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Airmails of the West Indies



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Editor: Dr. Everett L. Parker, 207 Corinth Road, Hudson, ME 04449-3057 USA

Telephone: (207) 573-1686; email: everettparker1245@gmail.com

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

Membership Director: Dr. Norman T. Berlinger, 18 Sycamore Ln., Grosse Pointe, MI 48230 USA

Email: ntbdoc@aol.com

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

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

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

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Airmails of the West Indies

(Part 1)

By John Seidl

Original Author: Dr. John M. Lockie in 1964 – updates, edits and embellishments by John Seidl

The following information was originally published by the BCPSG in the 1960s – the original document and a supplement. This document is an effort to recreate and update this information. Darryl Fuller provided scans of the original documents which I have recreated here. While I have updated the format broadly, the content is largely unchanged except where I have incorporated more recent information from various islands. I have directly incorporated the supplement contents into the mainline document to make it more useful to readers. Once I had recreated Dr. Lockie's work I then went to my own philatelic library and incorporated information I found in the following books:

- *Antigua The Stamps and Postal History* by Charles Freeland and John M. Jordan
- *Bermuda by Air* by Charles Cwiakala
- *The Postal History of the Cayman Islands* by Thomas Giraldi and Dr. Peter P. McCann
- *St. Vincent 1899-1965* by Charles Freeland, Roy Bond and Russell Boylan
- *Encyclopaedia of Jamaican Philately* by Steve Jarvis
- *Montserrat to 1965* by L.E. Britnor and Charles Freeland
- *British Virgin Islands Stamps: Postal History, Philatelic and Thematic Aspects* by Georgio Migliavacca

Undoubtably there are errors and missing information throughout this document – your input is encouraged. I have recreated Dr. Lockie's work here to seek consolidated and updated information around this topic that will be shared via the BCPSG journal and website. Please send any updates or information to me at john.seidl@gmail.com.

The airmails of the West Indies form an interesting addition to any collection of their postage stamps, postmarks and postal history. First Flight covers are not, generally, costly, though there are some of which there are only a few in existence. The earliest First Flight covers date from January 1919 (see Barbados), but the majority date from 1929 or early 1930, when Pan American Airways and the New York Rio and Buenos Aires Airline (N.Y.R.B.A.) started regular northward and southward bound airmail services throughout the Caribbean. The earlier flights are based on F.A.M. routes 5, 6-10, and the N.Y.R.B.A. line, and the later ones on F.A.M. 17, 18, 22 and 33.



First flight cover to U.S., September 26, 1929.

Antigua: The first flights to and from Antigua commenced in September 1929 by Pan American Airways, followed in February and March 1930 by the N.Y.R.B.A. line. Today, Antigua is served by flights of most of the big airlines.

DATE	FROM	TO	NOTES
September 22, 1929	Miami	Antigua	Special cachet, 80x57mm in mauve, "First Flight/ Seaplane and Braque/San Juan - Paramaribo". The cachet was applied in San Juan, Puerto Rico and often irrespective of the destination.
September 22, 1929	Antigua	Castries, Port of Spain, Georgetown, B.G., Paramaribo	One of the two planes involved in this P.A.A. service known as F.A.M. 6 was piloted by Charles Lindbergh.
September 26, 1929	Antigua	St. Thomas, San Juan, Santo Domingo, Port au Prince, Havana, Miami	Special cachet: three lines in black, "First Air Mail / Antigua to U.S.A. / September 1929"
February 25, 1930	Antigua	St. Thomas, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Port au Prince, Santiago de Cuba, Miami	First N.Y.R.B.A. flight. Special cachet: two lines in black, "Air mail / via Nyrbaline"
March 7, 1930	Antigua	St. Lucia, Trinidad and South America	First southward N.Y.R.B.A. flight.
November 11, 1930	Antigua	Cayenne, Fr. Guiana & Para, Brazil	P.A.A. Inaugural Service to Para, Brazil, FAM 10
November 11, 1930	Antigua	Buenos Aires	N.Y.R.B.A. first flight
February 10, 1931	Antigua	Maturin, VZ, Cristobal, Panama	P.A.A. F.A.M. 5 western extension.
July 1, 1931	Salvador	Antigua	First P.A.A. flight. Special cachet, in red, 55x25mm, "Primer Correo Aero / El Salvador / Antigua BWI 19 Julio de 1931 / San Salvador C.A." Antigua cover backstamped July 12, 1931.
August 20, 1931	Antigua	Puerto Rico and Miami	First Dornier DO-X flight. Special cachet, 90x45mm, in black, applied by P.A.A.: "From Antigua / DO-X / Special Flight DOX / Pan American Airways / Cooperating as Special Agents"
October 26, 1931	Antigua	Buenos Aires	P.A.A. extension
July 14, 1937	Antigua	Martinique & Guadeloupe	P.A.A. extension. There was an experimental flight on the route July 1, also.

Bahamas: Commencing in January 1919, the Bahamas has been well served by the various airlines.

