

CONVENTION 2013



Federico Borromeo presenting his display of BWI postal history



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BRITISH WEST INDIES STUDY CIRCLE

OBJECTIVES

- 1 TO promote interest in and the study of the stamps and postal history of the islands that comprise the British West Indies and in addition BERMUDA, BRITISH GUIANA (GUYANA) and BRITISH HONDURAS (BELIZE) and the Postal History and markings of all other Caribbean territories during any period that they were under British administration or control, and those British Post Offices which operated in the Caribbean, and Central or South America.
- 2 TO issue a quarterly BULLETIN containing articles, items of interest and other features of BWI interest. The BWISC BULLETIN was presented with the ABPS Specialist Society journal Award in 2004.
- 3 TO encourage, assist or sponsor the authorship and publication of definitive handbooks, monographs or other works of reference appropriate to the aims of the Circle. The BWISC has published over 20 books or Study Papers over the last 12 years, some of which have received prestigious awards.
- 4 TO hold an annual auction for the sale of members' material.
Normally, prior to the auction, the BWISC holds its Annual General Meeting.
- 5 TO organise occasional display meetings including a biennial weekend Convention and bourse.
This offers further opportunities for members to buy and sell material.
- 6 TO maintain an internet website where information about Circle activities is publicised and where much other relevant information is posted.
- 7 TO maintain a specialised library from which home members can borrow books.

**Opinions expressed in articles in this Bulletin are those of the authors
and not necessarily those of the BWISC, its Editor or its Officers.**

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IN THIS ISSUE		Page
Programme of Events & Information		3
Honiley Convention report	George Dunbar	3
Collett Roll of Honour	George Dunbar	4
Robert Devaux O.B.E.	Guy Kilburn	7
Subsidised Mail Contracts to the West Indian Colonies, 1863 – 1917	Michael Oliver	8
The Barbados 1916 booklet	Charles Freeland	13
Cayman Islands Censorship – The 'OK' and 'PC' labels	James Podger	16
Formal Display, BWISC Convention 2013	Federico Borromeo	21
King Edward VII Keyplate, Plate 1 Removed Jubilee Line	Peter Brookes	32
Trinidad 1869 Five Shillings rose-lake/maroon	Michael Medlicott	32
Tutorial on the use of computers — BWISC Convention 2013	Steve Jarvis	34
Auction Update	Charles Freeland	35
Membership, Web-Master's & Editor's Reports		39

SOCIETY PROGRAMME OF EVENTS & INFORMATION

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Saturday 26 April 2014 – AGM and Auction at Spink, 69 Southampton Row, Bloomsbury, London, WC1B 4ET. Viewing from 12 noon, AGM at 1.15pm, followed by the Auction at 2.15pm.

Thursday 6 November 2014 – BWISC 60th Anniversary display at the Royal Philatelic Society London. Further details to be announced.

THE HONILEY CONVENTION

GEORGE DUNBAR

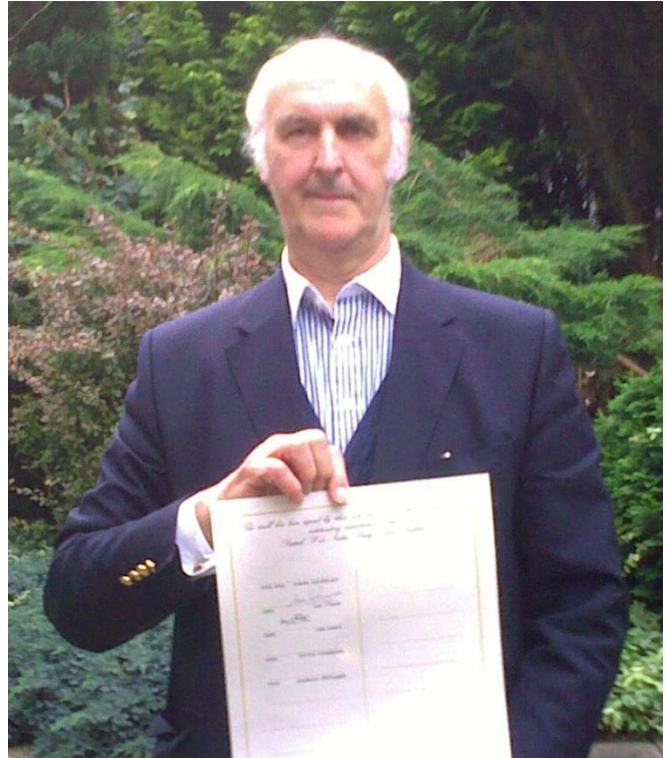
The 2013 Convention took place at Honiley Hotel, Warwickshire, on the 5th and 6th October. The 43 members and dealers who attended were treated to two outstanding invited displays, and a number of excellent informal displays of BWI philately.

On Saturday afternoon, Simon Greenwood presented his British Honduras, a collection of exceptional quality, including nearly all the early rarities (a summary will be in the March bulletin). He presented with style and gentle self-deprecating English humour. Peter Ford gave the vote of thanks, stressing the rarity of much of the material. Steve Jarvis gave a seminar on IT tools in philately that created a buzz, discussing key points such as choosing the most appropriate file format for images. He recommended the website "<http://retroreveal.org/>", where collectors can submit an image of a stamp, and receive several transformed versions of the image. These transformations are useful for revealing and emphasising key features of the stamp.

At the dinner Charles Freeland, as President, highlighted the Circle's continuing achievements, especially in publications, the auction, and the Bulletin. Charles mentioned the importance of the contribution of our Treasurer, Ray Stanton, to the running and success of the Circle. He reminded us, too, of the members who had died since the last convention but also noted an influx of new and hopefully far younger members.

COLLETT ROLL OF HONOUR

Frank Deakin after signing the Roll of Honour at his home in Exmouth, July 2013.



Ian Chard after signing the Roll of Honour in Broadford, Skye, September 2013.



Ian Jakes signing the Roll of Honour, near Cavendish, Derby, September 2013

The previous living winners of the Collett Memorial Trophy were invited to sign the new Roll of Honour. Ian Chard, Frank Deakin, and Ian Jakes had signed earlier, as they were unable to attend the Convention. Peter Fernbank and Simon Goldblatt were present to sign, introduced by Ray Stanton. A panel of Simon Goldblatt, Ian Jakes and Ray Stanton had considered the best contribution to the Bulletin for the years 2011 and 2012. Simon announced that the winner was Charles Freeland. He praised the quality of Charles' contributions, particularly his article on Grenada Badge of the Colony issues in Bulletin 231, which satisfied all of the award's criteria

regarding original research. Simon noted that the article had studied a 'set' which seemed straightforward at first glance, and revealed a depth of philatelic interest that obliged us to see it in a new light. Charles Freeland, on behalf of his fellow members of the book award panel, Graham Booth and Michael Medicott, then announced that there would be two winners of the Award in 2013 for the 'books' category: Peter Fernbank and Michael Rego. Peter said some words of thanks and praised the work of Peter Ford, who drives forward the Circle's intensive and unrivalled publication programme.

On Sunday morning, entertainment was provided by the mistress of ceremonies in the breakfast room, who guided guests this way (BWISC) or that way (coach party) and had little tolerance for insubordination in the matter of either tea or toast. But the day broke to clear blue skies, and warmed quickly.

Federico Borromeo d'Adda brought treasure from Italy, putting up before lunch a selection of the finest Caribbean philatelic gold (see later). There were expressions across members' faces of fascination, and bliss. He described a little the genesis of his collection, and generously gave us time to view and enjoy looking at the material. Simon Goldblatt delivered the vote of thanks with fitting oratory.

After lunch, members gathered around a panel of experts and presented questionable items for an opinion. These ranged from a Jamaica cover with a hand drawn imitation of a handstamp [albino strike inked in, probably by a collector] to three copies of Barbados SG 5 [one good; one undecipherable; one with an anachronistic bootheel mark, so a later perforated issue cut down]. This was popular, and made all the more interesting because the experts (Freeland, Goldblatt and Michael Hamilton) were sharing their line of reasoning.

All weekend, the dealers, Peter Ford at the publications desk, and the Members' table, manned by Nigel Chandler, Anne Pike, and Simon Goldblatt, were trading. Sunday afternoon drew towards a close with a further round of informal displays, including one by Mike Rego which included as its first sheet the certificate for his Collett Award. I have still never seen a Yorkshireman shed a tear, but the feeling was sincere. Before we knew it, Nick Bridgewater from Leamington and Warwick P.S. had been and gone again with the display boards (our thanks to the local Society for their loan). It was time to go home.

Convention 2013 Informal Displays

Anthony Wilkinson	Honduras, Bay Islands
Michael Medicott	St. Vincent 5s
Michael Medicott	Trinidad 5s
Brian Brookes	Antigua
Graham Booth	Cayman Islands
Paul Farrimond	Jamaica – Military and Patriotic mail
Simon Richards	British Guiana – The Waterlow lithographs 1860 – 1875
Simon Kelly	Bahamas
James Podger	Cayman Islands – Postal Stationery
Charles Freeland	Revenues from several countries
Michael Rego	Village Postmarks of Grenada



The Bourse in full swing.



Don Napier (from Melbourne) and
Andrew Fowles (from Jamaica)



Simon Richards, Michael Hamilton
and Danica Janeckova



Inspecting the display



The Opinions Panel – Simon Goldblatt,
Charles Freeland & Michael Hamilton

ROBERT DEVAUX, O.B.E. – 1934 – 16 APRIL 2013

St. Lucia has lost a true icon. At the age of 79, Robert Devaux passed away on April 16th, leaving a legacy that will live on in St. Lucia forever. He was a true patriot and his love for his country was evident in everything he did. He was a conservationist, an historian, a philatelist and a well known author whose passion was the preservation of St. Lucia's heritage. His accomplishments were many and varied but most St. Lucians consider the creation of Pigeon Island National Park as his greatest achievement. However, he was proudest of establishing the St. Lucia National Archives for the preservation of the island's records.

