

Peter Ford Introduction:

Our first formal display of the day is a joint effort by Kevin Darcy and James Podger and for those of you who weren't here when I gave my address this morning, James has to send his apologies because the latest news is that he's somewhere between Mumbai and London, flying back from a delayed trip of his, so his material is here, and unfortunately it falls on Kevin's shoulders to give an explanation of both his and James's material.

Kevin Darcy:

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for inviting us both to come here to give this talk and display today.

"Once upon a time in the Cayman Islands ..."

Our story really starts in 1889 when the Cayman Islands came under the jurisdiction of Jamaica and started with a branch of the Jamaican post office, probably some time around April, when low value Jamaican stamps were supplied to them, ½d, 1d, 2d and 4d initially, and later 2½d and official values.

I am going to commence with the 4d stamp which was probably one of the most important values. As many Jamaica collectors will know, this paid the foreign letter rate and registration rate from 1889 onwards. Within a year though, the foreign letter rate had dropped from 4d to 2½ d and by 1893 the registration rate had reduced from 4d to 2d. The first sheet shows cancels on piece of the oval Georgetown (Grand Cayman) Type 1 cancel, which was used from 1889 to 1894.

A second cancelling device was then brought into use; a single ring canceller, this was probably the most interesting cancelling device used in the Caymans, for two reasons:

1. It didn't have all the letters in the canceller device, It read 'GRAND CAYMAN P.O.' but the letter 'A' was always offset compared to the other letters and the 'Y' was always missing.
2. The other very interesting feature was the year was never changed. It was in use from 1895 to 1898 and nobody ever managed to move the 95. So you see covers in 1897 and 1898 still dated 1895 but of course the back-stamps show the true date.

By 1898 a third Georgetown cancellation device had come in, this time of the double-ring type. This was used at Georgetown from 1898 through to 1906. In 1898 a second Post Office was opened on the islands at Stake Bay, Cayman Brac. There, a small rectangular temporary rubber date stamp of the type used at new Jamaican Post Offices was brought into use. Unfortunately we don't have one of those to display to you today. But what we do have is the second device that was introduced in 1900. It is very similar to the one of 1898 at Grand Cayman.

So – four of those five early cancellations are here for you to see.

For many years, the Cayman Islands authorities had been trying to get their own postage stamps and eventually, in 1900, after much discussion, they were allowed to have two low value stamps – a ½d and a 1d. They wanted higher values but they were only allowed to have those two low values. Like many things with the Islands, nothing was straightforward – The stamps were requisitioned on 7 August 1900, they were then sent to Jamaica, they stayed there for a few days and then were sent along to the Cayman Islands. The official date of issue of the stamp was 19 February 1901. So there was this period between when the stamps were received and when they were officially issued.

There was great correspondence in the philatelic press between a Commander Martin and a Mr Jennet, a local islander. Commander Martin said that he was a lieutenant on HMS Pallas, and claims he took the first stamps to the Islands and tells the fascinating story involving himself, Sanguinetti (the Commissioner), the purser and other crew members who arrived at Georgetown in the Cayman Islands in a terrible gale on a really bad night. That night they had to row across the

harbour in longboats because they could not get the ship close enough into the island. They managed with difficulty to land and to get into a small hut. They sat down and started to get the stamps out of the various boxes in which they were kept and they started to make first day covers – apparently this is something they did at all the places they called with new stamps. Nobody has ever seen one of these first day covers but it is very interesting that in Richard Maisel's sale, held earlier this year, there were a couple of Queen Victoria stamps with those very dates of 19 Feb 1901; so obviously that part of the story he told was true. He undoubtedly did take out some stamps.

However, Mr Jennet then wrote and said "Well no, that story can't be right, they can't be the first stamps because we had the stamps back in November", and he said that there had been a few covers issued. So the story developed that the Cayman Island stamps were first for local use, and then later, after February 1901, for use to the rest of the World. Certainly, back in December 1900/January 1901, dealers in America and England were receiving Cayman Island stamps, but they were very disappointed when they received the stamps, because the envelopes sending the stamps out had Jamaican stamps and they really wanted the envelopes to have Cayman stamps. They didn't like Jamaica used in Cayman – How things have changed. The stamps were from plate 3. We are showing here the duty plates that James has for both the universal key plate for Queen Victoria, and the name and duty plates. There are a variety of plate blocks for you to look at and then a selection of used items showing the different rates of the Queen Victoria covers. We have a single example of a stamp used on 17 November 1900, thanks to EBay – one does find things there occasionally. Of the covers, one very interesting cover has a 'JAMAICA TRANSIT' mark, I haven't had an explanation yet as to why a cover coming out from Caymans should have the mark applied, maybe it was something to do with it being a Germany reply card. The dealer in Germany was writing asking about the new Edwardian Cayman stamps which at that point in time had only just arrived in the Islands.

