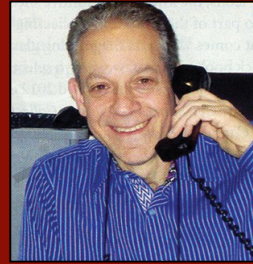


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Viewing Collections:

The du Pont British Guianas

by John F. Dunn

This past June, in two separate auctions, the Estate of John du Pont sold his fabulous British Guiana Collection. In this viewing we will blend the Sotheby's June 17 sale of the 1856 One Cent Magenta into "the rest" of the collection, which received a lot less publicity, but deserved a lot more attention than it got.

"The rest" of the du Pont British Guiana Collection was offered at auction by David Feldman of Geneva, Switzerland, a firm that is well known for achieving numerous record-breaking prices for some of the world's great rarities. Here's how David Feldman described the results of their June 27 auction:

"In 40 years as auctioneer, I have never had the experience where every single lot was underbid to an astonishing multiple of the original estimate, leaving no lot unsold!"

The Feldman news release continued, "...the auction of the main collection of John E. du Pont ...was an unbelievable success. The sale featured highly competitive bidding from collectors in David Feldman's auction room in Geneva, on the phone as well as around the world via the Internet. The result ended 500% greater than pre-sale estimates. It took no less than 3-1/2 hours to clear the 131 lots.

"The auction surpassed all possible expectations with 100% of the lots sold for a total over EUR 6 million." (U.S. \$8,171,280; all prices quoted here do not include the approximately 20% fees that are added on to these hammer prices and are converted from Euros to dollars at the currency rate on June 27.)

The auction opened with this 1850-51 2 cents black on pale rose (Sc. 1), with initials of postal official Smith "JBS", cut round, described as with



“usual defects” and a central Demerara datestamp “OC 7 1851”.

This is the rarest value of the “Cotton-Reel” primitives. It was issued in 1851 to pay a local town letter rate (the Georgetown Penny Post), a service that was unpopular and little used, with no town post usages known to have survived. One of only two single examples remaining in private hands (two pairs, each on cover, are also known outside institutions), it was estimated to bring \$136,188 and sold for \$258,757.

Next we see the 1850-51 4 cents black on orange (Sc. 2) with the initials of postal official Lorimer “WHL” with a central full strike of Demerara datestamp NO 9 1850. Estimated at \$6,809, it fetched \$57,199.



As you will see, realizations at many multiples of the pre-sale estimates were not uncommon in this auction.

Next up is the 1850-51 4 cents black on lemon-yellow (Sc. 2a), used on cover (with full letter enclosed) to Georgetown, cut round, with a central datestamp of Demerara FE 07 1851 just barely tying the stamp at the bottom, with the affixing paste showing through paper. Estimated at \$27,238, it sold for \$74,903.



The 1850-51 8 cents black on blue-green (Sc. 4) was represented by this single with faint initials “EDW”, a thick frame, cut hexagonally with wide margins all around and two strikes of a Demerara datestamp NO 26 1850.



Estimated at \$4,086, it soared to \$108,950—yes, \$108,950!

Still another rarity with a great result is this 1850-51 8 cents black on blue-green (Sc. 4) with the initials of postal official Lorimer "WHL", a thick frame and deep color, used on a cover



from Plantation Foulis (with full letter enclosed) to Demerara, tied by a light strike of a Demerara datestamp NO 5 1850. Estimated at \$20,428, it realized \$177,044.

An extremely rare unused example—one of only two unused recorded of the entire "Cotton Reel" issue—is this 1850-51 12 cents black on blue (Sc. 5) with thick frame, without initials, with deep color and cut round.



Estimated at \$54,475, it brought \$177,044.

This used single of the 1850-51 12 cents black on blue (Sc. 5) with initials of postal clerk Wight "EDW", cut square with a central Demerara datestamp of MY 09 1851 was estimated at \$6,809 and sold for \$74,903 despite having a corner added at the lower left,



while this horizontal pair showing both thin (left stamp) and thick frames se-tenant, with initials of postal clerk Wight "EDW", cut octagonally, with light Demerara date-stamps MR 21 1851, realized \$177,044 against a \$13,619 pre-sale estimate.



On page 4 we view the 1850-51 12 cents black on indigo paper (Sc. 5b)—the rarest shade of the 12 cents issue—with initials of postal official Wight "EDW", cut round,

with a full Demerara datestamp JA 14 1851, with a small part of the original cover still adhering to the reverse, also with an archive fold. Despite the fault, it brought \$51,751, or more than 25 times its \$2,043 pre-sale estimate.



