

# Uses of the Crowned Circle canceller in Barbados during the 1890's

## Background

From 1882 to 1892 Barbados had employed the universal key plate type stamps that had been used across many Colonies during the reign of Queen Victoria.

In 1892 however they were replaced by a design unique to Barbados. The new stamps would be Barbados's final stamp set during the reign of Queen Victoria; the new Seal of the Colony design.



SG 105-115

Initially just eight of the eleven stamps were issued and between 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> July 1892 the ½d, 1d, 2½d, 5d, 6d, 8d, 10d and 2/6 stamps went on general sale.

The stamps remained in use from 1892 until 1903 when they were superseded by the Jubilee issue.

## References:

Bayley, E.A (1989); *The Stamps of Barbados*

Clarke, G, Radford, R and Cave, S (1982); *Barbados Post Office Markings to 1981*



## The halfpenny dilemma

During the early 1890's the ½d stamp had a wide range of uses in Barbados; as well as paying the standard inland letter rate they were used daily on printed newspaper wrappers as well as being added to 'Prices Current' which was a list of current commodities prices across the island.

Typical monthly usage of these ½d stamps ran at around 30,000 so when the initial requisition for 150,000 stamps was made available there was in theory around five months stock on hand.

When the next order was made from the Crown Agents there were still 107,040 on hand meaning that there were sufficient for over three months of normal usage. In theory therefore that meant plenty of stamps until the new requisition arrived.

Abnormal demand for these stamps however meant that the entire stock were sold out between 16<sup>th</sup> December 1892 and 17<sup>th</sup> February 1893.



*Examples of the used ½d stamps SG106 showing usage between 1892 and 1903*

## The Solution

Following a meeting with the House of Assembly the Colonial Postmaster arrived at the following solution to the dilemma;

1. Halfpenny newspaper wrappers were sold at face value and no stamp needed to be added
2. If a large number of 'Prices Current' were handed in at the post office then the Colonial Postmaster was to receive the monies due however the mail would be franked with a 'Paid at Barbadoes' postmark in black
3. Internal mail on the island was also eligible to be franked with the 'Paid at Barbadoes' postmark in black

The 'Paid at Barbadoes' cancel, also referred to as the 'Crowned Circle', had previously been employed between 1849 and 1858 to cancel incoming mail to the island and then all cancels were struck in red.

It was this cancel that therefore came into use temporarily on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1893.

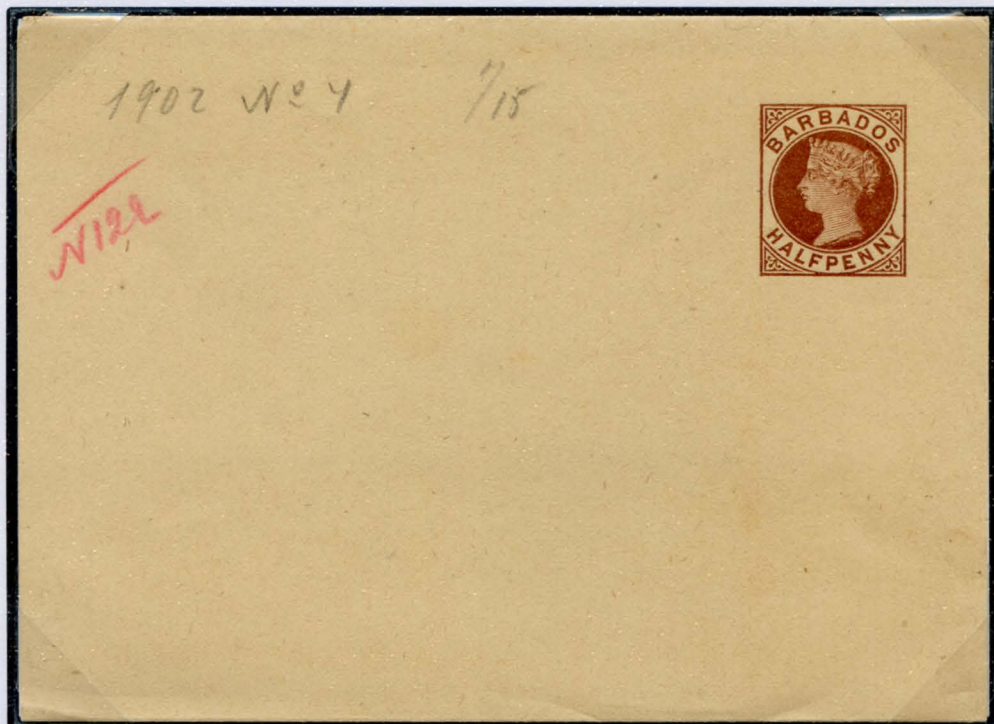


*Cancel at 125%*



## Newspaper Wrappers

In 1893 there were two types of newspaper wrapper in use on Barbados; a ½ d wrapper for newspapers sent through the Inland Post and the 1d for newspapers and printed circulars sent through the Foreign Post