DATE	FROM	TO	NOTES
January 30, 1919	Nassau	Miami	Flight from Nassau by two U.S. seaplanes, 600 letters and cards were carried. Special cachet in two lines in black, "By Air Service / Nassau-Miami" or in three lines in red, "First Trip / Aeroplane/ Nassau to Miami".
November 8, 1926	Nassau	Miami	One of several special flights between 1919 and 1929. Special cachet in two lines in black, "Nassau / Air Mail".
October 16, 1928	Nassau	Miami	Survey flight by Pan American Airways.
January 2, 1929	Miami	Nassau	First P.A.A. flight. Special cachet, large circular cachet in violet, "First Flight / Air Mail / twin engine monoplane / International F.A.M. 7 Miami - Nassau". This is far less common than the return flight covers.
January 2, 1929	Nassau	Miami	Return flight. Special cachet, two lines in red, "By First Air Mail / To Miami, Fla".
February 1929	Nassau	Miami & northward	Sea and air. During this period, both Bahamian and U.S. stamps were affixed to letters. Correspondence traveled by sea to Miami and was then flown by air.
April 15, 1929	St. Paul, Minn.	Nassau	Experimental flight. Arrived in Nassau April 22, 1929
January 2, 1930	Nassau	Miami	First P.A.A. flight. Thence by FAM 5 to most W.I. islands by service which commenced in September 1929. Special cachet, three lines in red: "First Daily Flight / Nassau to Miami / 1930". The other cachets seen on these covers are those applied by Dr. Hess. Some of these covers were inscribed, "Sikorsky Amphibian NC 9775" and signed by the pilot, Mr. C.A. Buhr.
December 3, 1930	Nassau	Jamaica	P.A.A. flight. See Jamaica flight of Dec. 2, 1930.
June 29, 1931	Salvador	Nassau	First P.A.A. connection. Special cachet, 54x 24mm in blue, "Primer Correo Aero / El Salvador a / Islas Bahamas / 29 de Junio de 1931 / San Salvador C.A."
March 1934 to March 1937	Nassau	Miami & northward	Sea and air. Special cachet in two lines, "By Air Mail / In United States Only."
1940s			Wartime R.A.F. airmail covers. T.R.D. inscribed "R.A.F. Station No. 111 / Official Mail / Nassau, Bahamas". These are very rare.
1942	Nassau	Europe	Inscribed "North Atlantic Ferry Service".

DATE	FROM	TO	NOTES
1944-1945	Nassau	Europe	Inscribed "Bomber Mail" and "RAF Overseas".
January 16, 1946	Nassau	Inter-island service	Bahamas Airways
April 19, 1948	Nassau	Miami	First flight by B.S.A.A.
April 2, 1950	Nassau	Kingston, Jamaica	First flight by B.W.A.I.
April 2, 1950	Kingston, Jamaica	Nassau	Violet cachet.
November 7, 1950	Nassau	New York	First flight by P.A.A. Stratocruiser direct.
August 4, 1951	Nassau	Kingston, Jamaica	First flight by Bahamas Airways.
November 3, 1955	Ship	San Salvador Island	Helicopter flight from Geophysical U.S. <i>Edisto</i> . Special cachet, two lines in violet, "Operation / Deep Freeze 1".
March 15, 1956	Nassau	Grand Turk	First flight by Bahamas Airways.
February 21, 1957	Nassau	New York	First flight by P.A.A. direct to New York. Special cachet in five lines, in black, "Statue of Liberty / First Flight / Nassau / New York / Beach Scene / Pan American / World's Most Experienced Airline".
February 21, 1957	New York	Nassau	First flight by P.A.A. direct to Nassau. Special cachet in five lines in green and red, "First Air Mail Flight / New York / Globe and Wing / Nassau / F.A.M. 5 / Pan American World Airways".
December 11, 1959	New York	Nassau	First P.A.A. jet service.
January 30, 1960	New York	Nassau	First BOAC Comet 4 service. Special cachet - United Nations 50 x 30mm in green-blue, "First Flight / BOAC Comet 4 / NEW YORK / BAHAMAS" or in three lines in green, "BOAC / First Jet Service / New York / Nassau." Also with first cachet in purple with "United States" rather than U.N.
March 25, 1961	West End, Bahamas	Miami	Bahamas Airways first flight. Not a cachet but envelope inscribed in blue, "Bahamas Airways / Nassau Bahamas" and in 45 x 47mm box, "First Flight Cover / Grand Bahama / to / The United States / March 25, 1961 / carried by / Bahamas / Airways". Covers are seen without the Bahamas Airways insignia and address at top.
April 11, 1961	London	Nassau	First flight BOAC Jet-Prop.

DATE	FROM	TO	NOTES
April 11, 1961	New York	Nassau	First BOAC 707 flight. Special cachet in red or blue for the U.S. or pale green for the U.N., "BOAC / Jetliner Service / map showing route from New York to Bahamas to Lima and jet plane in flight / First Flight / New York / to Lima / Peru / April 11 1961".
April 11, 1961	Nassau	Lima, Peru	First BOAC 707 flight (see above).
April 12, 1961	Lima, Peru	Nassau	Return BOAC flight. Special cachet, 40 x 20mm in blue, "BOAC / Vuelo Inaugural / Lima-Londres".
May 5, 1962	Miami	Nassau	First flight Cunard-Eagle Airways. Special cachet, 55 x 55mm in violet, "Cunard Eagle Airways / Miami / Nassau / Jet Tail / First Jet Air Service".
May 5, 1962	Nassau	Miami	Return flight by Cunard Eagle Airways. Special cachet, 51 x 37mm in pale green, with two Cunard jet engines: "Nassau, Bahamas / to / Miami, Florida / First Jet / Mail Service".

Dr. Lockie indicated that he had little or no information about the first flights or cachets of the Bahamas Airways flights.



First flight cover, January 2, 1929 to Miami.

February 21, 1957 first flight cover to New York from Nassau.



Part II will be in the April 2021 issue!



Ex Graham HOEY

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A glimpse at the past ...

The Abacos and their postmarks

By Malcolm D. Watts

Early maps from the Age of Discovery show the Abaco Islands area as “Habacoa,” but it seems that it was inhabited only by nature until 1786. It was during that year that persecuted Loyalists from New England fled to this Bahama out-island to make it their home. They maintained a close-knit community for many years, and one can still detect echoes of Colonial America folk-ways among their descendants, blonde-haired and blue-eyed, who still live there.