Another shade of the 1850-51 12 cents, black on pale blue (Sc. 5a) is seen here, with initials “EDW” initials, cut square, with a light central July 1851 Berbice datestamp. Very rare, as are all the Cotton Reels, it was estimated at \$10,895 and was hammered down

for \$68,094.

Another 1850-51 12 cents black on pale blue (Sc. 5a) is seen here, with initials “EDW”, cut octagonally, with a clear central Demerara datestamp JY 29 1851. Estimated at \$4,086, it fetched a lofty \$62,646. (Just for comparison’s sake, it has a Gibbons catalogue value of £9,000—or \$15,303, so you can see that this is not just a case of overly conservative estimates; rather, this supports David Feldman’s statement that the realizations were “an astonishing multiple of the original estimate.”)



Next is another variety of the 1850-51 12 cents black on pale blue, with the “2” of “12” with a straight foot—extremely rare with only a handful known—with “EDW” initials, cut round, with a pinhole and a March 1851 Demerara datestamp. Estimated at \$2,723, it sold for \$95,332. (Reminder: for a closer look at the “2”, you can use your pdf magnifier tool.)



On page 5 we display an 1850-51 pelure paper (very thin and transparent, almost onion skin) 4 cents black on pale yellow (Sc. 3) with “WHL” initials, cut square, de-

scribed as “with usual air-holes at foot,” and part of an extremely light Berbice datestamp. Described as exceptionally rare as a cut square, it was estimated at \$40,856 and realized \$122,569.



The next selection for viewing is the 1850-51 pelure paper (very thin and transparent, almost onion skin) 4 cents black on pale yellow (Sc. 3) with “WHL” initials, in a sheet corner margin single, used on a cover from Plantation Woodlands (with a list of cattle enclosed) to Georgetown, the stamp with a central Demerara datestamp MY 09 1851.



An exceptional stamp and described as “probably the largest margined ‘Cotton-Reel’ in existence. On cover it is clearly one of the major items of the issue”, it was estimated at \$163,426 and was hammered down for \$217,901.

Moving into the 1852 issue, the first lot in this section got it off to a good start, as we view an 1852 Waterlow 1 cent black on magenta (Sc. 6) with part sheet margin at left, unused with gum, exceptionally fresh and without any of the usual rubbing. Estimated at \$5,448, it brought \$49,028.



And to the left we see a used example of the 1852 Waterlow 1 cent black on magenta (Sc. 6), a huge example with part of the next stamp at the right, used on piece with a clear Demerara cds AU 12 1853, brilliant color and without any rubbing—pre-sale estimate \$2,724, hammer price \$17,404.



This next lot is a companion to the previous lot, being the bottom stamp in a vertical pair before being separated. (Shown at right is my rough reconstruction of the pair.)



The stamp in this lot (left) shows a neat clear Demerara cds AU 12 1853, datestamp. Like the previous lot, it was estimated at \$2,724 and sold

for \$17,404.

Next we have an 1852 Waterlow 4 cents black on deep blue (Sc. 7), exceptionally fresh unused with clear margins, creases with painted touch-ups—a very rare stamp in unused condition. Continuing the parade of huge realizations, it was estimated at \$4,086 and sold for \$57,199.



And here we see the 1852 Waterlow 4 cent black on deep blue (Sc. 7) in an extremely rare horizontal pair, with very fresh deep color, margins all around, and cancelled by a light Demerara datestamp of DE 31 1852.

Described as “the finest multiple of this stamp known”, it was estimated at \$13,619 and fetched \$57,199.

Still another strong realization was this 1852 Waterlow 4 cent black on deep blue (Sc. 7) with good margins all around and a central Berbice datestamp of JU 1 1853, estimate \$2,043, hammer price \$46,304.



Completing our viewing of this stamp, we have the 1852 Waterlow 4 cent black on deep blue (Sc. 7) with a right sheet margin, used on a JA 27 1852 cover to London and tied with a light Demerara datestamp with the “7” of “27” omitted. (The auctioneers tell us that a further strike on the flap has the “7” inserted by pen.) Described as “Probably the earliest known usage of this stamp and the only one used to a destination outside the colony, charged one shilling packet postage in London...A rarity among classic covers,” it was estimated at \$13,619 and sold for \$49,028.