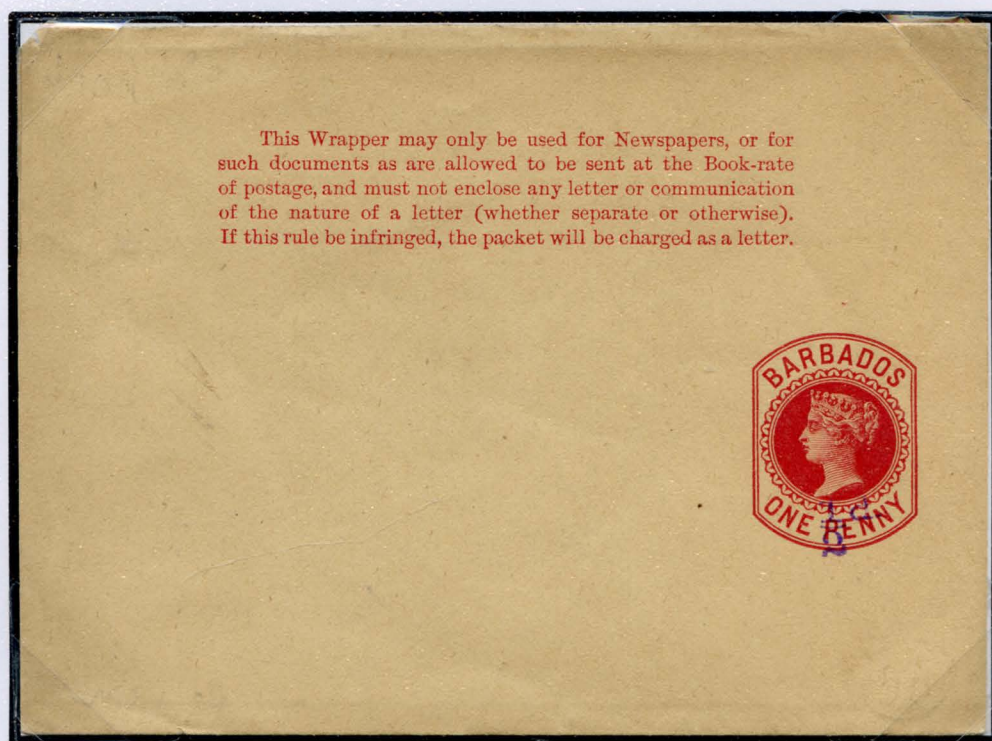
*Barbados News wrapper type N1, ½ d rate on light buff paper for use on Inland Mail- De La Rue & Co*



*Barbados News wrapper type N2, 1d rate on light buff paper for use on Foreign Mail- De La Rue & Co*



The shortage of ½ d wrappers in 1893 meant the Post Office overprinted 1d wrappers locally with a rubber hand stamp. Local hand stamping meant that there was significant variance between covers in both positioning of the ½ d and clarity of impression.



