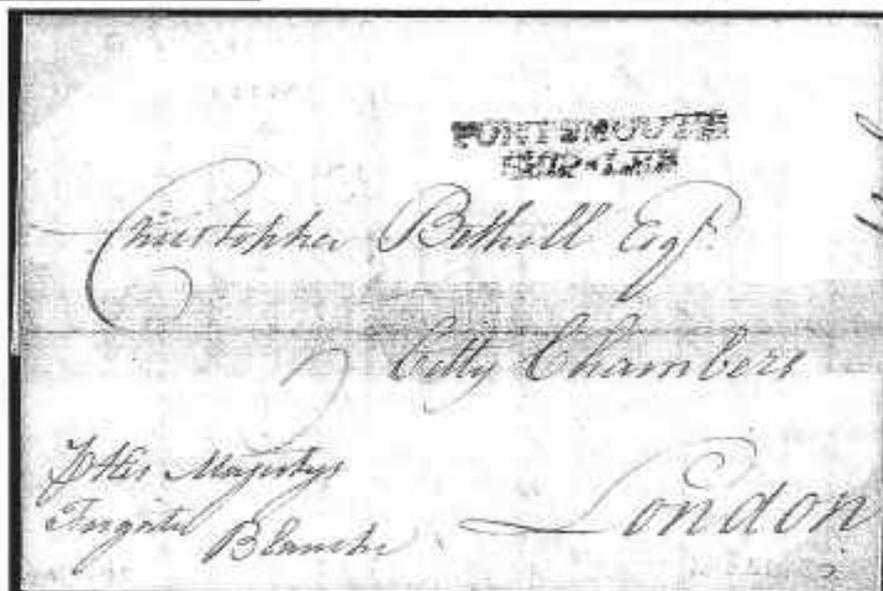


ISSN 0953-8720



STUDY CIRCLE

FOUNDED
27 JANUARY 1954



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BULLETIN No. 192 MARCH 2002

BRITISH WEST INDIES STUDY CIRCLE

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OBJECTS

- 1 TO promote interest in and the study of the stamps and postal history & the islands that comprise the British West Indies and in addition BERMUDA, BRITISH GUIANA (GUYANA) and BRITISH HONDURAS (BELIZE) and the Postal History and markings of all other Caribbean territories during any period that were under British administration or control, and those British Post Offices which operated in the Caribbean, and Central or South America.
- 2 TO issue a quarterly BULLETIN containing articles, items of interest and other features.
- 3 TO loan books from the Circle library (home members only). Borrowers bear postage both ways. Lists supplied upon application to Hon. Librarian accompanied by an S.A.E. (9" x 6½") - 2nd Class postage 150 gm rate required.
- 4 TO publicise 'wants' and furnish opinions on stamp(s) and/or cover(s) for a nominal fee.
- 5 TO encourage, assist or sponsor the authorship and publication of definitive handbooks. Monographs or other works of reference appropriate to the aim in para 1 above.

MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTION

MEMBERSHIP - is WORLD WIDE in scope and open to all whether they be new or advanced collectors.

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Subscriptions (dues) are payable on 1 January each year and, subject to what is mentioned below, in sterling (by personal cheque or standing ORDER drawn on a UK Bank, a Banker's Draft, International Money Order, Postal Order or local currency notes - no coins will be accepted - e.g. dollars, marks, francs etc.).

Members residing in North America (Canada, USA and the Caribbean) who do not pay their subscription (dues in sterling should pay by sending to the North American Representative (see above for address) a cheque for USA \$15 made payable to 'BWISC'. Other overseas members who pay their subscription by cheque drawn in a foreign currency or on a foreign bank MUST add the equivalent of £3 sterling partially to cover exchange and bank charges. The overseas rates quoted include an element to cover postage of the Bulletin by Air Mail.

PROGRAMME

2002

Saturday, 27th April 2.15pm
Venue

Annual General Meeting & Auction
Bonnington Hotel, Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4BH

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN - 1

Societies, or even Study Circles, fall into two main groups. There are those weak societies who drift from year to year without direction, allowing a few enthusiasts to guide their gradual demise down a fatal spiral, and there are those strong Societies where there is an variety of interest and talent constantly coming forward and competing for the sharp end. During the last few years we have clearly shown into which category your Study Circle falls.

In view of this, I shall put forward at the AGM in April the following proposals:-

- 1) The publication of the Bulletin shall cease forthwith.
- 2) The Philatelic Library shall be put in the hands of a selected auctioneer and liquidated.
- 3) The proceeds of the above shall be divided amongst the members of the Committee in place on 30 April 2003.

Any counter-proposals received with the required three weeks notice will be considered by your Committee.

Peter Ford has retired and is moving to Spain shortly, Derek Nathan has spent twelve years as Librarian without sign of a successor and has now come to the end of his three-year stint as Chairman. The choice is yours.

Derek Nathan

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN - 2

I have been outvoted. I wanted to forecast to you the dire future of your Study Circle if fresh blood did not volunteer to work for an hour or two per month for the future benefit of collectors of British West Indies material.

I wanted to point out that when the time comes in April for Peter Ford and myself to hand over our respective batons, if there is no-one to pass them on to, they will fall to the ground, unregarded. The Bulletin, the Library and the Chair itself will be without custodians.

I'm told I cannot tell you this - that we shall muddle through somehow, that the incumbents, some already in their seventies, of the various honorary positions will somehow do all the other jobs as well. If this is true, will the Circle run with the same vigour that it has displayed for the last fifty years?

The British feeling of "I must not push myself forward" is hereby cancelled. Please push yourself forward, we need you. Expertise is not required, just the willingness to put in that hour or so a month for the sake of yourself and other likeminded people.

But I'm not to tell you this. We shall muddle through. Maybe.

Derek Nathan

NEWS ROUNDUP

ALAN PEARSE ELECTED A FELLOW

Alan Pearse, who was kind enough to display to us at Leamington a couple of years ago, has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society. Alan, together with his wife, Stella, are not only regulars at our own meetings but are to be seen attending meetings at the Royal whenever a BWI display is on offer. Congratulations, Alan!

A SPECIAL AWARD

Longtime member Edmund Bayley of Bridgetown, Barbados has been honoured by the Government of Barbados with the award of the Silver Crown of Merit for Services to the Community as a philatelist. Amongst his many accomplishments, Edmund has been credited with the revival of the Barbados Philatelic Society and, of course, his book *The Stamps of Barbados* deserves special mention as it is, and will no doubt remain, the definitive work on the subject for many years to come. Well done, Edmund! Would that more eminent philatelists were recognised by the community at large.

DEALER MEMBER SHOCKS STAMP WORLD BY MOVING TO WILTSHIRE

Dealer member, Chris Rainey has deserted the wilds of Essex and moved his business to Swindon, Wiltshire. His new address is P.O. Box 1060, Swindon, WILTS, SN3 1JJ. His new telephone number is 01793-513431 and his Fax number is 01793-612853. Alternatively, he can be e-mailed at chris@chrisrainey.com. Good luck in the new location, Chris.

NEW WEBSITE OPENS - MUCH OF BWI INTEREST

Michael Hamilton has opened a new website at www.michael-hamilton.com. This is a well-constructed site with a huge variety of material, much of it illustrated in colour. The site is easy to navigate and there is an order form which could not be easier to complete (even for the computer illiterate). Michael always has a large stock of both stamps and postal history, and this site should be a regular stop as you search the web as I have the feeling that any scarce material appearing will be snapped up quickly.

WIPEX 2002

WIPEX will take place in the autumn in Central London on a date to be arranged.

EWENS WEEKLY STAMP NEWS

An Introduction

by Peter Fernbank

Ewens Colonial Stamp Market, founded by H. L'estrage Ewen, was one of the leading wholesale and retail new issue dealers in the UK in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and indeed many of the examples that grace our collections from this period today originated from that source. Between 1897 and 1922 the firm produced a periodical, *Ewens Weekly Stamp News (EWSN)*, detailing the latest issues received from the various British and foreign territories, and today they represent an invaluable reference source on the contemporary issues of the period.

Whilst bearing in mind that Ewen's business was selling stamps, and that a certain amount of 'hype' was promulgated concerning the scarcity of certain issues and individual stamps, the information provided in many cases was extremely detailed and accurate. To cater for their New Issue Service customers they purchased many complete sheets of each value (literally hundreds for some of the lower values) for the various colonies. They were thus in an enviable position to assess, from a large volume of similar material, the points of philatelic interest and importance concerning each issue. These included details of colour shades, constant flaws, sheet format, plate number used and positions of plate number, etc. They also provided information on paper thickness (thick, thin, medium), paper colour and shade (for both white and coloured papers), gum state (colour and thickness), visibility of watermark (transparent, semi-transparent, opaque), etc. The detail provided is, in a number of cases, sufficient to positively identify different printings of the same value. The Great War years saw a wide range of provisionally overprinted issues, including many of the War Tax issues. Ewens were in an excellent position to examine the new sheets received and to identify any errors and varieties in the overprints, which they proceeded to publish in *EWSN*.

Ewens dealt directly with many of the Colonial Postmasters of the time, and also had a number of agents available in the various colonies. Together with advance information provided by *The Colonial Journals* on new issues (from the Crown Agents), they had a formidable intelligence network that was able to provide them with early notice of new issues and new printings.

H. L'estrage Ewen tragically died in 1912 at the early age of 36. The future of the firm was in some doubt following his death and the New Issue Service was suspended for a time. The issues of *EWSN* during 1912 and 1913 tended to include just basic information on new issues, with little detail. Thereafter the Controller, believed to be a Mr. Gravenor, took over the reins and continued to provide very high quality information on many of the new releases. After c.mid-1918 *EWSN* was issued rather erratically, sometimes with a few months between issues, until the firm finally ceased trading in 1922.

With the benefit of hindsight, and information available to us today from the Crown Agents' and De La Rue archives on what was printed and issued, it is evident that they did miss certain printings, and that some conclusions stated were speculative and based on insufficient information. Nonetheless, there is a substantial body of valuable philatelic information provided by *EWSN* that gives us a most penetrating insight into the contemporary issues of this period.

Ewen's covered all the BWI territories, and indeed the BWI seemed to fare rather better than some of the other colonial territories in terms of detailed reported information. I would recommend *EWSN* to anyone studying this era as an invaluable information source on the contemporary issues of that period. Although copies of *EWSN* are difficult to come by these days, both the Royal and National Philatelic Societies have a nearly complete run and I understand the Bodleian library also. It is well worth the effort of looking up their respective entries if possible. However, to many these sources are not readily available.

Over the next few years, available space in the Bulletin permitting, I will be providing edited extracts from *EWSN* concerning the issues of Bahamas, British Guiana, Cayman Islands, Leeward Islands (1906-1922), Montserrat, St. Lucia and Virgin Islands (1912-1922), my specific interests at the time the

information was extracted. Each will be provided with a commentary confirming or rejecting certain statements made, or adding additional information, based on the current state of my knowledge within these territories.

Note:-

The task of looking up the various references relating to a particular territory from the complete run of *EWSN* (over 1,000 issues) may at first appear daunting. However, the numbering system adopted by Ewens for each reference provides some help. Each note for a territory was given a number e.g. 973 Y 988. The second number (in this case 988) refers to the number of the current edition of Ewens. The first number (973) refers to the previous reference to that territory. The letter in the middle (Y) runs sequentially for each report of each colony. The easiest method is therefore to work backwards, from the latest edition towards the earliest, until the first reference to the particular territory required is encountered. Thereafter each previous reference number is stated and the task becomes relatively easy.

