

Trinidad

First "Britannia Type" 1848-1863 A proposed new listing and numbering

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The current and traditional classification and numbering do not look satisfactory. Stamps should be classified 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 colours, same type of paper or perforations, of course with all their varieties. When these characteristics change we should have a new issue.

Trinidad stamps were first printed and locally issued in April 1847 by David Bryce, used for the prepayment of letters sent on board the vessel Lady McLeod who plied between Port of Spain and San Fernando. From 1848 till December 1861 stamps were requisitioned to 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 has been ordered by Jas. H. O'Brien, the then Post Master of Trinidad, and was, at the beginning, locally printed by Charles Petit. Later provisional printings were carried on by other individuals and are much less accurate.

For this study have been taken in consideration, first of all, the consignments dates, as published in the book of Percy De Worms for Perkins & Bacon. For De La Rue stamps the John Easton works (1958, 1960) and figures of the printings based on the entries of the 'Day Book'. The official date of the



establishment of the inland postal service, the presumed month in which the 'Lady McLeod' has been firstly put on sale, the date of the invoicing, and so on is the information from which has been given the progressive number of the issues. From the invoice date stamps were available for sale nearly one month later; actually, in that period, the voyage, all being well, was three weeks long. We must keep in mind that the stamps used from 1851 till 1859 were only foreseen to pay the postage in favour of Trinidad post office, although

prepaid letter were also allowed, but had to be 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 stamps. So that all the letters, but one, falling in that period (1851-1859), are franked with one single stamp. Later on letters may show, regularly, multiple franking.

A census of the letters in the period 1851-1859, bearing imperforate single stamps, has reported nearly 400 items. From 1859 started the pioneering period in which P&B struggled with the difficult task of perforating stamps; nearly sixty covers have been recorded with 'pin-perforated' stamps, perhaps ten with "clean-cut" stamps and less than twenty with the 'rough' perforations. The same difficulties rose with the first DLR printings on paper without watermark. Regular DLR printings on 'CC' paper and precise perforations started only in September 1863. Of course, later covers, from 1863, with stamps of the De La Rue issues, are much more abundant.

In the following listing are pointed out, for each issue, the following information.

- 1) The date of issue at the post office, if there is one, the date of the invoice or shipment, the progressive number of the issue and some comments.
- 2) The printing, if in recess, in lithography or in

typography and the name of the printer.

3) The specific information concerning the issue: denomination, watermark, perforations, type of paper, number of stamps in the sheet and how the stamps were placed (with the first figure being the number of stamps in the horizontal row, the second in the vertical row). If necessary some more information is given.

4) In the listing of each stamp we have:

a) the type of the stamp as illustrated in the SG catalogue: **1** being the 'Lady McLeod', **2** the 'Britannia' type without denomination, **3** the lithographic provisional stamps, **4** the 'Britannia' with denominations (4d, 6d and 1s), **5** the 5s stamp of 1869, **6** and **7** being the stamps bearing overprinted denominations, **8** being the 6d green stamp overcharged by hand, in black or in red ink and in various styles.

b) the denomination

c) in round brackets, (), the SG number

d) in square brackets, [], the new propose number

e) the basic colour, the varieties being listed in the Annex 2

f) the progressive number of consignments from the printers (see the Annex 1), with the amount of stamps dispatched, the date of the invoice, or the date of issue at the post office. Information concerning De La Rue printing and consignment have been taken from Bacon (1922, p. 271). Recently information concerning three other consignment have been found, i.e. those dated 11 June 1863, 30 September 1863 and 12 December 1871. Information concerning Perkins and Bacon have been taken from the Marriott (1963, p. 20), and from the book of Percy de Worms (1953, p. 828-829). On this subject, many other articles have been published, the most significant are listed in the bibliography (Annex 3).

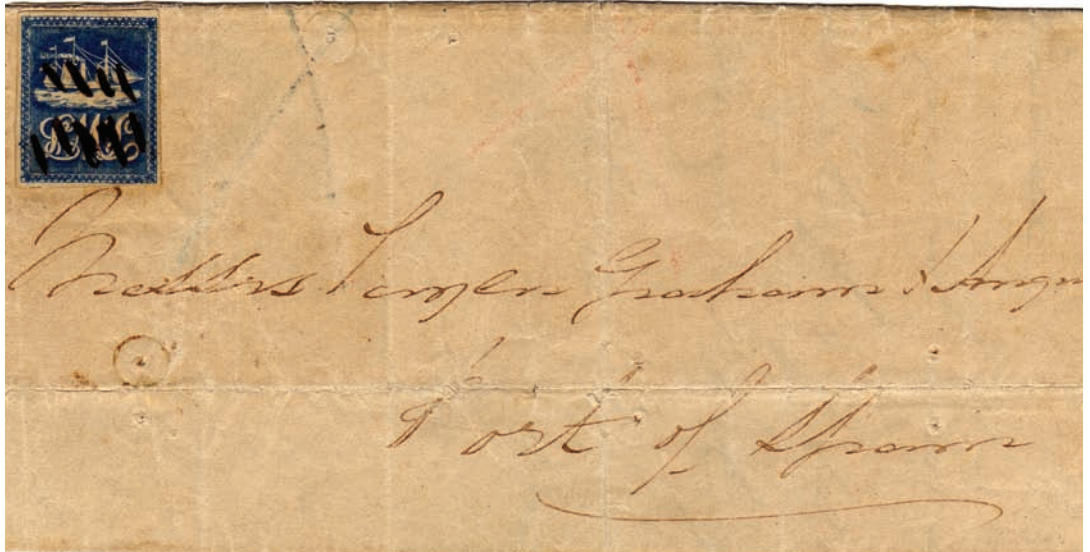
g) Comments concerning the issues, historical and technical data, are also given.