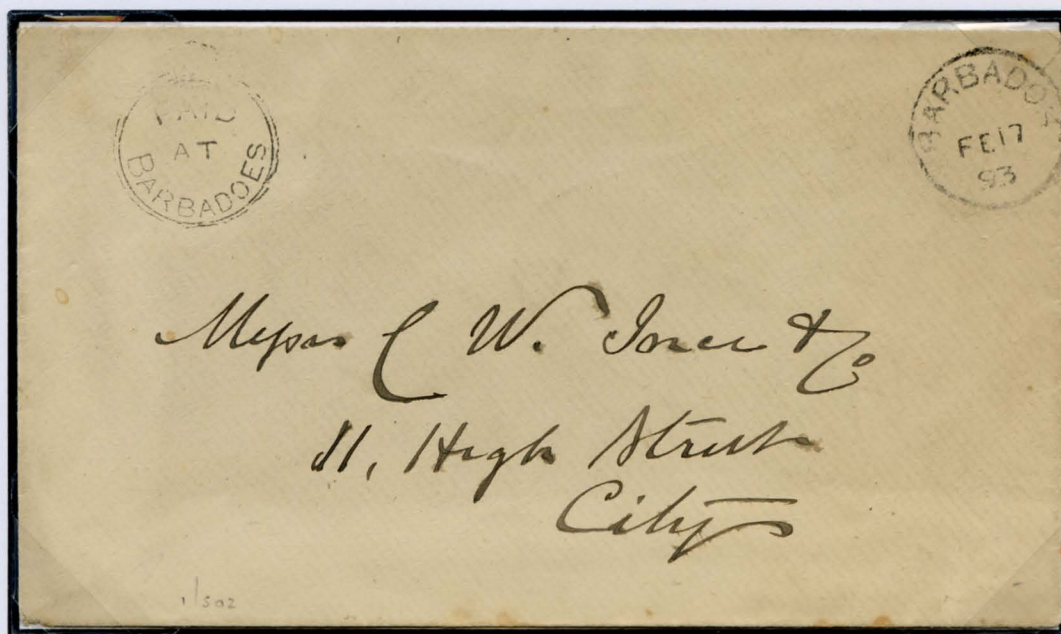
*Varieties of Barbados News wrappers type N2 overprinted locally with ½ d rate*

## The Covers

As might be expected few, if any, of the 'Prices Current' still exist from 1893 and equally finding any surviving covers from this date is difficult. The following therefore represent a small selection of the material available from these dates.

### A First Day Cover?

This cover is dated 17<sup>th</sup> February 1893 and cancelled with the Crowned Circle, making it the very first day that this canceller had been used since 1858, some 36 years earlier.



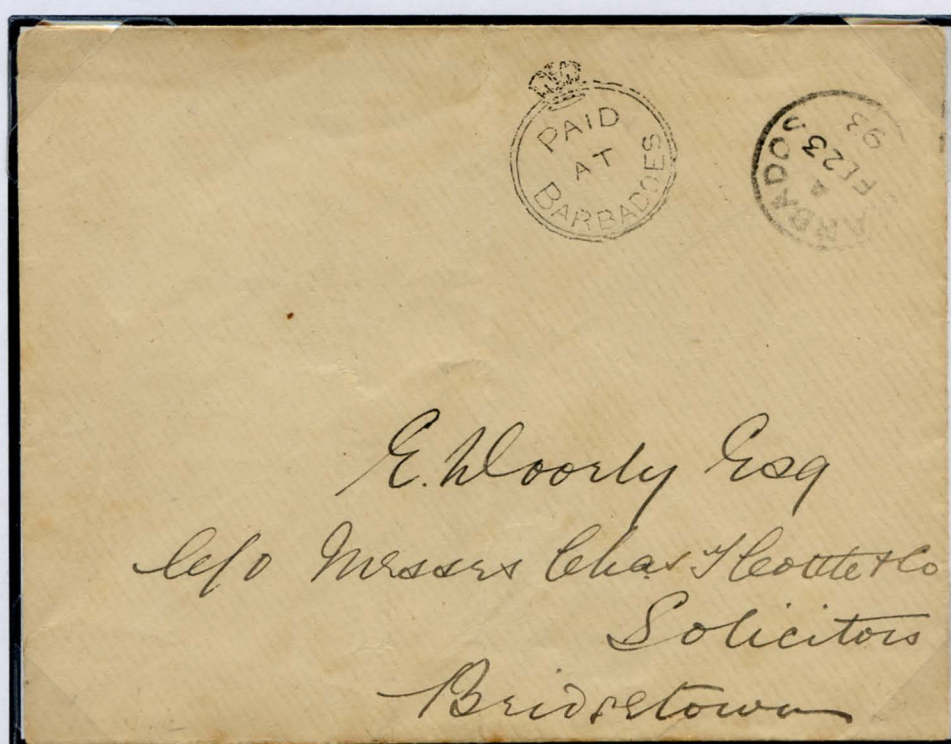
Cover sent to Messrs. C. W. Jones & Co, 111 High St, City (Bridgetown), cancelled with the Crowned Circle and dated 17 FE 93