BAHAMAS

3d WAR TAX SG98 - Stamps in sheets of 59!!

by John Davis

In researching the De La Rue Archives, I came across an unusual entry in *The Colonial Stamp Book* (Page 178). Included with a delivery of 2191 sheets of 60, there were 146 sheets of 30 and 74 sheets of 59.

I assume that sheets of 30 did not exist, and that the reference to them should have read 146 panes of 30, 73 sheets of 60 each (for some unknown reason) having been divided into two panes of 30.

The sheets of 59 are however interesting, but I find that Peter Fernbank has already beaten me to it with his article in *BWISC Bulletin 157* of June 1993. All sheets were numbered in the margin above the top right hand stamp. On 74 sheets the sheet number overlapped the stamp Row 1/12 and the sheets were rejected. De La Rue removed this stamp and re-numbered the 74 sheets in a different position. If the re-numbering was above the next stamp Row 1/11, then corner blocks of 3 or more with the corner stamp missing and the stamp at Row 1/11 with the re-numbering would be interesting.

Comments would be appreciated, and does anyone possess or know of such a corner block? I do not think Peter had a lot of response in 1993 and I am hoping that I may do better.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!

Mike Spaven is now responsible for the distribution of BWISC publications. All future orders for publications from the UK and Overseas (except the US) should be sent to him.

His address is: Eccleston House,
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Orders from US-based members should continue to be directed through Clay Holt,

CAYMAN ISLANDS

There Is Much More To Learn

by Richard Maisel

In an article published in the December 2000 issue of this Bulletin¹, I wrote that despite a rich literature there was much for us to learn about Cayman Islands philately, and illustrated that point by describing four discoveries from my May 2000 research in London. This past spring I was able to continue my studies in London, where again I learned much that was new about Cayman Islands stamps and postal history, including the points covered below.

Isolation and Overseas Contacts

The Cayman Islands were among the most isolated of British West Indian Colonies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1910, D. B. Armstrong described this isolation as follows:-

“No cables touch at the Islands, and the sole means of communication with the outer world, and between the Islands themselves, is by the sailing vessels, which at irregular intervals touch at Georgetown on their way to and from Cuba, Jamaica and the ports of South America and the southern coast of the United States.”²

This picture of limited overseas contact is correct, but it does not take into account the fact that the irregular contact was frequent and that the sailing vessels also called on the smaller island of Cayman Brac. The Cayman Islands Annual Reports show an average of about 3.5 sailing vessels per week entering and an equal number clearing Cayman Islands ports from September 1912 through December 1935.³ The weekly average was quite constant on an annual basis during this period, only once, in the year September 1917 through August 1918, dropping below an average of 3 ships per week. Of the overall average of 3.5 vessels, about 2.5 per week entered and were cleared at Georgetown and about 1 at Cayman Brac.

Advert

PETER SINGER

In the Annual Reports for 1912 through 1927 there are only scattered mentions of steam or motor-powered vessels calling or leaving the Cayman Islands, with one exception: the reports record a regular bimonthly mail service from September 1912 through August 1914, by motor vessel to Jamaica and Mobile, Alabama, under contract with the Seeberg Company of Mobile.⁴ An earlier monthly service by steamship to Jamaica has been documented in the literature for the period March 1908 through March 1909.⁵

The Annual Reports also record that 94 shipments of mail were carried by schooner from September 1912 through August 1914, in addition to the 48 carried by motor vessel, and that 61 shipments of mail were carried by schooner in the following year.⁶ This would give an average of slightly less than one shipment per six days during this three-year period. Unfortunately, the Annual Reports after 1914-15 do not give the number of mails carried by either motor or sailing vessels.

In 1927, the irregular service by sailing vessel was supplemented by a regular mail, passenger, and freight service by motor vessel. This service began with 15 trips per annum to Jamaica; the Isle of Pines, Cuba; and Tampa, Florida.⁷ On 23 November 1935, a wireless station, which transmitted messages "through the Direct West Indies Cable Company Kingston"⁸, was opened on Grand Cayman, and by 1936 a second station was opened on Cayman Brac.⁹ Limited contact by air, direct from Grand Cayman, began in the 1940s.¹⁰

Given the discussion above, it is possible to identify three periods of increasing contact between the Cayman Islands and the outside world:-

- Irregular but frequent by sailing vessels - 1889 (when regular mail service began) to 1927,
- Regular and frequent by motor vessels and sailing vessels - 1927 to 1935,
- Modern - 1935 to the present.

1908 Farthing Stamp and 1908-11 Postal Stationery

Between 1908 and 1911 the Cayman Islands issued a farthing stamp and five postal stationery items ($\frac{1}{4}$ d and 1d postal cards, 1d and $2\frac{1}{2}$ d envelopes, and a $\frac{1}{2}$ d wrapper) with a common design, which is unlike any other design used for such items in the British Empire (Figs. 1a - 1e).



A full description of the stamp and the postal stationery may be found in the philatelic literature¹¹, but certain details about their production have not, to my knowledge, been documented. Some of these details can be inferred from the following:-

- An entry in the Crown Agents Register of Dies, Plates, and Formes that lists four Cayman Islands dies for postal stationery ($\frac{1}{4}$ d, $\frac{1}{2}$ d, 1d, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ d), printed by a lithograph process.¹² Given the history of the Caymans' postal stationery, these dies must have been used for the five 1908-11 postal stationery items. The Register does not list a die for the farthing stamp, nor does it list any plates for any of these six items.
- Records of the printing of these items found in the Colonial Stamp Books.¹³
- Invoices for the printing of these items recorded in the De La Rue Private Day Books.¹⁴

The data in these three sources have the following implications:-

- The literature specifies very clearly that the farthing stamp was lithographed but does not describe the method of reproduction used for the postal stationery items. The description 'lithograph'

assigned to the four dies listed in the Register shows that they too were lithographed. This conclusion is supported by the listings of the postal stationery items in the Colonial Stamp Books, which describe them as lithographed.

- The plates or stones used for lithographic reproduction may be created by transfers beginning with an engraved die (recess or relief), an artist's drawing on paper or stone, or printer's type.¹⁵ It has been assumed that the original images for the postal stationery items were dies. The listing of the four dies in the Register confirms the accepted belief.

- The designs for the 1908 ¼d stamp and ¼d postal card seem to be identical, except that the postal card lacks the ornaments found in the four corners of the stamp (see *Figs. 1a* and *1b*). There has been some speculation that the same die was used for both the stamp and the postal card, with the corner ornaments eliminated on the postal card. The fact that there is a single entry in the Register for a farthing die for a lithograph process supports this theory.

- The 1d postal card and 1d envelope seem to have identical designs (*Fig. 1c*), and so it has been assumed that a single die was used for both items. The listing of a single 1d die for postal stationery is consistent with this assumption.

- The farthing stamp was lithographed in sheets of 120, but no information concerning the size of the sets for the postal stationery has previously appeared. The Colonial Stamp Books report lithographic production of these items in sets of two for the postal cards, sets of 6 for the 1d envelope, and sets of 7 for the wrapper.

- Small differences introduced by transferring the image from a die onto a plate or stone used for lithography often create plate varieties.¹⁶ To date, no such plate varieties have been identified for the five postal stationery items, but the information presented above suggests they may exist.

There are several problems associated with the data described above:-

- The Colonial Stamp Books and the De La Rue Private Day Books both specify a single plate for the first printing of the 1d postal card and 1d envelope. But the 1d postal card, which is 140mm by 89mm, was printed in sets of 2, while the 1d envelope, which is 120mm by 94mm, was printed in sets of 6. It is not clear how the same plate was used for lithographing different-sized sets of different-sized items.

- The farthing postal card was lithographed in two different sizes, 121 mm by 75mm and 115mm by 89mm, but only one plate was listed for the printing of these. It is not clear how the same plate was used for lithographing different-sized postal cards.

- The Colonial Stamp Books and the De La Rue Private Day Books usually list both the dies and the plates made for use in any requisition, but they do not list any dies in connection with the requisitions for the five postal stationery items. Since the Private Day Books contain copies of invoices, this implies that no charge was made for these dies.

Silver Jubilee Series

Collectors have long been aware that both die proof and colour trials exist for the Silver Jubilee frame plates. To date, no complete listing has been published of these production artifacts created specifically for the Cayman Islands. An analysis of the De La Rue Correspondence Books¹⁷ provides the following picture of these Cayman Islands proofs and trials:-

- '*Sketch*' - The production of the frame die for the Cayman Islands Silver Jubilee stamps began with a so called "sketch" produced by Waterlow, approved by the Crown Agents, and sent to De La Rue by letter dated 14 November 1934. The sketch was printed from the Silver Jubilee master vignette and master frame dies, with the text painted by hand. De La Rue used the sketch as a model for cutting the frame die for the four Cayman Islands stamps. It was then returned to the Crown Agents, which used it as the standard for approving or disapproving the die proof.

I have not seen the sketch for the Cayman Islands but I have seen a colour reproduction of the Fiji sketch in the Jerez Silver Jubilee Auction Catalogue (Lot 1582)¹⁸ and I have used it as a model in the reconstruction of the Cayman Islands sketch given in *Fig. 2*. The Fiji sketch was 45 x 29mm and printed on thin wove paper.

• *Approved die proof of the frame plate for each value (in triplicate)* - These die proofs printed in black and mounted on a sheet of paper, were sent to the Crown Agents by a letter from De La Rue dated 6 December 1934. They were approved by the Crown Agents and were returned to De La Rue by a letter dated 7 December 1934.

• *Approved colour trial of the frame plate for each value (in triplicate) and rejected colour trial of the frame plate for the 2½d (in triplicate)* - Colour trials for all four values were sent to the Crown Agents by letter from De La Rue dated 15 December 1934. The Crown Agents approved the trials for all denominations except the 2½d. All trials were returned to De La Rue by letter dated 17 December 1934, which requested a new colour trial for the 2½d "showing the blue slightly strengthened and nearer to the approved colour proof for combination No. 3." De La Rue sent the corrected colour trial for the 2½d, in triplicate, to the Crown Agents by letter dated 22 December 1934. The Crown Agents approved the corrected colour trial and returned the three copies to De La Rue by letter dated 24 December 1934.



Fig. 2

I have not seen these colour trials but I believe they may be similar to the imperforate versions of the complete British Honduras and Bechuanaland Silver Jubilee stamps perforated 'SPECIMEN' found in Lots 1527 and 1543 of the Jerez Silver Jubilee Auction Catalogue.¹⁹

The De La Rue Correspondence Books also indicate that the same approved artifacts (sketch, die proof in triplicate, and colour trial in triplicate) were produced for all Silver Jubilee stamps printed by De La Rue.²⁰

King Edward VIII Series

The descriptions of Cayman Islands stamps, which usually are organized by series in chronological order, show the last series issued during the reign of King George V (May 1935) followed by the first series issued during the reign of King George VI (May 1937). No mention will be found of the ill-fated King Edward VIII Colonial Omnibus series, which was ready for printing but was destroyed when the king abdicated in December 1936. This unwritten chapter in Cayman Islands philately can be reconstructed from various records; it reads as follows:-

• On 1 September 1936, De La Rue was notified that its tender had been accepted for the printing of an omnibus King Edward VIII coronation issue.²¹ The Cayman Islands was one of 37 colonies listed in this notification. No details were provided about the specific orders for the colonies, but the general conditions for the printing of these issues included the following specifications:-

- The series was to be recess printed by rotary press using thick white Crown Agents paper with the script CA watermark.
- A single design would be used for all stamps issued.
- Each stamp would be 13/15? by 15/16? in size.
- Each sheet would consist of 100 or 120 stamps; by 11 September the standard sheet was set at 120, and a diagram showed that it would consist of a single pane with 10 rows of 12 stamps.