Abaco is the most northern group in the Bahamas, made up of Great and Little Abaco plus hundreds of cays. In shape, it appears like an ancient boomerang stretching for 130 emerald miles from Walkers Cay down to the southern tip of Great Abaco at Hole-in-the-Wall. The group covers an area of some 770 square miles and has a population of around 7,000 (editor: this was written in 1981).

The two main islands are covered with pine forests interspersed with lakes. Here one will find wild boars, horses, duck, and pigeon, and their shooting provides a popular sport with the visitor. The Abacos are rich in farmland, forestry, fishing, and shipbuilding; local lumber has been a major export for many years, although the best of the lumber has now been used up.

Marsh Harbour, situated on Great Abaco, is by far the largest settlement, and is fast developing as a commercial center. Most of the villages are on the eastern cays, those being Walkers Cay, Spanish Cay, Great Turtle Cay, Treasure Cay, Man-of-War Cay, and Elbow Cay, where charming little Hope Town is dominated by its candy-striped lighthouse.

For the postmark collector, the Abacos offer quite a challenge. A complete collection of all the offices and cancellation types is likely to prove difficult, the reason being that a number of offices are now closed. These, the sites of former lumber camps, are: Cornwall, Millville, Normans Castle, and Spencer’s Point. Two other offices, at Old Place and Walkers Cay, have also closed, although these were not lumber camps. Over recent years a number of temporary rubber datestamps (TRDs) have seen use at the various offices, and this helps to make postmark collecting even more interesting.

The offices, with opening dates where known, are as follows:

Cedar Harbour, 1938	Marsh Harbour,* 1884
Cherokee Sound, 1881	Millville, by 1929, closed 1934
Coopers Town, by 1930	Moores Island, 1956
Cornwall, 1934, closed by 1944	Normans Castle, by 1919, closed 1929
Crossing Rocks, 1949	Old Place, 1910, closed around 1940
Dundas Town, by 1946	Sandy Point,* 1940
Fox Town, 1957	Spencer’s Point, by 1907, closed around 1916
Great Guana Cay, by 1900	Treasure Cay, ?
Green Turtle Cay,* 1881	Walkers Cay, 1953, closed 1958
Hope Town, 1881	
Man-of-War Cay, 1890s	* = District Post Office

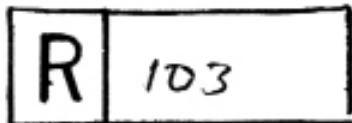
POSTMARKS



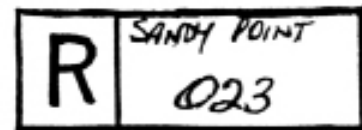
MARSH HARBOUR POSTMARKS



REGISTRATION MARKS



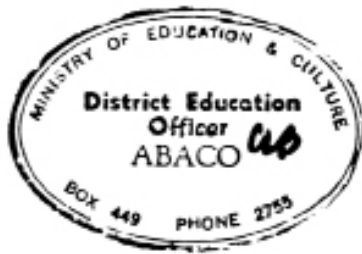
MARSH HARBOUR
R. No. 091



TREASURE CAY
postmark

Some “official” stamps of the Abacos are shown below. As in many West Indian territories, these are the office stamps of various government departments, and when struck on OHMS letters and initialled, they enable these letters to go post free internally. They are of many different shapes and colors.

OFFICIAL STAMPS



This article on postmarks of the Exumas is reprinted from the April 1981 issue of the British Caribbean Philatelic Journal.

We (still) need articles!

The situation is getting critical again as there is not enough material to fill these pages (and that's why we use filler such as this!).

Please continue to prepare and send items for publication, and please be patient as not all material can be printed at once!

The Editor

Please Help!

Yup, it's the same message as at left -- your editor is seriously in need of articles for this publication! You have always come through before -- now we need to step up and do it again. The situation is critical! The well is nearly dry on future articles. I am really uncomfortable unless I have at least a dozen articles available for forthcoming issues.

Please help create a backlog for me! And please do it now!

Waterlow plate serial numbers or “house” numbers: British Guiana

By Nick Halewood

Waterlow & Sons allocated a unique five-figure serial number to each plate from which stamps were to be printed. These plate serial numbers¹ or “house numbers,”² were allocated chronologically regardless of the country or denomination. They were basically for Waterlow’s internal use and did not usually appear on the issued sheets because they were guillotined off when the sheets were trimmed, being outside the printed marks indicating the sheet edges.

In most cases this happened but occasionally the numbers were trimmed off only partially (*Figure*



Figure 1
British Guiana 1954-63 12¢ (with Guyana independence overprint).
Top margin with frame plate #47821. Imperforate block of 12.

1) or not trimmed off at all (*Figures 2, 3*). In 1963, De La Rue & Company, Ltd. took over the printing of stamps of several British colonies, including



Figure 2
British Guiana 1954-63 12¢
(with Guyana independence overprint).
Top margin with frame plate #46261 and
vignette plate #46255.



Figure 3
British Guiana 1954-63 \$2 value.
Bottom margin with frame plate #46254
and De La Rue imprint.

British Guiana, previously printed by Waterlow & Sons. The margins of sheets produced by De La Rue were generally much wider than those on Waterlow sheets and hence the “house numbers” could be completely or partially visible (*Figure 3*).

Two-color stamps were printed from two separate plates, usually one for the frame and one for the vignette, each plate having its own unique number (*Figure 2*). Some numbers have a period between the second and third digits, as on the \$2 block in Figure 3, “46.254”.

Figures 4 and 5 show partial “house numbers” in the top margins of two values that were truncated but not on guillotining. The paper coating in both cases stops short of the sheet edge and the plate impression is confined to the coating, causing the tops of the numbers to be missing.

Brian Livingstone of The King George VI Collectors Society is compiling a list of Waterlow “house



Figure 4
British Guiana 1954-63 24¢ (with Guyana independence overprint doubled, one diagonal). Top margin with frame plate #46252, number partially absent but not due to guillotining.