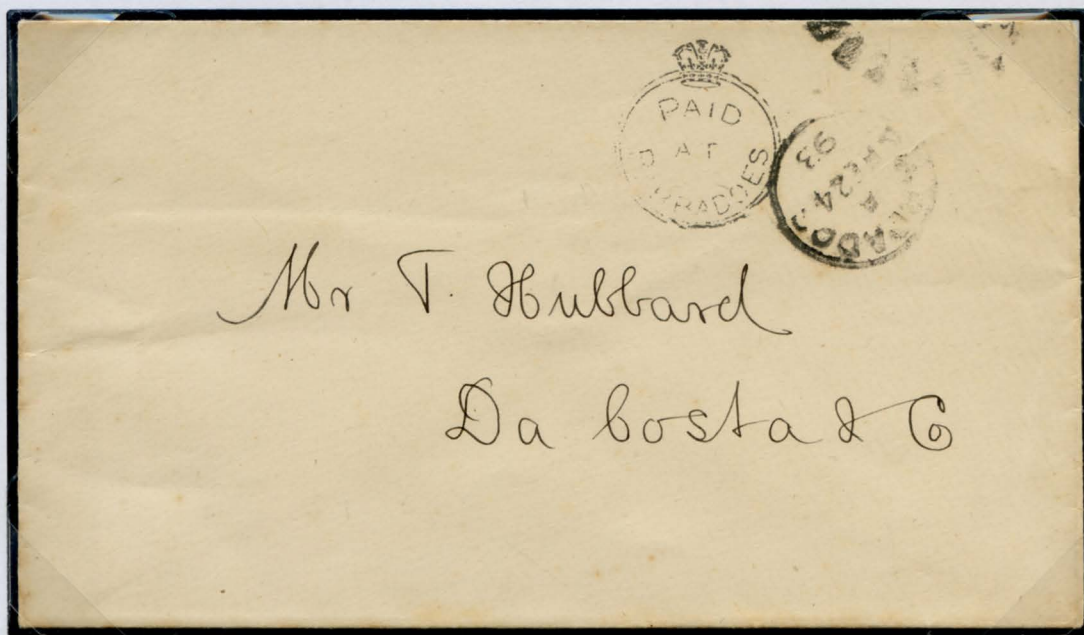
Crowned Circle Covers



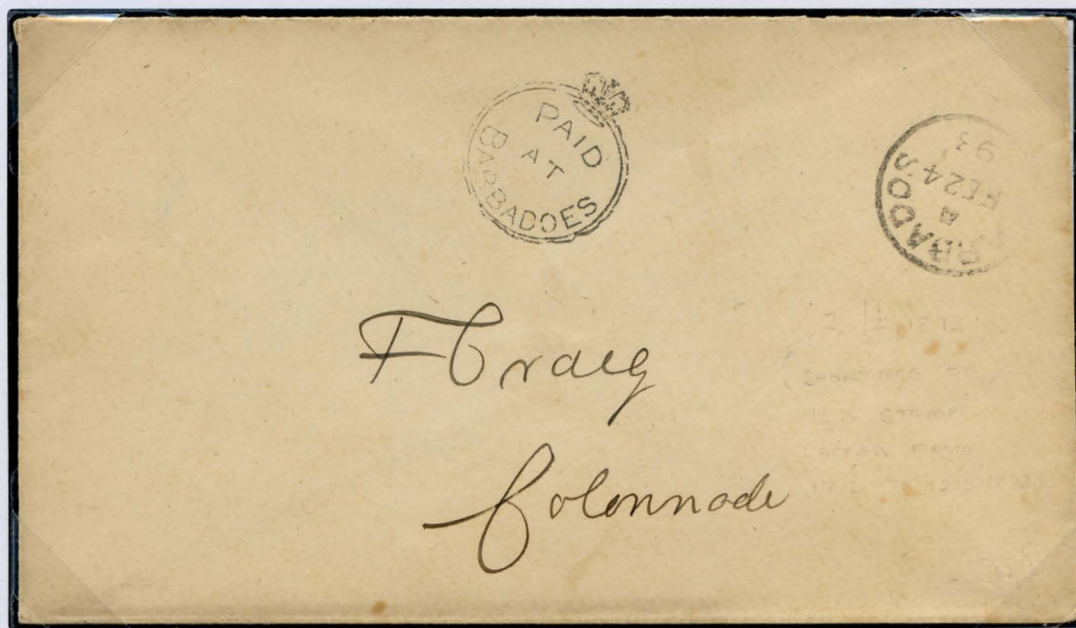
Sent to J G Austin, Bridgetown, cancelled with the Crowned Circle and dated 21  
FE 93



Sent to E Worley Esq, Bridgetown, cancelled with the Crowned Circle and dated  
23 FE 93