He was born in Castries in 1934 into a family that has lived on St. Lucia for more than 275 years, and he devoted most of his life to studying and documenting the history of St. Lucia and the island's natural habitat and ecosystems, as well as its rich and diverse cultural heritage. He was a strong advocate for the preservation of the island's archaeological sites and its historical relics. He played a major role in helping to raise public awareness of the importance of environmental conservation and the protection of St. Lucia's unique ecology, wildlife and landscape. In 1991 he was awarded an OBE for his achievements and outstanding service to his country.

Over the years he wrote and published several books and articles including the monumental *St. Lucia Historic Sites* (1975). He is also the author of *They Called Us Brigands: The Saga of St. Lucia's Freedom Fighters* (1997), *A Century of Coaling in St. Lucia* (1975), and *History and Analysis of Coastal Processes at Pigeon Island* (1993).

In 2012 he co-authored *A History of St. Lucia* with Jolien Harmsen and Guy Ellis. This book covers the entire sweep of the island's history in great detail.

In addition to all his other achievements, Robert was a lifelong and dedicated philatelist. His primary interest was, of course, St. Lucia, but he also collected the entire world. He was the St. Lucia group leader for the BCPSG and was the longest serving member of the BWISC, having joined in 1959. He contributed many articles over the years to both, and many collectors are familiar with his monograph, *The Early Airmails of St. Lucia*. For many years he was on the Government of St. Lucia's Stamp Advisory Committee and his influence can be seen in several of the stamps issued in the 1970s. He was always helpful to other St. Lucia collectors and mentored more than a few. There is not a single collector of St. Lucia stamps and postal history that does not owe a debt of gratitude to Robert Devaux for all his discoveries and original research. At the time of his passing he was crafting his multi-volume *Philatelic History of St. Lucia* and he had the knowledge and historical resources to pen the definitive work. Sadly, that history will not now be written.

He was a quiet and very private man completely devoted to his family. Those who knew him and were fortunate enough to be his friend will miss his knowledge of everything St. Lucian, his wry humour, and his calm and ever steady demeanour.

Robert is survived by Pamela, his wife of 53 years, and his children Stephen, Gayle, Tracey and Richard, as well as nine grandchildren. We offer our heartfelt condolences. He will be missed.

Guy Kilburn

BWI**SUBSIDISED MAIL CONTRACTS TO THE WEST INDIAN COLONIES, 1863 – 1917 MICHAEL OLIVER**

David Watson recently formed a new Study Group on Maritime Mail. It already has 13 members who have been actively responding to David's suggestion that the Group's first project is a research study paper entitled "Coastal Steamers". Handstamps or carriers' manuscript names to identify ships or vessels carrying the mail are rare prior to 1900 and for coastal or inter-island vessels almost non-existent, making this a very challenging project.

This article is written primarily for the other 325 or so members in the hope that they will look through their collections where there are bound to be some items hidden away with information that will assist or contribute to the project. Please forward, with illustrations if possible, any item you think may be of help to:

M.Oliver, 7 Ancliffe Lane, Bolton-le-Sands, Lancs. LA5 8DS or email watson1967 @live.co.uk

The Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. (RMSP) held subsidised mail contracts with all Caribbean colonies from 1842 to 1917, except for a short break between 1905 and 1907, under which it maintained fortnightly Transatlantic and Inter-colonial schedules. Initially the mail contracts were with the Admiralty, during which time they made many changes, but from 1863 the contracts were transferred to the Postmaster General, London and remained so until the last in 1911.

Pickford & Black of Halifax, Nova Scotia commenced a subsidised mail contract with the Government of Canada in 1899, calling at most colonies between Bermuda and British Guiana, continuing to 1913 when RMSP won it and retained it until 1927. Contracts for much enhanced services between Canada and the West Indies for mail, passengers and cargo were won by the newly formed Canadian National Steamship Co. Scheduled fortnightly services commenced in December 1928 and continued until 1942.

Following the outbreak of war in 1914, many of RMSP's ships were requisitioned by the Admiralty resulting in the Transatlantic and Inter-colonial services effectively ending in August 1915. In early 1917 RMSP commenced a regular Transatlantic service to New York, Jamaica and Colon by the ***Danube, Tagus and Trent***. This ended within six months when the ships were requisitioned for war service. Although no new mail contract was made, RMSP recommenced an irregular transatlantic service in 1919 which ended with the departure from London by the ***Quilpue*** on 4 August 1920.

My limited knowledge of coastal and inter-island services is restricted to the Leeward Islands. Nevertheless, in researching that I have obtained information which to me is pertinent to the Coastal Steamer project. The timings of Inter-colonial, Coastal and inter-island services were dependent upon Transatlantic ship arrivals for which very few delays to the scheduled timetables are recorded.

The following lists give a general summary of the subsidised mail services and insofar as I am aware the ships employed with dates of service:

1 Transatlantic Mail Contracts with the Postmaster General

The annual subsidy granted for all contracts to June 1905 includes provision of the Inter-colonial Services.

22 July 1863 – Commencing 1 January 1864 for six years fortnightly from Southampton. Annual subsidy £172,914. In 1864 a supplementary contract was made terminable on three months notice for the conveyance of mails to British Honduras at an annual subsidy £8,886.

31 August 1871 – St. Thomas to Puerto Rico. To continue the monthly service until the contract of 22 July 1863 expired. Annual subsidy £1,000.

5 May 1874 – From 1 January 1875 for five years. Annual subsidy £84,750. Amended on 8 July for Plymouth to be first port of call homebound, with an additional annual £2,000 to the subsidy.

12 August 1878 – From 1 January 1880 for five years. Annual subsidy £80,000. On 1 July 1884 the contract was extended to 30 June 1885. Passages monthly via St. Thomas and monthly via Barbados.

18 March 1885 – From 1 July for five years. Mails to Greytown, Limon or Savanilla to be conveyed at no extra charge. Annual subsidy £90,000. No calls at St. Thomas, Barbados the transfer station.

15 May 1890 – From 1 July for five years. Annual subsidy £85,000.

24 May 1895 – From 1 July for five years. Annual subsidy £80,000.

1 September 1900 – From 1 July for five years. Annual subsidy £80,000. Amended from 9 July 1902 for the route to be Barbados- Trinidad – Jamaica. Additional annual subsidy of £5,000.

1 July 1905 to 31 May 1907. There was no subsidised mail contract although RMSP continued their fortnightly sailings from Southampton. Connecting Inter-colonial services continued until August 1906.

6 June 1907 – From 1 June until either party gave six months notice of termination. The first sailing from Southampton was 12 June and the route extended from Trinidad to Colon, Jamaica and New York, returning the same route. There was no subsidy and mail was paid by weight. RMSP gave the PMG six months notice of termination in July 1910, when it is recorded that they received only about £20,000 per annum under this arrangement (plus £25,000 for the Inter-colonial services).

4 November 1911 – Commencing with the departure from Southampton on 18 January to terminate on 29 August 1917. The service called at Barbados and terminated at Trinidad. Annual subsidy £63,000 (plus £25,000 from the Crown Agents Inter-colonial service). Trinidad had become the transfer station the colony paying £16,300 toward the subsidy. This contract was not completed due to the war in Europe. The last scheduled departure from Southampton was on 24 August 1915 by *Magdalena*.

2 Inter-colonial Contracts with the Crown Agents

16 August 1906 – To commence by 28 August and terminable on three months notice by either party. The Northern route was four weekly terminating at St. Kitts and the Demerara route fortnightly. Annual subsidy £17,500. A separate arrangement was made with the Government of Dominica to provide a fortnightly service, by the *Yare*, Roseau – St. Lucia – Barbados, commencing from Barbados on 11 September to terminate on 31 December 1906, but was extended until the 1907 contract.

29 August 1907 – Replaced the 1906 contract to terminate on 29 August 1917 with a fortnightly Northern route service and the arrangement with the Government of Dominica terminated. RMSP to build two new Inter-colonial steamers at a cost of about £100,000. Annual subsidy £25,000.

3 Mail Contracts made by RMSP with Colonial Governments

23 February 1872 – British Honduras Service. Monthly Jamaica – Belize commenced 17 November 1871. Initially a three year contract then terminable by six months notice. Annual subsidy £3,000.

19 December 1889 – Leeward Islands Service. For five years by a steamer of at least 500 tons and speed of 10 knots per hour. Annual subsidy £3,000.

11 March 1892 – St. Lucia Coastal Service. For five years by two steamers commenced 1 August 1892. Annual subsidy £1,000.

24 May 1892 – Grenada Coastal Steamer Service. For five years by three steamers, terminable on six months notice. Annual subsidy £1,500.

1893 – Jamaica Coastal Service commenced around the island.

31 July 1897 – St. Lucia Coastal Service. 1892 contract extended for five years from this date.

22 March 1901 – Trinidad and Tobago Service. From 19 March one steamer based on each island for five years. Renewed from 20 March 1906 and for a further five years from 1911.

24 June 1901 – St. Lucia Coastal Service. Castries to Dennery weekly for two years. Discontinued in 1902. Annual subsidy £250.

21 August 1902 – St. Lucia Coastal Service. 1892 contract continued with one steamer only from 1 August 1902 to 31 December 1906. Renewed from 1 January 1907 for 5? years.