- Three denominations would be issued for each colony.
- Each stamp would be monocoloured, but a different colour would be used for each denomination issued in a colony.
- The stamps would be ready for shipment in time for them to reach the colonies by the middle of April 1937.
- By letter dated 11 September 1936, De La Rue received a document spelling out the details of the first printing of the series.²² For the Cayman Islands, the order specified 180,000 green ½d stamps, 180,000 red 1d stamps, and 120,000 blue 2½d stamps, and that these stamps be ready for shipment to the colony by the end of January 1937.
- On 12 October 1936, De La Rue received the official requisitions for the first printing of the issue.²³ The order for the Cayman Islands was assigned Requisition Number 9331/1, with the following specifications:-
 - 260,000 green ½d stamps with 80,000 for dealers,
 - 240,000 red 1d stamps with 60,000 for dealers,
 - 180,000 blue 2½d stamps with 60,000 for dealers,
 - These stamps to be ready for shipment by the end of January 1937,
 - 416 specimen overprints for each value.
- When De La Rue received the order they estimated a 15 percent spoilage rate and set aside the following quantities of paper for printing:-
 - 2,492 sheets for the ½d stamps,
 - 2,300 sheets for the 1d stamps,
 - 1,726 sheets for the 2½d stamps.
- During the next two months De La Rue completed the dies, plates, and cylinders for printing the Cayman Islands stamps, along with die proofs and colour trials in triplicate, but no stamps were printed. On 11 December 1936, the king abdicated and the issue was cancelled.
- Shortly after the issue was cancelled, De La Rue sent all dies, die proofs, colour trials, plates, and cylinders to the Crown Agents, which burned the proofs and destroyed the dies, plates, and cylinders²⁴

Though the Crown Agents destroyed the physical traces of the Colonial King Edward VIII Omnibus Series, memory of the series was preserved directly in the De La Rue Crown Agents correspondence files and indirectly in its influence on the Colonial King George VI Coronation Series.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank David Beech and Rod Vousden of The British Library and the staff at Heritage Services, Consignia, who helped me collect the information used in this paper.

Notes

1 Richard Maisel, 'Cayman Islands: There Is Still Much to Learn', *8W! Study Circle Bulletin*, No. 187, December 2000, pp. 90-93.

2 Douglas B. Armstrong et al., *The Cayman Islands: Their Stamps and Post Office* (London: H. F. Johnson, 1910), p. 4.

3 *Annual Report of the Cayman Islands, 1912-13 - 1935*, CO65111-651/23 (courtesy Public Record Office, Kew Gardens).

4 *Ibid.* 1912-13, CO651/1, p. 200; 1914-15, CO651/2, p. 343.

5 Armstrong et al., p. 4.

6 *Annual Report of the Cayman Islands, 1912-13*, CO651/1, p.200; 1914-15, CO651/2, p.343; 1915-16, CO651/3, p.380.

7 *Ibid.* 1926-27-1935, CO65111 5-651 123, Tables on Mail Service; *Cayman Islands (Dependency of Jamaica) Annual General Report for the year ended the 31st December 1930*, CO857/1, p. 3 (courtesy Public Record Office, Kew Gardens).

8 *Annual Report of the Cayman Islands, 1935*, CO651123, p. 363.

- 9 *Annual Report on The Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Cayman Islands 1938*, CO857/2, p. 122 (courtesy Public Record Office, Kew Gardens).
- 10 Thomas E. Girdali and Peter P. McCann, *The Postal History of the Cayman Islands* (Weston, Massachusetts: Triad Publications, 1989), p. 107.
- 11 John Byl and Richard Maisel, 'The Cayman Islands Farthing Stamp of 1908', *British Caribbean Philatelic Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Whole No. 192), September 1999, pp. 86-95; Girdali and McCann, pp. 124-131; James Podger, 'Cayman Islands: The De La Rue Records', *British Caribbean Philatelic Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Whole No. 183), June 1997, pp. 74-84.
- 12 *Crown Agents. Register of Dies, Plates, Formes, Etc., Held on Charge in The Colonial Stamp Dept.*, p. 37 (courtesy Philatelic Collections, The British Library).
- 13 Colonial Stamp Books, Vol. 10, pp. 177 (¼d stamp and postal card), 247 (¼d postal card), 226 (½d newspaper wrapper), 249 (1d postal card and envelope) (courtesy Heritage Services, Consignia Archives, London).
- 14 De La Rue Private Day Books, Vol. Y, pp. 18 (¼d stamp and postal card), 177 (¼d newspaper wrapper), 270 (1d postal card and envelope); Vol. AA, p. 55 (2½d envelope) (courtesy Heritage Services, Consignia Archives, London).
- 15 L. N. Williams, *Fundamentals of Philately*, rev. ed. (State College, Pennsylvania: American Philatelic Society, 1990), pp. 311-12
- 16 Williams, p. 308 (flaws).
- 17 De La Rue Correspondence Books, CA Comm Issue (courtesy Heritage Services, Consignia Archives, London).
- 18 1935 Silver Jubilee. The Jerez' Collection. Auction Catalogue. (London: Christie's Robson Lowe, 12 September 1989) Lot 1582.
- 19 Ibid Lots 1527 and 1543.
- 20 De La Rue Correspondence Books, CA Comm Issue.
- 21 Ibid. CA105.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Colonial Stamp Books, Vol. 17, p. 207.
- 24 Philip O. Beale, *Postal Service of Sierra Leone* (London: Royal Philatelic Society, 1988), p.183; *ibid.* p. 214 (reference 2 for Chapter 19).

Advert

Argyll Etkin Limited

DOMINICA**SG55a Small 'o' in 'ONE'***by John Davis*

..... but when is a 'small o' not a 'small o'?

Ian Small raised the question of the 'small o' in *Bulletin 168* (March 1996), and again in *Bulletin 173* (June 1997).

I telephoned him recently, and found out that the question is still unresolved as to where the ten small 'o's are that are referred to in Gibbons. I note that in Victor Toeg's book on Dominica he refers to the fact than 10 small 'o's are recorded, but their positions are not known.

As a part of my research into all War Tax issues, I would like to try and resolve this old chestnut once and for all.

I have written to Gibbons to see if they can provide the answer, but in the meantime I am asking readers to contact me if they can help. If anyone has a complete sheet, or large positional multiples would they please let me know. I would be interested in purchasing any such material.

I have a difficulty with my existing multiples as some 'o's are smaller than others, but on two identical positional pieces the variety is not constant.

..... and for good measure, is the position known yet of the large 'NNY' in 'HALFPENNY' Victor refers to in his book?

Advert

WILLIAM S. ALLMAN

JAMAICA

New Circular Datestamps

by Ian Potter

I have found a new source of up-to-date Jamaica covers. Looking through several thousand of these dated from April to September 2001. I found that a new style of Circular dated cancel was now in use. There were none of these in the previous lot (October - March). It consists of a single 30mm circle with the name of the office at the top and 'JAMAICA W.I.' at the bottom all in sans-serif block capitals. I have decided for the purpose of my database from which *The Postal Markings of Jamaica* was printed to call these markings 'C 1-30'.

The cancels appear to have been issued to most of the main offices and some of the smaller ones where they have been used in inks of all colours and the earliest date I have seen was 22 May 2001.

I list the ones I have seen:-

Bog Walk - Black	Calderwood - Deep Violet
Cambridge - Black	Central Sorting Office - Blue & Black
Christiana - Black	Constant Spring - Black
Cross Roads - Black	Discovery Bay - Black
Duanvale - Black	Ewarton - Blue
Frome - Dark Blue	Grantham - Black
Hagley Park - Dark Blue	Half Way Tree - Black
Hope Bay - Black	Jackson Town - Black
Knock Patrick - Black	Liguana - Blue
Linstead - Black	Mandeville - Black
May Pen - Black	Meadowbridge - Black
Montego Bay 1 - Black	Montpellier - Black
Morant Bay - Black	Negril - Black
Ocho Rios - Black	Point - Black
Postage Paid C.S.O. - Black	Race Course - Blue
St. Anns Bay - Violet	Savannah La Mar - Black
Southfield - Black	Spanish Town - Black
Western District - Black	Windward Road - Black
Yallahs - Black	



Advert

STANLEY GIBBONS

ENTIRES WITH HISTORICAL CONTENT

by Michael Hamilton

Most pre-stamp entires tend to either report on produce shipped and ongoing affairs at the numerous West Indian estates, or on simply business arrangements, and work undertaken by the various Mission Societies. Letters containing significant historical content are not easy to acquire, and those with substantial interest seem to be few and far between. Sometimes only one or two compelling sentences suffice to send one off to research the fuller picture.



I currently report on two 1795 entires which reflect much of what was going on during that year and show how continued British attempts to capture St. Domingue left her other island possessions vulnerable, and an 1823 British Guiana entire which has both a historical basis and amusing content.

EVENTS AS REPORTED FROM ANTIGUA DURING 1795

1795 entire headed 'Antigua July 4th 1795' from Langford Lovell to Christopher Bethell in London (Codrington LL180) endorsed 'p. His Majestys Frigate Blanche' and rated '5' showing clear red 'PORTSMOUTH/SHIP-LRE' (S.6b) above address panel and JY 3095 arrival b/stamp. The historical contents are fully transcribed as follows:-

"My last respects were the 17th May, since which no opportunity has offered for Europe but the present (the 2nd April and 1st May Packets having proceeded to Jamaica) consequently I intended to have wrote you fully by Admiral Caldwell (who has been superceded in his Command by the arrival of Admiral Sir John Laforey) that has just called here on his return home, but his stay is so very short, as not to admit it, nor indeed for me to advise fully of Occurences, shall therefore briefly state that of the Outward Bound Fleet that left Portsmouth the 24th May, 17 or 18 of them have been Captured and carried into Guadeloupe, and in them a number of Passengers, and from 7 to 800 Troops and which is particularly unfortunate, as the Brigands are extending themselves for we have lately been under the necessity of abandoning to them St. Lucia, and it is now feared (by accounts just received) that Grenada, will share a similar fate, whilst we have doubts for Martinico, and a Descent was made by them on Dominica in the course of the last month, but having been hemmed in on all sides by the Militia of the Island, and a detachment of Regulars before they could be reinforced, the whole Party submitted and laid down their Arms in the moment when the Old French Inhabitants were on their march to join them, and who it is expected have before this been entirely suppressed, - from this short sketch of affairs in these parts, you will judge our apprehensions, and particularly when I add, that few or none of the Troops expected which Embarked in the before mentioned Fleet were intended for these Islands, but principally if not wholly for St. Domingo, and such was the destination of the greatest part of those that arrived with Admiral Parker, and in the same manner have we been constantly deceived by the Minister, who has never sent out one half of the Reinforcements that he

promised, but left the Islands continually exposed to a settlement of Brigands, who have till very lately laid waste wherever they could get a footing, and they are at this time so much so, that if powerful reinforcements do not arrive before the hurrycane months, it is more than probable that all the Islands will fall before they are over. The Crop at Jennings finished some time ago, as has that of Bolans, and 4 hhds of Sugar from the former and 6 from the latter are shipped in the Antigua, Capt. Brown, and there will be 10 hhds also from the latter in the Brooke, Capt. Oliver, who has fortunately escaped from Capture, tho' chased to windward of Barbadoes - I say fortunate, having brought to the Island a large supply of beans, that are and will be very much wanted, for there is not a single bushell of corn lobe purchased in the Island, and our supplies from America so very scant, owing to the vast exports from thence to France, Spain and Portugal, as gives room for serious apprehensions of wanting for our Negroes before the hurrycane months are over we have just heard of the Death of General Vaughan at Martinico - Capt. Clarke of the Hero is amongst the number of those taken, and carried into Guadeloupe, and we are fearfull the John, Capt. Richardson is also of the number, as he was seen chased to windward of this Island by a French Frigate, by Capt. Barge of the Meliora who arrived a week ago, and we have no further tidings of the John".