Figure 5
British Guiana 1954-63 36¢, top margin with frame plate #46257, number partially absent, but not due to guillotining.



Figure 6
St. Christopher, Nevis & Anguilla 1954-63 1¢, top margin with vignette plate #45147.



Figure 7
St. Christopher, Nevis & Anguilla 1954-63 12¢, top margin with vignette plate #45128.

numbers,” so could members please check their collections and if they have examples of any country or reign, please send the details listed below, and if possible, color scans to me at editor@kg6.info. Please send country, Stanley Gibbons’ number, catalogue value, plate serial number, color of the serial plate number(s), margin involved and rough position in margin. This information will be a great help as we continue to explore this interesting subject.

Postscript

Here are three examples of “house numbers” on St. Christopher, Nevis and Anguilla 1954-63 denominations. The numbers in all cases are in the top margin, but in different positions. The numbers for the 1¢ (*Figure 6*) and 12¢ (*Figure 7*) are in the vignette color, respectively, but was the 8¢ (*Figure 8*) printed from one or two plates? The numbers on the 8¢ and 12¢ have a “period” between the second and third digits but that on the 1¢ does not.

References

¹ “Waterlow Plate Serial Numbers.” *GEOSIX*, Whole Number: 245, September 2012, pp. 7-8.

² Brian Livingstone, “Serial Numbers from the Printing Plates of Waterlow & Sons (“House Numbers” *GEOSIX*, Whole Number 253, September 2014, pp. 7-14.



Figure 8
St. Christopher, Nevis & Anguilla 1954-63 8¢, top margin with vignette plate #46947.



Figure 9
British Guiana 1954-63 12¢ (with Guyana independence overprint). Top margin with frame plate #47821. (This is the same stamp shown in Figure 1, but fully perforated).

A look at Grenada “surcharge postage” overprinted postage due stamps

By Hap Pattiz

Many years ago, 1975 to be exact, Dan Walker, a great philatelic researcher and world-class collector of Grenada, tackled some hard questions about why the “Surcharge Postage” overprinted postage due stamps of Grenada were issued and what purpose (other than as ordinary postage dues) they were intended to serve.

Dan amassed as much material as he could, and having reviewed it carefully, he concluded that this issue (Scott #J4-7, Gibbons #D4-7) was probably

a set of postage due stamps (Scott #J1-3, Gibbons #D1-3) which served the normal purpose of accounting for postage due on underpaid mail. These issues remained in use until July 1906 (1911 for the 1d value), when a new set of stamps in the same denominations was issued, with the lower panel changed from “Surcharge Postage” to “Postage Due.”

This first issue is very similar in design to the first postage dues of Trinidad issued in 1885, and,



Figure 1
Cover to “THE STORES” with 1d on 8d surcharged stamp
dated August 12, 1892.

released as a “philatelic speculation” and that virtually all known usages are on “philatelic” covers.

In the years that have passed, the author (among many other serious collectors) have concluded that these issues were not philatelic and their usage was not to create philatelic covers for collectors. Rather, they were used to frank business return envelopes for local merchants in an experiment similar to the “drop mail” system then in use in other parts of the British Empire. We showed the evidence from our research to Dan Walker and he concurred with our assessment.

Here’s the story. In April 1892, Grenada issued

indeed, appears to have used the same value plates as those subsequently used in Grenada until the currency change in March 1952.

It is worth noting that these standard issue Grenada postage dues are quite rare in unused condition, indicating no speculative philatelic accumulation. Indeed, there is evidence of several printings of these stamps, apparently requested from De La Rue only when supplies ran low.

It is difficult to reconstruct the post office history of this period for Grenada because whatever records may have existed were destroyed in a fire in 1898 (which was followed by other subsequent



Figure 2
Cover to “THE STORES” with 2d on 8d surcharged stamp,
dated August 20, 1892.

fires over the years).

The overprinted “Surcharge Postage” stamps were first issued in August 1892, when the 1d on 8d and 2d on 8d came into use. The earliest dates for these stamps is August 12, 1892. The 8d stamp, issued in 1885, appears to have had little use, so there likely was a surplus of these stamps in stock at the Grenada post office. Only a small number of the 8d were overprinted, perhaps only two sheets, or in all, 480 stamps. Likely none of these was available for purchase at the post office, since unused overprinted stamps are so rare.

Apparently the overprinted 8d stamps were in use only until the middle of October 1892, when the supply must have been exhausted. The latest known date of use is October 14 for the 1d on 8d and for the 2d on 8d.

The experimental use of these overprinted stamps, however, was not over. The postmaster had arranged for the same overprint on sheets of the 6d stamp (Scott and Gibbons #34). There appear to have been more of the 6d overprinted, perhaps six sheets, or 1,440 stamps. These were in use from mid-October 1892 (October 19 for 1d on 6d, October 18 for 2d on 6d) to approximately November 1892 when, with some exceptions, their usage ceased.

We believe that the local merchants asked the postmaster to allow them to use a form of business reply envelope for their customers to whom state-

ments would be sent. Rather than put stamps on the return envelopes (intended for return payments), the merchant would pay only the regular postage charge when the return envelope was delivered to the merchant by the post office (without any additional surcharge or fine for postage due [normally double the deficiency]).

The rate for local mail within St. George’s was 1d, and for mail from outside the capital, 2d. The postmaster applied the new overprinted stamps of the proper denomination to each envelope received in the post office, cancelled the stamp, then delivered the envelope to the merchant upon payment of the sums due.

This process must have been very time consuming for the postmaster and was likely discontinued in early November because the postmaster must have found the process too expensive and unrewarding. It is worth noting that (with very few exceptions) virtually all of the known covers showing usage of these issues is with the small size envelopes which would contain the merchant’s statements to their customers.