3 October 1902 – Grenada Coastal Service. From 1 September 1902 to 31 December 1906, subject to six months notice, to be performed by **Taw** and **Wear** with **Exe** as relief. Renewed from 1 January 1907 for 5? years.

20 November 1902 – Dominica Coastal Service. From 25 December 1901 for five years by a steamer of not less than 80 tons and speed of 8 knots. Undertaken by the **Yare**.

1 January 1909 – Dominica Coastal Service. For 5? years.

4 **Revised listings of RMSP ships and vessels employed on West Indies Mail contracts, 1885 – 1917**

Dates indicate the periods of employment on mail contracts.

Coastal and Inter-island give gross tonnages and home ports of vessels.

Transatlantic		Coastal and Inter-Island		
<i>Atrato</i>	1888 – 1912	<i>Arno</i>	607	1901 – 1917 Jamaica
<i>Danube</i>	1894 – 1920	<i>Barima</i>	1498	1913 – ? Trinidad & Tobago
<i>Clyde</i>	1890 – 1913	<i>Belize</i>	1498	1914 – ? Trinidad & Tobago
<i>Don</i>	1875 – 1901	<i>Exe</i>	61	1902 – ? Grenada
<i>La Plata</i> *	1896 – 1908	<i>Jamaica</i> ***	1138	1912 – ? Jamaica
<i>Magdalena</i>	1899 – 1915	<i>Kennet</i>	827	1901 – 1914 Trinidad
<i>Medway</i>	1877 – 1899	<i>Spey</i>	470	1892 – 1913 Jamaica
<i>Orinoco</i>	1886 – 1909	<i>Taw</i>	180	1892 – 1915 Grenada
<i>Para</i>	1875 – 1903	<i>Tees</i>	180	1892 – 1915 St. Lucia
<i>Tagus</i> **	1899 – 1914	<i>Tyne</i>	615	1891 – 1897 Dominica/St. Lucia
<i>Thames</i>	1889 – 1914	<i>Taff</i>	204	1914 – 1920? Grenada
<i>Trent</i>	1899 – 1915	<i>Teign</i>	204	1914 – 1929? and/or
		<i>Towy</i>	204	1914 – 1920? St. Lucia
		<i>Wear</i>	180	1892 – 1915 Grenada
		<i>Yare</i>	299	1901 – 1915 Dominica

***La Plata** built for RMSP in 1896 and taken out of service in 1900.
Replaced by purchase of **Moor** in 1901 and renamed.

****Tagus** (3252 tons) in service 1871–97 replaced by **Tagus** (5545 tons) built in 1899 and after two sailings seconded to the Admiralty for Boer War service. Recommenced employment on mail contracts in late 1902.

***Transferred to RMSP on purchase of Elder Dempster Co.

Inter-Colonial	
<i>Balantia</i>	1908 – 1915
<i>Berbice</i>	1909 – 1915
<i>Eden</i>	1881 – 1909
<i>Esk</i>	1882 – 1910
<i>Solent</i>	1878 – 1909

Transatlantic ships tonnages increased from *Medway*, 3687 to *Trent*, 5525 tons.

Inter-colonial ships ranged from *Solent*, 1908 to *Berbice*, 2500 tons.

5 The Canadian Services

a. **Quebec Steamship Co.**

This line had a mail contract with Bermuda from 1874 and also sailed to the West Indies in the 1880s. In 1903 a regular fortnightly mail and passenger service commenced from New York to British Guiana. Furness Withy took over the line in 1919.

Ships known from 1884 to have sailed to West Indies islands:	
*S.S. <i>Caribbee</i>	*S.S. <i>Muriel</i>
*S.S. <i>Fontabelle</i>	S.S. <i>Orinoco</i> (to 1900)
S.S. <i>Guiana</i>	S.S. <i>Panama</i>
S.S. <i>Korona</i>	S.S. <i>Parima</i>
*S.S. <i>Madiana</i>	S.S. <i>Portia</i>
	S.S. <i>Pretoria</i>
* Ships with known handstamps, only one or two of each.	

b. **Pickford and Black**

25 April 1891 – First sailing from St. John to British Guiana on a three weekly service.

20 July 1899 – From 1 July for six years for a fortnightly subsidised mail contract from St. John and Halifax to Bermuda and alternately to Trinidad and British Guiana calling at Dominica, Antigua and St. Kitts northbound. Reduced to monthly 1903–06 when St. Kitts, Antigua and Dominica were included southbound. Annual subsidy \$131,400 (£27,000).

22 July 1905 – A one year extension to 30 June 1906 at the same subsidy.

20 June 1906 – From 1 July for four years with ships of at least 1000 tons. Twelve day departures alternating ports of call between Bermuda to British Guiana but including all except Nevis and Virgin Islands, some northbound only. The contract allowed for departures to be fortnightly, thought to have commenced by early 1907. No calls at any USA port was permitted. Annual subsidy \$131,400. The 1899 and this contract included a further annual subsidy of \$131,400 for the provision of cargo ships.

1910 – The 1906 contract must have been extended until 1913.

I have not seen any identifiable markings or handstamps for this line.

Ships known to have plied the West Indies contracts:	
S.S. <i>Taymouth Castle/Ocamo</i> *	S.S. <i>Dahome</i>
S.S. <i>Duart Castle/Oruro</i> *	S.S. <i>Erna</i>
	S.S. <i>Orinoco</i>
*re-named in 1900	
The <i>Orinoco</i> was purchased from Quebec Steamship Co. in 1900	

c. Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.

1913 – They won a new contract for five years replacing Pickford & Black commencing with the first departure from Halifax on 23 November. Four suitable ships were to be provided for a fortnightly service of passengers, mail and cargo calling at all colonies Bermuda to British Guiana, except Virgin Islands. Annual subsidy \$335,000. (£70,000)

1918 – Contract extended.

1922 – New five year contract on same terms as 1913 ending 30 June 1927. Annual subsidy \$341,000.

Ships employed:			
<i>RMS Caraquet</i>	1913 – 23	<i>RMS Chignecto</i>	1913 – 27
<i>RMS Chaleur</i>	1913 – 27	<i>RMS Cobequid</i>	1913
<i>RMS Chaudiere</i>	1914 – 27	<i>RMS Teviot</i>	1923 – 27
The <i>Caraquet</i> in 1923 and <i>Cobequid</i> on her maiden voyage were both lost at sea			

d. Canadian National Steamship Co.

1928 – Won the contracts to provide much enhanced fortnightly West Indies services. Five new Lady Ships of about 6,000 tons were built at Birkenhead. The service commenced from Halifax to Br. Guiana on 14 December 1928. Both this service, the Eastern Route, and the Western Route to British Honduras continued until May 1942 by which time three of the Lady Ships had been sunk by enemy action.

6 Some General Notes

Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda, Bermuda, Nevis, St. Kitts and Tobago did not, I think, have scheduled coastal mail services.

Anguilla: By 1920 had a weekly service from St. Kitts by *Anne*, *Good Hope* or *Thelma* landing at Forest. The Postmistress carried the mail across the island to the Post Office at Valley. Both she and the schooner's master were paid by the bag which it is said could be as many as 25 at Christmas time. From 1940 the mail was transferred by car.

Dominica: From 1931 the Canadian National Steamship Co. called at Roseau and Portsmouth northbound fortnightly. The Lady Ships departed Roseau on Sundays at 1.30pm. when mail could be handed on the tender and a local letter to Portsmouth could receive the ship's 'Posted on the High Seas' handstamp. One has yet to be found.

Montserrat: RMSP ceased calling from 1852 and mails were delivered and collected by sloop from St. Kitts. From September 1864 to 31 December 1879, Mr. Cassin of Antigua conveyed the mail between St. Kitts, Nevis and Montserrat at £490 p.a. From 1880 the Inter-colonial steamers called every four weeks and the Government employed the new sloop *Gwendoline* (12 tons) to transfer mail and passengers. Also a new four weekly service with St. Kitts commenced at £135 p.a. to maintain a fortnightly mail service. From January 1885 the Inter-colonial steamers called fortnightly.

St. Kitts: From 1881 the police delivered mail daily within a quarter of a mile of the 30 mile long road around the coastline connecting the four sub Post offices. The railway was for sugar and did not carry mail or passengers.

Virgin Islands: Served by a branch line from Grenada until 1863 when the Government made a contract for the conveyance of mails between Road Town and St. Thomas at £36 p.a. The frequency is not known. With no more than 50 European inhabitants the amount of mail sent and received was very small. By 1915 Government sloops sailed to St. Thomas

every second day and to Virgin Gorda and Anegada six times a month. From November 1913 the RMSP Canadian Service did not call at St. Thomas and most mail was conveyed via St. Kitts. The **St. Ursula** was in use at this time, later replaced by **Sea Serpent** and after she was transferred to St. Kitts in 1929, by **Lady Florence**. The 1930 Colonial Report stated that mails from England and USA were received twice weekly via St. Thomas or Puerto Rico. By 1938 the Government Launch **Lady Kate** provided a monthly service between Road Town, Virgin Gorda and Anegada.

I have not included information in the first paper recently produced by the Study Group. Any member who can correct or add to these notes please write either to the Editor for inclusion in the Bulletin or to me.

7 Chief Sources of Information

Agricultural Reporter, Barbados, West Indies Mail Conference of 19 November 1910.

HMSO – Printed copies of mail contracts:

With PMG London, 1880–1911

With Crown Agents, 1906–1907

With Minister of Trade & Commerce, Canada, 1899–1906

– Despatch to Governors of the West Indian Colonies respecting mail contracts, May 1905.