Background:- King Louis XVI was guillotined on 21 January 1793 and on 1 February 1793 the French Republic declared war on Britain and the Netherlands. In the West Indies the war began with the capture of Tobago by Admiral Laforey on 14 April 1793. At the request of the Royalist inhabitants of Martinique a fleet under Admiral Gardner landed troops near St. Pierre on 16 June 1793 but the defence forces were deemed too strong to be taken and the troops and Royalists were re-embarked on 21 June and the invasion of Martinique abandoned. The British Government had by now begun to listen with sympathy to the suggestions of the Royalist planters from St. Domingue that a British occupation of that colony would be welcomed and supported by the white population who would be willing to place the colony under the British flag. Major-General Sir Adam Williamson, commanding the troops in Jamaica, was given discretion to occupy St. Domingue and on 20 September 1793 troops under the command of Colonel Whitelocke were landed unopposed at Jeremie and the British flag was hoisted. Further towns surrendered to the British during December and January 1794 but by this time disease had started to decimate both the British force and the opposing French revolutionary troops. Further reinforcements arrived in May 1794 but yellow-fever broke out immediately. The five year attempt to subdue St. Domingue proved a costly failure and it is estimated that some 20,000 British lives were lost from disease alone. The Maroon War in Jamaica held up for a while much needed reinforcements but it is doubted that success could have been achieved in any circumstances due to the overwhelming handicap of the ongoing yellow-fever. In early 1794 both St. Pierre and Fort Royal at Martinique were taken, and having left a garrison there the British troops were landed at St. Lucia on 2 April and at Guadeloupe on 11 April. Epidemics weakened these garrisons, and the Royalists serving with the British troops proved unreliable and on 6 October 1794 Guadeloupe fell to French forces under Victor Hugues who proved to be an audacious and blood-thirsty revolutionary leader. The recovery of Guadeloupe by the French was a serious disaster as it was used as a base from which attacks could be made on other colonies and revolutionary doctrines spread. Dominica was attacked in June 1795, St. Lucia was lost on 19 June 1795 and French emissaries, dispatched by Victor Hugues, were successful in stirring up revolts in both Grenada and St. Vincent. With the arrival of General Abercromby in the spring of 1796 events were reversed and the British islands saved and all the principal French islands in the Eastern Caribbean, except Guadeloupe, were in British hands.

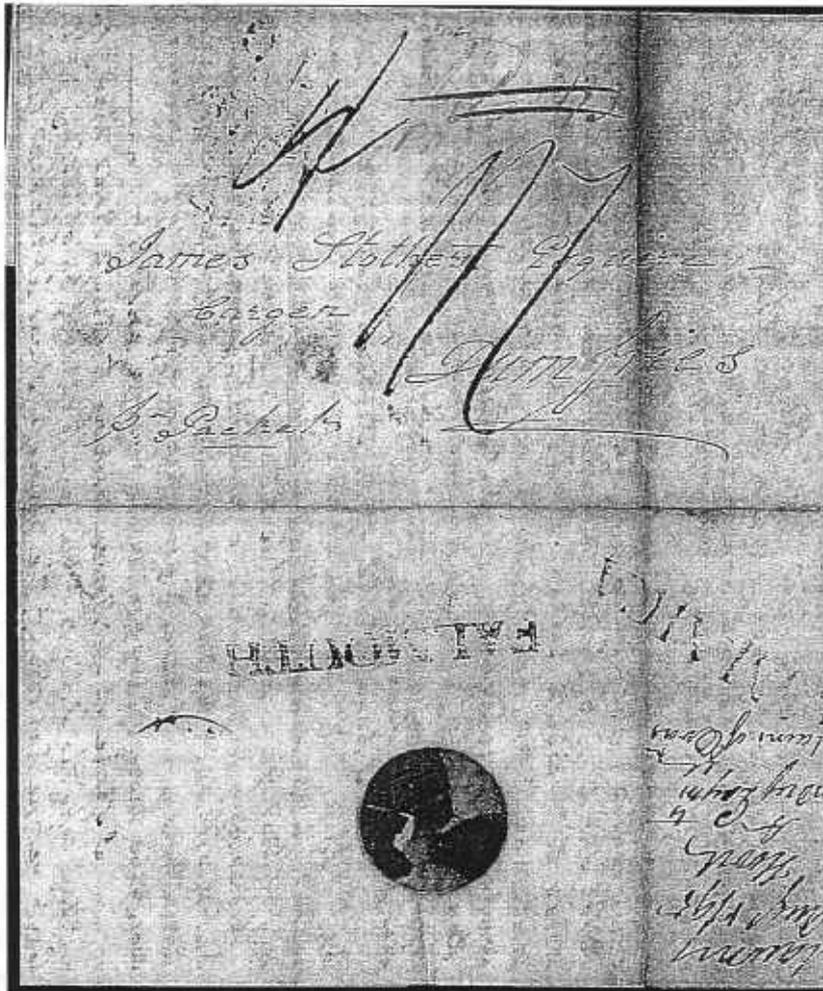
Note:- Lot 1009 in the Stephen Sugarman collection of Dominica (Christie's, 8 March 1994) offered a 25 June 1795 entire written from St. Pierre, Martinique "p. His Majesty's Ship Blanche" to Liverpool landed with red "PORTSMOUTH/SHIP-LRE" (S6b). Contents included "a vessel arrived this morning from Dominica confirming ...the total defeat of the Republicans that landed from Guadeloupe in that island, 360 men laid down their arms and about sixty was killed; their did only ten escape which are now in the woods".

AN ENTIRE WRITTEN ON THE EVE OF THE MAROON WAR IN JAMAICA 1795

Headed 'Trelawny, Jamaica, 11th Augt. 1795' to James Stothert in Dumfries rated 'Pd 1/3' in red and showing unpaid 1/7 with fine str. line 'FALMOUTH' (Type 2, 45 x 5mm) and clear 'JAMAICA' on lower flap plus NO 9 95 arrival d/stamp.

Lengthy contents include:-

"The Maroons of Trelawny Town have occasioned great alarm lately, particularly to the folks of St. James's,



to whom they sent a formal challenge to fight, owing to some of their people having been flogged at Mo(ntego) Bay for theft, it was the week before the fleet sailed - about 300 of our Militia were immediately up in the valley - Mr Sharp who sail'd with Capt. Munt for Bristol, and several other gentlemen went up and reason'd them to order again - but our governor Lord Balcarres is not satisfied - he is at present in St. James himself with a body of troops from Town, Martial Law has been proclaimed, and the Militia under arm & he has sent to the Maroons to come to him, and if they do not by tomorrow, a reward of proclamation is offered of £20 for every one of them taken dead or alive - There are about 700 in all in Trelawny Town, 180 fit to bear arms - so we shall have a disagreeable business perhaps - but its lucky the Slaves are all quiet & behave well - and the Maroons of Accompong Town have join'd St. Elizabeths militia".

Background:- In July 1795 two young Maroon men from Trelawny were convicted of stealing pigs from a white planter, and sentenced by magistrates to receive thirty-nine lashes each. The punishment was inflicted by the black overseer of the Negro prison in the presence of slaves, some of whom had been runaways and had been captured and returned by the Maroons. It was this insult rather than the pain of punishment which was bitterly resented. The Maroons assembled in arms, made various threats against white inhabitants and the militia was mobilised.

20 July:- attempts were made to settle the matter peacefully by prominent whites who called a meeting to discuss their grievances. Some 300 armed Maroons came to the meeting which ended on an apparently peaceful note. However the Maroons began to unsuccessfully incite slaves to revolt, and the slaves having no liking for Maroons who captured runaways for reward told their masters. Most of the troops had already been sent from Jamaica to Hispaniola, and the only remaining regiment of soldiers were under orders to sail to the same destination.

29 July:- the troops sailed from Port Royal and almost immediately it became obvious that the Maroons had not been pacified and that the situation was serious.

4 Aug:- the troopship having been intercepted landed the troops at Montego Bay (about 20 miles from Trelawney Town) to the great relief of the white inhabitants. Martial law was proclaimed and the Governor, Lord Balcarres, sent a warning to the Maroons that they were surrounded by strong forces and that they should appear before him on 12 August at Montego Bay to "submit themselves to His Majesty's mercy" or their town would be destroyed and rewards offered for their heads.

11 August:- some older Maroons surrendered but the rest were determined to fight. They burnt their town themselves and attacked some outposts of the troops.

12 August:- the Maroons inflicted a severe defeat on the body of mounted troops and militia, the colonel in command being killed. The Maroons then retired to the wild Cockpit country from where they raided neighbouring plantations murdering any whites they found.

19 August:- an entire (noted in Cavendish Auctions) from 'Vaughan's Field' to Major Gortley at Fort Augusta, Kingston included "our duty and situation are both unpleasant ... we are now preparing for a second attack ... when I think we should be able to give a better account to these rascals than we hitherto have done ... I must beg that some 400 canteens and haversacks and some Camp kettles may be sent to here and also some Hatchetts, Blankets and Tents".

12 September:- the Maroons ambushed another military force inflicting heavy casualties. The impossibility of rounding up the rebels was now apparent and the Legislature decided to obtain large hunting dogs from Cuba.

14 December:- Forty Spanish hunters arrived at Montego Bay with about 100 dogs from Cuba, a report quickly spread about the savage nature of these animals. The Maroons almost immediately offered to surrender on certain conditions.

21 December:- at a meeting it was agreed that the lives of the Maroons would be spared if they gave themselves up within ten days and none would be deported. Only 21 surrendered within the stipulated period. The time limit was extended and a further 400 more Maroons surrendered during January. A few remained in hiding but the revolt was effectively at its end by March. The Legislature later decided that those Maroons who had not surrendered by 1 January should be deported, and in June 1796 some 556 of the Trelawney Maroons were embarked in transports for Nova Scotia whereupon it was decided that the climate was unsuitable and they were removed to Sierra Leone in 1800. The day after they landed they helped to suppress a revolt of some liberated slaves. A few of the Maroons with their children returned to Jamaica in 1841.

AN INSURRECTION BY SLAVES IN BRITISH GUIANA

1823 clean entire headed 'Demerary 27 December 1823' marked 'p. St. Patrick' to Hugh McCalmont in Belfast. No transit or rate markings as it being smuggled mail. Contents include "I have not had the pleasure of hearing from you since the intelligence of our late revolt reached you - we have thank God completely put it under - the country is perfectly quiet - the holidays have passed over, have not heard of a single disturbance in the disturbed area, the Negroes are not allowed any Indulgence the two Companys of the 93rd arrived here from Cork (and) leave us this day for Barbadoes - the 27th are in Orders for this Colony - **the Highlanders surprised the Negroes very much, many were heard to remark, "The King must be vexed for he was in such a hurry to send soldiers he had not time to get trousers made for them"**. More men coming here will have no bad effect".

