

BRITISH CARIBBEAN PHILATELIC JOURNAL

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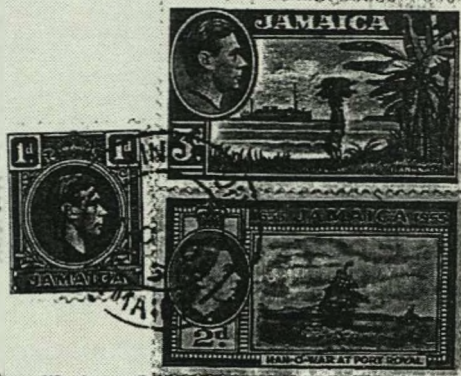
July 2002 Whole No. 204 Vol. 42, No. 3

FIRST FLIGHT
VISCOUNT



JAMAICA - TRINIDAD
11th Nov., 1955

JAMAICA
TERCENTENARY YEAR
1655 - 1955



Mr. J. Chin Aeng,
27 Harris Promenade,
San Fernando, Trinidad. B.W.I.

This cover was issued for the first BWIA Viscount flight, Jamaica to Trinidad, on November 21, 1955. Dr. Reuben Ramkissoon discusses this cover and many others in the second and final part of his series on British West Indies Airways (BWIA) beginning on page 7.



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A re-allocated Trinidad cancel

By Edward Barrow
Webmaster

When new post offices opened for business in Trinidad they often did not receive dedicated date stamps with the name of the town. Instead they received re-allocated cancels from other post offices that were closed or cancels which were withdrawn. Proud and Chin Aleong¹ listed many re-allocated cancels, many of which were allocated to unknown offices.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

For Indian Walk a "Trinidad" circular datestamp (see Figure 1) is listed as being used when the office opened. In the Port of Spain section D15 (see Figure 2) it is listed as being the same cancel that was re-allocated to Indian Walk. However, when these two cancels are super-imposed it becomes obvious that they are different cancels (see Figure

Continued on page 4

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CHART OF DEADLINES

January issue: Deadline November 15, mailing December 30; **April issue:** Deadline February 15, mailing March 30; **July issue:** Deadline May 15, mailing June 30; **October issue:** Deadline August 15, mailing September 30.

3). I recently came across a postal card that had a D15 cancel dated 3 JA 1901 (see Figures 4 and 5). Interestingly, the card was sent from someone living in St. Clair which was until recently served by Newtown post office (see Figure 6 for the reverse). This makes it most likely that this cds was used in Newtown when it was first opened, prior to the arrival of the Type 4 Newtown cancel.

FOOTNOTE

¹ Joe Chin Aleong & E.B. Proud, *The Postal History of Trinidad & Tobago*, 1998.

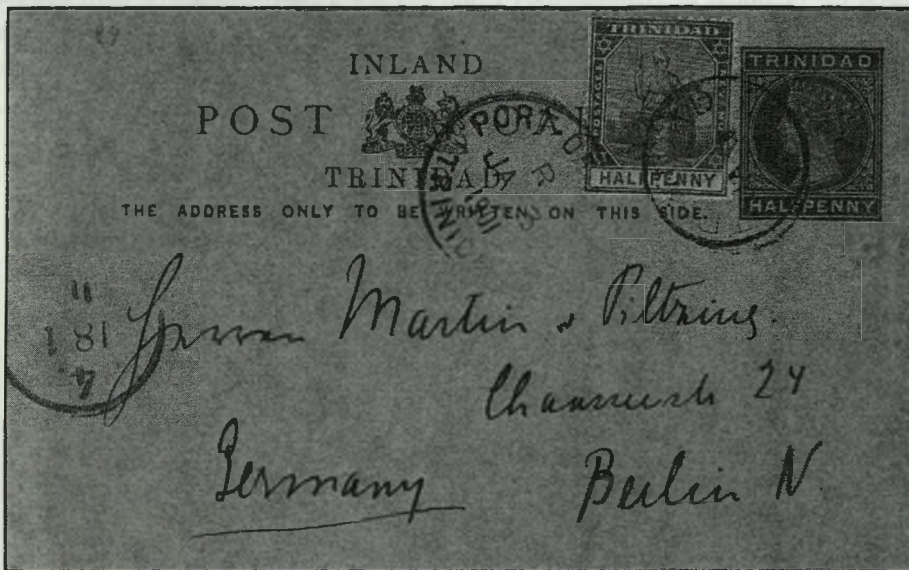


Figure 5

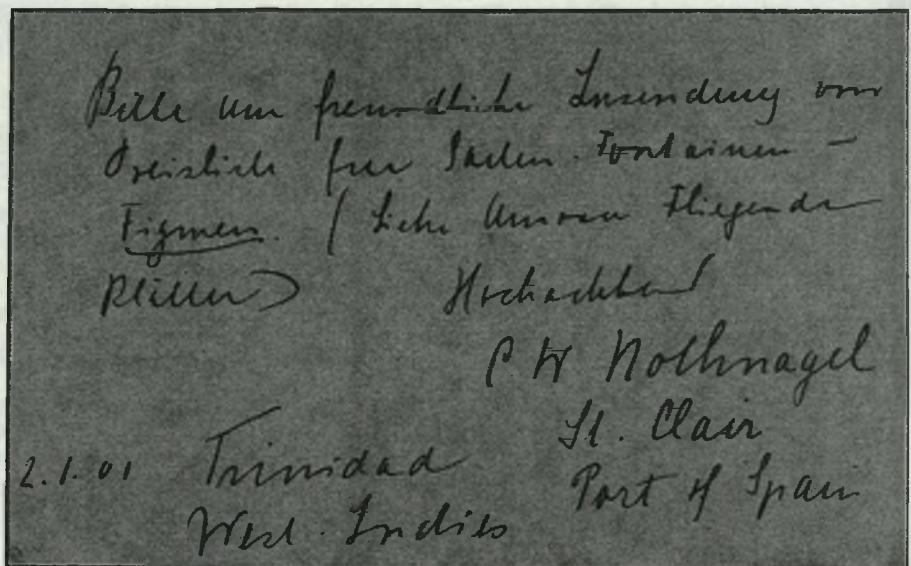


Figure 6

Consignments needed now for auction at Tortola!

The BCPSG auction will be in two parts. Part I will be live at Tortola (literature only), carry in by consignor will help greatly in reducing expenses. Part II mail auction closes on November 15, 2002 and will carry all remaining lots for sale.

We need stamps, covers, specialized items and literature. Seller pays 15% commission on price realized. Lots normally reserve at 75% of estimate unless seller in-

structs otherwise. Donations accepted for the benefit of the group. Literature descriptions and all other consignment lots need to reach the Auction Manager by August 1, 2002. If you have questions, please call the Auction Manager.

Ed Waterous

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Ground broken for North Sound Post Office (BVI)

Residents of North Sound, Virgin Gorda and surrounding areas of the British Virgin Islands (BVI) will soon have access to a new and improved Post Office facility, following the groundbreaking ceremony held on Saturday, April 6, 2002.

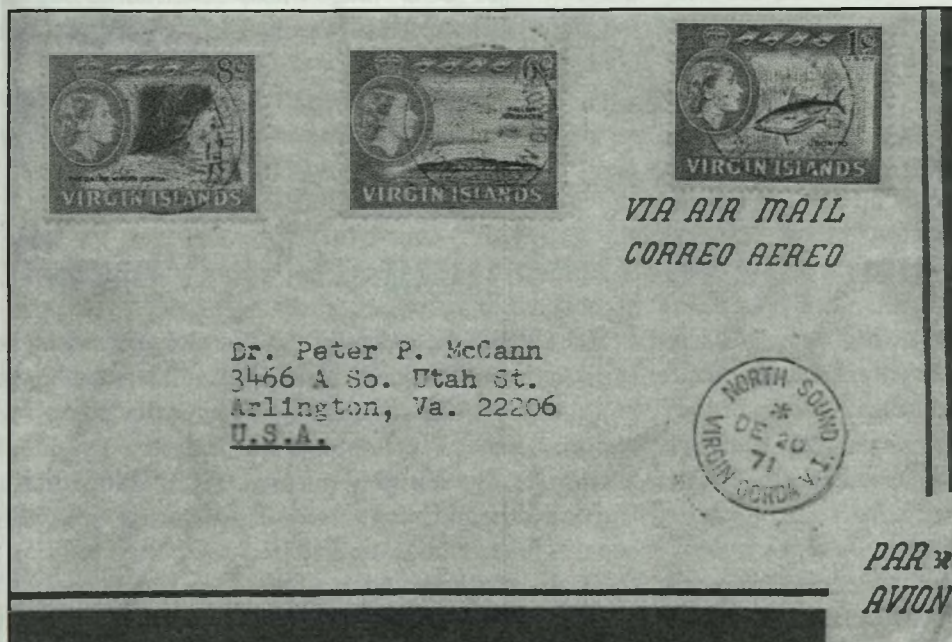
many persons should be aware that my government is undertaking major improvements in our postal services, not only on Tortola, but throughout the territory," the Chief Minister said during a press conference Monday. He said the BVI postal service is becoming a customer-focused



Chief Minister Honourable Ralph T. O'Neal breaking ground at the site of the new North Sound (BVI) Post Office. Flanking the BVI leader are Postmaster General Maralyn Richards and Hon. Reeial George. (Photo courtesy of Government Information Service, BVI).

Remarks were delivered by Postmaster Maralyn Richards, Acting Financial Secretary Kharid Fraser and Chief Minister, Minister of Finance and District Representative the Honourable Ralph T. O'Neal. "By now,

organization providing excellent service. He said with the postal reform initiative, the post office is evolving into one of the most efficient and customer friendly agencies in the government.



One of these initiatives focuses on improving postal services at the sub post offices in the territory. Some initiatives already underway include moving the mail collection counter at the general post office into the main section, so persons can more easily pick up their mails and use the other services of the post office within the same convenient area. Another is the establishment of a post office at the new Terrance B. Lettsome Airport terminal. It is also proposed that the new GPO will be located in the new financial complex to be located at Port Purcell.

A cover from the "old" North Sound Post Office dated in December 1971, and sent to member Dr. Peter P. McCann. Thanks to Dr. Giorgio Migliavacca for all illustrations in this article.

Continued on page 6

Regarding the North Sound Post Office, Chief Minister O'Neal said the new building will have the space and equipment for modern postal services and will boast 250 new post office boxes, with room for more if needed. The counter will be air conditioned and there will be computerized service points where customers may buy stationery, post cards, souvenirs and other related items. "We intend to provide a secure and reliable service to the North Sound community and also to the many visitors who frequent the area," Hon. O'Neal stated. He went on to ap-

Others include Mr. Malvin Flax, ex-Postmaster at The Valley and Mrs. Nora Potter, the present Postmistress. In the past, the Postmaster, and this happened in Anegada as well and East End, would use his own house as the post office and people went there for mail anytime of the day or night. "The new post office is a symbol of how far we have come," the Chief Minister said. He announced that the BVI is also having discussions with postal authorities in Washington, San Juan and St. Thomas with a view to speeding up the delivery and dispatch of mail



Architect's design for the new North Sound (BVI) Post Office building.

plaud all post office staff members throughout the territory for their patience and endurance. He singled out the current North Sound postmistress Ms. Diana Stevens, "who I believe labors in what is possibly the world's smallest post office." The Chief Minister also paid tribute to the commitment of postal heroes of the past, such as the late John George and his wife and Mr. John Rhymer, who made sure the mail was delivered from the main post office in The Valley and brought up to North Sound.

from here to those places. The new North Sound Post Office, which is estimated to cost over \$400,000, would also be a place in the village where the territorial flag and the Union Jack can be flown, the District Representative concluded. ☒

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article came from Dr. Giorgio Migliavacca of Road Town, Tortola, BVI. It is special from The Island Sun newspaper.)