– Leeward Islands, Colonial Reports – various 1897–1930

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BARBADOS

THE BARBADOS 1916 BOOKLET

BY CHARLES FREELAND

Simon Goldblatt's article "The source was a booklet" in the September Bulletin once again demonstrated his remarkable intuition. While the booklets issued by the Barbados Post Office in 1906, 1909, 1913, 1932, 1933 and 1938 were all in the regular format of 3x2, the 1916 booklet was something of a curiosity, formatted as it was in vertical pairs. The first 12 panes of 2 were ½ds, and they were followed by 18 panes of 1ds, each pane interleaved with very thin transparent paper. Fig. 1 shows a 1d pair from a dismembered booklet, with the upper selvedge showing the staple marks that held the booklet together. Note the signs of guillotining on three sides, as on the cover described by Simon...indeed not very accurate guillotining as the sides were clearly not vertically aligned.



Fig. 1 Pair from the 1916 booklet

Figs. 2 and 3 show covers to England, each franked with two ½ds from booklets. On the first, they are still a vertical pair, on the second they have been detached and mounted side by side. On both, there are similar signs of guillotining.

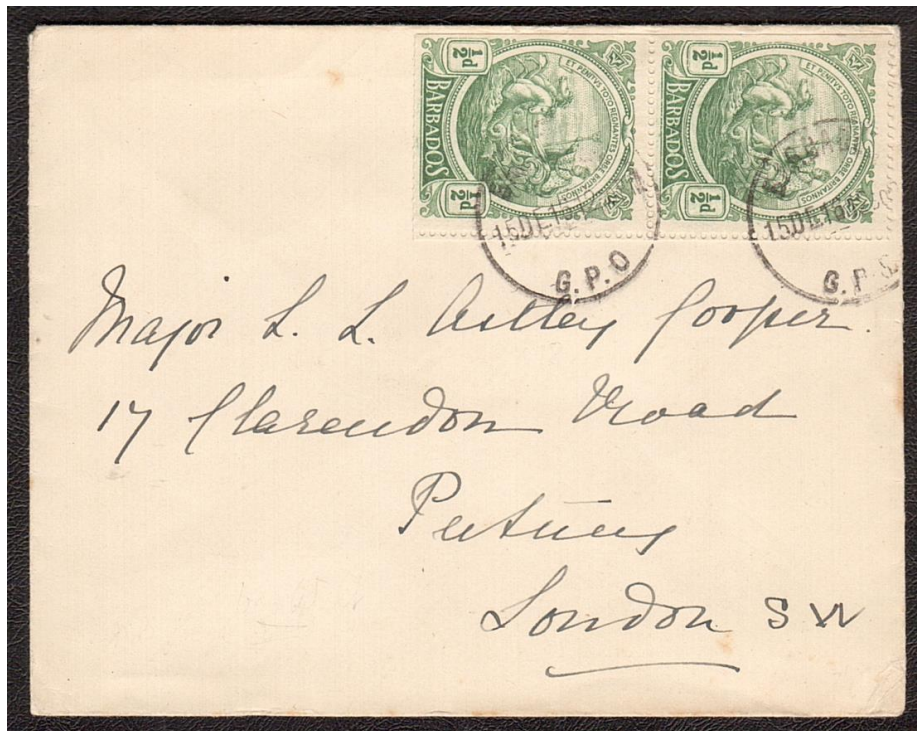


Fig. 2 Cover with a vertical pair of the booklet 1/2d



Fig. 3 Cover with two examples of the booklet 1/2ds

While this 1916 booklet is seen from time to time, it is common in comparison with the 1920 version that is listed by Gibbons as being in the same format of vertical pairs. I admit to never having recorded an example of the 1920 issue, not even in the definitive collection formed by Harriet Work, although she mentions it in her book. Can any member show us an example, on or off cover? I suspect there is a cover out there with one or more stamps from the 1920 booklet (if it exists) that has not been recognised.

Reference: British Empire Postage Stamp Booklets by H. R. Work

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Our December 7th Public Auction will feature the Rev. D. Hugh Peniston Collection of Bermuda with numerous rarities including the 1d on 3d Provisional and the 1d on 2d Provisional, no stop. Also, Part II of the Michael J. Nethersole collections including a further offering of his Trinidad and Part II of the Robert W. Hisey Collection of Orange Free State. Other highlights include an extensive Great Britain holding, a major offering of Cape of Good Hope, collections of Cayman Islands, Madagascar, St. Helena, New Hebrides, very rare Newfoundland King George VI and much, much, more.



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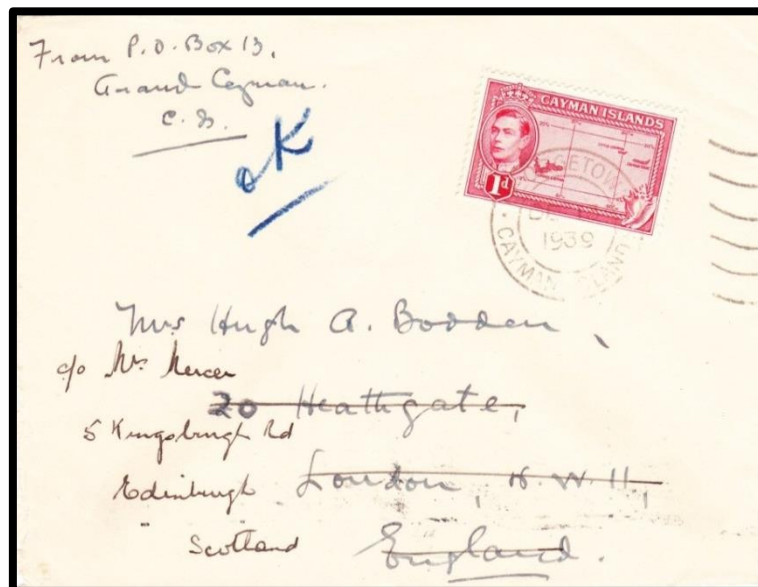
CAYMAN ISLANDS

CAYMAN ISLANDS CENSORSHIP – THE ‘OK’ AND ‘PC’ LABELS

BY JAMES PODGER

Censorship in the Cayman Islands, for World War II, was introduced late in 1939, the earliest recorded date being 4 September 1939, with the three censorship offices located on Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman being sub-offices of the Jamaican censor office. The censors were Rev. George Hicks (Grand Cayman), Aston S. Rutty, Sgt. Harris Bodden and Bert Marson (Cayman Brac) and Vermena Bodden (Little Cayman).

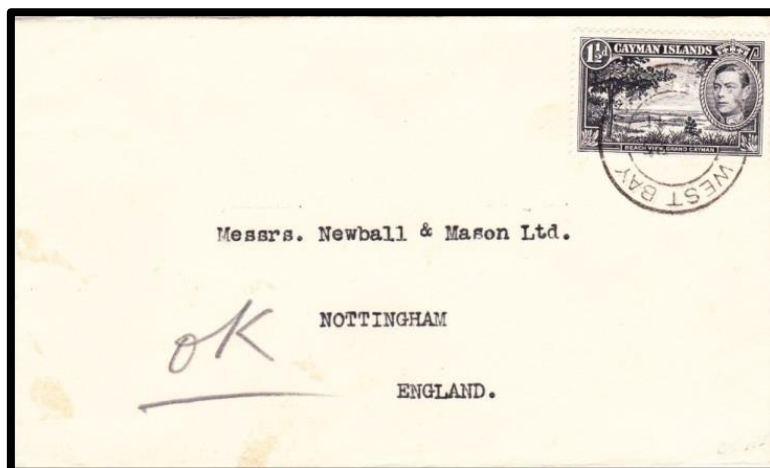
Manuscript was used firstly with the ‘OK’ believed to indicate that the contents had not been examined and presumably had been mailed by a ‘reliable’ person. This annotation was used on mail posted at Georgetown and West Bay (Grand Cayman) and Little Cayman from 1939 to 1941. The earliest date recorded being 19 October 1939 and the latest 19 November 1941.



‘OK’ (Giraldi type CM2), Georgetown type 8 cancel dated ‘DE 13 1939’.
Reverse with transit cancel, Golders Green ‘9 Jan 1940’

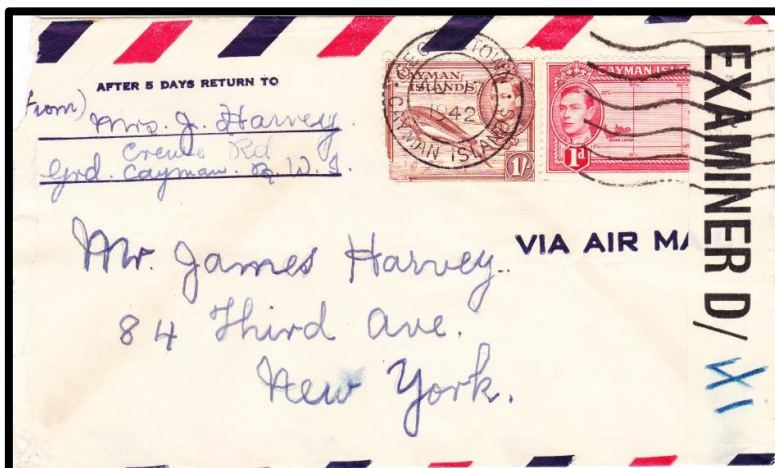


‘OK’ (Giraldi type CM2), Georgetown type 8 cancel dated ‘JU 11 1940’.