Although still uncommon, or even rare, unused overprinted 6d stamps do exist. There remained a stock of the unused overprinted 6d stamps when the postmaster terminated the experiment in November 1892, and these were eventually allowed to be sold over the counter at the post office.

The regular issue Queen Victoria stamps which

were overprinted were issued in panes of 60 (four panes to a sheet) with alternate rows inverted. Therefore, tete-beche pairs of the basic stamps and of the overprinted stamps existed. However, multiples of the overprinted stamps are very rare, and only vertical multiples show the tete-beche arrangement. In a sense, this is understandable if the overprinted stamps were not for sale, but were only to be used by postal personnel when placed directly on the unstamped return envelopes as received in the post office. The rarity of multiples is especially apparent for the 8d overprinted stamps for which the author can trace only one for the 2d on 8d (used on piece). No horizontal pairs or larger multiples are known.

For the 6d overprinted stamps, there are several multiples known, including vertical unused strips of each value and at least two blocks of four (both used) of the 1d on 6d value and a block of five of the 1d on 6d on cover. Again, horizontal multiples are rare for the 6d mint with strips of four of each value being the largest.

Aside from the tete-beche pairs, the only listed variety is for the double overprint on the 1d on 6d. Apparently a pane of 60 of the 6d received the double overprint and it was noticed by the postmaster who refused to allow the variety to be issued or sold. However, after November 8, when the experiment was ended, the postmaster likely allowed this pane with the double overprint to be purchased (we believe by a local philatelist, G. Smith), but only

after the stamps were cancelled. This variety is only known used with the dates of November 10 or 12, 1892. A horizontal pair is known and the Ferrary sale included a used tete-beche pair (the whereabouts currently unknown), but the catalogues no longer list the double overprint variety in tete-beche pair.

The overprints on this issue were locally done and are quite crude. They appear to have been set up to cover either 30 or 60 stamps (a half or a full pane). There are numerous minor varieties in the overprint and substantial variations in the placement of the three lines of the overprint. So far a plating of the overprint to its setting has proven impossible (not enough multiples, too little plating information on the basic stamps). However, there are some distinctive overprint variations worth noting. These include in the Ferrary sale, missing part of the surcharge (no “postage”); “postace” for “postage,” variations on upright, inverted watermark, splayed “E” on basic stamp, etc.

POSTAL HISTORY

As noted with the items listed below, all covers showing usage of the overprinted stamps are on the small return business mail envelopes, and are addressed locally to merchants or professionals in St. George’s. The “normal” covers begin with August 12, 1892 for the 8d overprinted stamps. There is one cover known with a damaged tete-beche pair of the 1d on 8d and a few are known with single

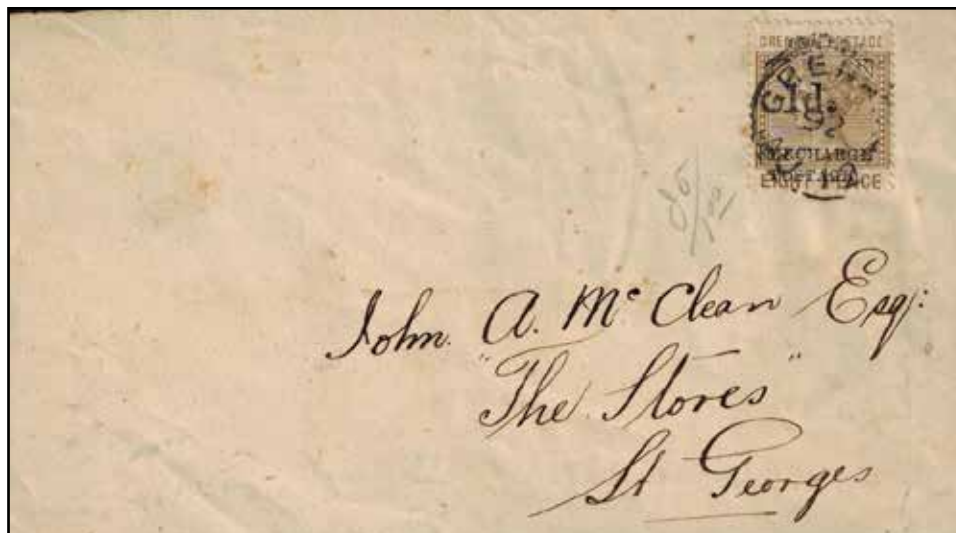


Figure 3

Cover to “John A. McClean, Esq., The Stores, St. Georges” with 1d on 8d surcharged stamp dated August 12, 1892.

stamps with partial margins.

There is also a cover front of a registered letter from Barbados showing a 2d on 8d along with a 3d of the first postage due issue -- the only known mixed usage item. In addition, there is a piece with a single of the 1d on 8d along with a tete-beche pair of the 2d on 8d placed over what appears to be a German cancel.



Figure 4
On-island cover from 1892.

At the time, the charge for forwarded and/or undeliverable mail was 5d and the doubled deficiency on a registered letter between places in the British Empire was likewise 5d.

During the time that these overprinted stamps were being used as part of the experiment in Grenada, other provisional issues also had been issued in St. Lucia. These St. Lucia provisionals had apparently attracted the attention of Mr. A.C. Smith, who was then resident on Grenada, and who, by all appearances, was a philatelist. Mr. Smith, in September 1892, arranged to have several covers (at least four have been accounted for) sent to him in Grenada and to which the 1d on 8d and 2d on 8d stamps were added and cancelled to reflect a postage due usage. These highly desired covers have attracted great philatelic interest (and with prices in the thousands of £ Sterling). Their use near the end of the period of 8d overprinted usage and before the 6d overprinted stamps issue also indicates a special relationship that Mr. Smith may have had with the postmaster.

