

# BRITISH CARIBBEAN PHILATELIC JOURNAL

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## The Trinidad SHIP-LETTER handstamps

*Federico Borromeo takes a look at these  
fascinating markings beginning on page 4.*





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CENSORED MAIL	Mr. Ray Murphy; email: raymurphy@prodigy.net
DOMINICA	Mr. William B. Ashley, P.O. Box 524, West Springfield, MA 01090-0524 USA; email: william_ashley@hotmail.com
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TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS	Dr. Peter P. McCann ( <i>address above</i> )

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**Editor: Dr. Everett L. Parker, 117 Cedar Breeze South, Glenburn, ME 04401-1734 USA**

**Telephone: (207) 573-1686; email: eparker@hughes.net**

*Please address correspondence regarding articles in this publication to the Editor.*

**Membership Director: Mr. Bob Stewart, 7 West Dune Lane, Long Beach Township, NJ 08008 USA**

**Telephone: (609) 290-3873; email: rstewart19@comcast.net**

*Please address membership questions to the Membership Director (this includes address changes).*

**Advertising Manager: Mr. Tom Giraldi, 1305 Scottsdale Way, Modesto, CA 95355-3255 USA**

**Telephone: (209) 571-1345; Email: teg43@aol.com**

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**Awards Editor: Mr. Frederick Lutt, 9561 Daly Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45231 USA**

**Email: frederick.lutt@zoomtown.com**

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### DEADLINES FOR THIS PUBLICATION

**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

# The Trinidad SHIP-LETTER handstamps

By Federico Borromeo

In reading an article by Robert Abenseur a few years ago, I was struck by a letter that carries the postmark “Ship-Letter,” which I recognized as one of the three postmarks of this sort used at Trinidad on unpaid letters sent from Puerto Cabello (Venezuela) to France.<sup>1</sup> Already for some time in England letters traveling by sea had been divided into two categories. On the one hand, there were those letters carried by the packet, called “Packet Letters.” These were ships of state or those under contract with Britain, which assured the regular transportation of correspondence. On the other hand, there were letters transported by any other private ship, British or foreign, which had no contract with the post. These letters are known as “Ship Letters.”<sup>2</sup>

The two categories of letters observed different prices, and they were differentiated by the use of handstamps appropriate to the tariff in question. Thus, in August 1841, the island of Trinidad received a first postmark carrying the words “TRINIDAD/SHIP-LETTER” in two lines.<sup>3</sup>

Roughly 20 years later, a second postmark came into use employing the same words on two lines, but now reversed: “SHIP-LETTER/TRINIDAD.” This postmark, of which only two are recorded, was employed only for a few years. As of December 1869, there existed a third type, the anonymous postmark reading “SHIP-LETTER” only. This last type is known for the period 1869-1876.<sup>4</sup> The first two types were all struck in black ink.

Type 3 was, except in one known case, always struck in red ink (*Figure 1*). All of these marks are rare, or extremely rare, and correspondingly of great interest. To my knowledge, there are hardly more than 26 of them -- three of the first type and two of the second type. Consequently, it is quite easy to constitute a descriptive catalogue for the whole ensemble. Unfortunately, I have not been able to have direct access to all the items and information regarding them is incomplete, and some illustrations are very poor.

As regards the postal tariff imposed upon letters delivered within the island of Trinidad, we find the annotation with the figure “4” only on the letter of 1848. That is the typical “Inter-Antillean” tariff of four pence. The tariff “3” (three pence for a letter weighing one half ounce) was applied as of April 1, 1863 (a decrease from the previous tariff of four pence).<sup>5</sup>

We find the tariff “2” only on those letters coming from Ciudad Bolivar previously franked with a penny stamp of Trinidad. The letter of June 9, 1876 was not subjected to a tariff at Trinidad, being in transit to France, and the Ship-Letter postmark was put upon it by mistake.

TRINIDAD  
SHIP LETTER

SHIP-LETTER  
TRINIDAD

SHIP-LETTER

*Figure 1*  
Type 1, left; Type 2, center; Type 3, right.

# TRINIDAD SHIP LETTER

## Type 1

The postmark “TRINIDAD / SHIP LETTER” on two lines. This was sent on the island in 1841.

The Type 1 occurs on the three following documents:<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 2**

*Type 1: April 19, 1848 from New Haven, Connecticut.*

1. April 19, 1848, from New Haven: this letter was struck on back upon arrival by the large datestamp showing “Trinidad - MY (?) – 1848” and probably charged four pence (**Figure 2**)<sup>7</sup>.



**Figure 3**

*Partial cover believed from January 1856, delivered on May 12.*

2. January (?) 1856, from Calcutta, delivered at Trinidad on May 12. Unfortunately, the letter is fragmentary. Nothing survives of this document other than a tight band with two stamps (a one-anna red and a two annas green of the East India Company Administration) and the postmark “TRINIDAD/SHIP LETTER” that lacks half of the bottom line. The two stamps were cancelled by the octagonal cachet of lines with B/1 at their center<sup>8</sup> (**Figure 3**).

On the verso, at the bottom of a piece of paper somewhat larger, there is to be found the datestamp of Calcutta in red, the datestamp of Trinidad, the sender's cachet in blue ink, and some words written by an employee of the office of Trinidad as follows: "Received at the Colonial Office the 12th day of May, Mich Brodie, for the Post Master."<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 4**  
**Cover to Venezuela with Trinidad Ship Letter handstamp at right.**

3. November 3, 1863, from Saint-Pierre (Martinique) for Carupano in Venezuela. The letter was struck with the datestamp of Fort-de-France on November 4, and that one of Trinidad on November, 6 when the postmark "TRINIDAD/SHIP LETTER" was also placed upon it. This strike is quite unclear and soiled, probably because of the little care given to this little-used postmark of old, which had survived in the island's postal office for 22 years. At Martinique, the letter was franked as far as the frontier, in this case Trinidad, with two stamps of 10 and 40 centimes of the so called Eagle type. There it also received the small cachet with the letters 'PF' (postage paid as far as the frontier), which seems to me, in the French colonies, absolutely exceptional.<sup>10</sup> Upon arrival at Trinidad, the letter was forwarded to its proper destination in Venezuela. In front some tariffs are visible, written in a black and a blue. According to a handwritten note on the inside, this letter was finally delivered on November 11 (**Figure 4**).

In the wake of the Mexican expedition in early 1862 and the creation of a new maritime line connecting this country with France as of February of that same year, a new agreement was signed between the French Government and the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique. A year later, in March 1863, a new subsidiary line was inaugurated so as to connect, four times weekly, Guadeloupe with Martinique and the latter with the British isles of St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Trinidad. The ship employed was *Le Cacique*, which was shortly thereafter replaced by *Le Caribe* as of December 1864. Our letter attests to this service, for the sender had written upon the letter "p. Cacique Voie de la Trinidad." This maritime itinerary did not last for long. In August 1865, a new subsidiary line C was created in order to connect the French colonies of the Antilles with Cayenne.<sup>11</sup>

## SHIP-LETTER TRINIDAD

**Type 2: The Postmark SHIP-LETTER / TRINIDAD on two lines.**

Only two instances of Type 2 are known, and these are between 1859 and 1865.