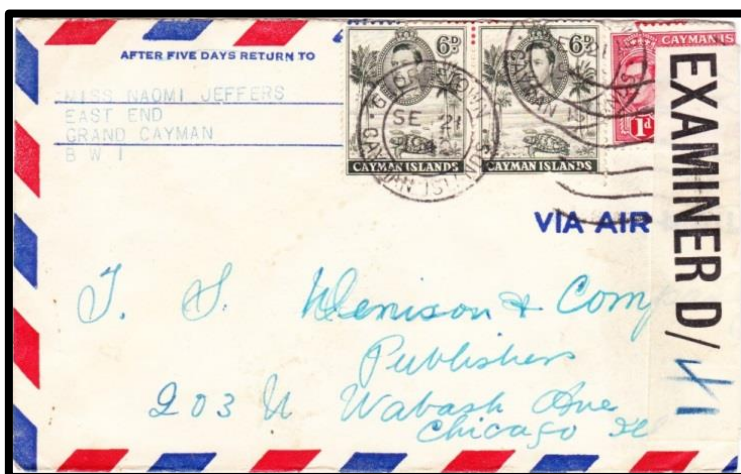


'OK' (Giraldi type CM2), West Bay type 2 cancel dated 'JU 25 41'.
(Sent by Rev. J.S. Blackman, as annotated on reverse)

The 'PC 90' resealing labels are recorded as being used on mail cancelled at Georgetown, Boddentown, East End and West Bay (Grand Cayman) and Little Cayman, with various usages between 8 June 1942 and 11 May 1945.



P.C. 90 label (Giraldi type CM3) with blue manuscript 41.
Georgetown type 8 cancel dated 'AU 17 1942'.



P.C. 90 label (Giraldi type CM3) with blue manuscript 41.
Georgetown type 8 cancel dated 'SE 21 1942'.



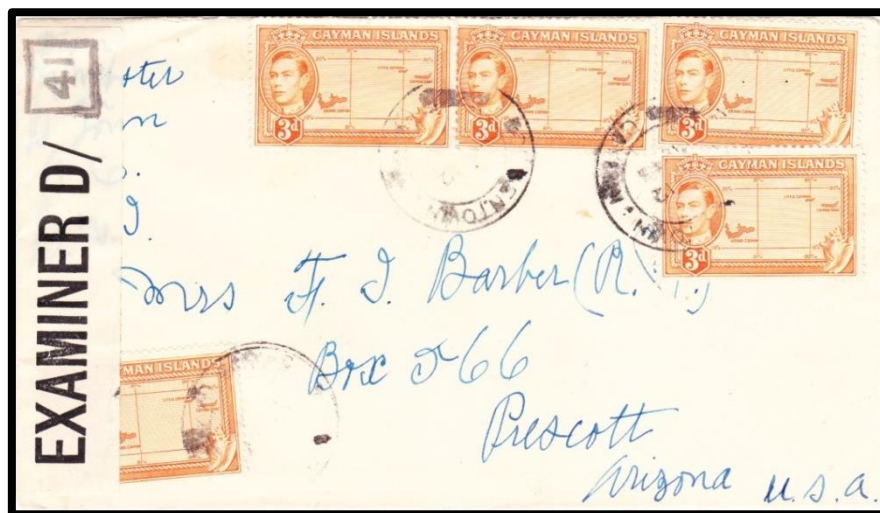
P.C. 90 label (Giraldi type CM3) with blue manuscript 41.
Georgetown type 8 cancel dated 'FE 23 1943'.



P.C. 90 label (Giraldi type CH6), Georgetown type 7a cancel dated 'MY 4 1944'.
Boxed number '41' removed to reveal senders address.
Year slug '9' missing from cancel.



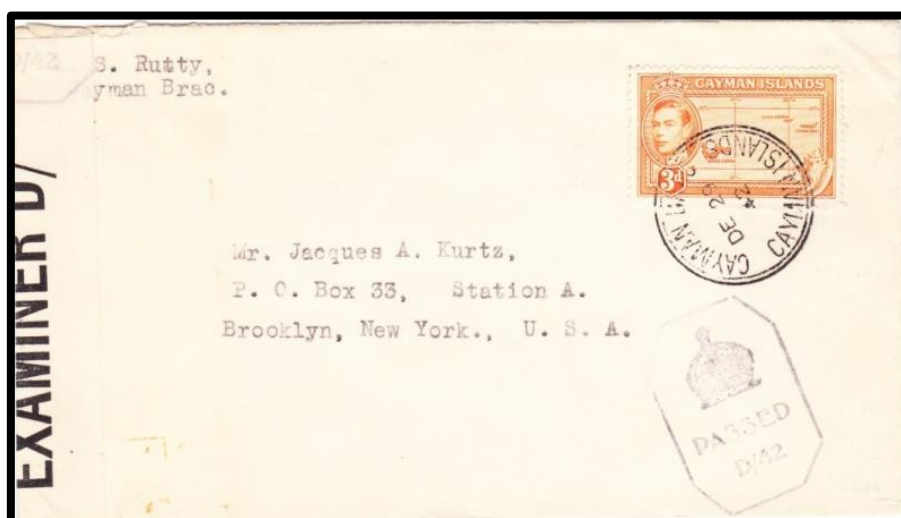
P.C. 90 label from censor at Trinidad.
Georgetown type 7a cancel dated 'NO 21 1944'.



P.C. 90 label (Giraldi type CH6), Boddentown type 3 cancel dated 'MY 12 1943'.
Only 2 recorded type CH6 covers cancelled at Boddentown.



P.C. 90 label (Giraldi type CH6), West Bay type 2 cancel dated 'AU 5 1944'.
(Additional 5 x 1/2d on reverse)



P.C. 90 label (Giraldi type CH5), Cayman Brac type 5 cancel dated 'DE 29 42'.
Note the use of the crowned octagon handstamp on the P.C. 90 label.



P.C. 90 label (Giraldi type CH7), Little Cayman type 1 cancel dated 'JY 12 1943'.

Unrecorded in the reference books listed below is mention of the 'P.C. 66' resealing label. These are labels that were remaindered from World War I and any used during World War II should demonstrate that they were only used in the early days of the War. The 'P.C. 66' label used on the cover illustrated below was probably put on by censors in England, during the transit to Holland, but is the only recorded example used on a cover originating in the Cayman Islands.



Georgetown type 8 cancel, dated 'JA 20 1940'.



Note: Some images have been reduced. All items are in the author's collection.

References:

- Giraldi T.E. & McCann P.C., The Postal History of the Cayman Islands, Triad Publications, 1989.
- Giraldi T.E. The Postal History of the Cayman Islands Supplement, GRD Philatelic Media, 2008.
- Burrows P.C. British Empire Civil Censorship Devices, World War II, Section 6, West Indies & Falkland Islands, Civil Censorship Study Group, 2010
- World Wide Web – Typing in PC 66 Censor Label

FORMAL DISPLAY, BWISC CONVENTION 2013**FEDERICO BORROMEO**

After the Rome exhibition in 1985, the famous Italian dealer Mondolfo purchased my collection of Papal States. This left me with a considerable sum but, at the same time, the dilemma of what to collect. I definitely did not want to form a new specialised collection of one of the ancient Italian States, which would put all my eggs in one basket. So I decided to form a collection that included several postal administrations interlinked. What geographical area lends itself best to develop this theme? Surely the West Indies, and so I embarked on this crazy adventure. At the beginning, from the Mondolfo money, I had the resources to acquire many basic stamps and some important pieces that I could not buy with my annual budget: to name just three Trinidad covers, the Lady McLeod (Fig. 1), the one with the strip of four of the third provisional issue (Fig. 2), and the one with the strip of five of the grey provisional (Fig. 3).

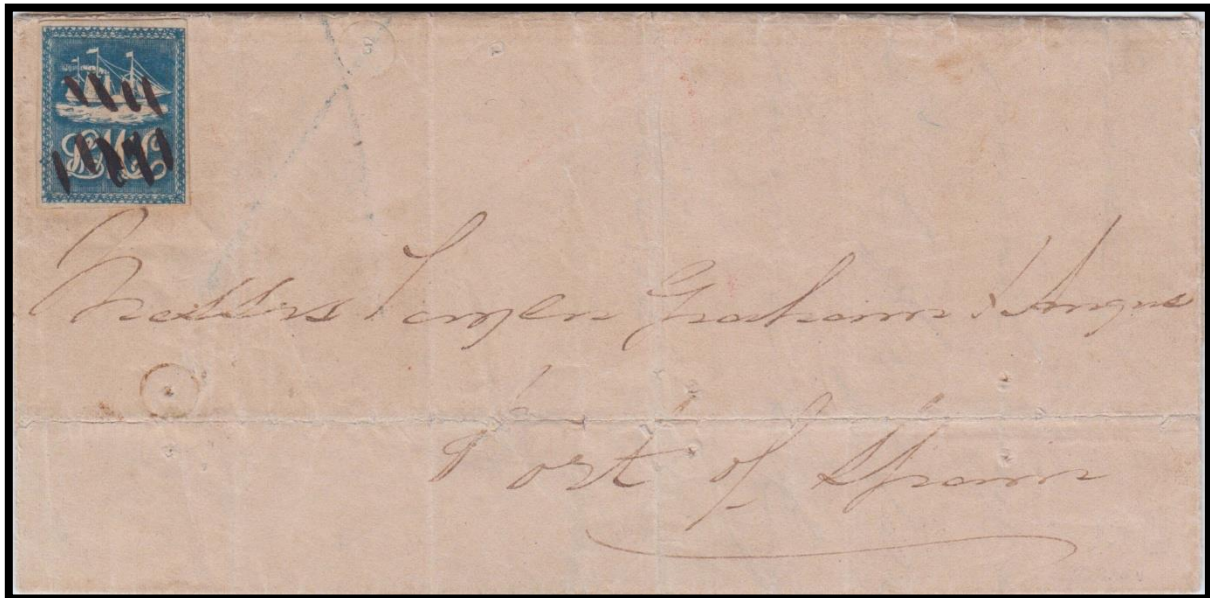


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Every attention was given to highlighting the great variety of postal traditions, which differed in every administration and almost island by island. It is worth pointing out that while the Caribbean archipelago is geographically homogeneous, it has in the course of time been split into different and often mutually hostile political entities. All this is reflected in the deliberately national character of many of the stamp issues so they can be easily distinguished, and in the different systems of postal rates.

