp collectors and dealers at the high cost of the sets, and it is to be hoped that similar sets will never again be issued with such high values as the Silver Weddings.

There were few varieties to be found among these stamps, but on the Bermuda 1½d a constant variety which will be found on the 51st stamp-a full stop on the nose of the King. In Jamaica the top row of the 1½d stamps there is a slight difference from the other stamps on the sheet, in that, the Queen's dress around the neckline, the beading will be seen to differ. This variety should cause the collector no difficulty in obtaining, as each sheet had eight on it.



Normal

Flaw

The issue dates and the withdrawals with the approximate amount of sales from the islands are listed below. The sales as you will see, from those I have been able to obtain the information, have been very low.

DATE OF ISSUE						WITHDRAWALS AND	AMT SOLD
Antigua	3	Jan.	1949	off	sale	4 April 1949	
Barbados	24	Nov.	1948	"	"	1½d 5s on 11.2.49 23 Feb. '49	51,454
Bahamas	1	Dec.	1948	"	"	1 Mar 1949	
Bermuda	1	Dec.	1948	"	"	1 Mar 1949	
Br. Guiana	20	Dec.	1948	"	"	Sales 4,392 21 Mar 1949	
Br. Honduras	1	Oct.	1948	"	"	8 Jan. 1949	
Cayman	29	Nov.	1948	"	"	1 Mar. 1949	
Dominica	1	Dec.	1948	"	"	1 Mar. 1949	3,600
Grenada	27	Oct.	1948	"	"	31 Jan. 1949	4,000
Jamaica	1	Dec.	1948	"	"	1 Mar 1949	under 4,000
Leeward Is.	3	Jan	1949	"	"	4 Apr. 1949	
Montserrat	3	Jan.	1949	"	"	4 Apr. 1949	
St. Lucia	26	Nov.	1948	"	"	26 Feb. 1949	3,200
St. Kitts	3	Jan.	1949	"	"	4 Apr. 1949	
St. Vincent	30	Nov.	1948	"	"	1 Mar. 1949	3,500
Trinidad	22	Nov.	1948	"	"	22 Feb. 1949	(Sales 8,000)
Turks Is.	13	Sep.	1948	"	"	8 Jan. 1949	
Virgin Is.	3	Jan.	1949	"	"	4 Apr. 1949	

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