**Figure 5**  
**Type 2 on letter dated January 10, 1859.**

1. January 10, 1859, a letter rated 60 centimes, carried by the ship *Almae*. Small rectangular mark with PP (Port Payé up to disembarkation) in red ink. The strike is just barely visible (**Figure 5**).<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 6**  
**March 10, 1865 cover from Le Havre to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.**

2. March 10, 1865, from Le Havre, a letter charged 30 centimes, franked with Napoléon stamps of 10 cents and 20 cents. That was the tariff for letters sent overseas as of August 1, 1849, if they were franked until disembarkation and carried by mercantile ships leaving a French port. This tariff was only 30 centimes as long as the letter departed from the port of disembarkation, as is the case here. If the letter departed from another city, on the other hand, the tariff came to 60 centimes.<sup>13</sup> The usual indication of the figure “3” (three pence) in black pencil and a small rectangular mark with “PP” (Port Payé up to disembarkation) in red ink (**Figure 6**).<sup>14</sup>

## SHIP-LETTER

### *Type 3: The straight-line postmark "SHIP-LETTER".*

Similar to the upper portion of Type 2, Type 3 measures 37 mm rather than 39 mm. The precise date of its introduction is unknown, but its use is documented between late 1869 and 1876. With a single exception in black ink, it always occurs in red ink.<sup>15</sup> Trinidad became a part of the UPU on April 1, 1877, and, as of that date, there was no longer any need for this postmark.<sup>16</sup>

Eight of the 20 letters known to me come from Ciudad Bolivar (Venezuela). They were regularly franked with a red one-penny stamp that carries the cancellation "D22." Following is a description of these Type 3 letters:



**Figure 7**

1. December 16, 1869, from Ciudad Bolivar (Venezuela). No postage stamp, but the indication of tariff "3" in blue pencil, is quite likely three-pence and with the sender cachet alongside (**Figure 7**).<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 8**

2. May 10, 1871, from Santander (Spain). Letter bearing two stamps of 200 Milésimas of Escudos, delivered at Trinidad on June 22, addressed to Forwarding Agents Gerold & Ulrich for onward transmission to Franceschi at Carupano (Venezuela) (**Figure 8**).<sup>18</sup>





Figure 9

3. October 26, 1875, from Santander (Spain). Posted letter with two stamps of 200 Milésimas de Escudo, addressed to the forwarders Gerold and Ulrich of Trinidad, to be forwarded to Carupano (Venezuela). Indication of an incomprehensible 1d tariff in red ink,<sup>19</sup> a Spanish oval handstamp showing the letters “P.D.” (Paid at Destination), indication of a tariff “3” in blue pencil, and upon the verso, rectangular cachet of the forwarder, Gerold and Ulrich (Figure 9).<sup>20</sup>



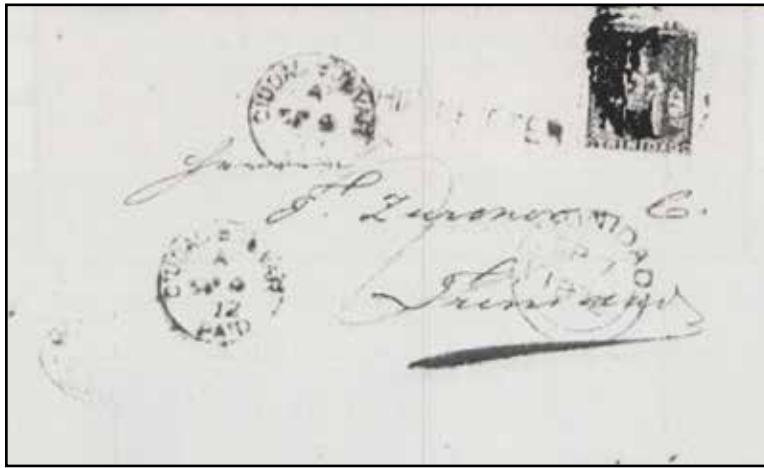
Figure 10

4. December 1871, virtually identical to letter 2 in this list, from Santander (Spain), franked with two stamps of 200 Milésimas de Escudo, addressed to the forwarders Gerold and Ulrich of Trinidad, to be sent on to Carupano (Venezuela). Indication of a tariff “3” in blue pencil. Rectangular cachet of the forwarder on the recto (Figure 10).<sup>21</sup>



Figure 11

5. July 9, 1872, from Le Havre for Trinidad, addressed to F. Zucher & Co., transported by the *Noisiel*. The letter was franked with two 25 cent stamps of the Cérés type, which was a reduced tariff, and marked with small boxed “PP” in red. The two handstamps placed on arrival, the “TOO-LATE” and the “SHIP-LETTER” were struck in black ink, a unique instance (Figure 11).<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 12**

6. September 4, 1872, from Ciudad Bolivar, delivered three days later. The letter was franked with a one-penny stamp with “D22” cancellation. Indication of tariff “2” in pencil and the mark “SHIP-LETTER.” Trinidad stamps used abroad are known only for this route, and unfortunately most of these letters have their stamps marked by a vertical archival crease (**Figure 12**).<sup>23</sup>



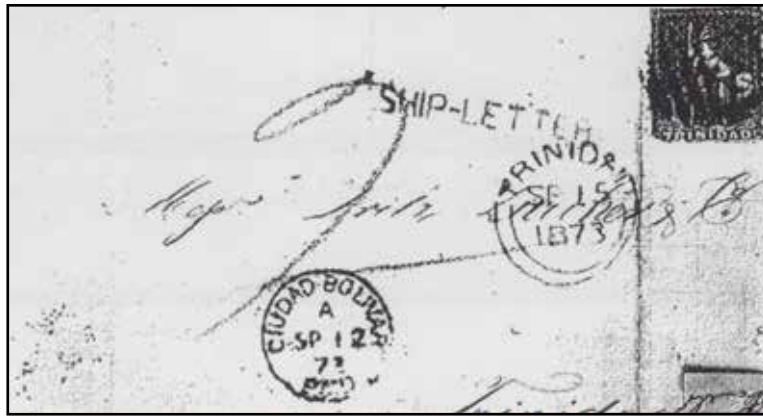
**Figure 13**

7. June 27, 1873, from Le Havre. Franked with two 15 centimes stamps of the Cérés type. Indication of tariff “3” in pencil (**Figure 13**).