I believe that the current traditional classification and numbering of BWI stamps is unsatisfactory. Stamps should be classified by considering printings, consignments, dates of issue at the post office, type of printing, watermarks, perforations, papers, colours and their shades, denominations, and so on. The different issues must include stamps with the same characteristics, same basic colours, same type of paper or perforations, and so on. When these characteristics change we should have a new issue. In my exhibit I prefer to take into consideration the consignment dates, as published in the books of Percy De Worms for Perkins & Bacon and John Easton's for De La Rue, as well as the figures of the printings based on the entries of the 'Day Book'. I try also, for each issue, to present an example on cover, sometimes a difficult task given that quite a number of stamps, even later issues, are not known on a commercial cover. For this display I have chosen to present 48 sheets each for Trinidad and St. Vincent, the remaining sheets showing a selection of rarities from the other British colonies.

TRINIDAD

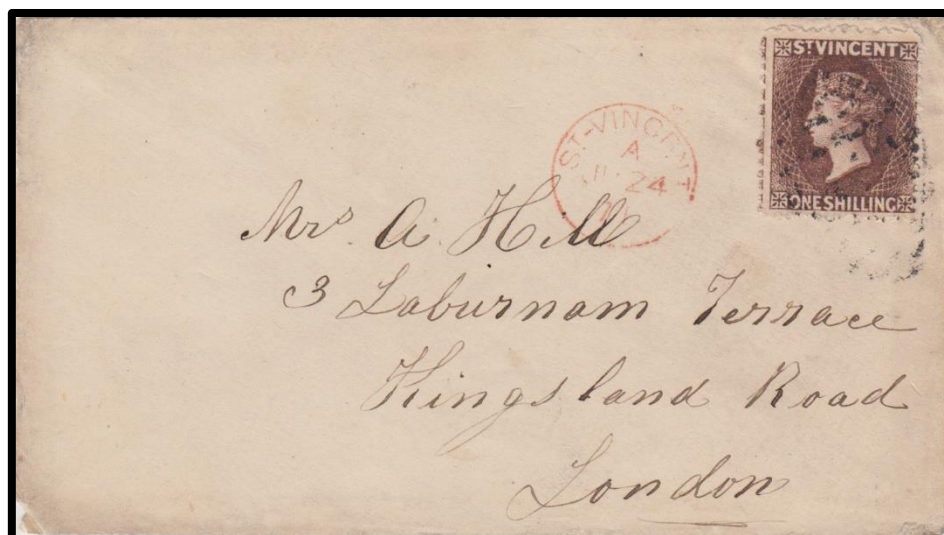
Trinidad stamps were first printed and locally issued in April 1847 by David Bryce, and used for the prepayment of letters sent on board the vessel *Lady McLeod* which plied between Port of Spain and San Fernando. From 1848 until December 1861, stamps were requisitioned from Perkins Bacon by the Government of the Colony under the control of the Agent General for the Crown Colonies. From May 1862 Trinidad stamps were printed by De La Rue. The first lithographic provisional was ordered by the then Postmaster, Jas. H. O'Brien, and was initially printed locally by Charles Petit. Later provisional printings were carried out by other individuals and are much less accurate. The stamps used from 1851 till 1859 were only designed to pay the postage in favour of Trinidad post office, although prepaid letters were also allowed if paid in cash. One penny was the postage for a single letter, probably weighting half an ounce, but heavier covers were charged more; this is proved by the rare pairs or strips off cover, and the only known large piece, bearing four lithographic provisional stamps.

From 1859 Perkins Bacon started out on the difficult task of perforating stamps. The same difficulties arose with the first De La Rue printings on unwatermarked paper. Regular De La Rue printings on 'CC' paper and accurate perforations started only in September 1863.

The first 36 sheets are devoted to the sequence of the issues, and the rest to cancellations, Ship Letter marks, French Transatlantic Mail, and stamps used abroad in Ciudad Bolivar. Two of the most interesting covers are those sent to Pulo Penang (Malaysia) and Guadeloupe franked with stamps perforated 11½-12 and 11½-12 compound with 11 respectively.

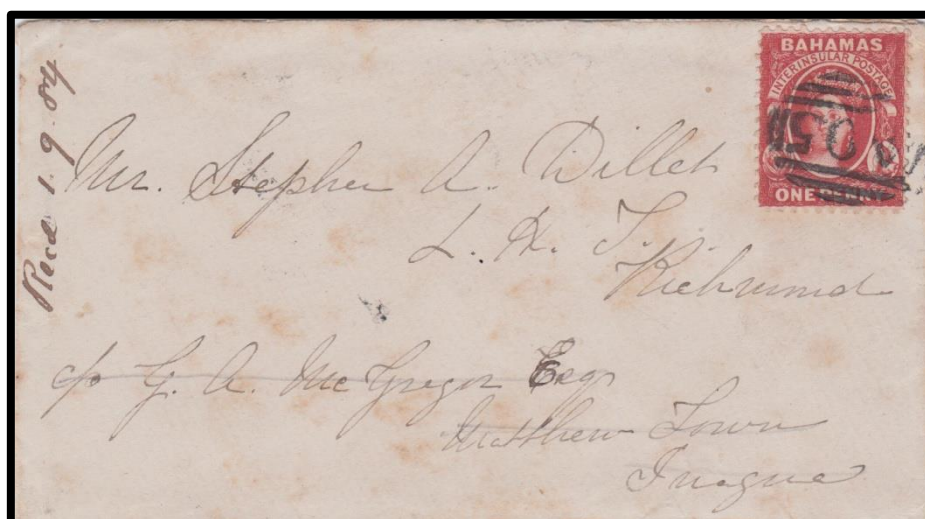
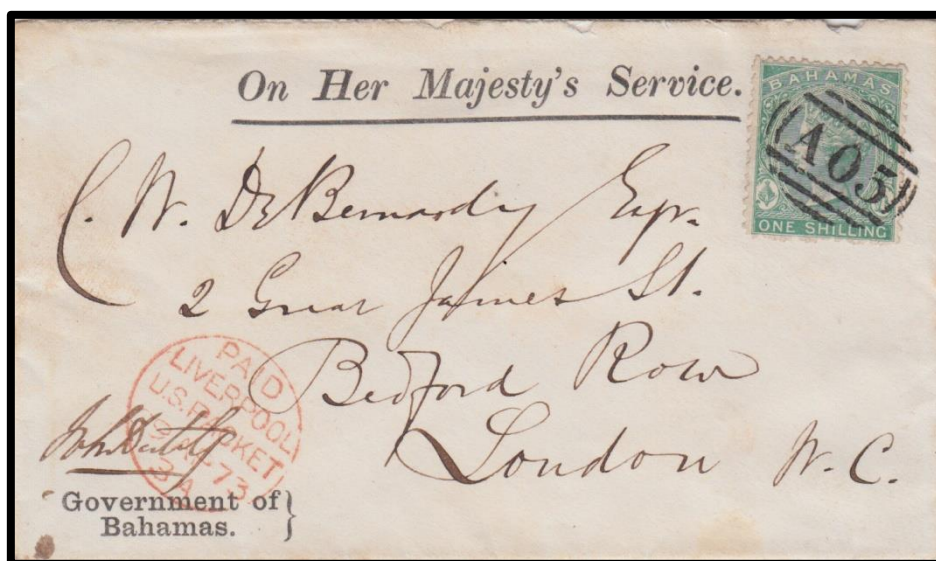
ST. VINCENT

The first stamps of St. Vincent came into circulation in 1861, and these were perforated, so suffered from all the problems encountered by Perkins Bacon with those operations. A feature of St. Vincent postal history is that many covers come from the Duke of Polignac archive, which makes the postal history of the island far richer than it might have been. I would like to suggest that the BWISC carries out a census such as the one done for Trinidad in the recent book by Marriott et al. These covers are beautiful and the varieties, shades and frankings add fascination.



For the other islands I have selected just a few letters, or stamps that are particularly significant:

BAHAMAS, a registered letter showing a mixed franking, a 1s green on cover, an inter-island letter franked one penny.



BARBADOS, two covers showing the 1854 2d bisect and the 1d on 5s bisect, and two with pin-perforated stamps.



DOMINICA, the cover franked with a 1877 6d green, the rare 'One Penny' surcharge on 6d green, both thin and thick bars, and Revenue stamps postally used.



GRENADA, a 1d green diagonally bisected on a 1s 1/2d rated cover.



LEEWARD ISLANDS, stamps and covers showing RMSP manuscript cancellations.



ST. CHRISTOPHER, the rare 'One Penny' surcharge on 2 ½d ultramarine.