Once the 6d overprinted stamps came into use



Figure 5
This is another cover addressed to "THE STORES" in Market Square.

in early October, their use became quite heavy. There are no known multiples of the 6d overprinted stamps on cover or piece.

One of the local addresses, David Seon (or Sean) received considerable mail during this period. However, on October 22, 1892, something unusual happened. A cover to Mr. Seon was received in the post office, properly stamped with the 1d on 6d overprint and then, somehow, two additional overprints were applied to the stamp and envelope -- one of them inverted -- and each weaker than the overprint on the stamp itself. What happened? Were some of the stamps placed on the envelopes un-overprinted and then a handstamp overprint applied to the stamp? Was there, somehow, a handstamp overprinting device inked on the postmaster's desk which someone came into contact with this stamped cover twice (once inverted) after it had been cancelled?

Please note that this is not an offset of the overprint, which would appear reversed, but rather two distinct additional overprints mistakenly applied to the stamp and envelope. Does this cover imply that rather than a likely setting of 30 or 60, that at least

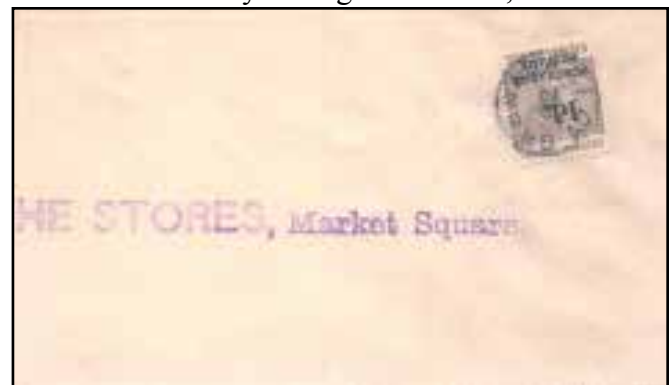


Figure 6
Another example of "THE STORES, Market Square" cover.

some of the overprints were applied individually by hand?

Mr. Smith was able to have covers sent to him and stamped with the 1d on 6d in November 1892, after these issues were apparently withdrawn from regular usage. Note that this date is also after the date of cancel on the double overprinted 1d on 6d stamps. Does anyone have correspondence from Mr. Smith, or other relatives, from this period? He did remain interested in postage due usages after this period.

The most spectacular cover showing the usage of the overprinted stamps was in the collection of the late Charles Freeland. This cover was sent from Grenada earlier in 1892, but was not delivered. Thus it was then returned to Grenada in late November 1892, where a forwarding fee of 5d was due. Even though by this time, the overprinted postage due issues had been withdrawn from general use for business reply mail, they apparently remained available in the post office and were valid for postage due usage. Therefore, the 5d charge was reflected by the block of five 1d on 6d which was applied to the cover and cancelled nearly two weeks later than any other usage.

This is the only reliable general postage due usage of the 6d overprinted stamps (there being only

two for the 8d overprinted stamps: the mixed usage on front from Barbados and the piece with the 2d on 8d tete-beche pair).



Figure 7

Another example of Grenada 1d cover.

Was there a “philatelic market” for provisional issues from this time period? Oh, yes. But there is no evidence that any of these overprinted postage due issues went to philatelists, except for those noted to Mr. Smith. All of the evidence available shows a temporary usage to accommodate local merchants, and this was carefully controlled by the Grenada postmaster, who eventually grew tired of the exercise and abruptly terminated the experiment.

KING EDWARD VII IMPERIUM KEYPLATES

Printings, Plate Number Allocations and Key Plate Varieties

by

Peter Fernbank FRPSL, Jeff and John Blinco

This work provides a study of the Imperium style key plate issues within the 16 colonies that employed this design. The formats of the key plates are determined and a detailed plating study of Key Plate 1 is provided, a rare example of such a study on a surface printing plate, whilst the ‘Spaven’ and ‘Missing Frame’ flaws are examined in depth. Philately has long misunderstood the format of Key Plate 2 and its true size and format is revealed. A study is made of the damage sustained to the marginal areas of the plates, particularly the marginal rules, which can assist in determining the date of printing of certain marginal examples. Individual colony sections list all printings for each colony and the use of ordinary or chalk-surfaced paper is recorded for all printings. The basis on which the plate number allocated to each printing has been deduced is given. Additional information has been derived from the De La Rue and Crown Agents records, together with that from philatelic literature, and any exceptional events noted.



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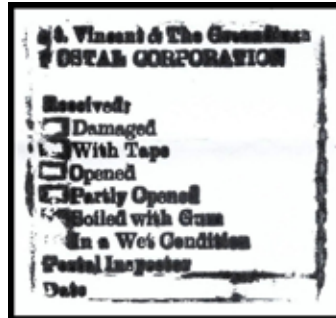
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St. Vincent Auxiliary Markings

By Steve Zirinsky

Here are some auxiliary markings recently recorded for St. Vincent.



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Were there three printing runs with the Leeward Islands 1954 8¢ duty plate?

By Nick Halewood

There were two printings of the Leeward Islands 1954 half-cent, two-cent, six-cent, 12-cent and 24-cent stamps, but only one of the other values. However, as I stated in the *British Caribbean Philatelic Journal* in 1992¹, I think there were two printing runs, at least with the duty plate, for the five-cent value, due to two distinctly different duty plate shades. Now, I think I also have proof that there were three printing runs with the duty plate for the eight-cent. Figures 1 to 3 show progressive damage to the duty plate marginal rule above stamps eight to 10. Does anyone have thoughts on this matter?

FOOTNOTE

¹ Nicholas J. Halewood, "Leeward Islands - Part IX, Last of the Line: The 1954 Definitives," *British Caribbean Philatelic Journal* Vol. 32, No. 3 (September 1992), 99-106.