**Figure 14**

8. July 15, 1873, from Ciudad Bolivar, delivered four days later. Indication of tariff “2” in blue crayon and the mark “SHIP-LETTER.” The letter was franked with a one-penny stamp of Trinidad bearing the “D22” cancellation alongside the datestamp showing “CIUDAD·BOLIVAR / A / JY 15 / 73 / PAID” and addressed to the firm Mssrs. Fritz Zurcher (**Figure 14**).<sup>24</sup>



*Figure 15*

9. September 12, 1873, from Ciudad Bolivar, delivered three days later. Letter franked with a Trinidad one-penny stamp cancelled “D22.” Usual tax figure “2” in pencil and the postmark “SHIP-LETTER” (*Figure 15*).<sup>25</sup>



*Figure 16*

10. October 12, 1873, from Ciudad Bolivar, delivered four days later. Letter franked with a pair of the Trinidad one-penny stamps cancelled “D22” and showing the handstamped “SHIP-LETTER,” but no sign of a tariff. Probably a double weight letter, which this is the only example (*Figure 16*).<sup>26</sup>



*Figure 17*

11. December 27, 1873, from Ciudad Bolivar, delivered on December 30. Letter franked with a one-penny Trinidad stamp cancelled “D22” showing the handstamp “SHIP-LETTER.” On the front is a circular red handstamp showing “CIUDAD BOLIVAR / A / DE 30 / 1873 / PAID.” Indication of tariff ‘2’ in blue pencil (*Figure 17*).<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 18**

12. January 16, 1874, from Ciudad Bolivar, delivered on January 20. Letter franked with a one-penny Trinidad stamp cancelled “D22” showing the handstamp “SHIP-LETTER.” On the front is a circular red handstamp showing “CIUDAD·BOLIVAR / A / (date) / PAID.” Indication of tariff “2” in blue pencil (**Figure 18**).<sup>28</sup>



**Figure 19**

13. February 20, 1875, from Ciudad Bolivar, delivered on February 23. Letter franked with a one-penny Trinidad stamp cancelled “D22.” On the front is a circular red datestamp showing “CIUDAD·BOLIVAR / A / FE 20 / 75 / PAID.” Indication of tariff “2” in blue crayon and the postmark “SHIP-LETTER” (**Figure 19**).<sup>29</sup>



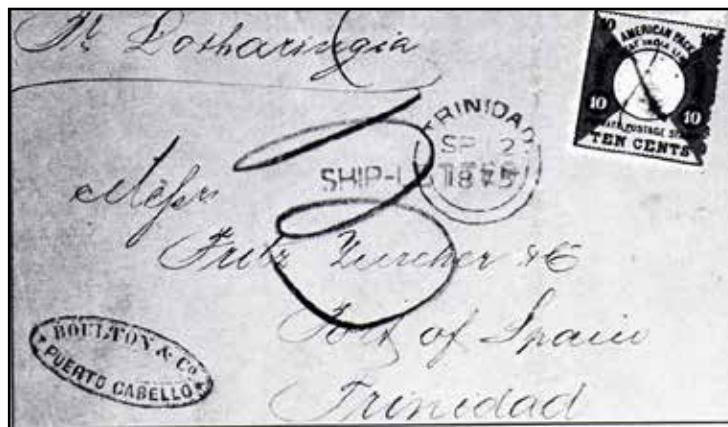
**Figure 20**

14. August 7, 1875, from Puerto Cabello to Trinidad, delivered on August 13, showing the sender cachet. The letter travelled upon the *Lotharingia*, a ship which sailed for the German maritime company HAPAG (Hamburg Amerika Paketfahrt Aktien Gesellschaft) on their Route 1.<sup>30</sup> It was franked with a single 10-cent company stamp. The usual tariff of three-pence is written in blue pencil and likewise appears the postmark “SHIP-LETTER” (**Figure 20**).<sup>31</sup>



**Figure 21**

15. September 1875, from Caracas (Venezuela), received at Trinidad on September 12. The letter is franked with a single Venezuelan stamp of the “Armoiries” type. Indication of tariff “3” in pencil and postmark “SHIP-LETTER,” (Figure 21).<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 22**

16. September 7, 1875, from Puerto Cabello (Venezuela), with cachet of the firm Boulton & Co., sent to Trinidad, and delivered September 12. The letter travelled on the *Lotharingia*, and is franked with a 10-cent stamp of the private shipping company HAPAG. Tariff of three-pence in blue pencil, postmark “SHIP-LETTER,” (Figure 22).<sup>33</sup>



**Figure 23**

17. September 10, 1875, from Caracas for Trinidad and delivered on September 12. The letter travelled on the vessel *Lotharingia* and is franked with a 10-cent stamp of the private shipping company HAPAG. Usual tariff of “3” pence in blue pencil, and postmark “SHIP-LETTER,” (Figure 23).<sup>34</sup>



Figure 24

18. June 9, 1876, from Puerto Cabello (Venezuela) to France, where it arrived on July 2. The route taken is indicated by the French-speaking sender "*par Vapeur Germania*" indicates that he had chosen the German HAPAG. In effect between 1875 and 1880, there was a ship *Germania* on the Route 1 calling at Puerto Cabello-Saint-Thomas-Port of Spain (Trinidad). The letter disembarked at Port of Spain, and at the post office received the postmark "SHIP-LETTER." It was then committed to another ship, perhaps German once more, but certainly not British. Upon landfall at Plymouth, the letter was stamped with the Plymouth "Ship-Letter" dated circular postmark of the type "S10a" in black ink (Figure 24).<sup>35</sup>



Figure 25

19. July 22, 1876, from Le Havre for Trinidad, where the letter (archive Zurcher) was transported by a merchantman, the *Noisiel*, and distributed 55 days later on September 14. The letter was franked with two 25-cent stamps of the Cérès' type, which was a reduced tariff and marked with small boxed "PP" in red. At the time, the vast majority of letters coming from France were franked with one franc stamps.<sup>36</sup> Indication of tariff "3" in blue pencil, the "SHIP-LETTER" and the straight-line "TOO-LATE" marking, both in red, (Figure 25).<sup>37</sup>



Figure 26

20. December 20, 1876, from Caracas for Trinidad, where the letter (Zurcher archive) was distributed on December 24. The letter was franked by a strip of four of the 30 centimes stamp of the Sage type, at a tariff of one franc and 20 centimes. Indication of tariff “3” in blue pencil and bearing the postmark “SHIP-LETTER” (Figure 26).<sup>38</sup>

This list is indubitably incomplete, even if it seems highly unlikely that any other examples of the first or second type will come to light in the future. On the other hand, new examples of the third type may still be hidden in some collections. It remains for us to rediscover the letter of 1841, so as to verify the exactness of the information published by Chin Aleong and Proud in their books.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Abensur, R. “Tableau C et mentions manuscrites en provenance ou à destination des pays situés en dehors de l’Union Postale (1875-1892): le tableau C.” *Documents Philatéliques*, No. 187, January 2006, pp. 12-21. The postmark “SHIP LETTER” was normally not put on letters (like those in question), which were merely passing through Trinidad.