They wanted to have higher value stamps, this was agreed because there were some covers with up to 48 stamps applied. It was intended for the 2½d, 6d and 1s value to come out with the head of Queen Victoria but of course she died in the meantime and the head of Edward VII was substituted which started the era of Edwardian stamps.

In many Colonies, stamps came out in complete sets but in the Cayman Islands, stamps came out a few values at a time – apart from a few issues; this led to a number of problems and confusion; and certainly to 'The Scandal' and surcharged provisionals. In this area we start with the duty proof for the 6d and the other 3 values, these came from the Richard Maisel collection. One of the areas of interest with this issue is the dented frame (the Glover flaw) and James has a lovely display of all the values in the 1902 & 1905 issue with the flaw and with many of the plate numbers to be seen as well.

The Postal History of this period involves routes, rates and also destinations. We have a number of interesting destinations. There is a cover to India with a 1d stamp paying the Empire rate; there are a couple of covers to Canada and there are one or two covers with interesting transit marks. Most of the mail went via Jamaica, some of it went via Cuba and a very small amount went directly to the Gulf ports of the USA. There is a particularly interesting cover from Georgetown, Grand Cayman; it went to Cayman Brac, where it was taken off the boat, backstamped in transit, and then went on to Jamaica. It is dated 6 February 1902, that's within a week of that stamp actually arriving on the Island. The stamps were of the single watermark variety, they were from Plate 1, after seven months the ½d stamp was issued when the stock of Victorian stamps was reduced and the 1d came much later as a single printing in early 1903.

At the end of 1904 and the beginning of 1905 the ½d, the 2½d, 6d and 1s stamps were issued with multiple watermarked paper, the 1d following some months afterwards. During this period, two things of interest from the postal history point of view happened, one was the IIIb cancel. The Type IIIa cancel had been used from 1898 through to 1906 and then for just a single month we have this different cancel, very bizarre, I don't know why they had a cancel for just a month – October 1906 – and then it disappeared to be replaced by Type IV; it is one of the items that many Cayman collectors look out for. Different types of mail were often generated from the two main islands, one

such example is Schooner mail mainly from Cayman Brac, about half the covers you see will be destined to people who were travelling on schooners. Whereas many of the people in Grand Cayman were actually living on the island, and would spend their time there, most of the population of young and middle-aged men from Cayman Brac were working on schooners, either in the fishing grounds, the turtling grounds around Nicaragua and the Bay Islands or working on the southern coast of the USA. What we have been able to identify is a number of covers that were sent to these chaps who were on schooners. As you can imagine, if you've got a son on a schooner and you want to get a message to him, how do you do it? Well there are two obvious ways, 1) you can send it to someone else and wait for him to pick it up or 2) the other method is you send it to somebody who then sends it on when the boat is in a particular port and we have examples of both types. The one here to Jamaica is fully endorsed where it has been sent to Bog Walk, the local newspaper has come out showing the boat in port and it was then sent on to him in Montego Bay. The other covers you normally find are ones where they have been left at an address at one of the southern coastal ports of the US for the person to pick up their mail.