Figure 1
Stamp 8, major dent;
Stamp 9, no dent;
Stamp 10, minor dent.



Figure 2
Stamp 8, major dent;
Stamp 9, major dent;
Stamp 10, minor dent.

Figure 3
Stamp 8, major dent;
Stamp 9, further damage;
Stamp 10, further damage.



St. Vincent Handbook 1899-1965

Amendments, corrections, additions & footnotes

By Roy Bond & Russell Boylan

In 2017, the British West Indies Study Circle (BWISC) published a substantial book by the late Charles Freeland, Roy Bond and Russell Boylan titled *St. Vincent Handbook 1899-1965*. The purpose of the book was to supplement the outstanding handbook on St. Vincent philately by Pierce, Messenger and Lowe, published by Robson Lowe in 1971.

Every year, the authors update the handbook with new information that has come to light. What follows is a listing of updates, changes and additions reported since the last update was published in the January 2019 issue of the *Journal*.

Chapter 10

Page 129, Section 10.4

Registered Envelopes

In respect of the 1938 envelopes (p. 131) the authors had reported that both the G and H2 sizes were hard to find used commercially. We can report on two recently discovered G size covers:

1) Dated February 16, 1939 from Kingstown to Bridgetown, Barbados. Uprated with 1½d scarlet and green definitive paying one ounce letter rate to Windward islands. Adhesive has been placed over the printed "FEE PAID" instead of the top right cor-

ner. Envelope is marked "Called at Office" in red manuscript. Very early use of this envelope as they had only been ordered October 1, 1938. The address appears to be to "Messrs W S Mansor" although it is hard to decipher the handwriting.

In the Postal Stationery section for Registered Envelopes (p. 131) the text reads as follows: "The registered envelopes were printed in two sizes, and both are hard to find commercially used. The smaller size corresponds to De La Rue's G, but both the horizontal and vertical sides are fractionally larger (Figure 10.4.7). The larger size is 230 x 102mm, about 4mm longer than the De La Rue H2 size, but much the same height. 33,000 examples were ordered from De La Rue on 1 October 1938."

I interpret this to relate only to the H2 size, or, is this the order for both? If so, then is it 33,000 of each envelope, or total for both? If both, then that begs the question as to how many of each were produced?

The reason for posing this is I have noted a 1938 PPRE size G on Chris Rainey's site "(1) Sent to Ohio, USA and uprated by 4d paying 2 ounce letter rate (2½d for 1st oz plus 1½d for additional oz). Dated 3 October 1938." This, of course, is only two days after the order was placed, if indeed it does apply to both sizes. I think, therefore, that the two are from separate consignments and that the "G" size may have an earlier order and dispatch date.

Do we have any way of checking this and wheth-



St. Vincent covers, both addressed to U.S.

er there are Bradbury Wilkinson records that can be checked? Are the Bradbury Wilkinson records available online somewhere?

In addition I have found a 1949 six-cent PPRE on David Morrison's website. It is addressed from Kingstown to Philadelphia, U.S.A. by airmail and dated October 21, 1952. Uprated with 2 x 10 cents + 24 cent definitives and paying 44 cents for one ounce letter (2 x 22 cents) per half ounce. David also has another 1938 PPRE cover, dated April 12, 1939, so not sure how we report this.

I will probably acquire both of these as they are excellent additions to my postal history exhibit I am building. They are shown at the bottom of the previous page.

Appendix A

Page 231

Here is an update to "Appendix A - The Brigands War." While this is not really a philatelic matter, it does bring closure to this particular Appendix, by bringing the history of the Black Caribs up to the 21st century.

At the end of this war, the remaining Black Caribs were all shipped to Balliceaux, a small, inhospitable island in the Grenadines, where the last 3,500 Carib men, women and children, from a pre-war population estimated at nearly 9,000, were all kept until March 9, 1797, by which date the island population had been reduced by disease, thought to be possibly Typhus, but probably Yellow Fever, to a mere 2,248. On that day, the remainder were loaded onto HMS *Experiment* and a flotilla of nine smaller transports and they had their last look at the green mountains of Youroumayn (the Carib name for St. Vincent). One of the transports, the *Prince William Henry*, was later captured by the Spanish and taken to Trujillo, but was then taken back by the British, with the Caribs still on board and completed the journey to Rattan a week or so after the others.

They were taken to Rattan Island off the coast of Honduras, but they only remained there for a few months and then collectively moved out to the east coast of the mainland into Nicaragua. Here they actually prospered for several years to the extent that they outstripped their environment and had to expand into Honduras, Guatamala and British Hondu-

ras, now Belize, where they still keep themselves as a separate nation, maintaining their own language and customs, just as they had on St. Vincent, and called themselves the Garifuna. They have continued to expand over the last 200 years in this region to a population of about 1.5 million and still class themselves as a proud independent nation with their own history, customs, language and society.

However, after the American Civil War there was a great shortage of workers for the large industrial cities of the northern states, especially Chicago, Detroit and New York. So in the 1870s and 1880s large numbers of the Garifuna moved to these cities from Central America for work. Yet to this day, they maintain their own culture, language, history and society in these cities and still celebrate their halcyon days past on the island of St. Vincent, with annual festivals and gatherings. The populations now are about 750,000 in Chicago and 750,000 in New York with about 500,000 in Detroit, totaling approximately two million in the U.S.A.

So in spite of the efforts of the British, they have prospered to a total population of over 3.5 million souls, who still maintain the ancient traditions and culture of the Caribbean natives going back to the 10th and 11th centuries. Indeed, back in 1963, a group of the Garifuna from Chicago went back to St. Vincent and there created and erected a statue to Chattoyer on Sion Hill, where he was killed in battle by Major Leith in 1796.

Nuggets from the past ...