This “brilliantly fresh mint” 1853 Waterlow lithographed 1 cent vermilion (Sc. 8) with large margins—rare in this condition—was estimated at \$2,724 and sold for \$10,895, while the same issue in a fresh horizontal strip of four, showing types 7-10, used on cover to Sophia’s Hope Estate Mahai-cony tied by a Demerara datestamp FE 29 1856—very rare, one of three such frank-



ings known—was estimated at \$6,809 and soared to \$62,646.

And here we display another cover, this one with the

1857-59 Waterlow lithographed 1 cent type B (Sc. 9), also in a horizontal strip of four, paying the four cents letter rate on cover to New Amsterdam, neatly cancelled by Demerara JA 6 60 date stamps, tied to the cover at the top of the second stamp from the right. Estimated at \$4,086, it realized \$51,751.

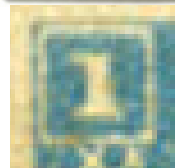
The next lot show a very fine 1853-59 Waterlow lithographed 1 cent dull red type C (Sc. 9), unused with large even margins, pre-sale estimate \$2,724, hammer price \$19,066.



The 1853-55 Waterlow lithographed 4 cents deep blue (Sc. 10) is shown here in mint condition with part original gum and good to large margins all around, estimate \$2,043, realization



\$4,903; and in a rare first stone retouched type mint pair (Sc. 11), with close to large margins, and a faint vertical bend otherwise fine and rare, estimate \$2,724, realization \$19,066.



The 1860 4 cents dull blue printing with the corner numerals framed (Sc. 12), fresh mint with good margins all around, and a faint wrinkle at foot described as “not evident from face” was estimated at \$1,362 and realized \$12,257.



And now we come to the 1856 Provisional issues, and the One Cent Magenta, Sc. 13. This is the rarity that was offered in a separate auction by Sotheby's in New York City.

Estimated at \$9,000,000-\$10,000,000, it was hammered down for \$7,900,000 after light bidding activity, or \$9,480,000 with the 20% Buyer's Premium. Although the buyer was not identified, we have been advised by someone who should know that the buyer was Joseph Hackmey.

We cover the Sotheby's auction extensively in our StampNewsNow website—along with a separate article on Mr. Hackmey, so rather than repeat that coverage here, I refer you to www.StampNewsNow.com.

It's a lot easier to for a lower value stamp to achieve a high multiple of estimate than it easier for a major rarity, but totally **JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT**, had the One Cent Magenta achieved the same 500% multiple of pre-sale estimate as was achieved for the average lot in the Feldman auction, the hammer price would have been \$47.5 million.

Coming back to the Feldman auction, we next view to this 1856 Provisional 4 cents black on magenta (Sc. 14), initials "EDW", possibly unused, with the top of design added and repainted and described as "Apparently one of only two unused examples supposed to exist, hence a rarity." Estimated at \$1,362, it sold for \$43,580. The estimate probably was on the low side because with the design added at the top there is no way to be certain there was no cancellation there, for example, as part of a pair or adjacent to a full stamp that had been cancelled.



Next up is the 1856 Provisional 4 cents black on magenta, Type 4, initials "EDW", cut octagonally, used on cover to Sophia's Hope Estate in Mahaicony, cancelled by village datestamp of Williamstown A 3 C 30 JL 1856, with Demerara transit



AU 1 over flap. It was described as “A very rare cover,” and the bidders agreed. With a pre-sale estimate of \$13,619, it sold for \$129,379.

And here we see the 1856 Provisional 4 cents black on rose-carmine (Sc. 14a), Type 4, initials “EDW”. Described as the marvellous UNUSED example with massive margins, deep fresh color and all details of design complete and clear, it was estimated at \$27,238 and fetched \$136,188. Although five times the estimate excellent, this to me was a surprisingly low price when compared with other realizations in this auction, particularly for such an outstanding stamp.



Continuing our viewing of this issue, we next have the 1856 Provisional 4 cents black on rose-carmine (Sc. 14a), Type 4, initials “EDW”, with exceptionally large even margins and a light Demerara datestamp of SP 15 1856. Estimated at \$8,171, this stamp realized \$177,044—which again has me wondering why the mint stamp above did no better than \$136,188 against a \$27,238 estimate.



(But then, it’s not my money!)

Moving on to the 1856 Provisional 4 cents, we see the black on dark blue colored fully through the paper (Sc. 16), “the famous sugar paper,” Type 3, initials “EDW”, cut octagonal, with Demerara datestamp AU 17(?) 1856, described as “a world classic rarity with only ten examples known in total (one of which is in the Royal collection).”