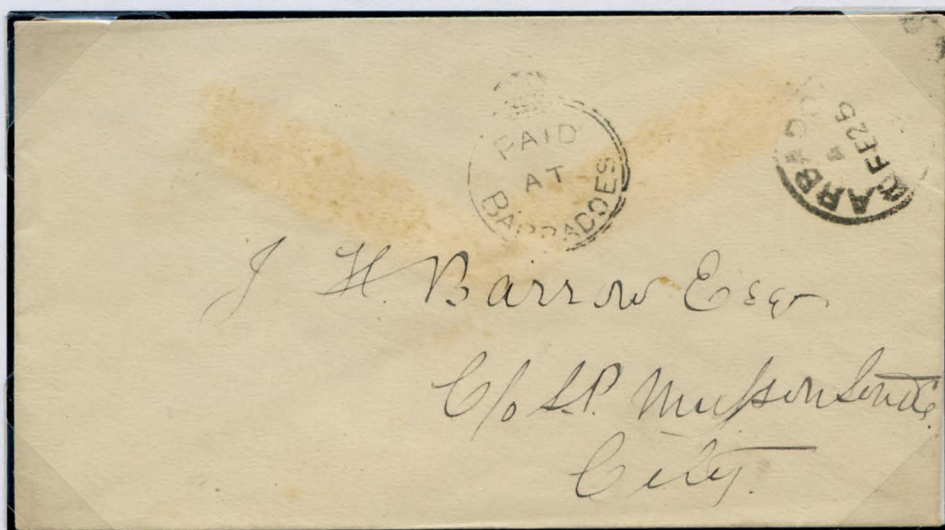


Sent to Mr T Hubbard, Da Costa & Co (Bridgetown), cancelled with the Crowned Circle and dated 24 FE 93

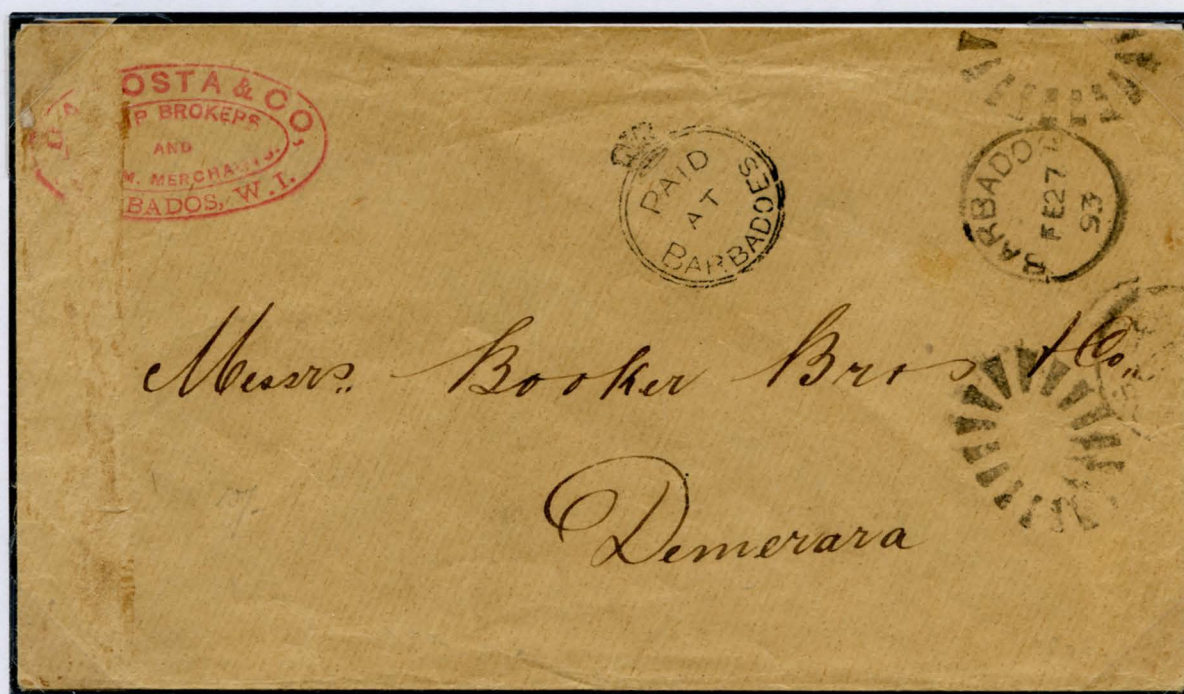


Sent to F. Craig, Colonnade (Bridgetown), cancelled with the Crowned Circle and dated 24 FE 93