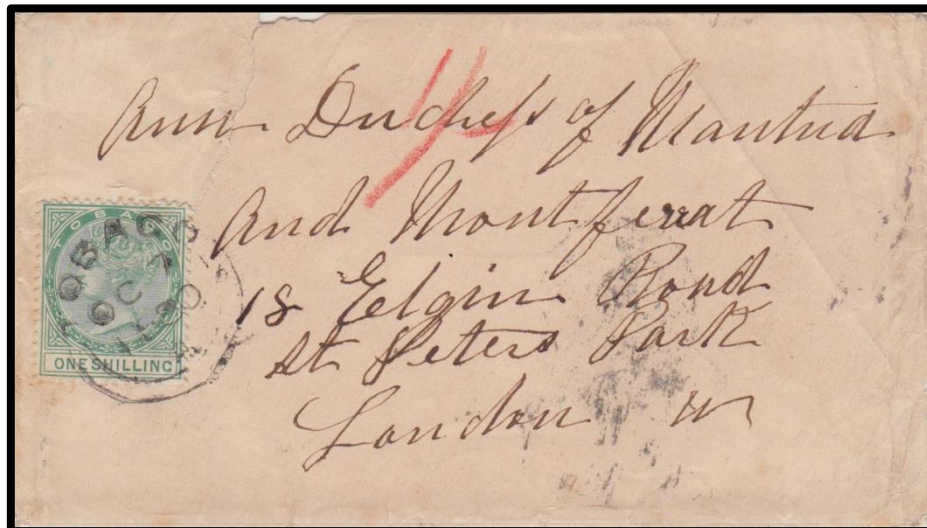
ST. LUCIA, stamps and covers showing normal and overprinted stamps.



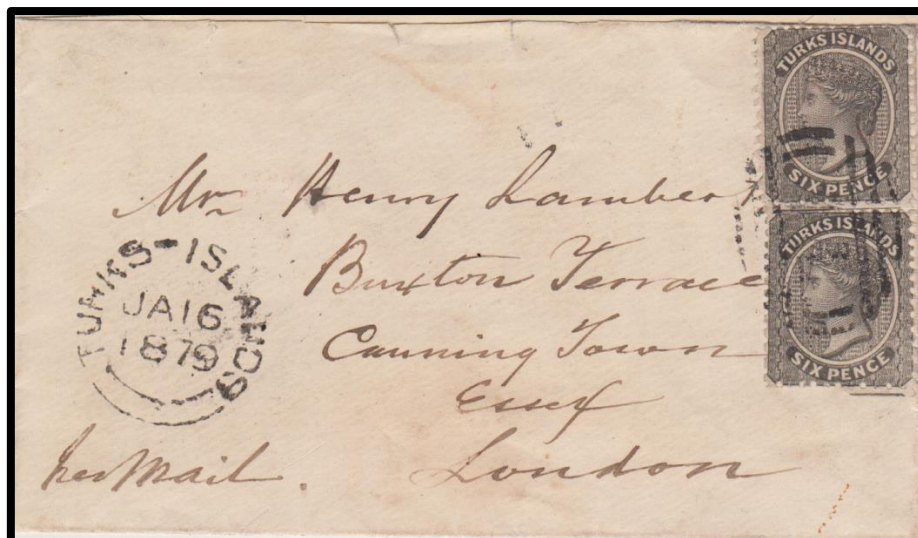
MONTSERRAT, a rare cover franked with a pair of 6d greens to London.



TOBAGO, one of the two known covers franked with a single 1s green wmk. 'CC'.



TURKS ISLANDS, the three denominations of the first issue on cover, the 6d black pair being unique, and the earliest cover showing overprinted provisionals.



Scans of all items mentioned in the above text are available on the website.

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2013 has seen no fewer than four new books published and there is sure to be something of interest to all members. These books are tremendous value compared to previous publications as the costs of commercial printing have reduced dramatically. For instance, the 'STEAMSHIP LINES TO THE CARIBBEAN' volumes by Michael Rego now sell for around £30, whereas the Jamaica Airmails book detailed below, of similar size is almost half the price. This is an opportunity not to be missed, so send orders in as soon as possible.

KING GEORGE V KEY PLATES OF THE IMPERIUM POSTAGE AND REVENUE DESIGN

by Peter Fernbank, FRPSL

This is a second edition; since its publication in 1997 this work has become the standard reference work for collectors of the issues of this King George V Universal key plate style. It was awarded the prestigious Crawford Medal by the Royal Philatelic Society, London, for the most valuable and original contribution to the study and knowledge of philately published in book form during the relevant period. It was further awarded a Large Silver Gilt medal in the Literature section of the British National Stamp Exhibition in 1998. This study encompasses the issues of all of the 17 colonies that employed this design with many illustrations in full colour. From a comprehensive examination of the De La Rue and Crown Agents archives it has been possible to produce a listing of every printing made of this key plate style. A wealth of additional information has been added to this basic framework that adds flesh to the bare bones of printing statistics. A4 size, hardbacked with dust jacket, (xx) + 488 pages.

PRICE: £49.00. BWISC Members' Discount – £5.00.

'BARBADOS – THE BRITANNIA ISSUES' by Fitz Roett. This book offers an in-depth study of these important issues, tracing their development and listing all of the scarce multiples and covers known. In collaboration with two Barbados specialists, Charles Freeland and Peter Longmuir, the author has been able to collect a great number of coloured images which are reproduced in this book. This is a must for all Barbados collectors. A4 size, softbacked, (x) + 220 pages.

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'ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF JAMAICAN PHILATELY – VOLUME 8, AIRMAILS' by Steve Jarvis, FRPSL and David Atkinson. This is the fourth book in this series and details the development of the airmail routes affecting Jamaica. Jamaica was rather late in becoming involved in the embryonic air route system that concerned the Caribbean; however, the story is a fascinating one. The book is in a different format to previous volumes in that it is a soft-backed book, lavishly illustrated in colour. A4 size, softbacked, (viii) + 270 pages.

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These books and others published by the BWISC can be ordered from:– David Druett, Pennymead Books, 1 Brewerton St., Knaresborough, N. YORKS. HG5 8AZ .Tel:– 01423 865962 or E-mail: Pennymead@aol.com. Orders will be dispatched with invoice and prompt payment is requested. Payment may be made by Credit Card. Orders from outside UK will be dispatched per airmail M Bag. This service requires a street address and is not available to PO Boxes.


The Barbados book above is also available for members in North America from the author Fitz Roett, 806, Kincora Bay NW, Calgary, Alberta T3R 0A7, or e-mail Fitz at www.fitzroett@yahoo.com.

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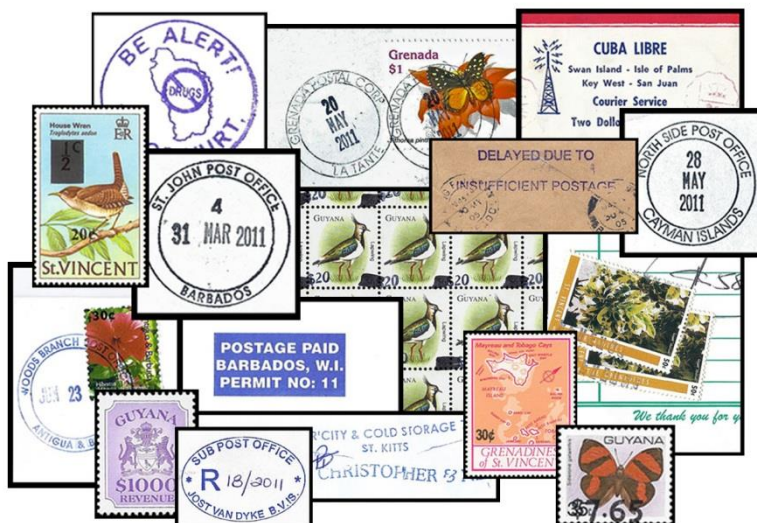
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KING EDWARD VII KEYPLATE

PLATE 1 REMOVED JUBILEE LINE

PETER BROOKS

In response to Jeff Blinco's article in Bulletin 238, the cut Jubilee line is on the Leeward Islands ¼d but will not be on the Leeward Islands 1s black/green as this stamp was never printed from Plate 1. The cuts must have been made late in the life of the plate.

The illustrated flaw from Left Pane 2/1 must have been short-lived as in Leeward Islands the June 1908 issue shows the 'repair' and I have no evidence of the actual flaw on the 1906/7 printings.

There are many other flaws on the Edward VII Plate 1. I can supply a list if anyone would like one.

TRINIDAD

1869 FIVE SHILLINGS ROSE-LAKE/MAROON

MICHAEL MEDLICOTT

The purpose for which this Receipt-size stamp was issued, the first postage stamp in the field, is uncertain. Only one example on cover (Lot 454 in the Marriott sale) is known, a foolscap envelope to France paid at an eight shillings & twopence rate. The recorded cancellations on loose stamps give little away as to the service they paid, although a small number of examples bear a "TOO LATE" handstamp.

Now, however, from the counter book of those admirable dealers Messrs. Richardson & Copp, has emerged an example remarkably cancelled with Type 0.7 "23" dated AP7/1876 – two large part strikes with the small numeral. Why the Cedros steamer, whose instrument this was, should either be carrying a supply of five shilling stamps or cancelling overseas covers with such a high franking is mystifying. In any event, this is the first example cancelled outside Port of Spain that the writer has recorded.

Foreign Parcel Post was not inaugurated until October 1885, and Inland Parcel Post followed in 1887 – see MMR (the BWISC book, not the inoculation, see Ref. 1). Registered Post, however, was introduced for letters and packets of printed papers on 1 January 1858. Thus Parcel Post is ruled out, and it is highly improbable that the Postal Agent on board the Cedros Steamer carried the authority or the paraphernalia necessary for registering mail.

We are left with the probability that this five shilling rose-lake prefranked an overseas letter which was subsequently posted in the steamer's box. Reports of another example of SG87 cancelled outside Port of Spain – even in San Fernando – would be welcome to extend the Check List on pp. 69-70 of MMR (see Ref. 1)



Ref 1 – “Trinidad, a Philatelic History to 1913”. Marriott, Medlicott & Ramkissoon. Pub. BWISC 2010.

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This article is not intended to explain in detail what was covered in the tutorial but provide an overview and some notes for those who attended.