Background: On the 18 August 1823 some of the slaves revolted and within a few days some 13,000 Negroes were in open rebellion as they thought that a dispatch from England had been suppressed which referred to their immediate emancipation. Two white men were killed and Martial Law declared and the troops quickly mobilised. Over 100 slaves were killed in the fighting and 47 hanged whilst others suffered floggings and long terms of imprisonment. Local opinion blamed anti-slavery mischief and plotting at the local Bethel Chapel branch of the London Missionary Society. The 'parson', being the Reverend John Smith, was tried by general court-martial and found guilty of inciting the slaves to rebellion. He was sentenced to hang although the court martial recommended him to mercy. Smith died in prison prior arrival of the King's pardon from England to be given on condition he left the West Indies.

ST. KITTS**War Stamp SG23***by John Davis*

A few years ago I purchased (in a BWISC auction) SG23 1½d orange used block of 18 with a duplex postmark of 26 July 1918.

The issue date according to Stanley Gibbons' Catalogue is given as August, the same as listed in *Christies Robson Lowe's Encyclopaedia Volume VI Leeward Islands*.

Having researched all War Tax references from *Ewens Weekly Stamp News*, I now realise the significance of the 26 July date. This was the date of the official notice of the revised postage rate, and the issue of the 1½d orange WAR STAMP. The notice concludes "These stamps are now on sale at the several Post Offices in the Presidency". It is not apparent whether the stamps could have been sold on a date prior to 26 July.

I would welcome comments on why Gibbons and Christies Robson Lowe have the issue date as August, and whether members know of examples issued prior to 26 July.

Advert

BRIDGER & KAY 'G' LTD.

VIRGIN ISLANDS

Extracts from *Ewens Weekly Stamp News*

by Peter Fernbank

[Authors comments in italics and square brackets]

635 N 705 (29 Mar 1913)

The Bazaar says that they have seen copies of the ½d and 1d values with head of King George. They are both in key plate design with solid colour tablet at foot, and small head.

Portrait of King George.

½d green.

1d red.

705 O 777 (15 August 1914)

The London Philatelist chronicles further values of the Georgian Issue.

Portrait of King George. Mult. wmk. Crown CA, P.14

2d grey

2½d blue

3d purple on yellow

6d dull and bright purple

1/- black on green

2/6 carmine and black on blue

5/- red and green on yellow

[The full series, ½d to 5/-, was invoiced by De La Rue on 9 Jan 1913]

711 P 884 (2 Sep 1916)

Even when there is a real necessity or occasion for provisionals such expedient is not always resorted to. Early in February we sent out a requisition for several thousand of the ½d, and the Post-master in executing sent only 570, advising that this number exhausted his stock and the balance of our remittance was held to credit until he could later complete. Only this week is the balance to hand, and we presume during the four to five months the Leeward Is. ½d was exclusively in use when this denomination was required at Tortola.

This latest supply of the ½d is found to be a distinctive shade. It is blue-green as compared with the yellow-green of former issue. Amongst the sheets received we were interested to find several that in part showed the inscription and figure of value, in tablet, slightly doubly printed. This possibly was occasioned in the machinery having been hurriedly completed to catch the mail to Tortola with the needful supply.

[This supply of the ½d, invoiced on 20 June 1916, was printed in September 1914 (from Plate 1b). By mistake the Virgin Islands duty plate was used instead of the Leeward Islands plate, and the printed stamps, held by the Crown Agents pending future orders, were used to fulfil this order.]

By a break in the letter 'L' of ISLANDS' a variety reading as 'VIRGIN ISI.ANDS' is found in the same position on both left and right-hand panes throughout this new printing.

[this indicates the use of a 60-set duty plate]

1916. New Shade.

½d blue-green.

Varieties.

- a) ½d and inscription, double printed.
- b) Inscription as 'VIRGIN ISI.ANDS'.

884 Q 886 (16 Sep 1916)

The consignment of the new printing of the ½d, referred to in *EWSN* of Sept. 2nd, is found to contain another prominent variety. On the 3rd stamp of 1st row the '1' of '½d' is of very thin formation compared to others, and curiously the '1' on the next stamp (4th) is rather thicker than the normal. These have been extracted in pairs.

Variety of ½d blue-green. 1916 printing.

- c) Very thin '1' of '½d'.

886 R 891 (21 Oct 1916) - War Tax Postage

We learn from *The Colonial Journal* that the 1d and 3d values overprinted 'WAR STAMP' are in course of preparation.

891 S 898 (9 Dec 1916) - War Tax Postage

The mail despatched from Tortola on Nov. 14th brought us early this week a quantity supply of the two new War Tax stamps recently announced for this colony; but less than a quarter of the number we cabled for. In this advance lot to hand, we find both values are new, or special printings from Plate 5 The 1d is scarlet with tablet of value in deeper shade, and the 3d is deep purple on lemon paper. We are officially informed these stamps were first placed on sale on Oct. 26th.

Oct. 26th 1916. War Tax Postage.

1d scarlet.

3d deep purple on lemon. [*the paper shade of this 3d was later re-defined by Ewens to lemon-yellow*]

These two latest War issues will be included in Distribution No. 686, to all members of our 10% New Issue Service.

898 T 904 (20 Jan 1917) - War Tax Postage

The news we learnt in November as to the 1d and 3d War Stamps having been received in Tortola from both plates, No. 1 and No. 5, is now confirmed by *The Colonial Journal*. The consignment received a few days later - early in December - were from Plate 5 only, and the quantity being far short of total we had made requisition for, and there appeared to be some misunderstanding or confusion, we at once confirm detail. The reply cable received stated "3,000 penny, 3,000 threepenny despatched". As there was still due more than 10,000 1d and 4,000 3d, it was evident misunderstanding at Tortola yet existed, and to avoid confusion becoming more confounded it was advisable to endeavour to have the matter adjusted by the slower process of letter communication.

[If the quantities supplied to other British and American dealers are also taken into account, then a substantial proportion of the total printed ended up in the hands of collectors.]

The consignment as above advised is no doubt now near to hand, and we hope may contain quantity of the 1d and 3d from Plate 1.

It appears a small number of sheets, the residue of a previous printing of both 1d and 3d from Plate 1 were used up for the special War Stamp requisition, the order being completed with sheets from the new Plate 5 printing. The shades of colour are of course in each case distinct.

1d deep scarlet red and tablet in carmine, Plate 1. (204 sheets)

1d scarlet, Plate 5. (98 sheets)

3d purple on yellow, Plate 1. (79 sheets)

3d deep purple on lemon, Plate 5. (121 sheets)

[The paper shade of this 3d Plate 5 printing was later amended by Ewens to lemon-yellow.]

The 1d on the 1st colours will probably prove to be a rarity. The total indent for the 3d is believed to have been small, and in this the lemon paper variety will likely prove to be a good item. The printings on lemon paper are in most cases only comparatively small quantity supplies. *[The sheets from Plate 1 were from a printing made in 1914, when the Virgin Islands duty plate was used by mistake instead of the Leeward Islands duty plate - the full story is outlined in Bulletin 146.]*

Both the 1d and 3d lemon, from Plate 5, were completed through our New Issue Service in December at the nominal 10%.

904 V 905 (27 Jan 1917) - War Tax Postage Stamps

The information given in last week's edition of *E.W.S.N.* led to a rush of excitement, and we can now add further interesting facts. The consignment advised we hardly expected to arrive so soon, but it reached us the day after writing the article. Fortunately, we received therein a number of the 1d and 3d Plate 1. A later post brought us a letter explaining the reason why our order could not be executed in full, which was that a new supply of the 1d was required. This means the 1d is exhausted - and we are of the opinion that the 3d is also.

If a new indent has been made, the 1d will be a new printing from Plate 5, in scarlet, possibly identical to the first supply, though in these difficult times there is the chance of it showing some marked difference. The 3d will also be a new printing from Plate 5, but on the new make of bright yellow paper - not on the lemon paper. It is evident the few sheets of lemon paper passed for the recent printing from Plate 5 must have been a mistake. This particular paper, it is believed, is now to all intents and purposes exhausted.

We must now revert to the 1d to deal with the matter in the clearest manner. In examining our stocks of the ordinary postage we find the printings from Plate 1 show three distinctive shades in colour.

(a) Carmine, with tablet in glossy carmine.

(b) Deep red with tablet in glossy carmine.

Deep red, tablet in deeper colour but without gloss.

The (a) carmine is the original. The (b) deep red a later printing, which is curious and interesting for the reason that the two different colourings of the tablet occur on the same sheet. The tablets were printed at a separate or second operation, and it happened that the tablets on the left-hand panes were a different inking or printing to those made on the right-hand panes. The residue that had remained when the War Stamp requisition came to hand, was not the deep red, as we had surmised, but the original carmine. It is stated this residue was very small. Only because it was desired to relieve the printers of the small surplus they had made in previous printings were the few sheets passed to be used up in the War Stamp requisition. *[but see quantities printed above]*

With this knowledge the incentive was given to speculate, but the market was found to be remarkably empty, except for one dealer, who had had the fortune to receive apparently the greater portion of the issue - and we bought him out.

Enquiries, covering three days, brought us several small lots, but the surprise to us was to find how few dealers held stock, even of the 1d scarlet. By the third day, it seemed we had cleared the market. The telephoning was becoming overdone, on everyone enquiring of everyone for Virgin Is. War Stamps - 1d carmine, 3d Plate 1, and 3d lemon - or what were they worth? Our venture had proved to be successful, and it was time for us to retire to Norwood, having secured the bulk of the issue, excepting perhaps a few odd.

No one had had the 3d Plate 1. No one had seen it except ourselves, and possibly we hold all that exists of this.

The episode of the Virgin Is. War Stamp first issue is indeed an extraordinary one. Neither of the old stocks of Plate 1 are in a sense ordinary. The 1d is carmine, the first shade, and the 3d is not the ordinary yellow but the trial make of lemon-yellow paper with chrome speckles showing (on the back) as described by *The Colonial Journal*.

Of the four varieties, three are undoubtedly good items which will rank amongst the scarcest of the War Stamp issues. The 1d scarlet from Plate 5 has also the chance of being of value above the ordinary.

Revised Chronicle.

Oct - Dec., 1916. War Tax Postage.

1d carmine, Plate 1.

3d purple on lemon yellow, trial paper, Plate 1.

1d scarlet, Plate 5.

3d deep purple on lemon, Plate 5.

[the paper shade of this 3d printing was later re-defined by Ewens to lemon-yellow.]

The 1d and 3d lemon have already been completed through our New Issue Service in the December distribution. The 1d carmine from Plate 1, and the 3d on the trial lemon-yellow paper from Plate 1 will be supplied in Distribution No. 687, now in preparation. Ours is the only New Issue Service to distribute the four varieties, and members will doubtless be gratified in securing the set complete.

905 W 910 (3 Mar 1917) - War Tax Postage Stamps

A letter received last Wednesday, posted from Tortola, on Jan. 25th, advises "No War Stamps in stock." The new supply can hardly have reached Tortola before end of February, if so soon, and it will likely be sometime in April at earliest before any supplies of the new printing can be received in London.

910 X 930 (21 July 1917)

The Colonial Journal advises that a new supply of the 1d stamp has been printed from Plate 5 and sent out to the Colony.