Postal reform may be forthcoming at St. Vincent

Postal Corporation Legislation to regulate postal services may soon be enacted by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This is according to Prime Minister, Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, who was at the time speaking at the National Consultation on Postal Reform.

Dr. Gonsalves said physical and conceptual changes need to take place at the Post Office. He also added that there is a need for this country's postal services to modernize the services offered to the public. The Prime Minister cautioned the postal workers about the unhappiness of the general public towards tampering of their mail.

He said that the image of the Post Office needs to be improved and that a new institutional framework will be put in place to effect change. Minister of Telecommunication, Science, Technology and Industry, Dr. Jerrol Thompson also delivered remarks. Mr. S. Hubert Niles, Universal Postal Union Regional Advisor for the Caribbean, delivered the feature address.

Junior Bacchus of the National Consumers' Association and ASP Artis Davis of the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force also delivered remarks. ☒

Thanks to Dr. Giorgio Migliavacca of BVI for the information.

Linking the Caribbean:**The Story of British West Indian Airways (BWIA)
1940-2000**

By Dr. Reuben A. Ramkissoon

*Of the USA***PART II***Into the Jet Age (1951-1969)*

With the support of BOAC, BWIA was able to consolidate its presence and service as the regional carrier of the Caribbean between 1952 and 1956. This is a remarkable achievement, considering that its contract with the Governments of the Windward and Leeward Islands would terminate in 1953. Consolidating acquisitions included:

1952: BAL international services (acquired from BSAA)

1953: CIA operations (acquired from BOAC)

1955: Management of British Guiana Airways (BGA), services in British Guiana, British Guiana-Trinidad, Trinidad-St. Vincent amphibious service.

1956: BCA (British Colonial Airways) services to British Honduras (Belize)

Effective July 1953, BWIA services were spread across the Caribbean -- Trinidad, Tobago, Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Antigua, St. Kitts, San Juan, Jamaica (including connections to Belize via Grand Cayman), Caracas, and British Guiana. Between 1947 and 1948, the status of many of Trinidad's old runways at Piarco was changing; surprisingly, some new fields were also built. Others were used to train BWIA pilots. Of all the new airfields, Mitchell Field is the least known, but by far the most romantic. Bill Mitchell was manager of the Pan American Airlines (PAA) guesthouse at Piarco. In 1945 he organized a local syndicate to build an airport hotel -- the Bel Air Hotel. When it became functional, Mitchell left PAA to manage it. He constructed an airfield (Mitchell Field) at his residence in Balandra to facilitate his commute to the hotel. Mitchell Field became a prominent checkpoint for pilots on the Tobago run. When Mitchell died in 1957, the field was abandoned. Thus, Trinidad's 17th runway, constructed and owned by a private citizen, was slowly reclaimed by the forest, but not before its history was bound to the development of BWIA.

In 1951, the first Vickers Viscount turboprop airliner (VP-TBK) was introduced into service by BWIA. These aircraft were immediately used on new routes, such as Barbados to San Juan, Puerto Rico (*Figure 17*), and on many existing routes. Air Letter sheets with imprinted cachets were used on the Jamaica, Bermuda and Barbados destinations (*Figures 18 to 20*). The acquisition of leased Viking aircraft now permitted BWIA to compete on long distance transoceanic routes. In December 1959, BWIA was certified to fly two new routes to the United Kingdom (via Jamaica and Barbados), to New York, and then on to London. BWIA's first trans-Atlantic flight from Trinidad to London, via Barbados and New York, made on May 1, 1960, was possible because BOAC leased Britannia B312's to BWIA. The airline became a trans-Atlantic carrier for the first time. A few non-official covers were serviced between Trinidad, Barbados and London, and only 18 of these were carried on the entire route (*Figures 21-22*).

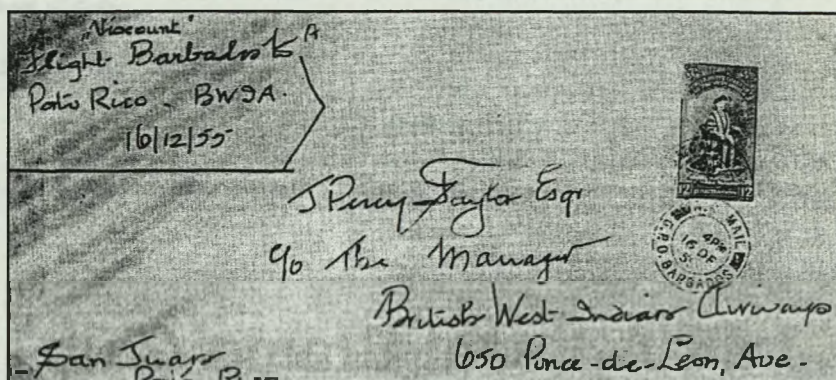


Figure 17: First BWIA Viscount flight, Barbados to San Juan, Puerto Rico, December 16, 1955 (Edmund A. Bayley collection).

By 1959, the runway capacity and terminal building facilities at Piarco (*Figure 23*) were falling behind the size and complexity of the aircraft used by the nine carriers who operated from the field (PAA, KLM, Air France, Aerolinas Argentinas, BOAC, Linea Aeropostal Venezolana, Trans Canada and Aerovias Brazil) in addition to BWIA, whose home base it was. The BWIA operations included Leeward Islands Air Transport (LIAT), which operated as a BWIA subsidiary on the old island routes served by DC-3 aircraft, and was served from its home base at Antigua. Mail from the Leeward Islands for the period is known, as shown by a St. Lucia to Trinidad April 29, 1959 unclaimed and returned cover, bearing a brownish-black "E Crown R Found Open or Damaged and Officially Sealed" label (*Figure 24*). In December 1960, the Viscount aircraft were withdrawn from the Trinidad-New York service, and diverted for use between Trinidad and British Guiana, and to increase the frequency of the Trinidad-Miami service. They were replaced on the New York route by leased Britannia 312's from BOAC.

BWIA Becomes a Trinidad Government Operation (1961)

BOAC was notified by the British Government that it would no longer sustain losses from BWIA in May 1961, forcing drastic changes in operations. BOAC negotiated with the then emerging West Indies Federation to acquire 51% of BWIA. This attempt was stranded, as the Jamaica referendum taking it out of the Federation forced the Trinidad Government to purchase the airline. On November 1, 1961, BOAC sold 90% of its interest in BWIA to the Trinidad Government for WI\$2.5 million. An agreement with BOAC allowed BWIA to lease desired high-performance equipment (Boeing 707's) for its New York route. The introduction of "Sunjet service" between Trinidad-Barbados and New York was noted by a number of commemorative flight covers (*Figure 25*) on June 10, 1961, serviced at the GPO, AMF and United Nations locations. A common design cachet of BWIA's "winged lion" logo was issued in different colors for each site: BOEING 707/ BWIA/ The Airline of the Caribbean/ First Jet Air Mail/ From New York/ To Trinidad." The return "sunjet service" flight dated June 11, 1961 at Port-of-Spain utilized two different printed cachets acknowledging the inauguration of the "First Jet Air Mail/ Trinidad to New York" (*Figures 26 and 27A-B*).

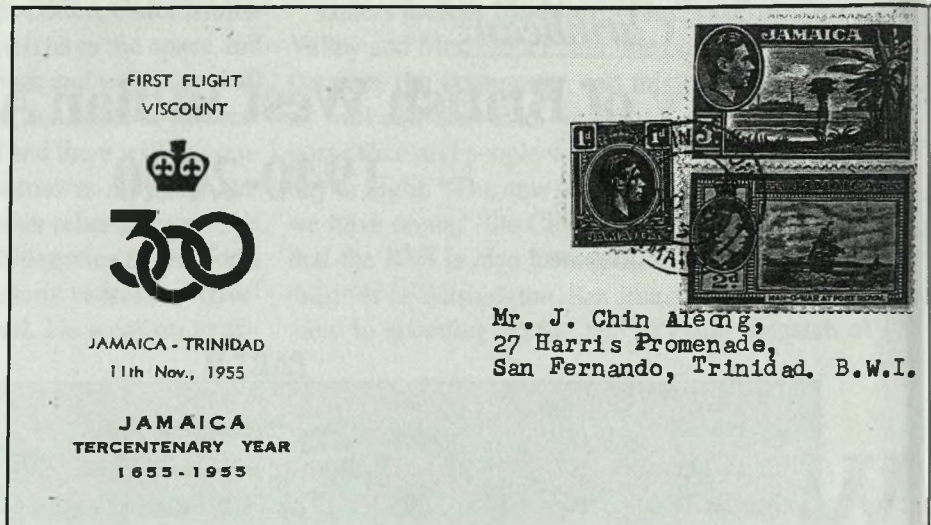


Figure 18: First BWIA Viscount flight, Jamaica to Trinidad, November 21, 1955.

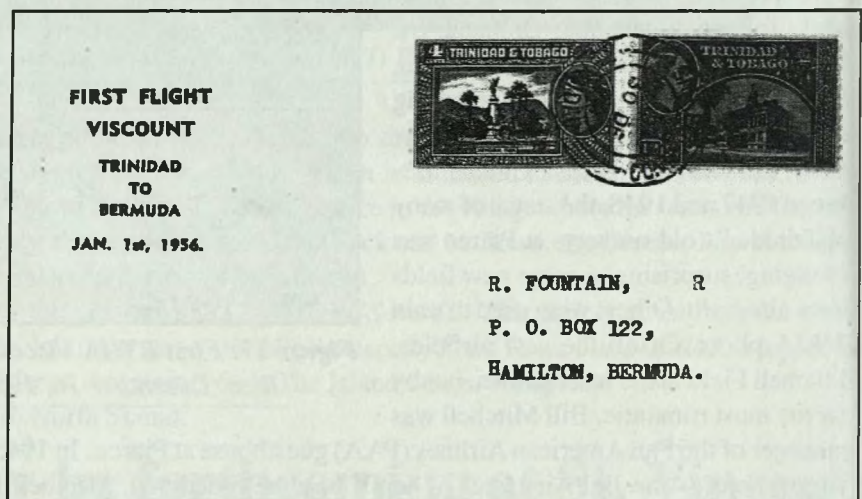


Figure 19: A New Year's day first flight cover of BWIA's Viscount flight, Trinidad to Bermuda (imprinted cachet) dated January 1, 1956.

BWIA's routes now served were:

Miami-Jamaica-San Juan-Antigua-Martinique-Barbados-Trinidad-British Guiana
 Miami-Grand Cayman-Jamaica Jamaica-Belize
 Trinidad-Grenada-Barbados-St. Lucia-Martinique-Antigua-St. Kitts-St. Thomas-San Juan.

Trinidad-Barbados-New York New York-London (under charter to BOAC).

Barbados-Caracas

British Guiana-Trinidad

British Guiana-Barbados.