The Stamp Duty Law of 1906 required stamps to be used for revenue purposes to pay various taxes. At this time two events happened, stamps were issued in March and Commissioner Hirst arrived on the Island. The stamps were a bi-coloured series, you can see the duty proof there for the 4d, 6d 1s and 5s values. At the same time they also sent the very last printing of the three low values of the previous issue and if you go back into the Bridger & Kay catalogues and back into the early Gibbons catalogues you will see that they were regarded as a set of 7 stamps. This confused me for a while, because when James went through the Day Books to try to find out when the stamps came out he could find all the of the four values of the bi-coloured series, the ½d and 2½d but not the 1d stamp anywhere in the Day Books but Richard Maisel found the requisition later on, in information from the Crown Agents. So those 7 stamps came out all together. When they came out, for some reason, the Governor of Jamaica said "can you take all the old stamps out of stock", and this they did, shortly after the new stamps had arrived, so they were just left with these stamps, a very small supply of the ½d value, 51 sheets, 104 sheets of the 1d value and around 50 sheets of all the other values. At this time the Cayman Islands were becoming of interest to collectors throughout the world and they were getting orders from stamp dealers who were ordering this ½d stamp and at a point in May 1907 the Commissioner realised that the stock of ½d stamps was down to about 17 sheets. Now you ask yourself 'Why would somebody just be ordering ½d stamps from a small island?' – I think the answer is stamp packets – what they were doing was making up packets of low-value stamps of various countries, you and I would go into their stamp shop, we'd buy a packet of stamps and we'd think 'Cayman Islands – that's a nice little Colony, I think I'll collect that' – because what we can't stand is only one stamp from a country.

For that reason the number of sheets remaining was greatly diminished. The Commissioner realised that he was going to be in trouble in a few months time, therefore he wrote to the Colonial Secretary in Jamaica saying that he was going to run out of stamps (I think he also was saying that he didn't want to use the old issue as they were 'Postage – Postage', he wanted a new 'Postage & Revenue' issue) because he was using the high values for Revenue purposes. So he actually wrote and said I have only 17 sheets left, can you surcharge some stamps for me, I've a large supply of the 1d (which in retrospect was a mistake) and can you over-print these with ½d and as you can see James has a selection of these surcharged stamps. The Commissioner sent 40 sheets of his supply to Jamaica for surcharging and we can see a selection of varieties and various uses of them. They came back with a very stern warning that unless he was going to give very good reasons they would not issue any new set of stamps. The letter was written to him on 26 July and he wrote back on the 29th, 3 days after it was sent from Jamaica, saying that yes he wanted a new issue of stamps, he needed 3d and 10s stamp values and all the series should be Postage and Revenue, not Postage – Postage. Just remember that date, the 29 July 1907. By the end of August he had received the surcharged stamps and they were put on sale with a strict notice that they were only to be sold over the counter to customers and not sent away to dealers. You can imagine the response from dealers! We have a variety of those stamps, used on cover, one paying the 3d empire rate, registered, and a couple paying the foreign letter rate of 2½d, a single, on a postcard paying the printed matter rate, Within a relatively short period because of the popularity and demand for both the ½d on 1d and 1d, the stocks grew lower and lower and they finally ran out at the end of November. They were expecting the new issue of Postage – Revenue stamps that

had been agreed but they hadn't arrived, so the only thing that they could do was to surcharge another stamp and they chose the 5s value as they had a very good stock. First of all the 1d ran out on the 22 November 1907 and by the 25 November the ½d ran out. So Miss Parsons, the Postmistress was instructed by the Commissioner, using a hand stamp device made by the local Police Constable one night, by oil-lamp, to surcharge the sheets using the handstamp and as she says – she made a very bad job of it, she sometimes did it twice, she sometimes inverted one, I'm sure many of you saw Richard Maisel's collection with the block of 4 where she had missed one, I think that excited somebody! The stamps were placed on sale the day after they were made. The 1D on 5s is probably more plentiful than the ½D on 5s used because the 1d was the correct rate on mail. They did allow collectors to have the stamps and there is correspondence between Miss Parsons and a number of collectors telling them of the stamps and attaching them to envelopes. James shows varieties, plate numbers and possible double overprints and dented frames on all the bicoloured and surcharges, both mint and used, also the recently recognised slotted frames. We have a nice used selection; with the 1D on 5s, there's a 1D on 5s from the first printing, there's a 1D on 5s from the second printing and there is a 1D on 5s on the 9 December, which is the last day of the 1st printing or the 1st day of the 2nd printing – you can decide which printing it is! We have 2 covers with the surcharges on, 3d for the 1d Empire rate, registered, to London (although unfortunately the address has been taken out). This one here is a fascinating cover, looking at it you would think 'very philatelic' a 2½d stamp, a 1D on 5s stamp, a 4d stamp and a ½D on 5s, so two surcharges and two ordinary stamps from the previous set but we need to go back and think about what was going on at the time, this chap Dr Aubrey was a stamp collector who was ordering stamps from the Colonies from various places and he would tend to want the low value stamps in any set, he was ordering the ½d, 1d, 2½d and the 4d bi-coloured but of course the ½d and 1d were out of stock and replaced by the 2 surcharges. So he probably had surcharges supplied in the envelope and on the cover as well, so whether you call this a philatelic cover is entirely up to you, I think it is halfway between a genuine and philatelic because it was conveying stamps to him, they were all done by the Postmistress but of course she was not using the correct postal rate.