In the October 1981 journal, M. Moreton Black wrote about discovery of a new King George VI registration envelope from the Bahamas. Also, Michael L. Perlin discussed the fascinating world of unexploded booklets, noting there was an "exploding" market for them.

Ed Addiss and Ian Woodward teamed up to provide information on establishment of the Tobago inland post. Harold M. Honig provided a detailed report on how overprint and surcharge errors occur, illustrating the article with a printing press design. Tom Giraldi wrote about a new Jamaica transit mark, and Reg Lant provided a report on "unpaid and tax" markings of Jamaica.

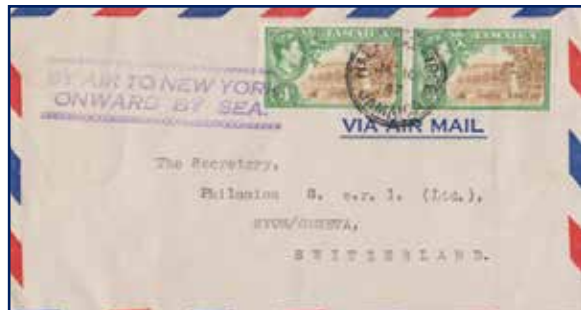
Secretary Howard Austin reported six new members for the quarter.

A Jamaican instructional airmail handstamp?

By Tom Giraldi

Cayman Islands Study Group Leader

This short article deals with a purple instructional handstamp I discovered on the four illustrated covers. Destinations include Gilbert & Ellice Islands, Holland and Switzerland (two). The handstamp: "BY AIR TO NEW YORK/ ONWARD BY SEA" (McQueen Type 1 and Giraldi Type 5B) is listed as a Jamaican marking with known period of usages ranging from November 6, 1947 to April 26, 1948. Two covers were mailed from Jamaica and two from Grand Cayman. Questions include when and where did the mark originate, and why is it listed under Jamaican markings? It was used for a couple of years and then disappeared. Has anybody else seen it and have examples of it?



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Vignettes of Barbados Britannia Covers

By M. Fitz Roett



When the first stamps of Barbados were placed on sale, two cancellation devices were issued to each parish post office. These devices were numbered 1 through 11; #1 was allocated to the G.P.O. in Bridgetown. This forwarded cover is dated May 25, 1852, and is one of the earliest examples of the usage of packet mail. It is franked with a pair of the 1d deep blue. It has a #6 cancel from the parish of St. Joseph and is the only recorded cover so franked and to England.

The cover is assessed at 2d Inland rate plus the correct rate of 1/-. (6d. x 2 = 1/-.) indicated by the black manuscript "IN" for the packet charge due on delivery. The black manuscript "4" (deleted) was applied in error.

Nuggets from the past ...

In the April 2009 journal, Jerone R. Hart wrote about secrecy, military bases and Pan American Airways, showing and discussing an unusual World War II cover from Barbados to Trinidad. Edward Barrow discussed the 1882 Trinidad 1d on 6d surcharges and the reasons for their being issued. Hap Pattiz discussed the contents of a 1930 letter which contained information about St. Lucia airmail. The late Charles Freeland authored an extensive article on censorship in the Caribbean during World War II, and Dr. Eric M. Bateson of Australia provided a look at high denomination stamps of the older issues of the British West Indies on philatelic covers. Tim Anderson provided a photograph of an old aqueduct on Tobago, taken in 2003, and Dr. P.J Ramphal of Canada continued his column on British Guiana, this time exploring an 1882 bisect on cover. There were seven new members for the quarter.

Membership Director's Report Norman T. Berlinger Membership Director

New Members

Richard Bruce Carithers, 794 Robert Jesse Dr., Dacula, GA 30019 USA. Email: railsplitter68@gmail.com

Sean Peters, 34 Stacy Ave., Streator, IL 61364 USA. Email: thealtomroute1982@hotmail.com

Linda Kumin, 8300 Burdette Rd., Apt. 322D, Bethesda, MD 20817 USA. Email: lkumin@yahoo.com

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What does your "stamp den" look like?



Research is important for Steve Schumann. To that end, having literature at hand makes a lot of sense. Steve reports he has a complete run of the British Caribbean Philatelic Journal as well as all Royal Philatelic Society London publications from 1875, all of the American Philatelic Congress books and many other facets of philatelic literature. His material is heavy in refernces for postal stationery and postal history. Can we share photos of your "stamp den"? Send to the editor today!

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President's Message

By John Seidl

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and some safe time with immediate family. 2020 was certainly a difficult year for all of us and I know we're all hoping 2021 is better. Please be sure to renew your membership as we're doing our best to sustain the BCPSG to the fullest extent possible.

It may be 2022 before we have another in person meeting, but we do hope to put together an auction at some point in 2021. Bill Gompel has volunteered to manage an auction for our group in 2021. Watch your email for a lot submission and auction instructions. The BCPSG auction is a lot of work so I really appreciate Bill volunteering to take this one. I'd like to see as many members as possible to participate as sellers and buyers!

We have several other volunteer roles – most with minimum time commitments – so check out the masthead of this journal or our website to see all those flagged as expired or vacant. Our society is only as strong as our members make it. While you're on the www.bcpsg.com website you'll see that almost every back issue of our journal is available electronically. We are missing a few here and there, but will fill in the gaps over time.

We also need articles for the *Journal* and that is a great way to have an immediate impact on our group. Everett will work with you on layout and formatting – take a few hours and gather your thoughts on your favorite British Caribbean philatelic topic. You'll find a recent effort from me around First Flights in this issue. Your feedback and input on any topic is encouraged!

Please consider a donation to the BCPSG when paying your 2021 dues – our treasury declines each year as our expenses exceed our income. How about making a New Year's resolution to recruit a couple of new members this year? Our dues are constant and not expensive. Thank you.



The little society with the long name



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