Sent to J. H. Barrow Esq, City (Bridgetown), cancelled with the Crowned Circle and dated 25 FE 93

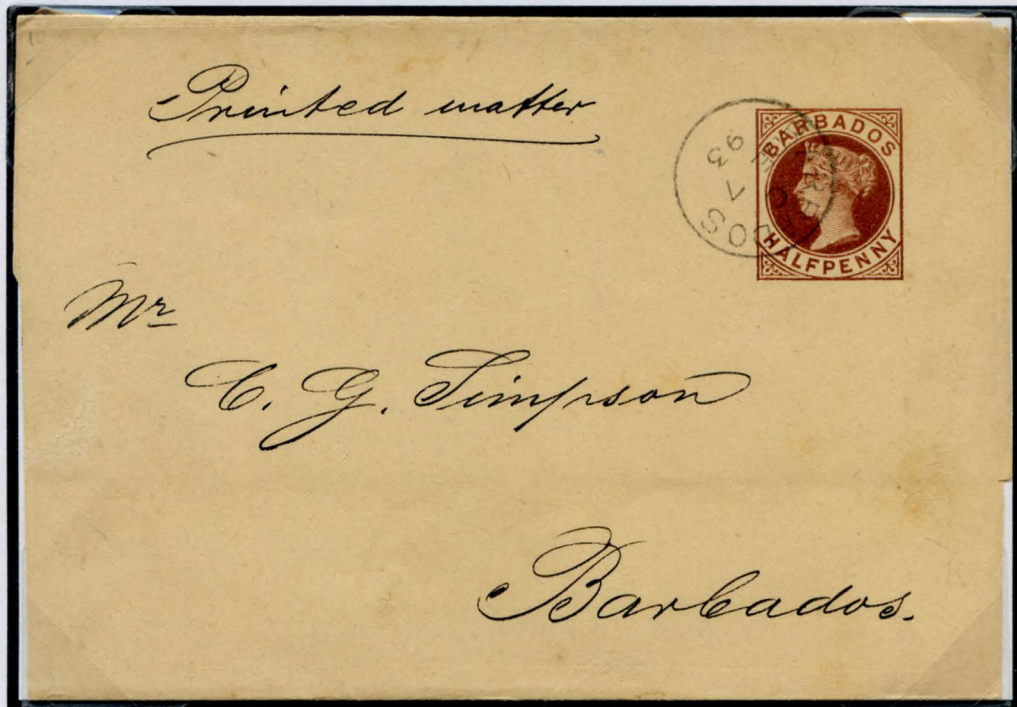


Sent to Messrs. Booker Bros & Co, Demerara, from Da Costa & Co, Ships Brokers & Chandlers and cancelled with the Crowned Circle and dated 27 FE 93. This cover is exceptional in that it is clearly inter island mail and should have been charged at a higher rate and stamps should have been used. It may have been sent along with a bundle of other letters and been inadvertently cancelled with the crowned circle instead of having stamps affixed.



Once the new stamps arrived on the island in March 1893 mail services returned to normal covers were no longer cancelled this way.

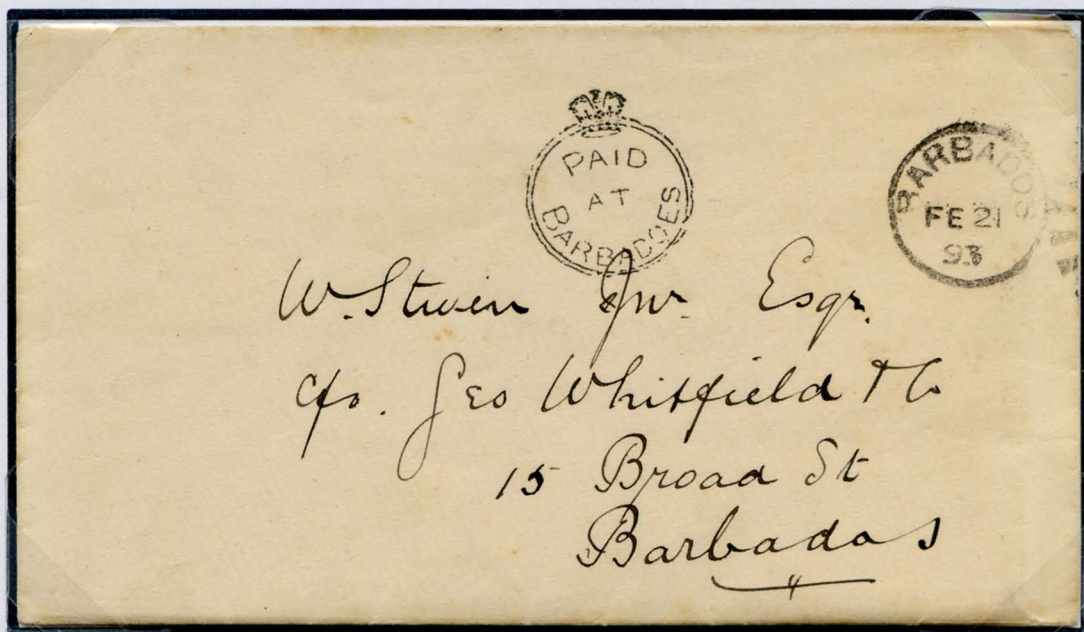
Later in August 1893 came a new requisition of newspaper wrappers and normal usage returned to the Island.