April 1847, "Lady McLeod"

Locally printed in lithography, no value expressed, no watermark, imperforate, (5 cents was equal to two-pence halfpenny)

1 5c. (1) [1] **blue**
printing unknown

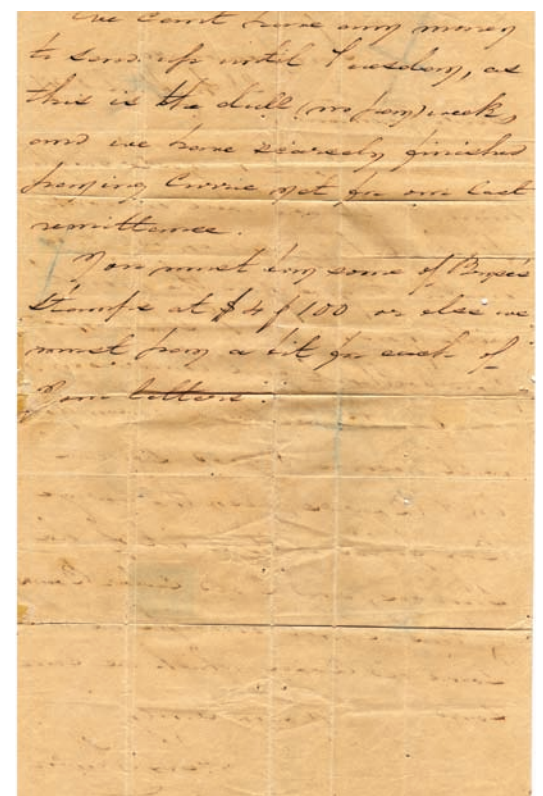
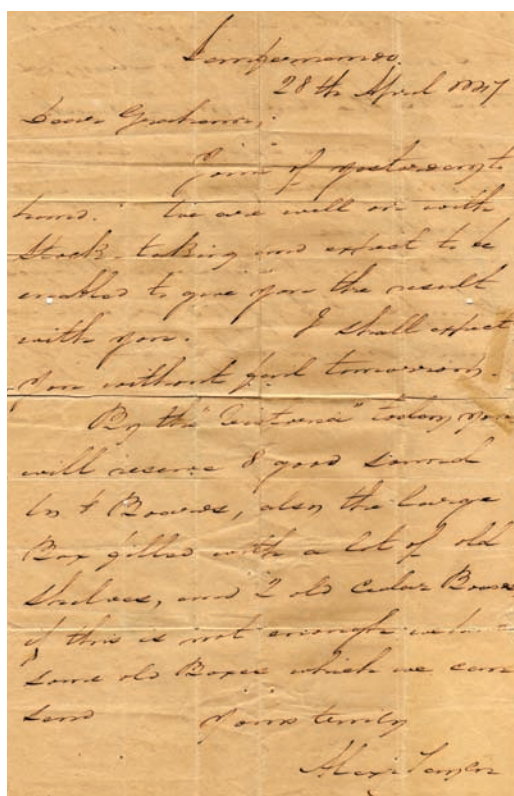
Perhaps worth recalling that the 'Lady McLeod' was not an official stamp and that though not rare it has become very much sought after. Actually, a recent census has established the existence of 16 unused items, 20 used and 35 on covers, 21 sent to Port of Spain, 13 sent to San Fernando. Only very few copies of the mint stamps are in such conditions, all the others derived from uncanceled stamps removed from covers, or worst, from having had the pen cancel deleted. Three covers are in institutions (the Royal collection, the Royal Philatelic Society and the National Postal Museum of the Smithsonian Institute), and ten covers have serious defects. The figures themselves reveal one of the oddities about this stamp: the fact that, contrary to the usual case with classic issues many exemplars are still attached to their covers. The explanation lies in the curious fact that J. G. Taylor, one of the addressees of numerous covers, himself became a stamp collector and preserved them, preventing the inevitable dispersion. It has been also suggests that the stamp was printed in sheets of fifty, not least for



28 April 1847, from San Fernando to Port of Spain, the oldest known date of use. The stamp, only in this case, is cancelled with nine small pen strokes. The 'Lady McLeod', locally printed, was valid for the prepayment of the carriage of one letter by the vessel of David Bryce who plied between Port of Spain and San Fernando. The rate was 1 bit, the same was worth 5 centimes, the equivalent of 2 1/2 pence. All those, however, who made large use of the service were charged two pence. Ex Charlton Henry.

ease of reckoning and one may infer that the "Lady McLeod" was engraved and printed by the same Charles Pétit who a few years later was entrusted with preparing the lithographed provisional issue. The earliest franked cover with a "Lady McLeod" is dated 28 April 1847, with the stamp cancelled by eight small pen strokes, the last cover is dated 25 September 1849. The "Lady McLeod" was first

noted and fully described in 1867 in the Stamp Collector's Magazine, but then for many years lost sight of by collectors. Probably has been listed for the first time in the Moens catalogue in 1883, and in 1885 by Evans. No problems with the numbering, at least from the moment that this stamp as been universally accepted as the No. 1 of Trinidad, and not as one of the so-called 'locals'.



In the last paragraph of the letter we can read: "... you must buy some of Bryce's stamps at \$ 4 per 100, or else we must pay a Bit for each of your letters ...".