This stamp drew a top bid of \$108,950, double its \$54,475 pre-sale estimate.

On page 11 you will find the 1856 Provisional 4 cents black on blue glazed surface-colored paper (Sc. 15), Type 3, initials “EDW”, in the form of a cut square with exceptional

margins, also with fresh color and a central Demerara datestamp SP 27 1856. Described as “A tremendous rarity (only four cut square examples known),” it was estimated at \$54,475 and brought \$231,520.

The next selection is the only known full cover with the 1856 Provisional 4 cents black on blue surface glazed paper (Sc. 15), the cover addressed to Sophia’s Hope estate in Mahaicony.



The stamp with initials “EDW” is cut octagonally, very lightly cancelled by village datestamp of Williamstown A 3 C OC 30 1856, and there is a matching strike on the reverse, as well as a Demerara transit OC 31 on the flap. Described as “without doubt a Great exhibition and world rarity, one of the major items of this collection,” it was estimated at \$204,282 and sold for \$326,851, making this the highest realization in the auction.

In the 1860-76 Ship issue section, we find this 8 cents brownish red, in a diagonal bisect, used as a four cents stamp (Sc. 53a), clearly tied on cover to Georgetown by a neat Arabian Coast village cds A 1 C NO



12 1861, with a cover fold that just touches one corner of the stamp. Such bisects were banned by a Post Office notice of April 1862, so this is a very rare cover. Estimated at \$1,362, it realized \$9,533.

Next up is an 1862 Provisional 1 cent rose (Sc. 35), from a lot with a selection of types A and B, with type A including



two unused (one ex Ferrary) and two used, type B with three unused (one ex Ferrary) and one used with small “T” in “CENTS”. I selected this lot so that I could show you an example of the 1862 Provisionals. For the record, the mixed condition lot was estimated at \$6,809 and realized \$27,238.

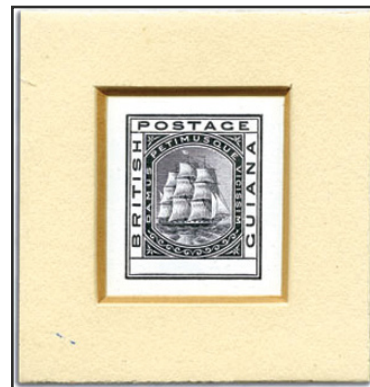
This cover bears the 1862 Provisionals 2 cent yellow in a vertical



strip of four (Types A+A+B+C; Sc. 38, 39, 40), signed, tied to the cover from Plantation Reliance to Georgetown by A-4-C OC 2 1862 circular dates stamps.

The auctioneers state, “this issue is of extreme rarity on cover with this probably being the most outstanding item existing.” Despite that description, it was assigned the modest estimate of \$6,809, but the bidders were not as modest, bidding it up to a \$62,646 hammer price.

We lead off the 1876-79 Ship issue with the Master Die Proof in black on glazed card, the printer’s working proof cut down and in a sunken mount, without a value in the bottom tablet. Estimated at \$545, it sold for \$3,813.



And here’s the 1881 2 cent on 24 cent green (Sc. 100 variety) with missing provisional horizontal black bar (intended to cover the value tablet), mint with original gum and some light gum wrinkling.

With a pre-sale estimate of \$409, it drew a top bid of \$2,043.

These stamps (Left, Sc. 104, right, Sc. 105, if I have them right) are part of an 1882 Type-set Ship issue selection including used and unused singles, pairs, pair on cover, perfin varieties, etc.



Not that it matters much, it was estimated at \$953 and sold for \$3,269. I selected the lot to show the two and three mast designs, the three mast being Type I and the two mast being Type II in the Scott catalogue.



Next, from a lot with the complete set of 15 of the 1888-89 "INLAND REVENUE" issue, plus a few extras, we see the 4 Dollars, Sc. 127. Estimated at \$545, the lot sold for \$1,634.

And from a lot with the 1889-91 Ship issues, including the 1889 mint set to the 96c, 1890 \$2 surcharge double overprint and \$3 (Sc. 149, shown) with what appears to be a quadruple overprint, plus covers and left-overs from various issues, with mixed condition.



The lot was estimated at \$409 and realized \$3,541.

Finally, we have the 1875 Official 1875 1 cent black Imperforate Between, with the provisional black horizontal bar and unlisted as such in Gibbons or in Scott (Sc. O1a variety), with pen crosses and light circular date stamp.



Estimated at \$5,448, it concluded our viewing with another excellent price, selling for \$32,685.

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