Finally, after this period, the Postage – Revenue stamps arrived in December 1907, this was almost 6 months after the Commissioner had brought to the attention the fact that they were running low on stamps. There has been much said regarding the scandal and these surcharge stamps but I think there is no doubt that the reason why this situation arose is down to the Officials in Jamaica and in London.

The Postage and Revenue stamps were of interest for 2 particular reasons: they started on plate 1, which was used for the majority of the period that the stamps were being issued, we had damage first recognised on the Cayman Islands stamps to the NE corner of the plate and there is the top half of a sheet showing all the values that are damaged. Mike Spaven some years ago found that there was a particular flaw which James describes on the 3rd stamp top row left pane that goes throughout all the Postage and Revenue stamps. We have a selection of stamps with the flaw; also shown is local use of covers going both ways and a selection going overseas. I shan't say anything about the Zenaida and the 2½d on 4d, you can read the article that came out this month – the covers are shown. A particularly interesting cover, one going from GeorgeTown Grand Cayman to Little Cayman, it was sent on 14 February 1908 to Magnus Bodden, a Master Mariner, I like to think there was this nice lady who was falling in love with this sailor and that he was travelling around the seas and she wanted to send him a Valentine card inside the envelope, it may just be a dream of mine but it is a nice thought. The interesting fact is that there were only 100 people living on Little Cayman and nobody has ever seen another cover from this period related to the Island – I was fortunate to have picked it up some years ago. I haven't mentioned yet the Post Offices, there was a PO opened in Bodden Town, we are not sure of the date but it was certainly functioning in 1907, when it was closed. There was also a PO over in east End and nobody has ever seen a cover from East End, the PO opened early in 1901 and closed in March 1908. We show some of these cancels on stamp and James has found a cover from the East End PO when this re-opened sometime in 1913, with the old cancellation device (which was in a poor state) prior to the new East End canceller being issued

We have a selection here of blocks and covers showing the various issues up to 10s and a selection of early postcards. James, sometime ago, did a lovely article on Plate 2, this was probably the 1911 final issue of the Postage and Revenue series, there were 500 sheets of the 1d

and 192 sheets of the 6d which were released. We don't know whether they were all, Plate 2 or whether Plate 1 broke down and Plate 2 had to be brought into use but there was great excitement in the Island at that time.

A group of 3 postcards relate to the visit of the Governor of Jamaica to the islands in October 1908. The ¼d stamp was brought into use in 1908, there is an explanation of why the ¼d stamp was issued and its uses, it was brought in for the new local post service because the Commissioner realized that this wasn't paying, he wanted to rejuvenate the service and he did two things, he reduced the postage rates: for an envelope from a 1d to ½d and brought a new ¼d rate for postcards and printed matter, he also decided to have a mail cart service going from George Town to the East End of the Island. The mail cart went as far as Bodden Town and then one of the Constables on horseback took the mail from there to East End. The cart took freight and also delivered and collected mail and sold stamps. The Commissioner did a design for the ¼d stamp – for which we show the proof – they were in sheets of 120 stamps, two panes of 60 and James shows a complete pane. There were 5 transfer varieties, one sheet was known imperforate down the right hand side (so there can be 10 stamps), there are 3 of them shown and there are 2 others we know of, but there are still 5 of them somewhere out there not yet found. Single use of the ¼d is always the most difficult and we show singles on 2 post cards, this one is particularly fascinating as it was used the same day as the rare MP3 OC 7 08, the paid provisional which is copied and you can see they were written in the same hand to two young ladies annotated, postcards for their collection, he obviously only had one stamp which he put on this postcard and the other was handed to the postmaster who wrote paid on it; also the Pd ¼d provisional MP4 is shown of OC 8 08 ex Jaffe.