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion, see John G. Hendy, “Ship Letters,” *The Postal History Society*, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Twenty handstamps (probably two of the same make for each destination) were sent out to the English colonies of Antilles, Bermuda, Berbice (British Guyana), and New Zealand. These postmarks are reproduced in *Postmarks of the Date Impression Books Post Office Records. Section 3, Volumes 5 & 6*, edited by Edward B. Proud, Heathfield, 1984, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> John Marriott, “The Philatelic History of Trinidad to 1862,” *British West Indies Study Circle*, Paper No. 3, 1963, p. 9. The BWISC published a revised version in 2010 as an actual hardbound book with a new title: *Trinidad: A Philatelic History to 1913*, by Sir John Marriott, Michael Medlicott and Reuben Ramkissoon. A census of the covers showing this mark is found from page 201 to page 211, with 22 illustrations.

<sup>5</sup> L.E. Britnor, *British West Indies Postal Rates up to 1900*, British West Indies Study Circle, 1977, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> In 1955, John Marriott wrote in *The London Philatelist*, Volume LXIV (54), p. 35 and 36, “TRINIDAD/SHIP LETTER” in two lines, serified letters 4mm tall, is recorded in 1841 and 1848, though I have not seen the former. In the 1848 example the ‘S’ of ‘SHIP’ is inverted.” He also showed a photographic reproduction of the latter instance. Whereas the 1848 example has remained in his collection, the letter of 1841 has not been seen in the years since then and may no longer exist.

<sup>7</sup> Sir John Marriott’s impressive collection was sold by Spink in two sessions, with 764 lots, at London on September 19, 2001. This cover was Lot 718 of that sale.

<sup>8</sup> Numbers 3 and 4 of the Yvert catalogue, which are likely the same as Stanley Gibbons numbers 14 and 31. For the postmark B/1, see D. Martin, *Numbers in early Indian Cancellations 1855-1884* (1970), p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> This was Lot 2272 in the sale “Trinidad and Tobago Stamps, Postal Stationery and Postal History: The Large Gold Medal Collection of Reuben A. Ramkissoon,” H.A. Harmers Auction, Zurich, Switzerland, December 6, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> This can be found reproduced in Raymond Salles, *La poste maritime française, Tome I, Les entrées maritimes et es bateaux à vapeur*, p. 34, ill. 171b, but not in the fourth volume (Atlantique Nord, Antilles, etc.).

<sup>11</sup> Salles R., *La poste maritime française, Tome IV, Les paquebots de l’Atlantique Nord, Antilles, Amérique Centrale et Pacifique Sud, États-Unis*, p. 148. From the author’s collection.

<sup>12</sup> A drawing of this postmark is reproduced with the number “SL2” in Joe Chin Aleong and Edward Proud, *The Postal*

*History of Trinidad & Tobago*, Heathfield, 1997, p. 246. It would seem to appear upon a letter of February 11, 1859. However, it is odd that it was employed at the same date as the first type, which was still being used as of late 1863. The date of January 10, 1859 is given in the description for the Proud sale of March 16, 2001, Lot 1538, as follows: "1538 - Incoming mail: evn. from France to Trinidad (10 Jan. 1859) franked with 60¢ it shows 'PP' in red 'Ship Letter Trinidad' and indication that it was carried by 'Almae' of Messageries Maritimes. An attractive cvr. (see Photo). £400." The 60 centimes (twice 10 + 20 centimes?) might be a double tariff for a letter despatched by merchantmen. That would also explain the ship's name, for it did not belong to the fleet of Messageries Maritimes. In my opinion, the date should in all likelihood read 1869. Type 1 is yet attested in November 1863, whereas Type 3 is documented as of December 1869.

<sup>13</sup> This tariff passed to 40 centimes on January 1, 1866, without any differentiation as regards the place of posting, and subsequently became 50 centimes on January 7, 1871.

<sup>14</sup> Ex-Ramkissoon collection, Lot 2373, December 2006 sale.

<sup>15</sup> See Type 3 letter No. 18 of the Gérard Desarnaud collection.

<sup>16</sup> James Bendon, *UPU Specimen Stamps. The Distribution of Specimen Stamps by the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union*, 1988, p. x, 260.

<sup>17</sup> This item was Lot 719 of the Sir Marriott sale.

<sup>18</sup> This item was Lot 1540 of the Proud sale of March 16, 2001.

<sup>19</sup> London put these stamps of 1d credit upon those letters for the English colonies that were paid through arrival. They indicate the part of the postage that was turned over to the colony. But, in this instance, the colony was not to demand any payment upon arrival.

<sup>20</sup> See K. Rowe, *The Postal History of the Forwarding Agents*, 1984, p. 200. Lot 720 of the Marriott sale.

<sup>21</sup> Ex-Ramkissoon collection, Lot 2274.

<sup>22</sup> This cover is similar to the one dated July 22, 1876, which was illustrated in the revised Marriott book of 2010, p. 210.

<sup>23</sup> The handstamp "D22" and the others for this office were sent to Ciudad Bolívar in 1868, and employed to cancel both the English stamps (of which only one instance on a letter is known) and the stamps of Trinidad. John Parmenter, *GB Used Abroad: Cancellations and Postal Markings*, Beckenham (Kent), 1993, p. 162-163. This cover being ex-Brassler collection, sold by Christie's Robson Lowe, New York, December 1987.

<sup>24</sup> Lot 1646 of the Charlton Henry famous sale, Harmers of New York, April 1961, collection of the author.

<sup>25</sup> Lot 11726, sale of the André Bollen collection, David Feldman, March 29-30, 1984.

<sup>26</sup> Lot 1143 of the Harmer sale of June 16-24, 1958 (unsold) and Lot 287 of the sale of May 30-31, 1960.

<sup>27</sup> Lot 763 of the Marriott sale. It seems that a similar cover should be recorded dated December 10, 1873.

<sup>28</sup> Lot 1144 of the Harmer sale of June 16-24, 1958, which also included the letter of February 20, 1875. Also ex-Ramkissoon collection, Lot 2276.

<sup>29</sup> Lot 1144 of the Harmer sale, June 16-24, 1958.

<sup>30</sup> This German company maintained six different routes in the Antilles between 1875 and 1880. See S. Ringstrom and H.E. Tester, *The Private Ship Letter Stamps of the World: Part I, The Caribbean*, p. 133-157.

<sup>31</sup> Former Dr. Schnell collection.

<sup>32</sup> Lot 1539 of the Proud sale of March 16, 2001. This item appears to be a large piece.

<sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*, S. Ringstrom, H.E. Tester, p.146.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 146.