Although not fully finished, new terminal facilities at Piarco were completed in time for the independence celebration of Trinidad and Tobago on August 1, 1962. Its new terminal building, along with its extensive ramp, as well as its extended runway system, justified its designation as Piarco International Airport. This modern facility in the

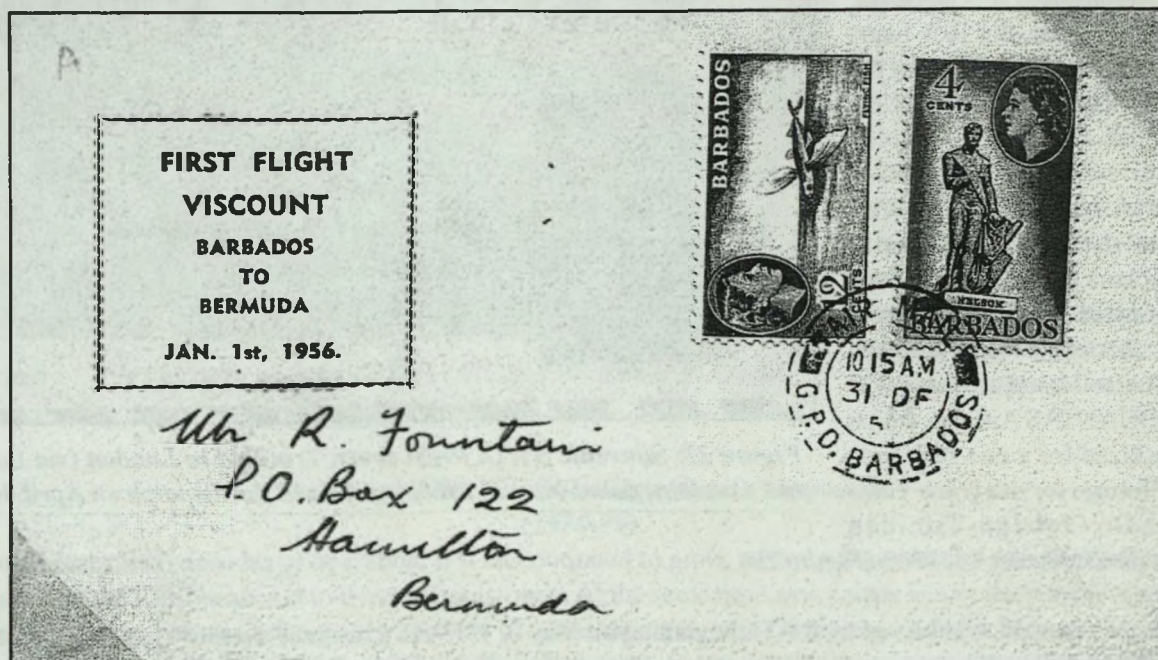


Figure 20: Another imprinted first day cover postmarked on New Year's day, January 1, 1956 for the BWIA Viscount Barbados to Bermuda flight (Edmund A. Bayley collection).

Caribbean hub was ready for the jet age, with room to expand and the ability to cope with developments in world aviation. The delivery flight of a Boeing 727 from Seattle to Trinidad in December 1964 was noted with a special cover (Figure 28).

BWIA ordered three 727 medium range jets to compete with PAA Caribbean jet service. Beginning in 1965, BWIA was forced to suspend its London service when BOAC would no longer lease the required aircraft. The introduction of BWIA's own jet aircraft on the North American service was started that year.

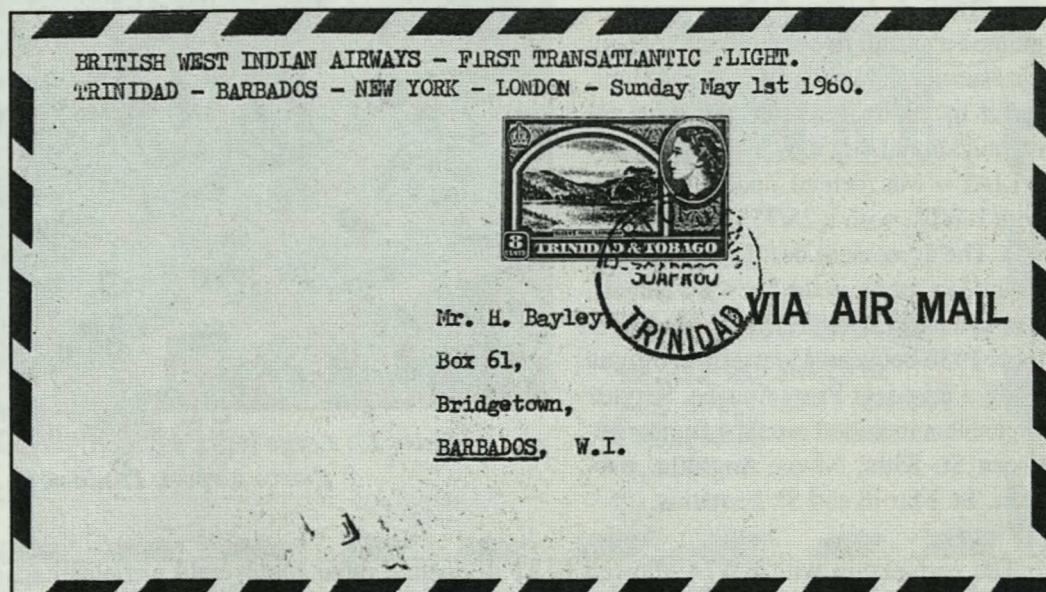


Figure 21: Souvenir BWIA flight cover from Trinidad to London, via Barbados and New York, dated May 1, 1950, is received for dispatch on April 30, 1960.

A service to Suriname was started in

December 1965. Wike reports a cover from the return service with the four-line cachet: "15 DEC 1965/ OPENINGS/ VLUCHT B.W.I.A./ OP SURINAME."

In 1967, BWIA was experiencing serious financial problems, and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago sought expertise outside of its and the regional governments to operate the airline. An agreement was signed with Trans World Airlines (TWA) in May 1968, but was never implemented due to objections from the U.S. Civil Aeronautics (CAB) board. During this time, the 10% interest in BOAC was acquired by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

BWIA sold two of its Viscounts to Linea Aeropostal Venezolana (LAV) in July 1968, retaining the remaining numbers for its charter service. That year, BWIA also leased a Boeing 707 from QUANTAS Airlines, which was utilized for a one-stop New York-Tobago service (New York-Barbados-Tobago-Trinidad route) on December 14, 1968 (Figure 29).

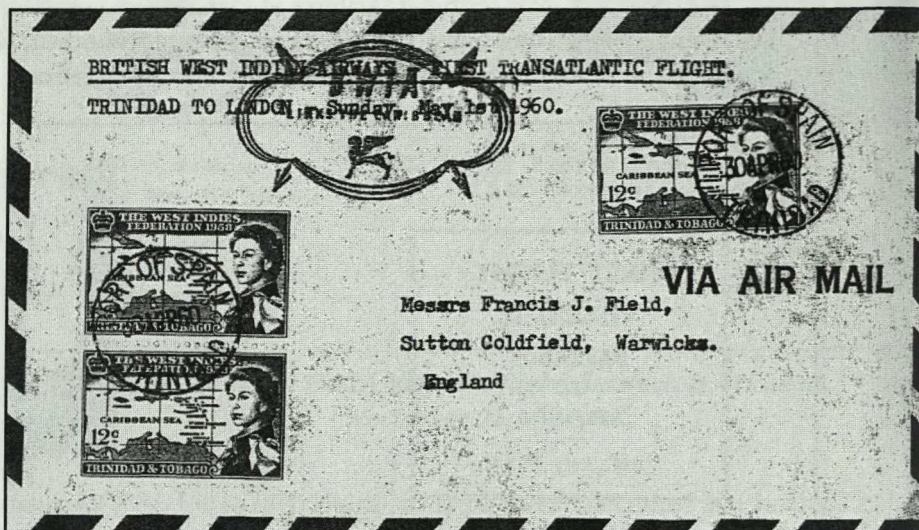


Figure 22: Souvenir BWIA flight cover, Trinidad to London (via Barbados and London), dated May 1, 1960, is received for dispatch on April 30, 1960.

Toronto, Canada, was served by BWIA beginning on May 3, 1969, as a result of a strike by Air Canada on May 2, 1969. A temporary license was secured to open a route to Toronto, with intermediate stops at Barbados and Antigua, to continue support for Caribbean tourism.

The Emergence of Leeward Islands Air Transport (LIAT)

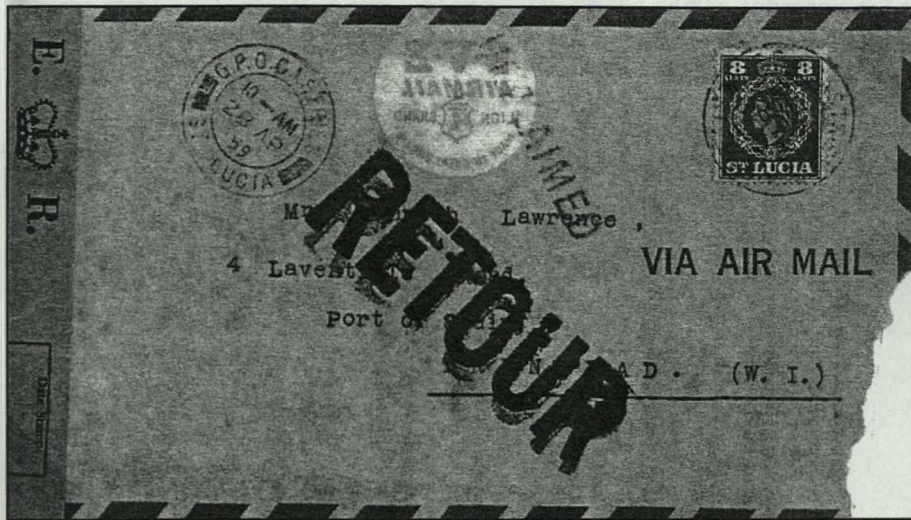
A partnership between L.W. Magruder and Frank de Lilse of Montserrat was granted a permit to operate a non-scheduled service between Antigua and Montserrat in 1956. Realizing the need for organizational support, a new company -- LIAT -- was formed, under agreement with BWIA, with a 25/75% share of assets. The agreement designated LIAT to operate its routes in the Leeward Islands. The company inaugurated service in October 1956 between Montserrat-Antigua using a four-seat Piper Apache. Service expansion included weekly flights between St. Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla, Barbuda, St. Martin and St. Eustatius.



Figure 23: Large (6.5 x 6.0 inch) picture post card of the Piarco Airport, Trinidad in 1955.

The partnership with BWIA allowed LIAT to operate other routes until airfields capable of handling BWIA's aircraft were available. Airfields in Dominica and St. Vincent were supported. The Arnos Vale airport, close to the capital Kingstown, St. Vincent, was opened on June 9, 1959, and its extended nearly mile-long runway came into use on May 10, 1960.

Additional DeHaviland Herons aircraft were purchased by LIAT for inter-island services which by now extended from Trinidad to Puerto Rico. Service to St. Vincent was inaugurated on December 1, 1959 using one of the Herons. The temporary amphibious service of BGA was closed in August 1960. LIAT later extended operations between



Antigua and Barbados, via Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique and St. Lucia; between Antigua, St. Kitts and St. Thomas; and between Antigua, St. Kitts, St. Thomas and San Juan.

LIAT decided to replace the Herons fleet with Hawker Siddeley Avro 748s and Vickers Viscounts, but the Viscounts were withdrawn. The 748s were purchased by using an overdraft backed by BWIA, which also leased a Beechcraft Bonanza to LIAT for five years, without charge, to support the airline.

Figure 24: Flown cover on a LIAT flight of April 29, 1959, St. Lucia and to Trinidad, is rated 8¢.

The Struggle for Survival and further Development (1970-79)

During the next two decades of operation, BWIA continued to grow, with the inauguration of additional and new services within the Caribbean and to international points. At the same time new routes were established, others were discontinued, and yet others impacted by the loss of other carriers to the Caribbean. A flight between St. Vincent-Trinidad-New York took place on March 15, 1970, coinciding with the four commemorative stamps depicting aircraft of BWIA and LIAT. Commemorative flight covers show a rectangular enclosed cachet on the reverse: "SPECIAL/ INTERPEX/ FLIGHT/ St. Vincent-Port-of-Spain/ New York."