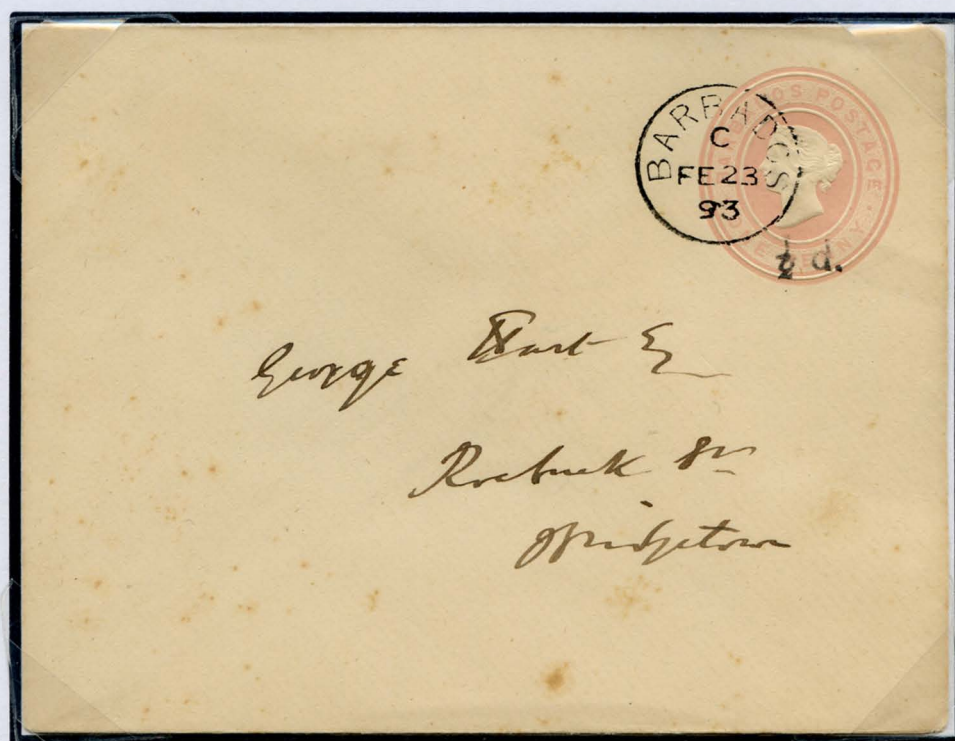
There was one further instance of usage of the Crowned Circle and that was from January 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 24<sup>th</sup> 1896 when the newspaper rate was reduced to ¼d however no stamps of that denomination were available. These wrappers were almost all disposed of and are extremely rare, this one even more so with a 'Too Late' cancel as well.