930 Y 965 (16 April 1918) - Prints from Plate 5 - New Shades

We have received quantity supply of a new printing of the 1d, presumably the first to be made from Plate 5 for the ordinary postage stamp. The colour is changed to *scarlet*, printed on thick paper, wmk. opaque.

War Tax Postage - New 3rd Printing

We have also received supply of the latest printing of the 1d and 3d War Stamps both from Plate 5.

The colour of the 1d is rose-red with tablet red on medium paper, wmk. opaque, the overprint **WAR STAMP** being heavily impressed. The 3d is *brown-purple* on *lemon* paper, showing the overprint in shiny ink, blue-black in appearance and heavily impressed.

The three printings of the 3d show marked difference in shades, and are perhaps best defined as follows:

1st. 3d dull purple on chrome speckled trial yellow paper, Plate 1.

2nd. 3d deep or plum purple on lemon-yellow paper, Plate 5.

3rd. 3d brown-purple on pure lemon paper, Plate 5.

Feb. 1918. New Prints from Plate 5.

1d scarlet.

War Tax Postage. 3rd Printing.

Overprint WAR STAMP on 1d in dull black and on 3d in shiny black.

1d rose-red.

3d brown-purple on lemon.

The above were completed through our 10% New Issue Service distribution No. 697 as shade varieties.

We are indebted to the Commissioner for kindly sending us a copy of the War Tax Official Notice, and for information as to the quantities of stamps issued to date, all overprinted in London.

Notice

On or after 1st September, 1916, all letters and Parcels posted in the Virgin Islands to places in the British Empire outside the Leeward Islands must bear the following extra stamps in addition to the usual postage:

On every letter 1d

On every parcel 3d

Parcels addressed to a member of His Majesty's Navy or Army will not be charged the additional postage.

On and after the above date, every Postal Packet containing dutiable goods arriving in the Virgin Islands will be charged a War Surtax of 3d to be collected by a three-penny stamp to be affixed to the packet before delivery.

Three-penny and penny stamps surcharged 'War Stamp' will shortly be on sale for this purpose. Until these are ready ordinary stamps can be used.

15th August, 1916

Postmaster

Quantities of the three Deliveries Oct./16 - Feb./18.

1st Delivery. Issue of 36,240 1d and 34,000 3d placed on sale October 20th, 1916.
[Invoiced 26 Sep 1916]

2nd Delivery. Issue of 36,840 1d and 24,600 3d placed on sale March 12th, 1917.
[Invoiced 5 Feb 1917]

3rd Delivery. Issue of 61,080 1d and 25,200 3d placed on sale Feb. 13th, 1918.
[Invoiced 8 Jan 1918]

The 1st delivery included the small residue of sheets from former printings of both the 1d carmine and 3d dull purple on chrome speckled yellow paper from Plate 1, which were used up for the 1st War Stamp requisition, the bulk of the consignment being new printings from Plate 5, viz. 1d scarlet and 3d plum purple on lemon-yellow paper. The latest 3rd delivery of the 3d War Stamp in brown purple on pure lemon instead of the new make of full or bright yellow, comes somewhat as a surprise. All of the 3d in our consignment were lemon paper, but possibly a portion of this issue may exist on the full yellow make of paper. It will be interesting to know if such is the case.

965 Z 979 (10 May 1919) - New Prints from Plate 6

A new fourth issue of both the 1d and 3d War Stamps, now printed from the new Plate 6, are also notified as supplied.

979A 980 (17 May 1919) Printings from new Plate 6 - New Shades

It appears the Post Office at Tortola was without any stock of the Virgin Is. ½d stamp for some months, and apparently during the period had to make do with the Leeward Is. issue.

The new stocks of the ½d and 1d, printed from the new Plate 6, were in due course received, and presumably were placed on sale on March 11th last. Our several orders for large quantities, which had been held in abeyance, were then quickly executed, and the supplies arrived in London a few days since. This new printing of the ½d from Plate 6 is in a new shade, being in *deep blue-green* with tablet in *dark shiny green*, and is printed on the new make of dead white medium paper with white gum, wmk. semi-transparent.

The new printing of the 1d from Plate 6 is also in a new shade, being in deep rose-pink, and is similar as regards paper, etc., to the ½d stamp.

War Tax Postage - New 4th Printing from Plate 6

The new fourth issue of the 1d and 3d War Stamps now printed from Plate 6 were placed on sale at Tortola on March 11th. The 1d appears in a new shade of (i) *deep rose*, but a few sheets are found in a minor shade of (ii) *deep rose pink*, and is printed on the white paper, etc., as with the new postage values.

The 3d is in a new shade of *greyish-purple on pale yellow*. Amongst the large stock we have received we find this value with error, watermark *inverted*. [*The paper shade is better described as buff-yellow, and is not the same as the pale yellow paper defined in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue*]

Both values have the overprint **WAR STAMP** in thinner type than the previous issue. The quantity of these 4th printings are comparatively small. The 1d being 506 sheets of 120 = 60,720 stamps, and the 3d, 303 sheets of 120 = 36,360 stamps. [*these quantities are confirmed, invoiced on 17 January 1919*]

March 11th/19. New prints from Plate 6.

½d deep blue-green, with dark green tablet.

1d deep rose-pink.

War Tax Postage. 4th Printing. Plate 6.

Overprint WAR STAMP in thinner type.

1d deep rose.

1d deep rose-pink.

3d greyish-purple on pale yellow.

Error. Watermark inverted.

3d greyish-purple on pale yellow.

The above items are included in our New Issue Service Distribution No. 707.

980 B 982 (31 May 1919) - War Tax Postage. - Type Error

The chronicle of the interesting error, smaller type **WAR STAMP**, overprint, letters 2.25mm high, is completed by our listing the four printings of the 1d and 3d values that have to date been issued in this Colony. [*from position RP10/1*]

Oct., 1916 - Mch., 1919. War Tax Postage.

Error, Overprint smaller type, 2.25mm. high.

1d carmine, Plate 1, Oct./16.

3d dull purple on yellow, Plate 1, Oct./16.

1d scarlet, Plate 5, Oct./16.

3d plum-purple on lemon-yellow, Plate 5, Oct./16.

1d rose red, Plate 5, Feb./18

3d brown purple on lemon, Plate 5, Feb./18.

1d deep rose, Plate 6, Mch./19.

1d deep rose pink, Plate 6, Mch./19.

3d greyish purple on pale yellow, Plate 6, Mch./19.

3d ditto, Error wmk. inverted, Plate 6, Mch./19.

982 C 1002 (24 Jan 1920) - New Shade

The 2d stamp is to hand in a much deeper shade, being in slate instead of grey, as in previous supplies. The print is from Plate 1, evidently a supply sent out to the Colony several years ago, but not placed on sale until August last. *[This was from the only Plate 1 printing of the 2d, made in January 1913. The change in shade was probably the result of six years storage in a tropical climate]*

Aug. 1919. New Shade. Print from Plate 1.

2d slate.

War Tax Postage. - With reference to a further requisition we sent out several months ago for a quantity of the 1d War Stamp, the Postmaster wrote early in December that our order was held pending receipt of War Stamps from England. This presumably will be a new printing from Plate 6 or 8, and we expect the supply will come to hand very shortly.

1002 D 1009 (10 Apr 1920) - New Print

A new supply of the ½d stamp is reported by *The Colonial Journal*. This further printing no doubt has been made from the new Plate 8 and in due course, as soon as we receive delivery, we will report on any difference there may be in shade, etc., from previous issues.

War Tax Postage. Reverting to our last note we learn that the order for new supplies of the 1d and 3d War Tax stamps to fill outstanding orders held, was vetoed on this side, and the issue was to be considered as discontinued when the stock supply printed from Plate 6 became exhausted in November or December last.

Under date of January 26th, the Commissioner informs us that no 'Victory' or 'Peace' stamps will be issued.

1009 E 1014 (22 May 1920) - Print from Plate 8

We have received delivery of the new printing of the ½d stamp made from Plate 8, as advised in the last edition of *The Colonial Journal*.

This new printing is not so deep in colour as the March, 1919 issue from Plate 6. The shade is green with bright green tablet. Very curiously some of the right hand panes of the sheets show the tablet of value considerably mottled.

[Examples from left and right panes from Plate 8 in my collection confirm this observation, and in addition the value tablets on both left and right panes are different shades of green. Because the duty plate was 60-set size it was necessary to print the duty impression in two separate operations, at different times, on the 120-set sheet containing the key plate impressions. The mix of green ink and the set-up of the plate obviously differed for each pane printed.]

April 17, 1920. Print from Plate 8.

½d green, with bright green tablet.

½d green, with mottled green tablet.

ST. VINCENT

St. Vincent in Eruption

by Simon Goldblatt

I must make belated acknowledgement to Edgar Allan Poe for drawing my attention to an event of which I previously knew nothing. It is sure to interest some of our members. His information came, in turn, from Murray's Encyclopaedia of Geography - see the Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherezade - and it can be quoted verbatim:-

"On the first of May, 1812, a cloud of volcanic ashes and sand, coming from a volcano in the island of St. Vincent, covered the whole of Barbadoes, spreading over it so intense a darkness that, at midday, in the open air, one could not perceive the trees or other objects near him, or even a white handkerchief placed at the distance of six inches from the eye."

It is too much to hope for surviving letters of the time from St. Vincent which mention the occasion. There may be more chance of some Barbados letter containing an account of it (or Grenada, perhaps?). Has anybody come across one?

On further reflection, it is discomfoting to learn of two major eruptions less than a century apart. It suggests continuing need for a measure of vigilance, probably enhanced rather than reduced by the recent history of Montserrat. I write in ignorance, and it may well be that there is already a steady programme of monitoring and measurement along all vulnerable parts of the Caribbean.

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WHY EXHIBIT?

An Alternative View *by Charles Freeland*

I read Dennis Mitton's comments in the December 2000 Bulletin with interest and feel they call for a response from someone who doesn't exhibit (and is constantly being asked why not).

One needs to start by deciding what exhibiting actually means. If it means competitive displays in organised philately, then count me out for reasons I will come to later. But if it means sharing one's collection with those who may appreciate it, then I am whole-heartedly in favour. This can be anything from a one-on-one show-and-tell, through informal displays at clubs and societies to more formal lectures or displays culminating (if one's collection is sufficiently distinguished) in an invitation to the Royal.

The challenge of preparing a display to a high standard is a daunting one. It is also a salutary experience and, however advanced a philatelist you may be, I am sure you will learn something new. Dennis suggests that you quickly find that your collection is not as good as you thought it was. I am not sure I have felt that, but I have had the equally sobering experience of discovering that I did not know as much as I thought I did. Many of us are intrinsically lazy and leave our acquisitions on the pages of the previous owner or store them in cupboards, shoe boxes or bank vaults. Once one begins to write up a collection, a whole host of questions comes to mind. Some of the questions can be resolved with access to a good library while others lead one to new fields of research. Not much can be obtained from a Gibbons catalogue, one really needs a good handbook and a reference set of bulletins plus Victor Toeg's valuable indexes. For postal history, much more is needed.

Writing up also involves a healthy dose of discipline to present the facts as clearly and concisely as possible. A good presentation requires literary skills as well as philatelic knowledge. Of course, it is not necessary to display to write up a collection, but it certainly provides a positive incentive.