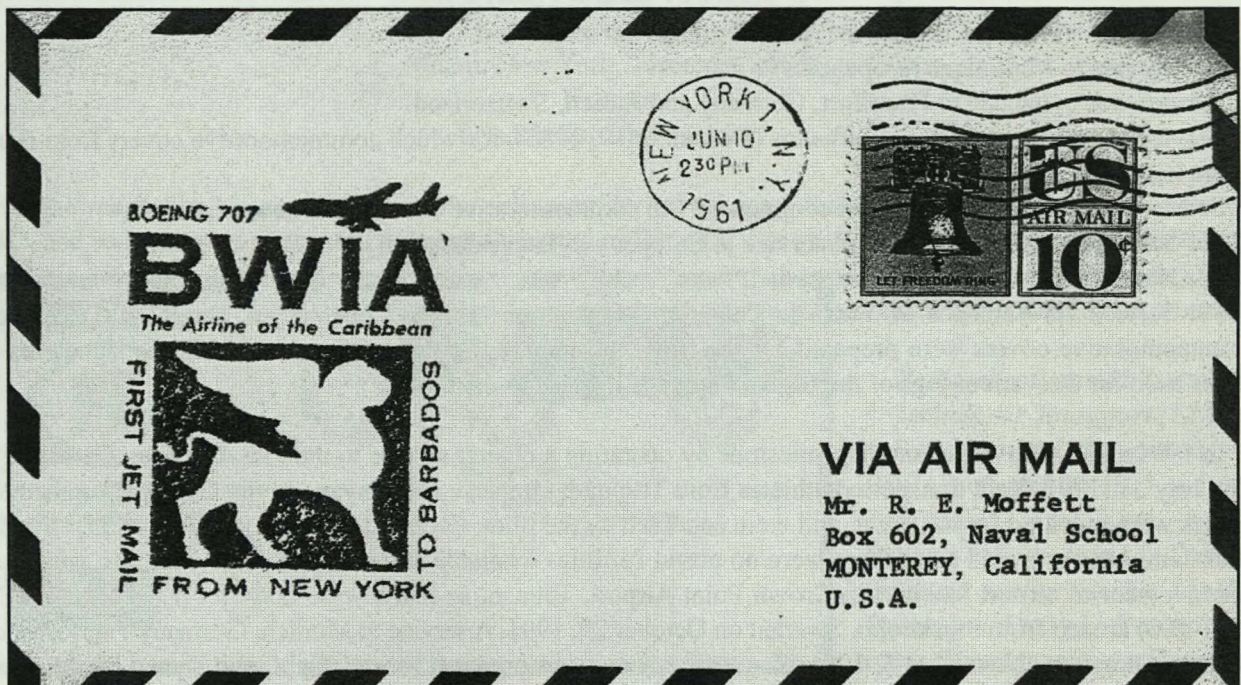


Figure 25: First BWIA Sunjet flight, New York to Trinidad via Barbados, postmarked at GPO, New York (red cachet, 1,750 flown); also serviced at AMF (magenta cachet, 2,251 flown), and United Nations (green cachet, 3,927 flown), dated June 10, 1961.

To reduce costs while maintaining a suitably mixed fleet of jet aircraft, BWIA entered into an agreement with Braniff Airways to exchange three of its Boeing 727-100s for four Boeing 707-227s, resulting in a fleet of six Boeing 707s. When in 1973 BWIA received rights to reopen its London route, a Boeing 707-315C was ordered for the resumption of trans-Atlantic service via Barbados, which was inaugurated on April 5, 1974. At least one cover has been recorded from Trinidad (postmarked April 5, 1974) to London, with a boxed violet handstamp: "NOT CALLED FOR/AT/LONDON AIRPORT CENTRAL/ POST OFFICE" and a London (Heathrow) Airport. Hounslow violet dates-tamp on April 10, 1974 when it was returned *poste resante*. Six souvenir covers were serviced for the London-Heathrow flight, with a pictorial datestamp (Figure 30).



Figure 26: First BWIA Sunjet flight, United Nations, New York (green cachet) to Trinidad (also serviced at GPO, NY and AMF, Kennedy), dated June 10, 1961.

A merger between BWIA and Trinidad and Tobago Air Service (TTAS) occurred on January 1, 1980. TTAS operated a shuttle service to Tobago from Trinidad. The emerging carrier became BWIA (International) Airways Corporation. Wide-bodied jets (Lockheed TriStar

L-1011-500) were acquired that year, and used on the London route for the first time on March 28, 1980. Additional TriStars were acquired, and by the summer of 1982, all of the BWIA's Boeing 707s were phased out.

For the next several years, routes were expanded and others were dropped in an effort to be responsive to market conditions. These are summarized as follows:

1982: Service started to Curacao; service to Paramaribo suspended.

1985: Service to Martinique re-opened.

Service was expanded to Frankfurt, Germany and Zurich, Switzerland.

Service to Boston started via Barbados (December 19, 1985), for which commemorative covers from Barbados are known (Figure 31).

Service to Baltimore/Washington commenced (no commemorative covers have been reported).

1986: Suspension of expanded 1985 service to Europe, was later reinstated.

1988: Non-stop service to Frankfurt started.

1990: Service via Barbados-St. Lucia to Cologne, Germany, onwards to Copenhagen, Denmark (December 18). Commemorative covers were prepared for the flight, postmarked at Port-of-Spain, bearing the signatures of the pilots used for the various legs of the flight (Figure 32).

In 1991, BWIA traversed another milestone by operating a charter service to the Pan American Games in Cuba. The July 31, 1991 flight transported athletes from Trinidad, Grenada, and Guyana to the Games. Commemorative covers were prepared for the flight, and were endorsed by the pilot, Captain John O'Brien (Figure 33). No Havana backstamp was provided since there were no postal facilities available at the airport. This year also witnessed the improvement of airport facilities at Crown Point Airport, Tobago, so that a wide-body jet (Lockheed Tri-Star L-1011-500) landed from Stockholm, Sweden on October 29, 1991. A service to Munich, Germany via Barbados and St. Lucia began on November 5, 1991. Souvenir covers were prepared for the flight, and signed by the pilots, D. Shepherd and M. Rose (Figure 34).

In 1991, another restructuring of ownership of BWIA commenced. A movement away from a state-owned corporation to a publicly held company came into effect. The new company, BWIA International Airways Limited, was

incorporated on February 15, 1995. A week later, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago completed the privatization by yielding 51% of its stock. The management of the airline passed to a group of U.S. and Caribbean investors. The Trinidad and Tobago Government retained a 33.5% interest, and allocated 15.5% to the employees. Later that year, the new BWIA purchased 29% of the newly privatized LIAT.

United Airlines terminated its Trinidad and Tobago operations at the end of 1994. It had the mail contract between Trinidad and the USA. No mail was received from the United States between December 11 and 25, 1994, resulting in a 10,000kg accumulation of mail in Miami. BWIA eventually delivered the mail, but some 5,000 pieces were rain-soaked. At least one piece of mail from New Jersey (December 6, 1994) is known with a Trinidad Post Office "RECEIVED WET" handstamp.

By the end of 1995, BWIA's ambitious scheduled services were rationalized, and a number of destinations were withdrawn. The resulting service routes which came into effect were:

Caribbean region:

Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Martin. Tobago domestic service was withdrawn.

South America:

Guyana; Caracas, Venezuela

North America:

Miami, New York, Toronto, Canada

Europe:

London, Zurich, Frankfurt

Over the years of its history, the logo of the airlines underwent changes that reflected its growth, affiliations with BOAC, and its ownership changes. These are illustrated in Table III. The changes in its routes and expanded Caribbean and continental services are shown in a consolidated route map.

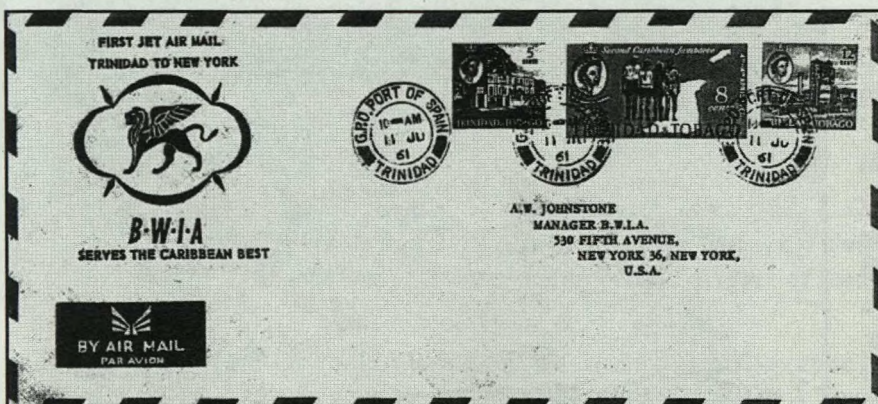


Figure 27B: The return first BWIA Sunjet flight, Trinidad to New York, with an imprinted blue cachet in two (#6-size) and #10 size (Figure 27A) cover designs, June 11, 1961.

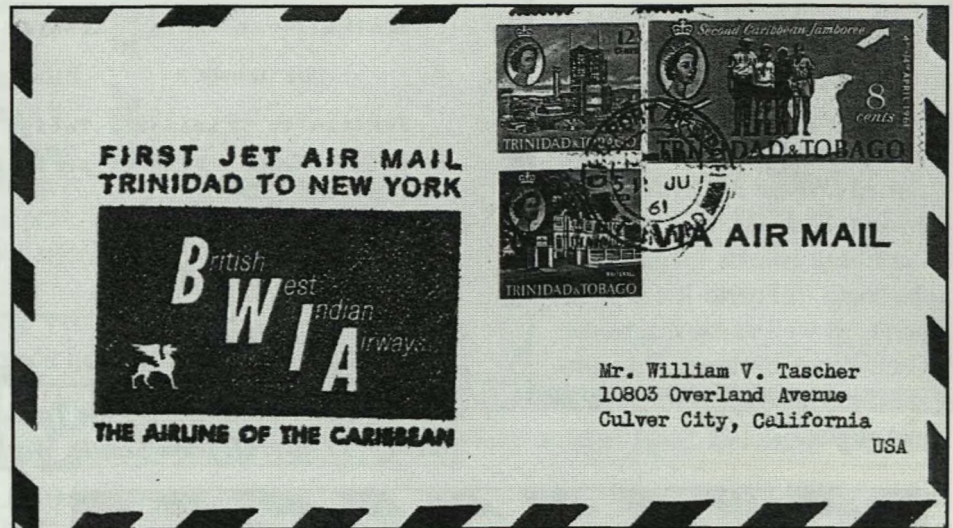


Figure 27A: The return first BWIA Sunjet flight, Trinidad to New York, with an imprinted blue cachet in two (#6-size) and #10 size (Figure 27B) cover designs, June 11, 1961.

Rationalization with Leeward Islands Air Transport (LIAT)

Since 1970, LIAT operated under BWIA's control. In 1971, a British company, Court Line, bought BWIA's 75% share in LIAT, and introduced service on the Trinidad-Barbados-Antigua-Puerto Rico route. Three years later, Court Line collapsed, and after negotiations between Caribbean governments failed, a new jointly-owned company, LIAT 1974, was formed under

a financial loan from Venezuela. Suspended service during the financial crisis was restored. LIAT purchased additional aircraft (DHC Dash 8) for their inter-island service. A direct Tobago-Barbados service was started on November 1, 1990, for which a limited number of covers were carried (Figure 35). LIAT's operations continue to most of the Caribbean islands (Trinidad in the south to Puerto Rico in the north; as well as service to the Grenadines between Grenada and St. Vincent), from its base in Antigua.



Figure 28: Cover documenting the Trinidad delivery flight to BWIA of a Boeing 717 aircraft from Seattle, Washington, December 23, 1964.