<sup>35</sup> The "S10a" type handstamp is reproduced in Colin Tabcart, *Robertson Revisited: A study of the Maritime Postal Markings of the British Isles based on the work of Alan W. Robertson*. (Limassol [Cyprus]: James Bendon, Ltd., 1997), p. 244. The cover is also reproduced in *Documents Philatéliques* No. 187, figure 5, p. 18. G. Desarnaud collection, but the Trinidad handstamp was erroneously ascribed to Plymouth.

<sup>36</sup> Tariff of January 1, 1875 at 50 centimes for 15 grams as far as the port of embarkation for the countries overseas, without differentiation of the so-called "Parages" (coastal waters) by the ships departing from the French ports and not providing a regular service. The tariff of simple letter as far as destination by the regular English mailboats was 1 franc on January 1, 1871 and subsequently 1.40 franc as of January 1, 1876. In this case, there ought not to have been either the tariff "3" nor the postmark "Ship-Letter," but rather a red credit-mark added at London. The tariff, as far as the port of embarkation for the countries overseas by ships departing from French ports and providing a regular service, was 1 franc on July 1, 1873 at the moment of Trinidad's entry into the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

<sup>37</sup> Lot 721 of the Marriott sale.

<sup>38</sup> In the upper part of the letter, it is possible to make out "": the ship *Guyane* and all its travels are described in Salles, Tome IV, p. 145. Ex-Ramkissoon collection, Lot 2275.



# St. Lucia: A Cover and a Card

By Guy Kilburn

One searches on eBay and studies the auction catalogues and dealer offerings, but after 44 years of collecting St. Lucian postal history and not seeing them, a little despair creeps in. And suddenly, without any of the deserving fanfare, there they are, both of them, so unassuming, a cover and a card in two months! And then a spare! Surely one cannot see all the worldwide listings and offerings, and I probably missed one or two across the years, but these I think are quite unusual.

The first one to be found was the May 17, 1898 cover illustrated in *Figure 1*. On May 9 of that year, the St. Lucia postage rate on overseas letters decreased from 2½d to 2d per half ounce, but this rate was in effect only for a very brief 33 days, or until June 10, 1898. This item is a large, quadruple weight (4 x ½ oz.) cover bearing a strip of four of the 2d Key Plate, SG #45. It is addressed to Ryland's Sons in Manchester, at that time the largest textile manufacturing company in the United Kingdom. The small excised area appears to have been the result of removing burn marks. *Figure 2* shows a single rate example. It is addressed to A. D. Farmer and Sons in New York, a type-foundry; it is cancelled May 25, 1898.

The 2d ultramarine and orange QV keyplate was not part of the original Die II set that came on in 1891. It was supplied to the colony in March of 1898, possibly in anticipation of the lower rate. Perhaps because the



*Figure 1*  
May 17, 1898 cover to Manchester, England with four of the 2d keyplate St. Lucia stamps.

2d keyplate is such an innocuous looking stamp, covers bearing the stamp and the 2d rate go unnoticed. Its value as a used stamp is quite low. (There was another rare rate for St. Lucia that became effective on November 1, 1895; this was the 1d rate to Grenada and St. Vincent, nicely described by the late Charles Freeland in the December 2012 British West Indies Study Circle [BWISC] *Bulletin*.)

*Figure 3* and *Figure 3a* (next page) bring us a really multi-faceted St. Lucia QV 1d reply-paid card. Cancelled October 5, 1904 in Karlsruhe, Baden, it is addressed to Kapitainlieutenant Albin Stoelzel on board the fabled German protected cruiser S.M.S. *Vineta* (*Figure 4*) at Newport News, Virginia, then an American ship-building, repair and coaling center.

In 1901 the *Vineta* became philatelicly famous when 5 pfennig stamps were bisected and over-stamped "3 PF" by the ship's purser. Mail bearing these stamps was sent from Pernambuco, Brazil to Germany on April 17, 1901. In 1903 and 1904, the *Vineta* participated in the shelling of Venezuelan forts during the Venezuelan Crisis. The ship was commissioned in 1898 and from 1899 she was assigned to the American station; it is not difficult to imagine that in 1904 she called at Castries, St. Lucia to re-supply with coal. It



*Figure 2*  
A single rate example addressed to U.S., postmarked May 25, 1898.

seems that the good Kapitainlieutenant bought and used a St. Lucia 1d + 1d card and sent it to his aunt in Germany. The UPU rate for postcards was at that time 1d, and an additional 1d for an attached reply half. One can only hope that the out-going message half of the pair of cards still exists somewhere in the philatelic world. His aunt dutifully replied (*Figure 3a*) and here is the translation from Old German:

*Dear Albin. Thank you for your kind greeting card. I should feel guilty that I have not written earlier, and I should say 'thank you' to you because you are thinking of me. I really have the will to do so. Every day I have in mind to chat with you, but constantly something or somebody comes along, and as you know I must be undisturbed while writing to you. You have had some great and interesting experiences recently. I really feel happy for you, even though it must have been exhausting for you. Today finally a letter will be forwarded to you from me. With a thousand greetings, your aunty, S. ST.*

Perhaps this card should have been taxed. According to the regulations adopted at the UPU conference in Vienna in 1891, reply cards returned to any destination other than that of the issuer were supposed to be charged as unpaid letters. The problem here, of course, is how do you treat a reply card addressed not to a country but rather to a German naval vessel? Had the German postal authorities indicated that the letter was to be taxed, who was to collect the postage due? The Newport News Post Office? The purser on the *Vineta*? Neither seems likely and the card was sent on its way undisturbed.

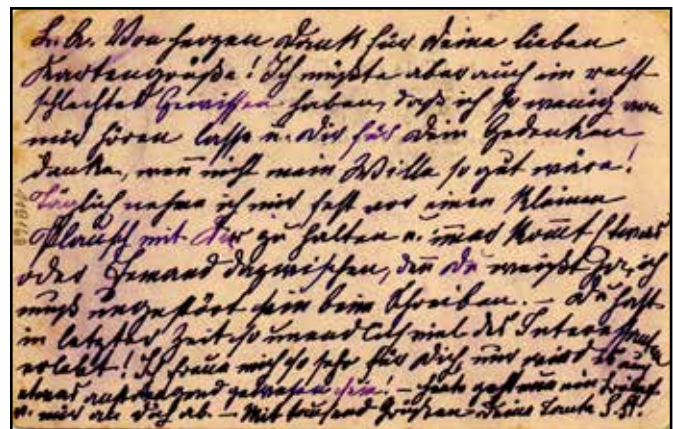
St. Lucia reply-half postcards are truly rare. There are three known of the 1½d and I have never seen another of the 1d. If any of our fellow collectors can add information to the above please contact me through the editor or directly and I will update the article as soon as possible in a future *Journal*.