In my experience, there are two further benefits from writing up in preparation for a display. One is that the very act of planning your exhibit focuses your attention on what is needed to enhance it, which leads to a more targeted future acquisition strategy. It will mean upgrading quality and seeking out items that really catch the eye. Second, one begins to give due weight to philatelic importance. This is by no means the same as market value. For example, in a traditional exhibit, where you show the origin of the stamps and their usage, there may well be a challenge to show the full range of postal rates. A typical example would be the ½d or 1d printed matter rate, which will normally be a cheap item, if you can only find it. Displaying will also force you to weed out the trivial, reduce duplication and to focus on quality, eye appeal and the need to show varieties in positional multiples. Award-winning collections need to be highly focussed and must contain a high proportion of 'important' items. These are what catch the judges' eye.

So why do I stop there and not exhibit competitively? There are basically three reasons (and they do not include the fact that I am not a competitive person, because my friends know that I am). The main reason is my fundamental distrust of the subjective nature of the judging, particularly at international level. It is not that I do not respect the judges, but there is no way a team of judges can conduct a due diligence assessment of a hall-full of exhibits, which leaves ten minutes or so available for eight frames. A lot of judging therefore tends to be impressionist and superficial, with many exhibits being based on limited knowledge, prejudices and out-of-date impressions from a previous show. A second problem is related to this, namely that in order to reduce the subjectivity, the rules are very constrictive and anyone who deviates an iota is penalised. I realise that rules are essential, but their interpretation does not have to be so inflexible as often appears to be the case. Finally, I do not like the essentially political nature of the process, with national commissioners and judges lobbying for their own collectors, a process that can become pretty dirty when grand prix and the like are at stake. Moreover, it obviously pays to belong to the establishment. I have seen examples of collections worth a large silver or small vermeil receive gold when the collector's name is the right one. The notional anonymity is a farce. There are also the not immaterial frame fees, most of which finance freebies for commissioners.

I would exclude from the first of these criticisms the specialist society competitions, where at least the judges should know what they are looking at and the time factor is normally less challenging, but possible political bias remains. Of course, all judging is subjective and a level playing field is impossible. How can you compare a virtually complete collection of the rarities from a BWI island with a collection of USA or GB that include marvellous items but contains a fraction of the material that is available to the US or GB collector? The system used at the beginning of the last century, when collectors submitted their complete collection, was probably fairer even if totally unworkable today!

I confess to one more specific concern about current judging trends, namely the inability of judges to appreciate true rarity. This is partly because exhibits are now often focussed on a very narrow field and jury teams cannot cover every speciality. Indeed, even specialists often do not know what is truly rare in their field because of inadequate study, while auction houses regularly perpetuate myths about rarity based on out-of-date sources. I have seen many displays, even by members of the Circle, where the exhibitor falsely claims uniqueness or something close to it. In principle, such inaccuracies should be heavily penalised, but if the claim has been by the premier collector of the area, the judges rarely question that judgement.

In practice, as Dennis explains, the marks for rarity are only about 10 per cent, which make little difference except at the highest level. Far more marks go to presentation and this nowadays means advanced computer skills. Pat Walker, whose display at STAMPSHOW 2000 won the Grand Prix National, would probably be the first to admit that her striking presentation, which was very innovative, was what attracted the judges' attention. But would she have been able to present the display so skillfully if she had not spent her working life at IBM?

Dennis mentions the ability of the competitor to provide a manuscript write-up, but I have not seen one at an international since Sir John Marriott displayed at San Francisco in 1997, and he had the advantage of a neat hand that we all know graces many pages of the Royal collection. I am certain that no hand-written entry, even in perfect copperplate, would receive high marks for presentation nowadays.

There is one final reason why I do not display competitively, namely the pressure I would place myself under to continue to enhance my collection if I planned to continue to compete with it. I have a large number of interests and I see no need to rush around seeking out items aggressively. There is more than enough on the market to absorb what my wife leaves me to spend on stamps and some of my collections lie dormant for years waiting for a suitable opportunity. I sympathise with the poor specialist who finds nothing to add to his or her collection for months. And when an auction opportunity eventually arrives, it is quite likely that a shrewd dealer will have seen his exhibit, identified the gaps and will bid against him hoping to sell him the item he desperately needs.

A final thought. Our sister group across the water seems to have a higher proportion of competitive exhibitors among their members. Is this because the Cameron trophy gives them an incentive to exhibit competitively? The Circle's only award is the Collett trophy for distinguished philatelic writing. Do we need a Mitton award for exhibiting? But, as I said, count me out.

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BOOK REVIEW

British Virgin Islands 1787- 2001 (continued)

by Simon Goldblatt

6d perf. 15. The catalogue adopts Brown's plating notes, and illustrates four of the more prominent plate positions. Blind (or skipped) perfs are not alluded to. I have sometimes asked myself whether some of the plate proofs around were made for the purposes of this issue, trying out the new shade to be adopted.

4d perf. 15. There are useful illustrations and listings of essays, die proofs and plate proofs. Then a full sheet of the value as issued is given, followed by a set of plating notes. The text here highlights the blind perfs., attributed very credibly to broken perforating pins. However, there is once again a significant matter omitted from the plating guide. The fact is that - as with the 6d perf. 12 - there was a 'clean' and a 'dirty' state for these stamps. The most prominent indicators of the dirty version are that at position lithe frame-line break described and catalogued as No. 15a, is twice as long, while the stamp at bottom right (No. 25) has lost part of the letter 'A' (lower half of right limb).

My interpretation is that the two values discussed had parallel panes from the same transfer laid down on the stone, so as in fact to be printed in slabs of 50. I infer (and, experts in printing, please tell me if I have got it wrong) that the clean transfer was the first to be laid down, and that imperfections were picked up, second time round. At position 14 the editors catalogue a 'missing pearl' variety. If I have correctly isolated the 'dirty' version, it develops a vertical line of colour below the colour flaw in the border of pearls.

The 1s stamps. The 1s stamp in its various guises is so well known and has been so fully analysed on various occasions, that one expects, and one finds, little to criticize. On page 84 the footnote reads as if 7,500 was the total number printed with crimson frame, from which the 4d surcharges numbering 2,500 have to be subtracted. In fact, of course, 7,500 represents the surviving number of SG18, 19 and 20, after allowing for the surcharges and a further 1,000 for SG11 and 14.

Plate Proofs list the 1s single-lined frame, in deep rose. My example shows traces of double line in places, and I wonder whether others do also. I also have an imperforate example of SG20 from bottom left of the sheet, no gum; and again it is open to debate whether or not this is a cut-down perforated stamp. Incidentally, the double-lined frame as illustrated on p.84 is rather indistinctly shown. All plate proofs of the 1s value, where they incorporate the figure of the Virgin must show this typographed in black. Where the Virgin is in the colour of the stamp, this is a De La Rue proof. Blown-up details of plating characteristics are given for all positions of the 1s stamp. In practice, the 1s value can often be distinctly difficult to plate, and this point just about emerges from a careful reading of the text.

SG20 is discussed in detail on p.91, and it is proposed that the stamp is usually found "with no gum and poor centering". In my own reconstruction, about half the unused stamps have gum, the inner margins on the corner stamps are uniform, and at least half of the others are reasonably centered in the non-marginal planes. I should regard a score of 12 or 13 for good centring as being high. I note in passing that my no.16 and 19 have fairly normal, as opposed to outsize margins at foot.

The editors include the 'Missing Virgin' within the description 'no gum and poor centering'. This is curious. As the stamp is known only from the top two rows (and with trimmed perfs at head of one and foot of the other, as Migliavacca painstakingly explains) the centring is what the centring is, and has no statistical significance for the rest of the breed. Incidentally, the editors' comment that my report of 8 surviving examples of the 'Missing Virgin' is likely to include double-counting may well be right. I was reporting what Bill Frazer told me, quite late in his life. As Bill's enthusiasm for Virgin I. was kindled by acquiring the Burrus holding as a single auction lot, I have no means of knowing how assiduous he was over plating and how accurate over recording. What he did have was an outstanding collection, and contacts likely to have been as extensive as any contemporary in the stamp trade.

Returning to SG20, there are few clues as to the period when it was used. I do have an example on piece with a 1d perf.12, sharing an A91 cancellation; and after much hesitation I have decided that this item is genuine. Given my approach to dating, this would relate to any time after 1871, when the use of A13 was suspended. It is notable (see p.306) that the long interruption in the usage of A13 has not been appreciated in this catalogue. As an envoi to SG20 a stamp from position 19 is wrongly attributed to position 17 in the text, but the editors have probably picked up the slip for themselves by now.

DLR Lithographs. These are described in considerable detail, along with their proofs and Specimens, with extensive plating notes and enlarged illustrations. The material, including sheets and large multiples, is still relatively available, so that anyone who cares can pick up the trail and follow it a reasonable way along. So, just a few random comments from me.

When one sees the difficulties that highly experienced printers like De La Rue had with lithography (flaws, blurring on the 6d value, colour variation across a single sheet, and from sheet to sheet) it seems a little unfair to categorise Nissen & Parker's workmanship as "possibly shoddy" back to p.55. The procedure was economical, but it was not altogether easy. And guess what! Full sheets of the DLR 1s have numerous blind perfs. The sheet illustrated from the Royal Collection, and mine at home, are almost identical in this respect.

On pricing and description the editors retain the classifications green and yellow-green for SG22 etc. and maintain a price differential in favour of the upright watermark (like SG) except where sideways on yellow-green, which they recognize only with the orientation of watermark. I have to join issue again. I have never been able to isolate a distinct yellow-green shade, though tropicalisation produces an aura. I find the upright watermark a bit more plentiful than sideways. There is a huge range of shades amongst the upright. Finally, the sideways watermark comes facing different ways. So, how would I describe the issue? I haven't the faintest: I'm not an editor!

When we come to the 1d red, no mention is made of the imperf. postmarked examples. This is a controversial topic, but should have been mentioned.

There is no listing of a reversed watermark for the 4d value. There may be other watermark variations, for this is not my field.

DLR Key types. Here again we are on wholly familiar territory, well-trodden, with much already on record. The listing of proofs etc. does not record that the 1d rose exists overprinted CANCELLED in red. Neither is the 2½d ultramarine mentioned alongside the ½d green as being imperf. as issued. Of such trivia, nobody can know everything.

Envoi. I am conscious that what began as a book review could be received as my Study Group's presentation for the next two years. If my criticisms appear to diminish this work, forget them. It is a tour-de-force, and should give welcome stimulus to new collectors of this highly individual territory. So I hope it sells like hot cakes. I have just two further suggestions. The first is that the catalogue would have closed a little more gracefully had it ended on p.311. The second is that there is no excuse for the lamentable hand-drawn illustration of A91, found on p.306. We all have our weaknesses, and perhaps an insert of errata in copies still to come on the market would not go amiss.

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FREDERICK P.SCHMITT

AUCTIONS

The Past Decade *by Charles Freeland*

Over the past decade or so the UK auction scene has changed radically. For the first time in more than fifty years, the strong Harmers/Robson Lowe duopoly, supported by little brother Harmer Rooke/Gibbons, has been broken. The personal withdrawals of Bernard Harmer and Robson Lowe were the trigger. The two firms remain in business under different owners, but in neither case do they command the loyalty of collectors and dealers as they used to. Harmers has moved to the suburbs (remote at that) and Spink's owners, Christies, is currently seeking to dispose of it.