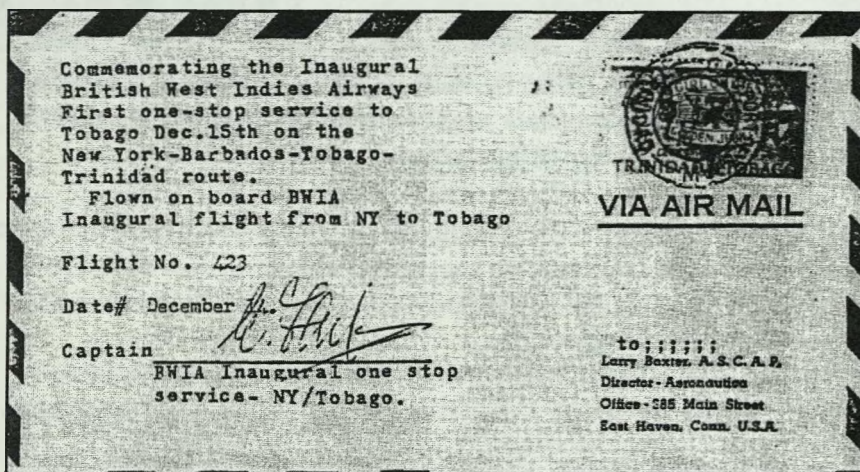


Figure 29: Souvenir cover of the inaugural BWIA flight to Tobago; a first BWIA one-stop service to Tobago, on a New York-Barbados-Tobago-Trinidad route, December 14, 1968.

LIAT was privatized in 1995, with BWIA purchasing a 29% interest in the new LIAT. There is a cooperative working relationship between these two carriers which closely share a geographical service to the many small as well as the larger islands in the Caribbean.

Mail Carrying Services

BWIA became the first regional carrier to obtain mail-carrying rights to the Caribbean islands, adjacent countries, eventually to the United States, and post-World War II, to the United Kingdom. As a part of BOAC, it carried

mail at a reduced rate to the United Kingdom via Jamaica, as opposed to the air route of PAA.

A summary of the airmail rates on the routes flown by BWIA and other carriers of the period are given in Table I. Air letters (aerogrammes), which were introduced in two denominations -- regional (Caribbean) and international (British Commonwealth and foreign) rates, are summarized in Table II. Discontinued in 1993, Second Class air mail service began in 1958. A cover with a tourism booster machine cancellation: "VISIT TRINIDAD AND/ TOBAGO THE MOST/ EXCITING ISLANDS/ OF THE CARIBBEAN" is shown (Figure 36). In studying the first flights of BWIA -- or any other airline, for that matter -- it is well to be aware that air



Figure 30: First BWIA jet flight, U.K. to Trinidad, is marked by a special London Heathrow pictorial postmark, April 6, 1974.

mail flights may have multiple stops. Covers from such stops may have specific cachet for the different legs of the flight (points of origin), and different dates of dispatch/arrival (see *Figures 9 and 10*) which also show different rates of postage.

Air Mail Markings and Postmarks of Trinidad & Tobago

All air mail dispatches from Trinidad & Tobago are routes through the GPO, Port-of-Spain, even though such a postmark may not be evident on a cover. It is not uncommon to find only the postmark of the dispatching town or village.

Cancellation date stamps: A Type VII cancellation date stamp (cde) reading AIR MAIL G.P.O./ TRINIDAD/ */ DE 20/ 56 (EKD) and DE 27/ 56 (LKD) are shown in Table IV. Chin Aleong and Proud record a DE 21 date only. Of the few examples found, all are on single stamps, and whether there are any surviving covers is not known.

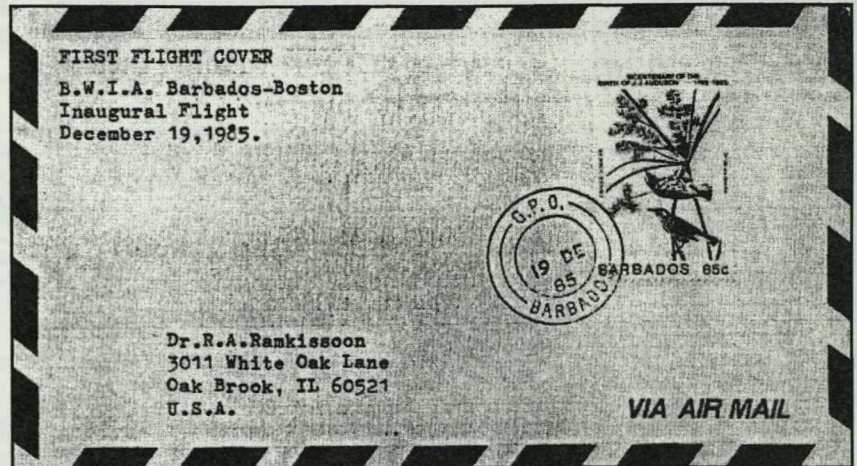


Figure 31: First BWIA Barbados-Boston flight, December 19, 1955.

While there are several cds known from the Piarco Airport, the postal facility there served as an air mail transit center, which did not generally provide mail service to the public. However, mail was cancelled at the facility, since there are rare examples of its cds known. The center was first opened on December 19, 1955. A local cover to San Juan dated April 23, 1981 of a Type VII PIARCO A.P. cds is recorded (Table IV).

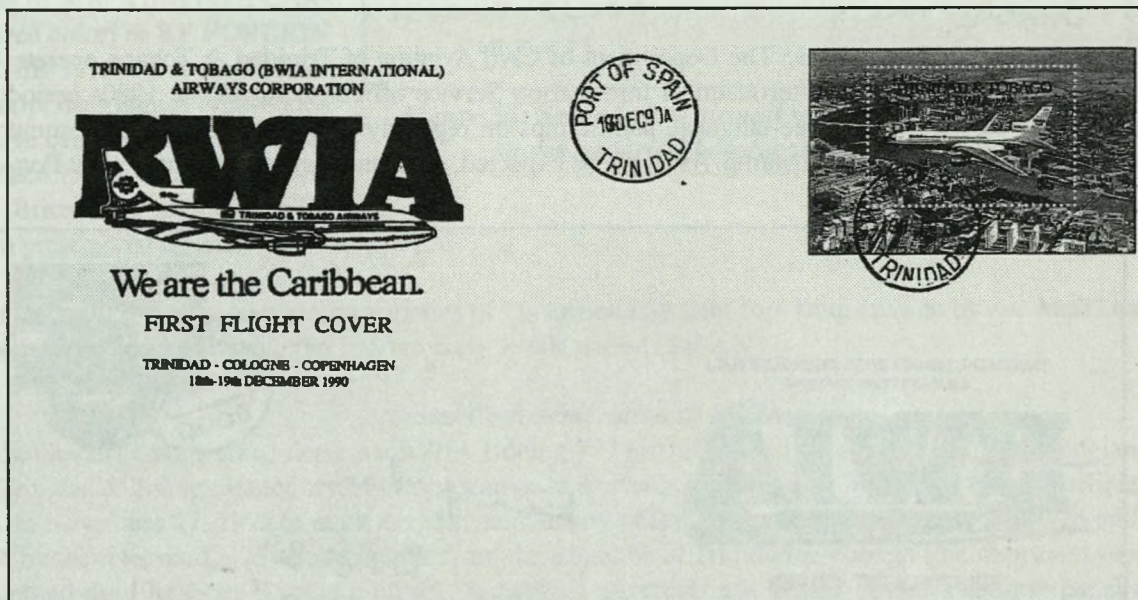


Figure 32: BWIA's inaugural #10 flight cover between Trinidad (December 18, 1990) and Cologne, Germany, with receiving mark of December 21, 1990.

The PIARCO POST OFFICE/ TRINIDAD was opened at the airport on November 2, 1992. It provided for a wide range of services, and was open to the public seven days a week. A Type 10 cds was used. An air mail cover of September 7, 1993, rated \$2.25, depicting a BWIA MD83 aircraft, showing a different setting of a Type 10 skeleton datestamp reading "PIARCO P.O./ TRINIDAD" is recorded by this writer. During Aviation Week celebration, a Type 10 cds is recorded for June 16, 1987 (Table IV).

For reasons of postal efficiency, TTPost (a contract postal service arrangement between New Zealand Post International and the Government of Trinidad & Tobago) has begun to dispatch all international mail from Tobago through the main mail processing facility in Trinidad. Such mail originating from Tobago no longer shows a Scarborough, Tobago postmark. The sender's address, if indicated on the envelope, is the only way to ascertain a Tobago dispatch.

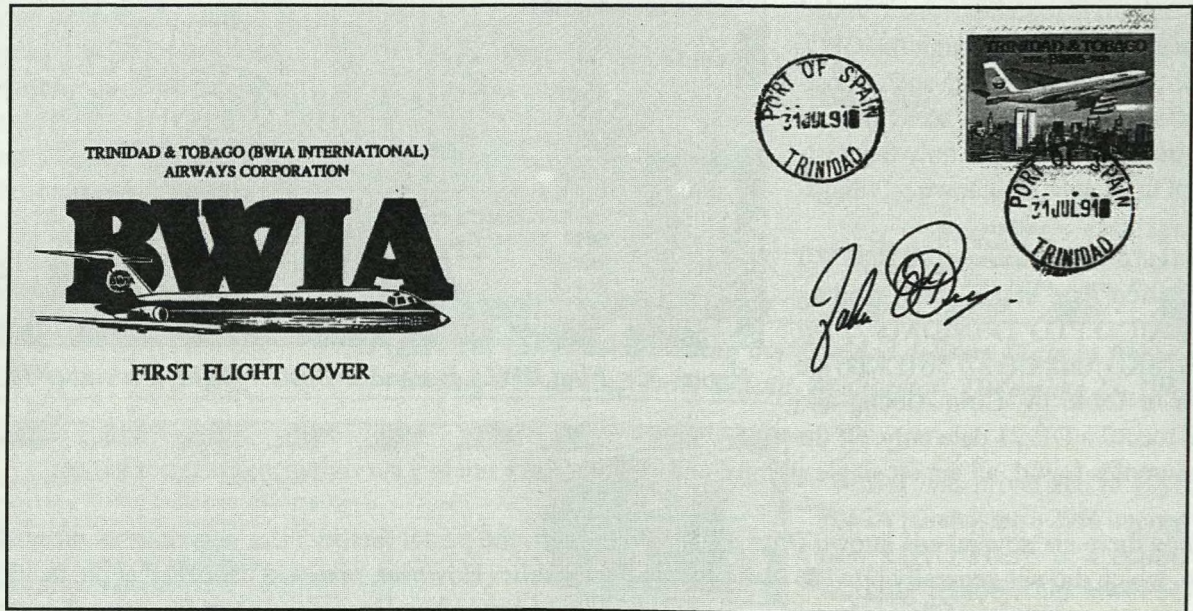


Figure 33: BWIA's inaugural #10 flight between Trinidad (July 31, 1991) and Havana, Cuba and return, signed by the pilot, Captain John O'Brien.

Piarco Airport Official Handstamps: The Department of Civil Aviation of Trinidad & Tobago operate from the Piarco International Airport. Their Aeronautical Information Service official mail (in the 1980s period studied) flown on regional carriers show three-language handstamps on regularly issued AJP/ NOTAM communications along with a purple boxed dated handstamp. As might be expected, all examples were postmarked at Port-of-Spain

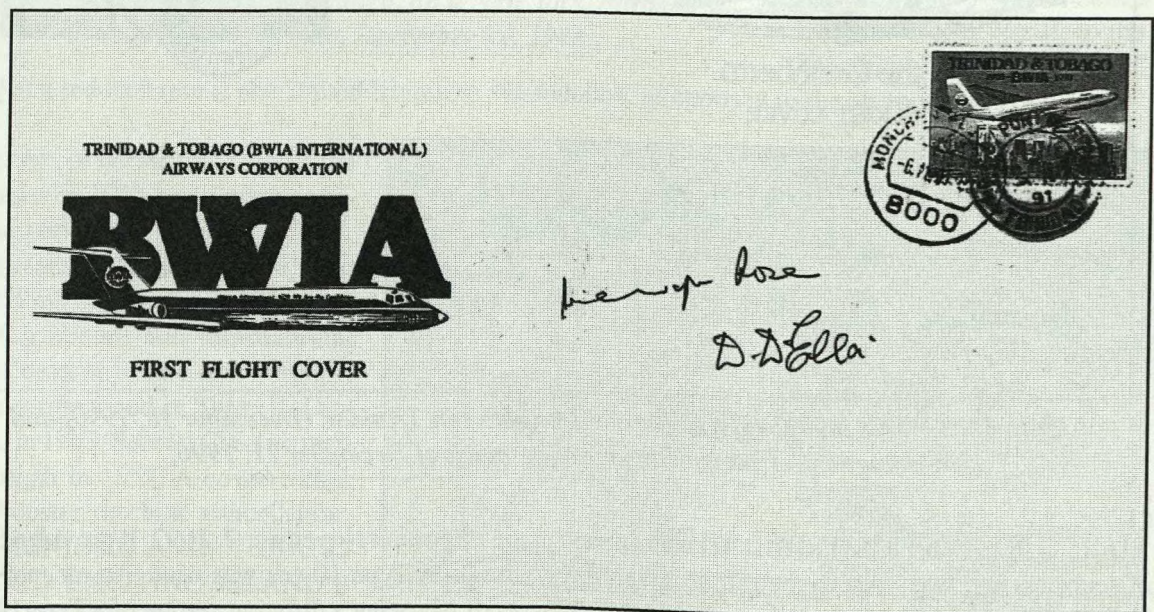


Figure 34: BWIA's inaugural #10 flight cover between Trinidad (November 5, 1991) and Munich, Germany, signed by the pilots, M. Rose (Trinidad-Barbados) and D. Ella (Barbados-Munich).