**References**

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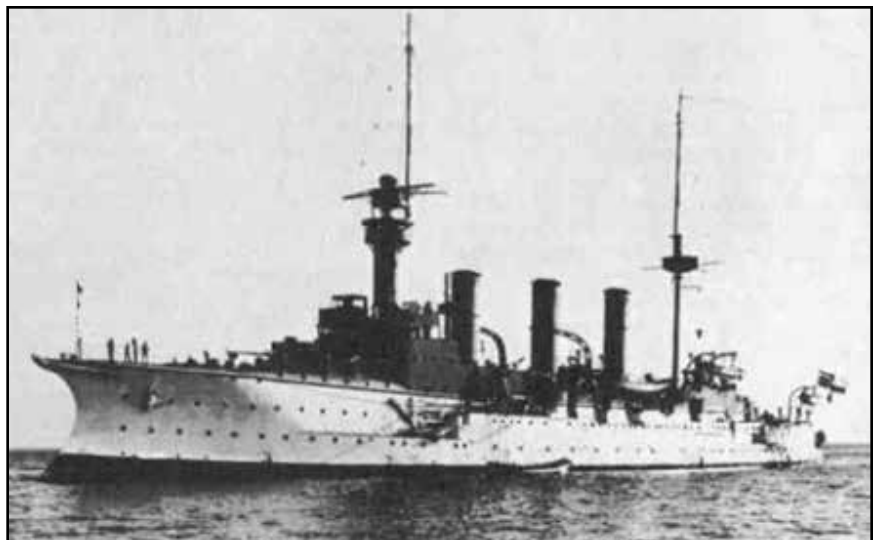


**Figure 3 and Figure 3a (below)**  
 A multi-faceted St. Lucia QV 1d reply-paid card with reply in German.



**Acknowledgments**

Maria Dewald, the late Charles Freeland, Jamie Gough, Wayne Menuz, Hap Pattiz.



**Figure 4**  
 A photograph of the fabled German protected cruiser S.M.S. Vineta.

## Our sister society, BWISC, extends discounts to BCPSG members and offers mailing from U.S.

By Peter C. Ford

Over the last few years, the British West Indies Study Circle (BWISC) has distributed its publications through the good offices of Ed Barrow. We would like to thank Ed for all his help with this task, not only in distributing the books, but also storing them. Ed is now off to pastures new and we wish him the very best of luck in his new home.

BCPSG President John Seidl was good enough to assist us in finding someone new to distribute our books, and he came with the answer: the American Philatelic Society (APS). Our books were shipped to the APS headquarters in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

In addition, we ordered some more of our softcover

books as well. All this will alleviate the huge cost of postage of these publications from the United Kingdom to the United States. Postage costs now will be around \$2 per book. We hope to increase the number of our books available through the APS in time. The books are listed on the APS website at [stamps.org/publications](http://stamps.org/publications).

At a recent Committee Meeting of the BWISC, it was decided that discounts, normally offered exclusively to BWISC members, should be extended to members of the BCPSG. So, when contacting the APS to order books, do mention that you are a member of the BCPSG to obtain the discount.

If you have any problems, the person to contact is [judy@stamps.org](mailto:judy@stamps.org). These discounts are also available on books ordered from David Druett at Pennymead Books.

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## *Follow-up book on Trinidad & Tobago definitives*

By Peter C. Ford

As many of you will already know, I intend to write a book on the stamps of Trinidad and Tobago as a follow-up to our two previous books, one on Trinidad and the other on Tobago. I apologize for the fact that this article, with the permission of both editors, will appear in both the journals of the BWISC and the BCPSG. The reason for this is that information regarding these issues is scant, to say the least, and I need to reach the biggest audience I can, as the past records of Bradbury Wilkinson (BW) concerning Trinidad & Tobago seem to have been mislaid since the company was taken over by De La Rue.

In 1935, T&T decided to issue stamps showing scenes from the islands and these were designed by BW. Sheets so far seen do not have any plate numbers visible and it may be that, as these stamps were only used for around two years, only one plate was used and no plate number appeared. Some, but not all, sheets were numbered in the top right corner. Luckily we have had sight of a sheet of the eight cent stamp with a sheet number. There was only one printing of the eight cent stamp, so we can imagine that numbering was applied to all sheets. But unfortunately there also exists a sheet of the six cent stamp which does not have a sheet number. Perhaps it was one that was supplied to London dealers directly and not numbered. Some information on this would be welcome.

The same vignette die seems to have been used for the design of the next issue of King George VI stamps, but this time the head of the monarch was included. Stamps of this size were normally printed in a sheet of two panes of 60 (10 x 60). However, the T&T set were printed in panes of 60 (12 x 5). Were the two panes printed one on top of the other or side by side? The latter seems the more likely, but there isn't yet any evidence. Now we come to plate numbers. I have been sent scans of quite a number of plate blocks and there are several questions that need to be answered. Firstly, what is the significance of the plate numbers with an "a" after the number. Was, for instance, one (left?) pane annotated with plate number 1, 2, 3, etc., and the other pane with 1a, 2a, 3a, etc.? If this is so, where is there any proof? The monocolored values had only one number and that was under stamp 59 of the pane (R12/4). The bi-colored values had the frame plate number under the same stamp and the vignette plate number under the adjacent stamp to the right (R12/5). Now, it seems that on some of the earlier printings, the vignette plate number is missing. Did this, as was the case with Waterlow's contemporary printings, indicate Plate 1?

The Queen Elizabeth II issue was very similar to the previous King George VI issue but with a new frame design which now included the portrait of the queen. The vignettes were the same, only the frame was changed. The Stanley Gibbons now-defunct listing of Elizabethan stamps shows the printing dates and plates used for the QEII issues, but little information exists of the KGVI issue. I am trying to research all these issues and would be grateful for any information pertaining to these stamps, especially the numbers printed. Examples of scanned plate blocks would be appreciated. You can reach me by email at: [peterf@bwisc.org](mailto:peterf@bwisc.org).

# *BCPSG at Chicago stamp show!*



*Those participating in the BCPSG group dinner included John Paré, left, and Duane Larson, third from left.*



*Former BCPSG President Ed Waterous received the Saul Newbury Award for service to philately in Chicago.*



*Duane Larson, left, with author Edward Bergen.*



*Our fearless leader, John Seidl, at the BCPSG table at Chicago. We signed up several new members at the event!*



*Although no people are present, this photo shows the exhibits area at the event.*



*The annual meeting was held at the Chicago stamp show in November.*

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	233	1		255	19
2010	234	21		256	30
	235	19		257	31
	236	19	2016	258	28
2011	237	21		259	33
	238	27		260	54
	239	22		261	53
2012	240	25	2017	262	1
	241	22		263	2
	242	25		264	9
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	245	33			
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- *The Posts of St. Lucia* (Ritchie) & *The Postal History of Soufriere, St. Lucia* (Devaux), 82pp., 2 copies available.
- *The Town Cancels of British Honduras 1880-1973* (Addiss), 1990, 57pp., 17 copies available.
- *The Furness Line to Bermuda* (Ludington & Rego), 1990, 58pp., 75 copies available.
- *Bermuda Mails to 1865* (Forand & Freeland), 1995, 118pp., 67 copies available.
- *Leeward Islands – A Postal History Anthology* (different authors for each chapter), 1997, 67pp., 56 copies available.