The economics of auctioneering have changed. Each of the 'big two' regularly held 50-60 sales per year in the 1950s and 1960s. Now, the frequency of sales has significantly decreased, while the average lot value and sale total has increased. Indeed, the target seems to be about a half a million pounds, and if that means only a dozen sales per year, so be it. One would have expected Gibbons and Sothebys to have benefitted from the upheaval because of their more diversified structures, but both have recently announced they are replacing their live auctions with web-based sales. Instead, the big gainer has been Phillips, the only London house to buck the trend and retain its frequency of about 35 sales per year. However, Phillips has just completed a merger and change of name to Bonhams. Although the offices and auction premises remain as they were for the moment, new policies dictate that it too will cease its specialised sales and move to mega events. Of the lesser London auction houses, only Grosvenor looks capable of breaking into the big time.

At the provincial level, the pattern does not superficially seem to have changed a great deal. As in the 1980s, the biggest three houses remain Cavendish, Warwick and Western, but there has been a significant shift between the three with Cavendish decisively overtaking the other two, and now threatening the big London firms. James Grimwood-Taylor's postal history expertise has clearly paid off as Cavendish has taken over the market that Robson Lowe Postal History Auctions dominated for so long. It will be interesting to see whether Cavendish can strengthen their hand in stamps as well and become a serious competitor at national level. At present, the really big postal history items continue to be offered in London as part of the major collections, but Cavendish's ability to access the international buyers' market is growing by the year. As the experience in other countries, such as USA and Germany shows, there should be no need with today's remote access bidding facilities, for big sales to take place in the capital city.

This of course gives a rather insular impression for the BWI collector, since serious material can come up all over the place. Many of our members will be buying much of their material from the two main BWI dealers, David Druett and Michael Hamilton. For the big players, the major European auctions (Cornphila, Feldman, Kohier, Rapp etc) have occasional fine pieces and there are also a number of US auction houses, led by Siegel and Shreve, where BWI material can sometimes be spotted among the voluminous offerings of US material. But the best US source of specialist BWI has become Victoria Stamp Company, where Phoebe MacGillivray has within just a few years rapidly acquired the confidence of US collectors. Her carefully lotted sales have become a treasure trove for all BWI collectors, though one has to admit that bargains are rarely to be had.

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Stamp Insurance Services

BEFORE THE PHOTOCOPIER *by Simon Goldblatt*

Familiar as we all are with 18th and early 19th century letters being sent in duplicate or triplicate across the Atlantic to and from the Caribbean islands, I for one have given little further thought to the business implications. We meet bills of exchange in series now and then, of course:- "This third of exchange, first and second unpaid", implied that any one of three copies might be the first to be presented for acceptance and payment; and at one time, as I recollect, the island of Mauritius - with which we do not ordinarily concern ourselves - provided separate revenue stamps for each copy of such a bill. What I have left out of consideration until now, is business control at the point of despatch. How did filing systems work? What lay behind some such endorsement on an arrival letter as:- "Madeira 17th June 1801, Recd. 21st October, Ansd. 24th Oct."

A chance conversation with a non-philatelic contact many months ago, has led to my being lent a business file of that approximate period. It is an intriguing document, which will whet a researcher's appetite. I am gazing at a vellum-bound file, entitled on the outside 'Jamaica Letter Book from 23 November 1784 to 2 September 1792'. The parchment pages within contain the handwriting of the various senders, exact copies of the outgoing senders. Sporadically, a letter has been omitted, and a separate copy gummed into the interior at the appropriate place.

Well, of course? Why didn't I think of it before? Duplicate letters could only have been sent, if exact copies had been retained: and weeks or months would pass before answers were received. With such wide separation in time, a continuous chronological record of outgoing correspondence was essential, and incoming letters would be held and filed separately. Only in that way could business by correspondence be kept in reasonable order. What it amounts to is that, scattered around business premises in London and elsewhere, and correspondingly scattered around the plantations and the Great Houses of the West Indies, there must have been hundreds of such files. They cannot all have disintegrated and vanished. Laywer's offices, bank vaults, and family attics could yet yield an untapped source of information, more comprehensively assembled than the occasional finds of arrived letters which we prize so highly for their postal markings.

The actual content of these letters to Jamaica I shall leave to be revealed later by others. It is the clear prerogative of Steve Jarvis and his impressive team to carry out the detailed scrutiny and research.

AUCTION REPORT

A Personal Appraisal of Recent Sales

by Charles Freeland

Victoria Stamp Company (1 December)

A number of people have asked me why I consigned my Caymans collection to Victoria. The reasons are two-fold, one was that I totally trust Phoebe MacGillivray, knowing she would do a first class job in describing and lotting my jumble of bits and pieces. Second, she persuaded me that she had many keen Caymans customers and would get at least 50% more than I thought the collection was worth. Well, folks, she was right! Many specialist items that would have been bulk lotted by other auctioneers were offered separately and fetched in nearly every case the full retail price, in many cases above that - as a result, her sales provide few bargains and not many opportunities for dealers.

Amazingly, my modest assortment fetched far more than Byl and Edmondson and even more than Marston (although here there were a lot of valuable unsolds). The only Caymans collection to have fetched more was the incomparable one formed by Bob Cooley. Cayman Islands was not the only BWI material on offer - there was, as in most Victoria sales, a strong showing of Bermuda, and a scattering of other useful WI. For much of the Bermuda there was, as earlier reported in these columns, signs of indigestion, with collectors being tempted by many other offers of ex-Ludington and ex-Dickgiesser material (albeit at full retail prices). It is comforting that the marketing of the Leuhausen collection has been subject to probate delays in Bermuda and Sweden.

Reverting to the Caymans section, I am indebted to Richard Maisel for the following information on the proceedings. The sale took place in Phoebe's new offices in Ridgewood, about 20 miles from Manhattan. There were about twenty people in the room, including a couple of agents, and three phone bidders. Progress was slow in the first section where there was strong competition for the 19th century material. One of the phone bidders acquired nearly all the choicest covers and cancellations, spending about 40% of the 'take', a high proportion for a public auction.

Over a quarter of the 373 lots were from other consignors, including a number of choice items that were once in the Lloyd-Lowles collection. Fortunately, this resulted in little duplication. Richard Maisell expressed shock at some of the prices he had to pay, but he should take comfort that his international large gold collection (the first to be awarded for Cayman Islands) must be worth five times as much! It is difficult to pick out the plums but thanks to Kevin Darcy's recent bulletin article the schooner covers went well and the many unusual specimen lots were popular - to such an extent that even the straight specimen sets attracted spirited bidding, something that has not been seen for 20 years! Anything with a rural or village mark was expensive with the two rare Georgetown type IIIbs fetching \$1,500 (all prices plus 15%). Prices for the proof material were stronger than in recent years, though not high compared with the Edmondson prices in 1988. However, my choice for spectacular price would be shared by the 1889 incoming cover at \$5,500, the earliest recorded for the island but hardly worth noting elsewhere, and the George VI War Fund label on the reverse of a cover from which a stamp had been cut out. This could be had for the princely sum of \$3,250. On the distaff side, there were quiet spots among the censors, (although the unique D140 octagon made \$1,600), the first flights and the postal stationery.

Spink (13 December)

The feature of this sale for BWISC members was an old-time collection of British Guiana that had apparently been in a bank vault since the early 1940s. Speculation about the owner centred on Leslie Ray, a former doyen of the Postal History Society and a describer for Robson Lowe's early catalogues. This was due to the catalogue's references to Townsend and Howe (not wholly correct as it turned out) that cited Leslie Ray as a source. However, the owner was not Ray who died in 1961, but a private collector who died in the early 1970s. The basis for the collection was the George Ginger collection that was offered in a Robson Lowe Private Treaty brochure in 1941.

The principal point of interest to the BG specialist lay in the fourteen covers from Berbice to McCalmont in Belfast, especially those for the period 1811-16. These contained two two-line marks I had not recorded. One of them, represented by three examples dated between 14 Oct 1815 and 25 June 1816, was very small with Berbice in capitals on the top line, of similar size to the rare single line type of 1815. The second was of medium-size italic type with 'Berbice, 5th' on the top line and 'Oct. 1813' below. In addition, there were two examples of the very small single-line mark, bringing my records to five in all. Other lots of interest were two Waterlow die proofs for the 1860 4c, an 1860 cover to Dresden via Aachen franked with two GB 6ds and two 1ds, and a cover to London bearing a pair of GB shillings. A mystery item was a first type A8C cancellation - an unallocated code - dated 12 Nv 1857. There was also a good range of early stamps, whose condition was mixed.

I was unable to attend so am indebted to Michael Hamilton for the following statistics. The total hammer price for the 131 lots was around £64,000, against total upper estimates of £50,000 odd. The two GB frankings referred to fetched the highest prices, £3,800 and £3,200. The 4c Waterlow proof on large card fetched £3,000 and the blocks sold well, but many of the stamp prices look modest, presumably on account of their mixed condition. I was keen on the positional block of the 1881 2/24c with italic 2, but Philip Kinns proved too competitive, perhaps because several of the stamps show signs of an overprint bounce.

The Circle was well represented in a sparse room by Messrs Hamilton, Medicott, Nathan and Stanton, and for once the telephones were relatively quiet. Michael's figures reveal the biggest buyer as one of two phone bidders with about 15% of the total 'take', closely followed by an agent's customer, John Taylor, Philip Kinns and a book bidder. These five divided two thirds of the spoils but Derek Nathan was

especially pleased to secure the PAID cover with thin 4 used in 1871 only and by my count one of four recorded on cover. The choicest Barbice marks were acquired by the Falmouth packet collector, Michael Jackson.

Coming events

There are two impending sales for BWI collectors to look out for, the Grosvenor sale on 20 March which includes Pat Burke's Jamaica collection, and the following two days at Spink, which will include some useful Bahamas and St. Vincent.

Amendments to Membership Listing:

New Members:

Last Name	Initial	Address	Phone/Fax/E-mail	Interests
Easton	R			DOM, STL
Marchelletta	R			BAH
Rigby	A			STK, LEE (used in STK), ANT, DOM, MON, BVI,
Runciman	C J			MON, LEE

Change of Address/Telephone Number/E-mail address:

Last Name	Initial	Address	Phone/Fax/E-mail	Interests
Cordes	C			BRG (Pictorial Issues) NEV
Davis	J			
Gordon	J H			BER (US, G6/HV) TOB, TRI, TRO (most codes)
Horry	D			
Rainey	C			

Correction to address:

McGregor R

Deceased: B. Crowther, J. O. Griffiths.

Resigned: R. Harrower, P. Longley, A. N. C. Pollard.

GROUP LEADERS			
ANGUILLA	Denis Charlesworth		
ANTIGUA	Stella Pearse		
BAHAMAS	Graham Hoey		
BARBADOS	Michael Hamilton		
BARBUDA	Rob Wynstra		
BELIZE & B. H.	Bhan Rogers		
BERMUDA	Dennis Mitton		
B. GUIANA	Peter Ford		
CAYMAN IS.	J. H. Byl		
DOMINICA	Steve Sugarman		
GRENADA	Andy Soutar		
GUYANA	David Atkinson		
JAMAICA	Steve Jarvis		
LEEWARD IS.	Michael Oliver		
MONTserrat	M. A. Smith		
ST. KITTS-NEVIS	Brian Brookes		
ST. LUCIA	A. D. Kinnon		
ST. VINCENT	Steve Sharp		
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	David Druett		
TURKS & CAICOS IS.	Alan Pearse	see Stella Pearse above	
VIRGIN IS.	Simon Goldblatt		
MISCELLANEOUS	Charles Freeland		

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