(Table IV).

Instructional Handstamps, Cachets and Manuscript Markings: Besides the illustrated first flight cachets for BWIA (also recorded for PAA), a number of instructional handstamps are known to indicate mode of air mail transmission: "BY AIR MAIL/ PAR AVION" and "AIR MAIL" have been recorded in at least four variations.

Several World War II markings indicate full (TO NEW YORK BY AIR/ AND ONWARD BY AIR); or partial (N.Y. AIR/ STEAMER/ ONWARD; By AIR MAIL OVER U.S./ Domestic Routes only; TO U.S.A./ ONLY/ BY AIR; NORTH ATLANTIC ROUTE and NORTH ATLANTIC SERVICE) air transmission. These are usually struck in violet, but have been recorded in red and rarely in black.

At least two handstamp types were used to indicate whether service was to be by a BRITISH CARRIER (red color) or BY FOREIGN CARRIER (violet). A number of manuscript markings or typewritten texts have been recorded. A notable occurrence is the uncommon "Via BRO" (British Routing Office), for which a preferential air mail rate was charged.

Four different unboxed handstamp varieties of "Insufficiently Paid for/ Transmission by Air Mail" handstamps also have been recorded during the 1950 to early 1960s period (Table V).

Postal Commemoration of BWIA

A 25¢ Guyana aerogramme depicts a BWIA Boeing 727 aircraft, noted on a used example to England in early 1974. Trinidad & Tobago issued a set of three stamps, a souvenir sheet (Figure 37), and matching official first day covers on November 27, 1975 to mark the 35th anniversary of BWIA's operation. This was followed on December 1, 1976 by the release of a 25¢ aerogramme from the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago (the imprinted stamp design now omitted the Elizabeth II royal portrait). A pictorial advertisement on the sender's address panel advertises "BWIA International - To New York - Toronto - Miami - London - and The Caribbean."

Giselle La Ronde, a Trini crowned "Miss World 1986," was honored with a 1987 multicolored 10¢ Trinidad & Tobago commemorative stamp, depicting a BWIA aircraft named after her, "Giselle La Ronde/ Miss World 1986."

Trinidad & Tobago observed 50 years of air mail service with four stamps, a souvenir sheet, and an official first day cover on November 27, 1990 (Figure 38), depicting aircraft used by BWIA during its history.

A number of other British Caribbean islands (Barbados, St. Kitts, etc.) have honored BWIA on commemorative issues.

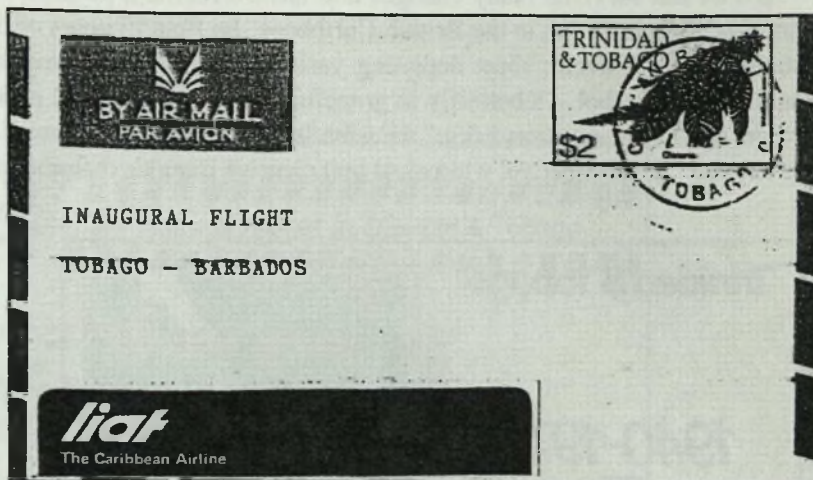


Figure 35: LIAT Barbados-Tobago direct flight inaugurated on November 1, 1990.

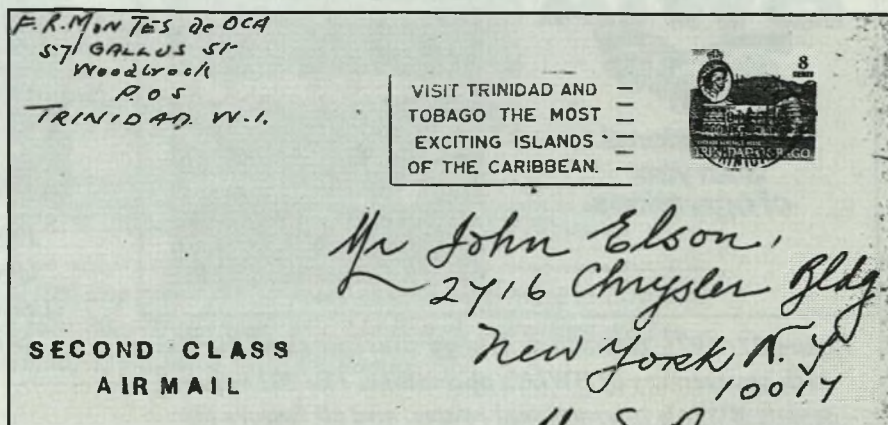


Figure 36: Second class airmail service began in 1958, and this cover shows a tourism booster slogan cancellation message.

BWIA has survived many changes and has overcome a number of operational setbacks to remain today as the premier air connection in the British Caribbean. Its first 50 years of operation was commemorated by a set of four stamps and a souvenir sheet depicting various aircraft which have been used in its service (Figure 39). Its 50th anniversary symbol -- a butterfly in graceful flight -- (Figure 40) is depicted "as a window on the sunrise to sunset colors of Caribbean sea and sky;" the islands are set down as "jeweled markings on the butterfly's wings," and serve to express "the distinctive, whimsical and creative impulse that abounds among the peoples of the Caribbean." ☒

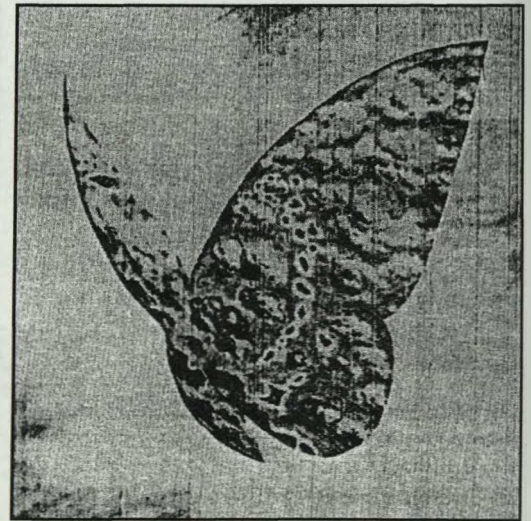


Figure 40: BWIA's 50th anniversary logo, showing the Caribbean Islands (Lesser Antilles) as jewels in an unfurled wing of a regional species butterfly.

Figure 37: 1975 Trinidad & Tobago souvenir sheet for the 35th anniversary of BWIA's operations. The 20¢ value depicts BWIA's international routes, and all feature the Boeing 707 aircraft.

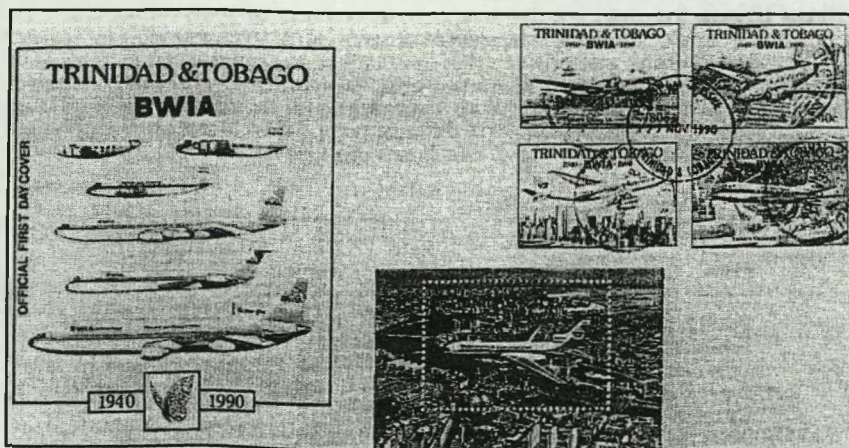


Figure 39: Official first day cover for 50 years of BWIA operations, released November 27, 1990, depicting aircraft in BWIA's service: 40¢, 80¢, \$1.00, Vickers Vikings; \$2.25, Boeing 707; \$5.00, Lockheed L-1011 TriStar.



Figure 38: 1977 official first day cover for 50 years of airmail service to Trinidad & Tobago. Designs depict: 20¢, flying boat; 35¢, Lindbergh delivering mail to Trinidad; 45¢ and 50, BWIA's Boeing 707.

Table II. 1944-2000. Air Letter (Aerogramme) Rates from Trinidad & Tobago

Year	To Caribbean Countries	To Commonwealth and foreign countries	Comments
1944	--	12¢	International rate
1945	5¢	12¢	Regional (Caribbean) rate added.
1949	5¢	12¢	
1952	5¢	12¢	1956 Viscount aerogrammes flown
1957	6¢	15¢	
1969	8¢	20¢	
1976	15¢	25¢	
1980	25¢	40¢	
1985	--	55¢	
1985	70¢	70¢	All zones uniform rate
1988 Zone A:	65¢ (Eastern Caribbean)		
Zone B:	\$1.00 (Rest of Caribbean)	\$1.00	Zones C-E (rest of the world
1993 Zone A:	65¢	Zones B-C \$1.00	Americas; Rest of the World
2000	\$2.00	\$2.00	All zones uniform rate

Table III. Logos of BWIA



Bird in Flight
1940s



The Winged Lion
1960s



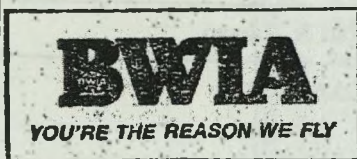
The Winged Lion
(revised)



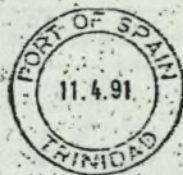
Caribbean Associates of BOAC
Lettered and pictorial design
The Airline of the Caribbean
1960s



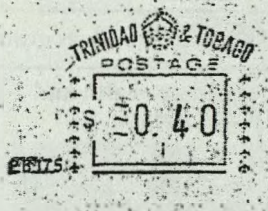
Steel Pan design
BWI International
1970s



You're the reason we fly
1990s



Lettered design
The Airlines of the Caribbean
1975s
(postal meter advertising)



We are the Caribbean.
Trinidad & Tobago Airways
We Are the Caribbean
1990s

Table IV. 1956-2001. Piarco Airport and Aviation Week Handstamps and Cancellation Date Stamps

AIR MAIL
GPO



EKD DE 20 56



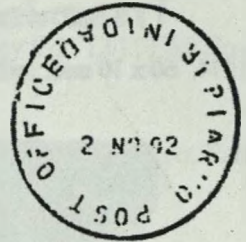
LKD DE 27 56

PIARCO A.P.



