

Philatelic Literature: **Philatelic Jamaica**

by Dr. Everett L. Parker

Perhaps, if you're like me, when you think of exotic Caribbean island nations, you don't realize that each has a long and complex postal history. But it's true, and one of the islands that has a rich philatelic history is Jamaica.



Jamaica has an interesting and diverse postal history. A book recently published by the British West Indies Study Circle (BWISC) in the United Kingdom will be a great help in expanding the knowledge of this Caribbean island's philately.

Titled ***The Encyclopaedia of Jamaican Philately***, the softcover book was authored by Steve Jarvis and David Atkinson. It is actually part eight in the ***Jamaica Encyclopaedia*** series, published over the years by the BWISC.

We are promised in the Preface, written by Steve Jarvis, that this is the first time a comprehensive listing of Jamaican airmails has been undertaken. Many collectors will know that Everard Aguliar, a name known to most Caribbean philatelists, wrote several articles on the subject in ***The British West Indian Philatelist*** in 1949 and 1950. Those articles were subsequently reprinted in the ***British Caribbean Philatelic Journal*** in the 1960s.

Several other authors have reported on the subject of Jamaica airmails, but this 278-page book is the first comprehensive treatment of airmails, including postal history and postcards, in one volume.

Several subjects are included in the contents, including an overview, early development of air transport, establishment of the first direct mail service, evolution of Pan Am Airways,

other airlines serving the island through World War II, the World War II era, regional airlines and dependencies, and the post World War II era.

Arguably one of the most important features of the book is a comprehensive Appendix composed of two parts: rates and a checklist of flights. The 33-page checklist of flights is worth the investment alone if you are interested in this topic. It is comprehensive and has more detail than you're likely to find anywhere else.

Work on the catalogue, published in the 8.25 x 11.75 inch format and perfectbound, began in the late 1990s by David Atkinson, and Jarvis took over the task more recently. Much information was researched by Atkinson in old Jamaica newspapers, including *The Daily Gleaner* and in the Jamaica National Library.

Every page of the book contains useful information, from an overview in Chapter 1, through an exhaustive illustrated listing of first flight covers.

The genesis of Jamaica scheduled airmail started in December 1930 when Pan Am flew the first mail into the island from both northbound and southbound directions. Earlier, survey flights and regional schedules were developed. The first airline in the region with scheduled services was TAG in French Guiana in 1919. Other countries, such as Colombia, established an extensive internal flight network, but with their limited size and range, early airlines precluded long flights between countries.

The book is published in full color, and is available through David Druett, Pennymead Books, 1 Brewerton Street, Knaresborough, N. Yorkshire HG5 8AZ, United Kingdom. It is priced at £18 (about \$29). His email is pennymead@aol.com.

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Remember that review copies of books, monographs, society journals and other philatelic literature are solicited. Please send all publications to Dr. Everett L. Parker, 249 NW Live Oak Place, Lake City, FL 32055-8906. Email is eparker@hughes.net.