We have single use here on what was probably a fly-leaf advertising a subscription to the local newspaper, The Caymanian and then a selection of different rates going through to multiple rates.

Of particular interest there is the last of the 1st printing, a little note where the Post Mistress, Miss Parsons wrote to Mr Foster saying she was enclosing the last few of this printing of these stamps – there were only 98 sheets, so they quickly ran out. Initially they were only intended for local use but because other values had run out, they were used abroad. We then get into the period when the stamps had run out and we have manuscript franking. I think the way Gibbons have done the manuscript franking is wrong. Stationery – we have a die proof of the stationery, starting off with a small farthing card and changed to a larger card. The little mint card of which we have two examples, is particularly scarce, you wouldn't think it but we only know of three examples, much scarcer than used. And then uses, interesting cards in the period when there were no farthing stamps, resulting in 1¼d rather than a 1d for the overseas rate to England and the rest of the stationery – ½d wrapper, 1d for the envelope and the postcard and later 2½d envelope and then we have some cut-outs that were used in the 1920s.

The section relating to the Rural Postal service and its postmarks. Initially the large cachet was used on all the mail, as shown by the first cover, it was then only used on local mail. The Officials were allowed to send mail under special circumstances free, and we have examples of the small East End cachet and the large Rural Post cachet used on stamp-less mail. There is a cover to the USA without cachet which travelled by the rural post and is explained in the write up. There is an example of rural post mail being delivered en-route by the mail cart driver at South Sound with a map to show where it was delivered. 2 covers need to be looked at together, one is a well known rural post cover, the other has no cachet, but they travelled exactly the same route. They have the same dates at Bodden Town, George Town and Jamaica, where they parted company, it is undoubtedly a rural post cover but without the cachet, it depends whether you call that rural post or not. It went from the messenger to the mail cart driver and then on its way, interestingly it is stamp-less, I don't know how it got into the service, it is the only unofficial stamp-less cover I've ever seen. Very late in 1916 the rural post cachet is known in black and there are two examples to view. We then get into a period where King Edward VII died and George V came to the throne and the islanders needed a new set of stamps. We have the duty proofs for all the values, including new values of 2d, 2s and 3s, ex archive strips with punch holes, various plate numbers and blocks, the 3d value we find of particular interest, both plate 1 and plate 8. During this period they started with Plate 1A, they then went on to Plate 1B, then Plate 5 and finally finished with Plate 8 over the 8 years of this issue. We show some of the blocks of Plate 8 and a selection of higher values. There is a lovely example of the rural post cachet in black, as compared to the purple. During the rural

post period there was a rejuvenation in post offices – re-opening at East End and Boddentown, a new one at West Bay, there is a selection of cancels. We have a selection of covers showing the use of the values in various formats and rates, including 1d printed matter rate, we have orders being fulfilled by postal officials. During this period the registration marks begin to appear, starting with labels then manuscript markings and then moving on to hand-stamps. At Cayman Brac they just had labels and then hand-stamps – no manuscript markings. In 1921 we have a new issue of stamps with a design similar to that of New Zealand with stamps produced by the copper-plate process, the issue came out originally on Crown CA watermark paper with 5 values, followed by the script CA wmk paper. This issue is interesting because we start to see perf variations – some with comb and some with line perf and also we see inverted wmk, you can see examples in blocks and on cover. For a short period formula registered envelopes were sent to the island and used at this time. A particularly interesting cover is a 1921 Ship Letter, Ship Letters in Cayman are somewhat different to other parts of the world, for many years people were sending mail from boats to the islands via members of the crew and then given to people without going through the postal service. The authorities didn't like this, so they brought in a series of penalties for mail coming in that way and designated that a ship letter was a letter coming off a boat, to be delivered within the islands (that came stamp-less) and it would be charged at the ordinary deficiency not at the double deficiency. We have only found a couple of examples of ship letters with a tax mark charged at only the ordinary deficiency. We then come to the 1932 centenary issue, the 1935 pictorial issue and then the last section here is all about the first Cayman airmail, James has an official notice advising the service and listing the rates to various countries. To conclude we have a selection of items with the handstamp, a postcard referring to the airmail starting and a cover the following month which was intended for airmail but I don't know whether it ever travelled or not.

Thank you very much

Charles Freeland gave the vote of thanks to Kevin and James