AP 23 81

PIARCO POST OFFICE



NO 2 92

PIARCO P.O.



SP 7 93

AVIATION WEEK



JU 16 87

Postal
Datestamps

AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION SERVICE
DEPT. OF CIVIL AVIATION
PIARCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
TRINIDAD, WEST INDIES



Official
Handstamps

EXPRESOS—PRINTED MATTER—IMPRIMES
AIP/NOTAM

Aeronautical Information Service
Wallblake Airport
The Valley,
ANGUILLA

Multiple
handstamps
on notice
Wallblake
Airport, Anguilla
May 22, 1982

Contiene solamente informaciones para la
seguridad de navegacion aerea
SIN VALOR COMERCIAL
Certified to contain only information regarding
safety of air navigation
NO COMMERCIAL VALUE
ne contient que des renseignements relatifs a
la securite de la navigation aeriennne
SANS VALUER COMMERCIALE
URGENTE—URGENT

Airport Manager

AIR MAIL

DEPARTMENT
OF
CIVIL AVIATION
- 5 FEB 1982
PIARCO AIRPORT
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

FE 5 1982

Piarco International Airport
Department of Civil Aviation
official handstamps and
datestamps (reduced sizes)

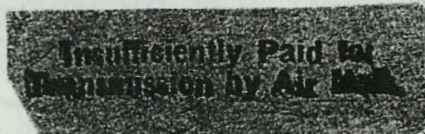


MR 27 2001

Table V. 1954-1974. Insufficiently Paid for Air Mail Transmission handstamps

*insufficiently Paid for
Transmission by Air Mail*

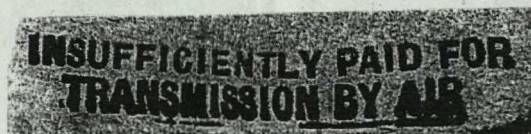
1954. 60 x 10 mm, serified bold letters, lines 5 mm apart



1971. 49 x 7 mm, unserified bold letters, lines 2 mm apart

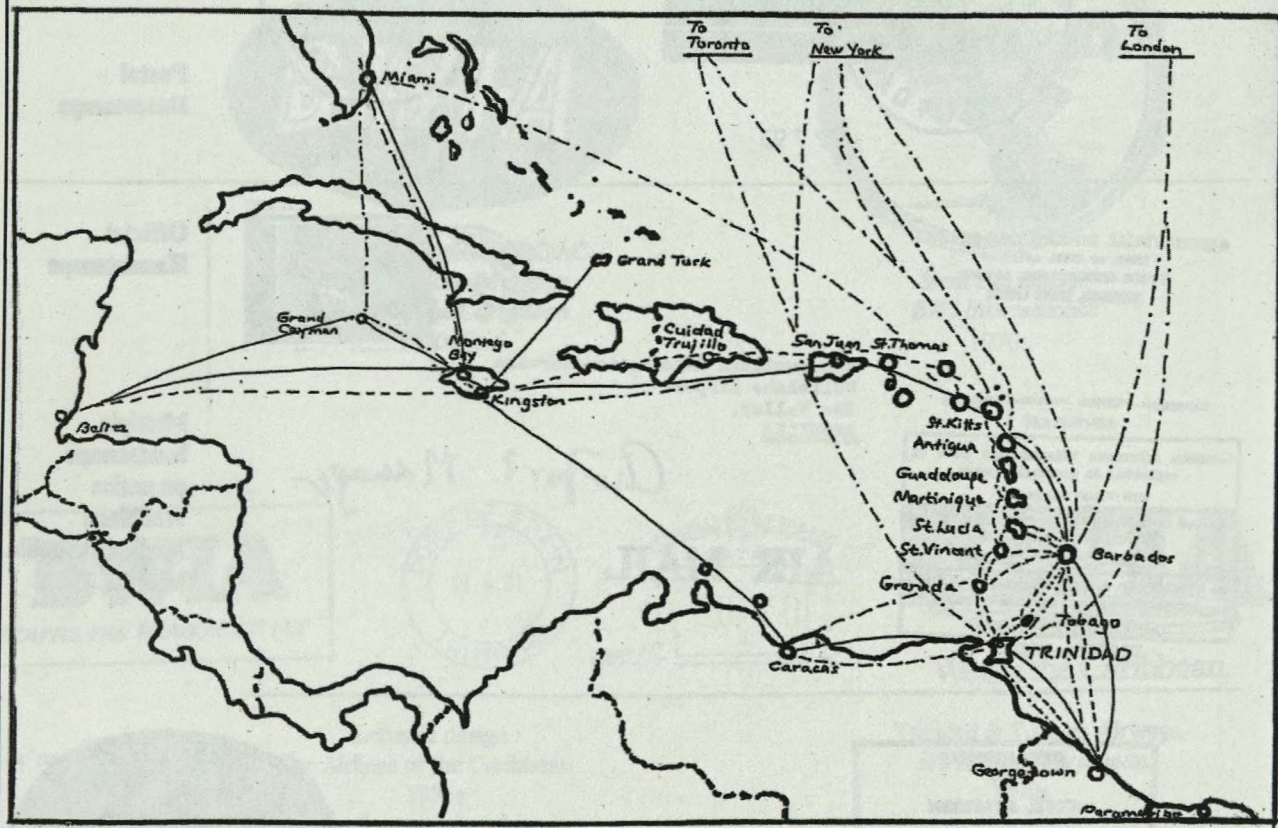
Insufficiently Paid for
Transmission by Air Mail

1956. 50 x 11 mm, unserified bold letters



1974. 65 x 9 mm, unserified bold capital letters

1940-2000. Map of Routes of Service of British West Indian Airways



- 1940. The beginning Trinidad-Tobago-Barbados
- 1945. Post WWII expansion ----- British Caribbean, Belize (Central America)
- 1954. Caribbean basin _____ (BOAC subsidiary)
- 1965. Expansion to New York ----- (Independent)
- 1979. International expansion - - - - - Transatlantic service
- 1990. Transatlantic continental service via Caribbean

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Membership Director's Report — By Tom Giraldi

New Members

All new applicants listed in the last issue of the Journal have been accepted as members of the British Caribbean Philatelic Study Group. Congratulations and welcome to the Group.

New Applicants

Sohrne **BJORN**, Torkel Knufsonsg 2F, 11825 Stockholm, Sweden. Philatelic interest: General. Sponsored by Giorgio Migliavacca.

Norman **FINNIE**, 72 Wyattville Park, Ballybrack Co., Dublin, Ireland. Philatelic interest: All pre-1970 stamps and covers. Sponsored by Thomas Giraldi.

Eric A. **GLOHR**, 139 Richard Ave., Lansing, MI 48917-1748. Philatelic interest: Leeward Islands. Sponsored by Thomas Giraldi.

Bruce **ROSS**, 26 Ludlow Cres., Redcar, Yorkshire TS10 2LQ UNITED KINGDOM. Philatelic interest: 1935 Jubilee, GVI Commonwealth. Sponsored by David Druett.

Andrew Brockett, Unit 6, 1-5 Dalcassia St., Hurstville, NSW 2220 Australia

Peter Ford, Ctra. Cabo la Nao 71-6, 03730 Javea, Alicante, Spain

David Herendeen, 5612 Blue Peak Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89131 USA

Richard C. Mounsey, Horizon House, 900 University St. #13D, Seattle, WA 98101-2778 USA

Fred Seifert, 500 Paisano NE, Apt. 242, Albuquerque, NM 87123 USA

Nicholas Thurn, 6 Leona Dr., Cascade, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago

Richard A. Ward, 501 Upland Rd., Louisville, KY 40206-2834 USA

David A. Wilson, PO Box 1135, Great Falls, VA 22066 USA

Russell Boylan, P.O. Box 71, Christmas Island, Indian Ocean WA6798, Australia

Change of Address

Edward Barrow, 354 Intervale Rd., Canterbury, NH 03224 USA

Deceased

Jack Arnell

Andrews B. Hale

If any member has information, such as a change of address, to be included in the Membership Director's Report, please contact me, either by mail (see inside front cover of the Journal) or by e-mail, at TEG43@aol.com. Thank you.

Title of BVI catalogue does not do book justice

Specialized Stamp Catalogue of the British Virgin Islands 1787 – 2001

Edited by Giorgio Migliavacca

Published by the Millennium Project Committee, Government of the Virgin Islands (U.K.) 2001

Reviewed by Peter P. McCann, PhD

In reviewing this catalogue I must make the disclaimer that I wrote the Introduction to the volume, which appears on page 4. In other words, I am very familiar with the subject and think this volume represents an important milestone in the history of British Virgin Islands philately. The title *Specialized Stamp Catalogue of the British Virgin Islands 1787-2001* does not do justice to what this volume represents. It is a hard-bound book of 312 pages, covering every facet of the stamps of the British Virgin Islands. Most collectors consider the BVI to be a "minor" country compared to other island stamp issuing nations such as New Zealand or even Trinidad, and that is to a certain extent true. However, the strategic importance of the BVI in terms of its location adjacent to the Danish West Indies (now the American Virgin Islands) has always meant that a great deal of mail was transshipped through Tortola in the 18th and 19th centuries, and thus its philatelic importance was greater than one would expect, based on the literate population.

What is actually in the volume? The introductory chapters of the book cover a bibliography, history and an excellent map showing the location of all the BVI post offices. However, the meat of the catalogue is a highly detailed coverage of all the stamps and their varieties issued by the BVI from 1866 through 2000. The Victorian issues are

Continued on page 26

News From the Auction Manager

By Ed Waterous

We will have an auction sale in 2002. The topic of whether to hold an auction this year has been kicked around for quite awhile. Because of the difficulties encountered when carrying auction lots across country borders, the sale will be held in November 2002. It will be largely a mail bid only sale. However, the literature portion of the sale will be live at the Tortola meeting. Mail bids will be accepted for all lots. Stay tuned as the next *Journal* will carry final details of this sale.

As far as the literature goes, if you'd like to sell some items related to the literature of the British Caribbean area, we'd love to include it in the sale. For those of you coming to the meeting, it would help greatly if you could bring the literature lots with you. For those who will not be able to attend, arrangements can be made for you to ship the items for sale. We would prefer not to have to ship the lots two or three times for obvious reasons. Please send me descriptions of the items you will bring for sale if you'd like them to appear in the auction catalog listing. This way members can submit mail bids if they cannot be present at the sale. If you have questions about placing literature consisting of philatelic books, periodicals, journals, notes or non-philatelic publications related to our collecting specialties, please contact me.

I have a number of auction consignments in hand. Quite a bit more material is needed to make a viable sale. The printing and postage costs for our sales demand a substantial income before the breakeven point is reached. We need a large sales volume, in terms of either number of lots or dollars, to be able to continue offering these sales. Yes, the subject of abandoning the auction has been broached. The decision was made to continue offering this membership benefit as long as there is sufficient interest and support from you, the membership.