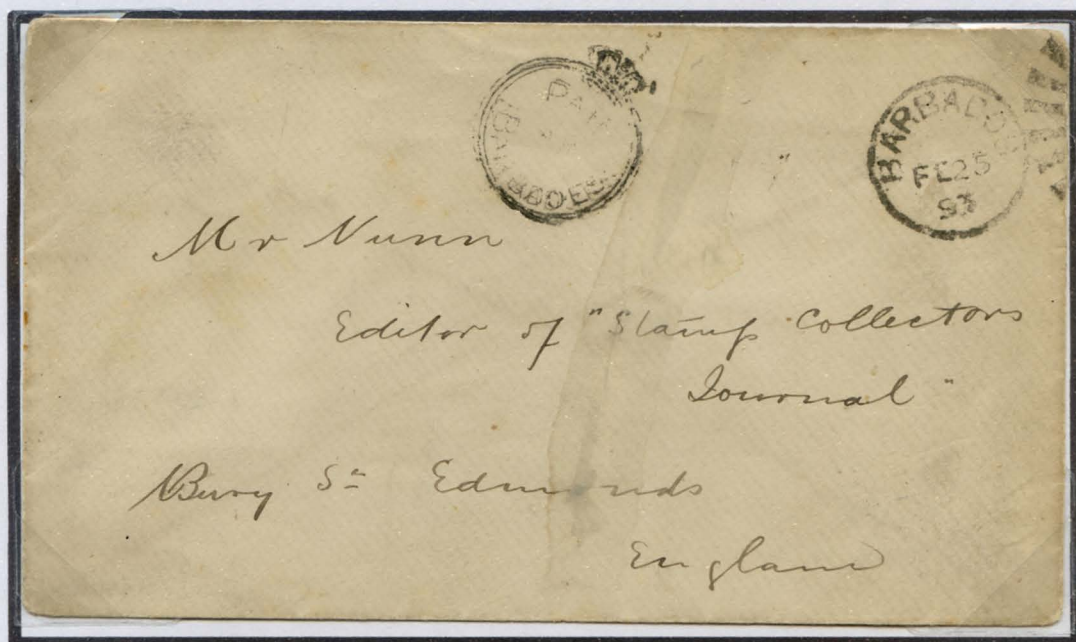


Sent to W. Steven Jnr Esq, c/o George Whitfield & Co., Broad St, Barbados, dated 21<sup>st</sup> February 1893.



An unusual use of postal stationery to circumvent the lack of stamps, used during the stamp shortage and dated February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1893.



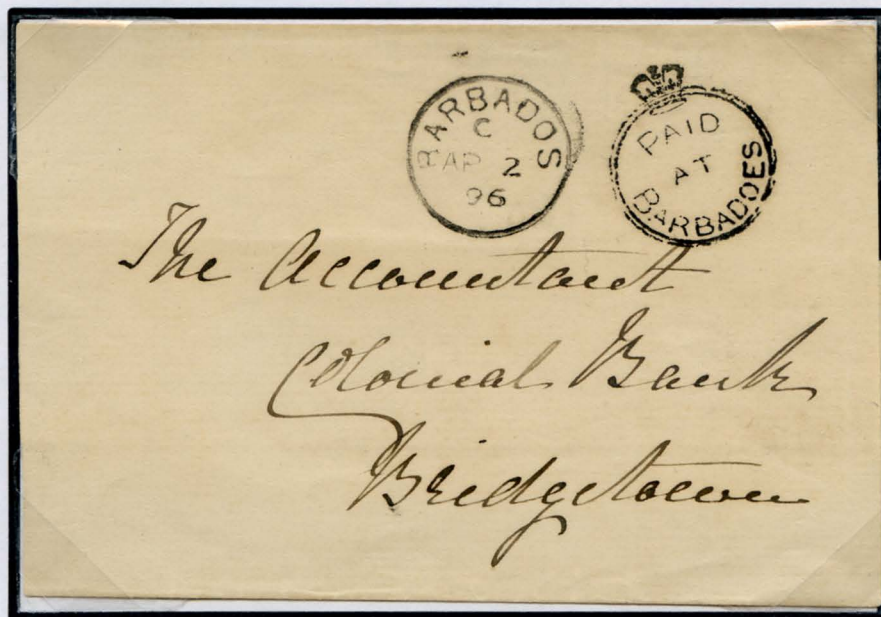


An unusual cover to Mr Nunn, Editor of 'Stamp Collectors Journal' in Bury St Edmunds, UK, dated 25<sup>th</sup> February 1893 and cancelled with the Crowned Circle canceller. This was clearly against regulations and given the addressee is probably philatelic.

The rear has a fine single circle Bury St Edmunds receiver mark dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 1893 giving a transit time of just eleven days.







This wrapper is another late use of the Crowned Circle canceller, dated April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1896 and addressed to The Accountant, Colonial Bank, Bridgetown.

These wrappers were used for delivering newspapers at the ¼d rate between the dates of January 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 24<sup>th</sup> 1896 when the newspaper rate was reduced despite no stamps of that denomination being available.