### Ordering Instructions:

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**NEW BOOKS FROM BWISC PUBLICATIONS!**

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The purpose of this book is to act as a Supplement to the outstanding handbook on St. Vincent philately, *St. Vincent*, by Pierce, Messenger and Lowe published by Robson Lowe Ltd. in 1971 (PML). While comprehensive in its coverage, this book did not include stamps and revenue stamps after 1897 while the coverage of the Postal History and cancellations only went up to 1915. The present volume will extend into the 20th century and add a couple of missing sections.

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Edited by Peter Fernbank FRPSL

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## We desperately need articles!

The situation continues to be critical as we desperately need material to fill these pages!

**PLEASE provide articles!**

Several of our long-time writers are no longer sending in material, and we cannot continue a journal without input.

It's not just us -- a British journal recently announced there would be no further issues until articles are submitted! Please don't let this happen to us!

## PITCAIRN ISLANDS STUDY GROUP



The PISG is devoted to *all things* pertaining to Pitcairn Island, including its history, islanders, the HMAV *Bounty* mutiny (the mutineer descendants still live on Pitcairn), stamps and postal history. Our award winning journal, the *Pitcairn Log*, is published quarterly. For information and a membership form, contact Dr. Vernon N. Kisling Jr.  
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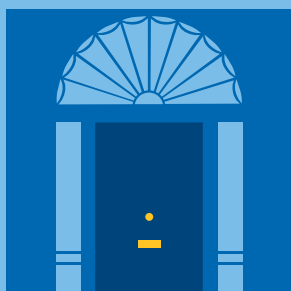
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The Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. For this occasion an international exhibition will be held in Stockholm. H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden has graciously agreed to be the Patron.



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# BCPSG Exhibits and Awards

By Paul Larsen

Awards Chairman

Following is a listing of recent British Caribbean Philatelic Study Group (BCPSG) member exhibit participants and awards.

----

**Philataipei 2016**

**World Stamp Championship Exhibition**

**October 21-26**

**Taipei, Taiwan**

Darryl Fuller

*Airmail Postal History of the Caribbean*

**Vermeil**

**NAPEX 2017**

**June 9-11**

**McLean, Virginia**

John Paré

*The Development of Air Mail Service  
Between Bermuda and U.S. 1925-1939 (SF)*

**Gold**

*The 1940 Bermuda 1/2d on 1d Provisional  
Overprint and its Postal Use (SF)*

**Large Vermeil**

**MINNESOTA STAMP EXPO**

**July 21-23, 2017**

**Crystal, Minnesota**

John Paré

*Evolution of Air Mail Service Between Bermuda  
and U.S. 1925-1939 (SF)*

**Large Gold**

*The 1940 Bermuda 1/2d on 1d Provisional  
Overprint and its Postal Use (SF)*

**Gold**

Paul Larsen

*The Evolution of French Sudan and Niger 1887-1951*

**Large Gold**

**OMAHA STAMP SHOW 2017**

**September 9-10**

**Omaha, Nebraska**

Paul Larsen

*Federal Issues of the Leeward Islands:  
King George V Reign*

**Gold, APS 1900-1940 Medal**

**BCPSG Exhibits at the Chicago AGM**

<b>Exhibitor</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>No. Frames</b>	<b>Awards</b>
<b>Dr. Peter P. McCann</b>	Montserrat: Postal History of a Caribbean Island	8	Grand Award, Large Gold, BCPSG Gold
<b>Edward Waterous</b>	The Bahamas Post to 1935	6	Cameron Trophy, Large Gold, BCPSG Gold
<b>Paul Larsen</b>	Federal Issues of the Leeward Islands: King George V Reign	8	Gold, BCPSG Gold
<b>Frederick Lutt</b>	Leeward Islands King George VI Definitives 1938-1954	5	Vermeil, BCPSG Vermeil
<b>Paul Larsen</b>	Leeward Islands: Federal Judicial FEES Revenue Stamps	1	Large Vermeil, BCPSG Vermeil, American Revenue Assn. Award
<b>Frederick Lutt</b>	Estonia Stamp Centenary Commemorative, 1940	1	Vermeil

*Our Caribbean area exhibits amounted to 10.6% of the competitive exhibit frames in the Chicago show. We provided a nice part of a wide spectrum of philatelic subjects in the show. Thanks and an electric pat-on-the-back for all our exhibitors who helped entertain and inform the show goers. Please remember that BCPSG has a cash award to encourage a new first time BCPSG competitive exhibitor to spread her or his wings.*



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A4 size, hardbacked with dust jacket, (xii) + 344 pages. ISBN: 978-0-900631-85-6

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#### BRITISH WEST INDIES STUDY CIRCLE PUBLICATIONS



## NEVIS



'NEVIS – THE STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY (1661–1890)' by Federico Borromeo, FRPSL and Charles Freeland, FRPSL. This is the first definitive handbook on Nevis to be published since the slim booklet by Fred Melville in 1910. Despite its small size, this island has attracted collectors from the earliest days. The book traces the pre-stamp history and examines the early Nissen & Parker issues in great detail and goes on to describe the evolution of the De La Rue printings. It also includes chapters on postal stationery, revenue issues and forgeries. This book is a must for all BWI collectors.

A4 size, hardbacked with dust jacket, (viii) + 208 pages. ISBN: 978-1-907481-19-2

**Price: £35.00 (approx. \$52.00). BWISC Members' Price: £32.00 (approx. \$48.00).**



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# Membership Director's Report

By Bob Stewart

## 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

**Anthony Walker**, 3 Nazareth Mews, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE2 1EW, UNITED KINGDOM. Collects British naval mail of World War I, Machin postal history and Turks & Caicos Islands. Email: walker369@btinternet.com. Sponsored by Dr. Peter P. McCann.

**Jay Bigalke**, P.O. Box 882, Troy, OH 45373 USA. Collects Bahamas, KGVI. Email: Jay.bigalke@yahoo.com.

**Andy Busard**, 2361 Westwood St., Muskegon, MI 49441 USA. Collects Turks & Caicos, U.S., Canal Zone, France. Email: Andybusard@yahoo.com.

**Michael Miklovic**, 14612 W. 50th St., Shawnee, KS 66216 USA. Collects British Commonwealth, French Colonies, etc. Email: stumper1972@aol.com.