Each PC is set up slightly differently and each user has their own way of working with which they feel comfortable. Therefore, there is no set way of doing things and the following advice needs to be adapted to the individual circumstances and the task being undertaken.

The first section focussed on image handling, which is a regularly encountered topic. The first aspect is to ensure that sufficient information about each image file stored on the disk can be seen. In Windows Explorer, there is a View menu option that can be changed between various settings including different sized Icons and Details. Select the Details option and the right hand pane starts to give more information about the file selected.

The contents of the Details pane can be changed by right clicking on the column headings: Select and deselect the information of interest (I always have Name, Type, Size and Date Modified showing but Tags, Resolution and other items can be of interest). 'Type' is useful but doesn't always give full information, I always turn on the option to show the file extension (e.g. the 'jpg' of 'image1.jpg'), this is done by 'Organise > Folder & Search Options > View > Hide Extensions for known file types' (untick to switch off)

Images in bmp, gif, jpg, png, tif formats were explained in terms of quality, size and use.

- tif format (now owned by Adobe) is often used for archival purposes as the content is an exact version of the scan. However, it cannot be used on the web and file sizes are very large.
- bmp format (royalty free) has similarities to tif in characteristics but is mainly used by techies for interfaces.
- png is often used on the web. It is typically half the size of tif files using a compression method which is 'lossless' i.e. the image is accurately reconstructed from the file. The main disadvantage is that it is very difficult to incorporate metadata (explained later).
- jpg is the most commonly encountered format. However, it has a bad reputation because it is a 'lossy' format. When the image is saved, the compression algorithm says to itself "this pixel is very similar to the one next to it, so I will treat it as the same", therefore some accuracy is lost when the image is redisplayed. If you open and save an image several times, the accuracy progressively degrades. Originally, this was a major issue but now most imaging software has an option that allows you to define what degree of compression is applied. This option is not always shown prominently and is often ignored and the default compression is applied (which can lose a lot of accuracy). I usually set my option to about 90% maximum quality.
- gif is a format that is most often used for small images such as logos (on the web).

Editors will often ask for tif format (as they don't then need to explain about the quality option) but will usually accept png or jpg (if sufficiently high quality).

Resolution: An easy one. 300 dpi is a safe level for most purposes, including printing. You only need to go higher if you want precise zoomed in detail (then go up to a maximum of 2400). 300 dpi of full pages can be too high for web use, so if necessary, take a copy and reduce to 96dpi (but keep the 300dpi).

When you scan, try not to use generic options. e.g. if it asks you "is it for email" it will apply low resolution and high compression. Enable a custom option to let you to take control. Remember, once you have saved in a lower quality format you can't revert to a higher quality.

How to straighten and crop an image in Adobe Photoshop Elements was demonstrated. Metadata is properties assigned to an image. I use 'Author' to record provenance, 'Title' for a short description and 'Comments' for a longer description. Adding these can be very useful when searching or scrolling through (especially if the view fields, explained above, are visible).

The second topic covered was web resources. The RPSL and BWISC sites explained by Charles in the last Bulletin were shown, together with the Smithsonian and APRL web sites. Two useful utilities were demonstrated:

- We Transfer: www.wetransfer.com. This allows transfer of large files between people. No registration or software is required to use it. The advantage is that the file size limit is 2GB and it does not clog up the sender's or receiver's mailbox. They can download when convenient and the sender gets a confirmation email when done.
- RetroReveal <http://retroreveal.org/> is a utility that accepts a scan of a stamp/postmark and applies various filters to try to make the postmark more visible.

The allocated time had run out at this point but a few people stayed behind for a quick explanation of how Microsoft Office could be used for recording a collection (Excel) and producing display pages (Word).

AUCTION UPDATE

CHARLES FREELAND

Kelleher 19 – 20 September (BP 18%)

It was a surprise to see a really fine specialised collection of Bermuda consigned to this Connecticut auction house that offers predominantly US material. Although the auction took place in New York City, the prices were predictably dull and some bargains were to be had. However, two of the "star" lots, a stained QV 1901 Farthing with F reinserted and a 10s GV with inverted watermark but fiscal cancel removed, were both overestimated and did not sell. Imperfs of the 1873 6d and 1s, lotted together, were \$550 and a rare inverted watermark on the 1903 6d (SG10a) was \$750. Three docks die proofs (uncleared vignette, unclear master die and the 1d duty die) were \$1,650 and nine docks colour trials sold for \$4.3k in all. The 1d Docks inverted watermark fine used was \$200. Among a decent range of KGV caravels and keyplates the most interesting was a 5s with inverted watermark USED at \$700. There were many GVI keyplates, the choicest being a 2s 6d line perf superb u/m with the rare #22 tail flaw at \$3.5k but a plate block of the 1941 £1 with the #60 scroll flaw was \$1.8k and a comb perf 10s with #17 chin flaw \$1.2k.

Grosvenor 25 – 6 September (BP 17%)

The item of interest to us here was a collection of Br Honduras town cancels broken down into 93 lots, many of them comprising covers from the same office. Most of it was fairly mundane with many average quality strikes but covers bearing decent Guinea Grass and Riversdale TRDs to Monty Ward and a horribly philatelic Progreso each topped £300, while a cover with a 1930 Maskall Bank receiving TRD was £260, a partial Spanish Lookout on stamp £55 and a 1939 Commerce Bight on piece with a Coronation 4c £200. Surprisingly, a fair strike of the rare straight line Orange Walk of 1906-7 was unsold.

Gibbons 2 – 3 October (BP 15%)

This was another interesting (in parts) sale for the BWI collector. A 26 April 1847 (almost EKD) Bahamas Crowned Circle cover, fine strike but overstruck on a slightly brown cover, was £1.2k and a St. Lucia Panton cover from Turks Is, with a large NO 2d from the bottom row, £300. A decent range of commoner Barbados Britannias in mint blocks went for not much more than one third Gibbons. In Bermuda keyplates a 2s line perf with broken tail flaw #22 fetched £900 despite streaky toning. In Nevis, a 1s sheet from the deep green litho printing was £750 even with gum toning and several GV proofs of Turks and Caicos also sold well.

Regency Superior 5 October (BP 19%)

The “Charles Cook” offering was a pretty bland but comprehensive Commonwealth collection of mint or unused singles. Those who saw the alert on our website should be satisfied as the prices were on the whole modest for items in mostly decent condition. The reserves were as low as half estimate and I was able to buy a couple of unsold lots at that discount. The better lots included a Bahamas GVI 8d Columbus flaw used with short perfs at \$1.9k, Bermuda 2s 6d line perf #59 and 60 flaws mint at \$1.6k and \$2.2k, and Jamaica GVI 5s line perf hinged at \$2.6k. But the buyers who paid a mere \$325 for the 1935 Jamaica Jubilee booklet and \$1.25k for the sideways war tax overprint misplaced on a pair got a bargain. Other lots of value included a Leewards GVI £1 with inverted watermark at \$3.25k and an unusually fresh St Vincent 1d on 6d SG 28a(part og) at \$1.5k.

Spink 22 October (BP 20%, plus 9% tax for EU buyers)

The (stamps only) collection of former Prime Minister David Saul has become something of a legend among Bermuda collectors. After a quick skim through it earlier in the year, I suggested in our auction alert on the web that it was the best collection of Bermuda STAMPS around. Having viewed in more detail I have no reason to alter that opinion. Condition was often dodgy but the rarities were spectacular.

I think I was the only active bidder among our members who made their way to Spink for the sale. The room was practically deserted, with only two dealers (David Muscott and Gibbons’ Philip Kinns), two agents and a well-manned bank of telephones. The phones ensured the hammer total reached about £750k, although there was significant internet success in the later stages. As expected, the star lots were the three Perot Postmasters that fetched £263k, all to a bidder represented in the room by Philip Kinns. The next highest bidder spent almost £100k and the third £61k. While my recording of the winning bidders’ numbers is not always reliable, I reckon there were ten bidders who spent over £20k and over 60 successful bidders in all. The liveliest section of the sale was the early period where there were some strong prices and few unsolds, but the GV was average and the KGVI distinctly weak where the frequent presence of light toning (how were they stored in Bermuda?) and pencil marks on even unmounted stamps plainly deterred bidders for the keyplates.

Apart from the Postmasters the big items were the unused and used QV 1d imperfs (£60k and £17k), and the two blocks of the 1874 3d/1d (£65k and £35k). The most popular of several perforation flaws on the QV 1s was the unique used vertical pair imperf between at £14k, while the F inserted on the 1901 farthing was £5.5k. The predictable range of GV keyplates was strangely quiet, with many fine blocks sold at modest prices and the unique used block of the 12s 6d revenue used in date seemed reasonable at £5k, but the mint corner block (£8.5k) looked over the top. The reversed watermark on the 5s went to £6.5k but the highest price in this section was £12k for the imperf pairs of the 1921 Tercentenary set. Another outstanding price was £1.5k for vertical strips of the Silver Jubilee UPU specimens.

There is little to say about the later issues. Even the unique used plate block of the GVI 5s bronze-green (£4.8k) raised no excitement, going below a low estimate which was set at two-thirds the price it achieved in the Ludington sale in 1999, while the first printing of the 12s 6s in an upper left plate block was a mere £1.9k, way below realisations 20 or more years ago. Yes, there were a few decent prices but the vast majority of lots were unsold or went for the reserves of 70% of low estimate. How will this leave the Bermuda market? Not too robust beforehand, it now has to absorb another hoard of unsold keyplates with another major collection still to come in the Victoria sale on 7 December. But it is some comfort to note that almost £1m (including BP) was paid for Bermuda stamps during September and October.

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