I mentioned benefit and I'd like to put in a few words about that. Our Group consists of people with a specialized interest in the British Caribbean area. To have a healthy organization we need to have members at all levels of philatelic development or interest. Some members seek exotic varieties, shades printings, cancellations, unusual usage, etc. Others have finished the study and/or exhibition of certain material while still others could very well seek the same material for their own purposes. This is where we fit in. One member may offer material they

no longer want to own in hopes that another member is seeking that same material. We, through the auction sale, try to get the two people together with the material being offered simultaneously to all members. With the large auction houses seeking \$200.00 and up material, we fill a niche at a much lower dollar level. We do not aim to compete directly with our dealer members. We do need to average about \$35.00 per sold lot based on recent statistics. For example, if we offer 20 lots that will sell for \$10.00, we need to sell several lots in the \$100 to \$200 range to reach our breakeven goal. The majority of auction houses add both buyer's premium and seller's commission. They are trying to operate a business to earn a profit. At this point, we do not charge a buyer's premium.

What this column comes down to is a plea for material that will interest our membership to the point of bidding in our sale. It does not have to be an item that will realize three or four digit prices ... though we would not mind that. Please look at the items you bought in duplicate not realizing that you already owned one, the remainders of larger lots you have looted for your collection, Grand Uncle's trunk in the attic, or parts of your collection which no longer hold your interest. Pack them up and send them to me as soon as you can. The deadline for consignments to reach me is August 1, 2002. I'll do my best to get them into the November sale. Donation lots are gratefully accepted.

If you have any questions or need further information such as a direct shipping address, phone me: (219) 769-2840. Send mail to: Ed Waterous, P.O. Box 1105, Homewood, IL 60430-0105 USA. Alternatively, my e-mail address is: ewwaterous@hotmail.com. ☐

**BCPSG Annual Meeting 2002
in association with the British
Virgin Islands Philatelic Society's
10th Annual Stamp Show, Nov. 2-3,
2002, Road Town, Tortola, BVI.
Please see the President's Message,
and plan on coming -- now is the
time to commit! Fill out the
enclosed Registration Form today!**

President's Message

By Peter J. Kaulback

It's hard to believe but Spring is here (however, as I write this in Canada the only indication is from the calendar) and hence we should all be giving due consideration to our Annual General Meeting, being held in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, at the beginning of November. The majority of our meetings are held in a North American city in conjunction with a major philatelic exhibition, and we attempt to locate the meeting in different areas of the country to give a larger number of members an opportunity to attend.

Every tenth year our meeting is in London, United Kingdom, and the last such meeting was held in conjunction with our friends and colleagues the British West Indies Study Circle. Sometime between these London meetings we try to have a meeting actually in the territories of interest to the Group, the last such meeting being in Barbados in May 1995. This year our meeting, being held in association with the show of The British Virgin Islands Philatelic Society, will be on Friday, November 1, while the show extends for the next two days. Pages 22 and 23 of the January issue of the *Journal* provided details of the meeting and the show, and other pertinent information, however a repeat of the highlight is undoubtedly justified:

Location: Tortola, British Virgin Islands

Date: Suggested arrival on October 30 or 31; AGM on November 1 and show on November 2 and 3. Banquet on November 2, and special (optional) trip to Virgin Gorda on November 4.

Accommodation: Arrangements have been made for rooms at a special rate at the Treasure Isle Hotel. Rates are \$75/night (plus 17% tax) for single or double occupancy, or suites at a rate of \$125/night.

Address: Treasure Isle Hotel, Box 68, Pansea Estate, Road Town, Tortola, BVI. Telephone: (284) 494-2501; Fax: (284) 494 2507; e-mail: tisle@surfbvi.com; webpage: www.treasureislehotel.net

I sincerely hope that many people will seriously consider coming to the meeting and enjoying what I am sure will be the outstanding hospitality of our host club, and experience one of the most idyllic areas of the Caribbean. Our hosts are ensuring an experience that will be truly outstanding, and based on previous meetings, the camaraderie between members and their spouses and friends will ensure a most enjoyable experience.

Please, however, make your plans early to avoid disappointment! Contact the hotel now! In the next issue we will give you further details on the show and program that will be available at that time.

Please feel free to contact me at any time on any issue related to the Group. I would appreciate any input and suggestions that you care to make. Thank you.

Review of new BVI catalogue

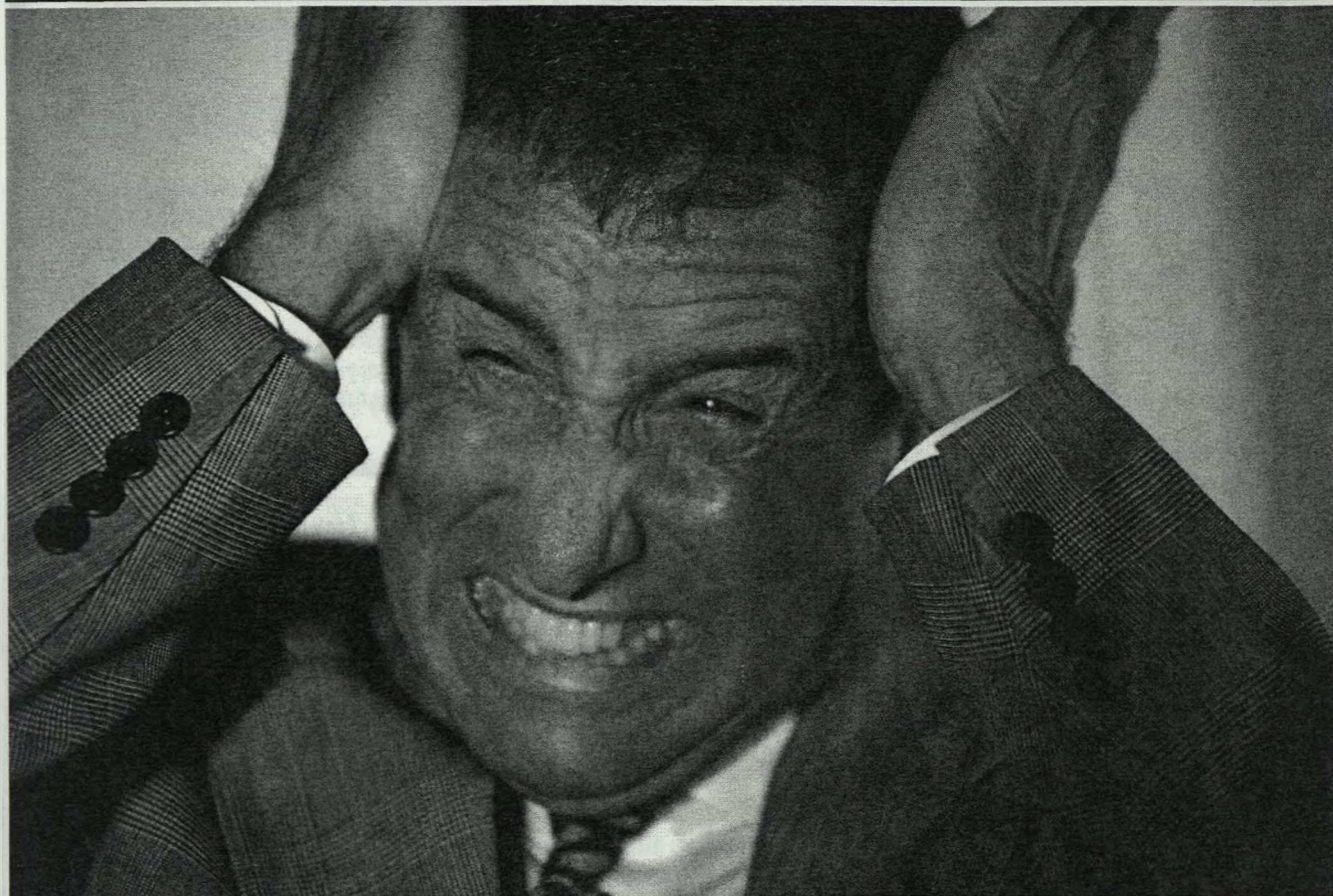
Continued from page 24

given a great deal of emphasis as they are allotted almost 40% of the 269 pages devoted to the stamps. On pages 92 and 93 is the definitive answer to the questions about the most famous BVI stamp, the legendary "Missing Virgin" variety of the 1867 1/- issue.

One of the best features of the catalogue is that all the stamps and varieties are well illustrated in great and very clear detail. Also a number of unusual pieces of postal history, many reproduced in color, are placed in relevant sections throughout the book, making it a fascinating volume just to page through. I personally found one of the most interesting and useful parts of the catalogue to be the end chapters on the postal stationery and aerogrammes, which have been little described in the philatelic literature. Finally, there is a brief chapter on the postal markings which really only serves to whet one's appetite for the companion volume due out this year on the postal history of the BVI.

Editor Giorgio Migliavacca, and his Contributing Editor Roger Downing, both long time residents of the BVI, have done a superb job in creating this fascinating book which is more than just a catalogue listing. If you have any interest in the philately of the Caribbean area you must have a copy for your library. It can be purchased for US\$ 39.95 (+ \$ 17.00 air postage to the USA or \$25 to Europe) from the British Virgin Islands Philatelic Bureau, GPO, Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands (West Indies). Payment can be made by a check in US\$ drawn on a US bank (the BVI uses US\$ as their currency) or by credit card. Alternatively you can contact the editor by e-mail at issun@candwbvi.net or by fax (284) 494-3510.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: My apology for having to split this review onto two pages; it was the last article to be placed, and these two pages were the only ones with room to fit in.)



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How many times have you sat at your desk looking at a partial cancel on a stamp of Trinidad & Tobago and wondered which office was responsible for the marking?

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'THE UNISSUED STAMPS OF KING GEORGE VI' BY DAVID HORRY

It must have been over 10 years ago when Horry, younger and slimmer than now, first showed us some of his ideas at Stampex. Mild hysteria gripped us immediately, and spread rapidly to fascinated customers. It has yet to abate.

Philatelic books can, on occasion, be a bit on the dull side. This lavishly-illustrated casebound publication is certainly never dull and is replete with inspired absurdity, usually (apparently) justified by the text. There appears to be one 'main' creation per colony, with lots more in the surrounds. Exceptions include the Fiji 1½d: the exclusive story of the many dies is now revealed.

Horry's enjoyment of his own jokes is extremely infectious. It's backed up by his wonderful full-colour illustrations, making this a book which surely has appeal beyond the philatelic market and has a place on every coffee table. If you as a stamp collector have ever been shy about admitting to your hobby, this book justifies stamp collecting - its author's humour and creativity communicate enjoyment of the hobby in a universal fashion.

If you want to make your spouse laugh, this is about the only philatelic book we can recommend.

This book has 170+ pages and is available exclusively from Murray Payne Ltd, at £24.95, plus postage £2 Europe and £5 rest of the world.

This publication has a limited print run.

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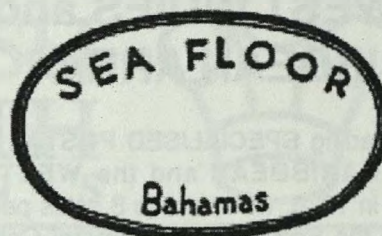
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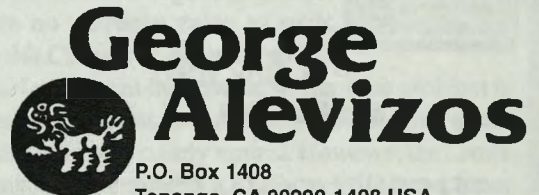
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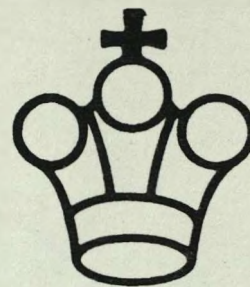
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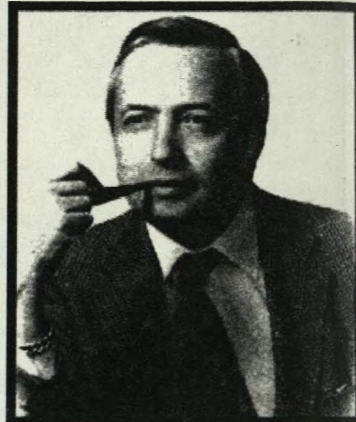
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