**Marcus Orsi**, 44 Ch.de Belle Cour, Onex 1213 SWITZERLAND. Email: marcuso@davidfeldman.com.

## Address Changes

George H. Paul, 1861 Cherry St. #3, Jacksonville, FL 32205-8715 USA

Mary Gleadall, Box 23, Site 2, RR1, Millarville, AB T0L 1K0 CANADA

## Resigned

None this quarter

## New Email Address

**Patricia Capill**: colinpat255@gmail.com

## Deceased

**M.B.B. Hellings**, *Life Member*

**Brian Brooks**, *Life Member*

**Alan Fincham**

## Donations

*(And thanks!)*

None this quarter

## BRITISH WEST INDIES STUDY CIRCLE PUBLICATIONS

### ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF JAMAICAN PHILATELY, VOLUME 9 MILITARY MAILS

by Paul Farrimond and Raymond Murphy

This book is based on the original written by the late Derek Sutcliffe; it has been thoroughly revised and largely re-written. It continues the aim of presenting the Jamaica Encyclopaedia in a new softbacked format with many illustrations now in full colour. **WINNER OF GOLD MEDAL AND GRAND AWARD FOR LITERATURE AT CHICAGOPEX 2015!**

A4 sized, perfect bound, (viii) + 458 pages. ISBN: 978-1-907481-24-6

Price: \$38.00. BWISC/BCPSG Members' Price: \$34.00.

This book can be ordered from the American Philatelic Society (APS)  
(stamps.org/Publications)



# President's Message

By John Seidl

The Chicago Philatelic Society did an amazing job hosting the 131st Chicago-pex show in November. Our annual meeting was attended by several members with a discussion focused on a few important topics. We discussed expanding our membership. This could include a direct mail campaign targeting APS members who share our interests; a direct participation in local, regional and national shows – exhibits, brochures, member gatherings; advertising in APS show programs; merging with other philatelic groups with a common interest; and supporting our *Journal* and other society programs like the BCPSG Library. Write an article, borrow a book for your next research project, run an advertisement, donate your library holdings.

Needless to say, each membership growth idea has the associated implications and potential costs. We already advertise in the APS show programs with a member covering the cost as a donation. I've used the APS (American Philatelic Society) mailing list with another stamp club and had pretty good results. APS provides the mailing labels for members who have indicated they collect our area and we then write PERSONAL letters to them inviting them to join. Let me know if you'd be willing to help with this effort or bring some brochures to your local show.

Our auction, while not the largest in our history, was still a success. Thank you to all the members who participated as both sellers and buyers. I found some great items to add to my collection! Look elsewhere in this issue to find the literature clearance sale! You'll find back issues of *The Circuit* and BCPSG monographs at bargain basement prices. Great as gifts too!

In the end the success of our group depends on your support. Volunteer to lead a study group, take on an officer role, write an article for the *Journal*, recruit new members: it's all easy and we need you! Don't forget to tell your BWI dealer that you saw their advertisement in our journal OR that you think they should advertise in our journal. The money we collect from our advertisers is what keeps us from needing to raise the society's dues. We also greatly appreciate financial contributions from our members. You can even donate auction items in support of the group. We are 501(c) and you may be eligible for a tax deduction.



## Writer's Guidelines

Prospective authors are encouraged to submit articles for the *Journal*. We need a constant supply of material to fill these pages. The following are a few hopefully helpful hints to guide you in preparing a submission. These rules are not etched in the proverbial concrete, and you are encouraged to contact the editor (address and email on page 3) if you have a question.

- Electronic submissions are preferred, but not required. In sending a manuscript, whether typed and sent by regular mail, or by email, please follow these standard typesetting conventions: one space after periods or other punctuations, and indent paragraphs. No space need be left between paragraphs. Tables and charts should be prepared separately and not embedded in the text.
- If a file is sent by email, do so either as an attachment or "regular" email. You may also send material on CDs, disks, or Zip disk.
- Generally, scans used for web pages do not have sufficient resolution for use in print. Scan images at 300 dpi and at 100 percent (roughly the size of an average illustration in the *Journal*).
- If a scan is to be used as a color image, send it CYMK, not indexed color.
- Save the scan only as a jpeg or tiff image.
- Most important: send each scan as an attachment to your email and not embedded in the word processing document.

*If you follow these simple rules, it will make your editor a happy camper!*

## Deadlines *Deadlines Deadlines*

*We've all got them, and this journal is no different! Deadlines for receiving material for publication (and that means in the editor's hands, not mailed) and the anticipated mailing date for each of the quarterly issues of this publication are now found at the bottom of page 3.*

*Please take note of these dates!*

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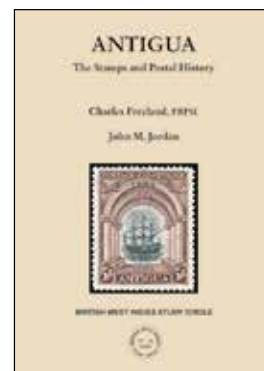
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## 'ANTIGUA - THE STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY'

by Charles Freeland, FRPSL and John Jordan

Coming so early in the alphabet Antigua has always been one of the most popular of the small Caribbean islands. It has an interesting mix of early stamps printed by Perkins Bacon and De La Rue including a number of rarities. On the postal history front Antigua is especially well endowed, with the Codrington and Tudway estate correspondences. There is also a rich variety of early postal markings, including some unique marks. The original inspiration for this book was the Antigua Monograph published in successive issues of the British Caribbean Philatelic Journal over a 15 year period between 1973 and 1988. This book collates all this information, updates it and presents it in a most readable form. **WINNER OF LARGE GOLD MEDAL AT NEW ZEALAND 15TH NATIONAL PHILATELIC LITERATURE EXHIBITION!**



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# CAYMAN ISLANDS POSTCARDS

(and QSL CARDS)

'CAYMAN ISLANDS POSTCARDS' by Thomas E. Giraldi. This long awaited book is here at last. Tom has over many years collected information on all aspects of Cayman Islands philately and has written this catalogue which is and will remain a steadfast guide to the cards of these islands. Lavishly illustrated in colour it will be a book which collectors of BWI picture postcards will refer to as a standard work for many years.

A4 size, softbacked, perfect bound, (iv) + 210 pages. ISBN: 978-1-907481-10-9

Price: \$21.00. BWISC/BCPSG Members' Price: \$18.50).



This book can be ordered from the American Philatelic Society (APS)  
([stamps.org/Publications](http://stamps.org/Publications))

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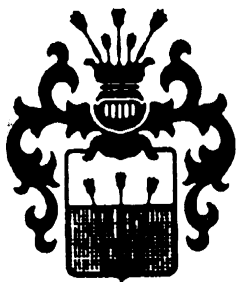
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