

Owen Sound Stamp Club
Chapter 191
Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 17th 2016 @ 7 PM

From the President...



Time sure flies by fast! It seems only yesterday when it was New Years, but the calendar says it is February and the Family Day holiday is coming. Although we all may appreciate a holiday, a few days later, February 17th, is the regular meeting of the Owen Sound Stamp Club. We will meet at our regular place, the St Mary's High School. The meeting runs from 7-9 PM. It is always nice to see new people come to our meetings, so if you know other collectors, extend open invitations to come. More importantly, let other people know what your hobby is and you'll be surprised to discover that there are other collectors in the neighbourhood who know nothing about the club. Just an advance notice about the March meeting, because the date occurs during the March break, we cannot meet at St Mary's for that meeting. We are looking at alternatives and will let you know once everything is firmed up.

Activities planned for this meeting is a chance to go through the Owen Sound Stamp Circuit books, which will be followed by an auction of items club members bring to the meeting.

Please limit yourselves to five items for the auction. It will also be a chance to add pages into the club circuit books, and I expect that Chris will be at the meeting, as long as work doesn't interfere. As far as club activities and needs go, a new newsletter editor would be appreciated. An essential tool for the editor is the ability to manipulate a computer, perhaps some writing articles or inspiring others to write something about our common hobby.

Last night I attended a meeting of the Board of Directors for the Grand River Valley Philatelic Association (GRVPA). At the meeting I received several flyers for member clubs upcoming shows. These will be available at the meeting. There were two main items of the meeting, one was the planning of the GRVPA Club Circuit Book fair to be held in Cambridge on October 29th and the second was a report on the Royal Fair which will be held in Waterloo in August, from August 19th – 21st. The hosting club is looking for volunteers to assist for however many hours or days you may be able to commit. I will have further information on that in the future.

Our annual elections for the club executive was held at the last meeting, and due to a lack of volunteers, the present executive will continue for 2016. There are many things that would help the club become better known in this area. I would love to see a pamphlet made and placed in public locations like libraries and perhaps Post Offices. Developing a "youth" booth for the fall show would be something we could also work on. But knowing my own limitations, a public spokesperson would really put the club into the local media. Would anyone like to take on one of these suggestions?

I would also like to extend a welcome to the newest club member, Randy Rogers. All the club members hope you feel welcome and that we may be able to help you in your collection interests and you can help the club continue into the future. In conclusion, I hope to see you at the meeting on the evening of the 17th, but be careful about the weather conditions

Cheers.

Phil Visser
President
OSSC

The Greene Foundation: Part 2

By Phil Visser

In the last article about the Greene Foundation, it was mentioned that the Foundation is actually in two parts, the Harry Sutherland Library and the Stamp Expertizing Committee. This article will focus on the second part of the Foundation which serves as the place where a collector is able to have a Canadian stamp expertized. The experts have two pieces of equipment at their disposal with which to do research with, the VSC6000 and a micrometer with which to measure stamp thickness with. Both of these two pieces of equipment were used to discover some information about stamps in my collection.

The person who operated the equipment was Mr. Garfield Portch. A wonderful, ever helpful and very knowledgeable person about stamps, Garfield has been recognized for his contributions to philately by being designated a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. He was part of the committee that expertized the third known copy of Canada #32, the 2 cent large Queen on laid paper. Garfield visited the Owen Sound Stamp Club almost two years ago with a talk about that discovery and the validation process before the stamp was certified as being genuine.



My first quest was to find out what precancel number was on this stamp. Using an ordinary 10x magnifying glass didn't help resolve what number was on the overprint. The number was quickly discovered by placing it in the Foster & Freeman VSC6000 spectral comparator. The magnifying capabilities were amazing. It was quickly seen that the number was 8160, not the 6160 I first thought. The Standard Canada Precancel Catalogue (6th edition) does not list a number 6160, so the VSC600 had established itself as a very useful tool and now the stamp is placed in the city of Calgary section.

The Montreal town cancel poses a problem in the catalogue listing. Under the "Money Order" section it lists Style 9 and Style 10. To my eyes, both of these styles appear to be the same. To compound the mystery, the 1935 King George V issue is printed in both Style 9 and Style 10.

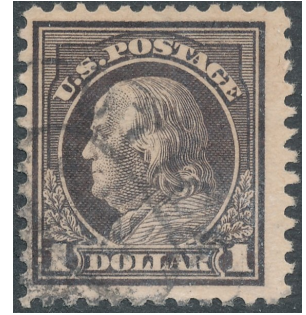
How can one distinguish which style is which? Here the VSC6000 came to the rescue again with its ability to quickly compare one stamp to the other.

Putting the two stamps together and looking through my ordinary magnifying glass showed that the lines above and below the Money Order number were in the same position. Even the Celestron computer magnifying telescope could not pick out a difference between the 1 cent and three cent stamps. The catalogue listed only the 1 cent for both Styles, but not the 3 cent. When Garfield superimposed the image of the 3 cent over the 1 cent, the computer then showed the differences between the two numbers almost instantly. The zeroes did not superimpose over each other so the two styles revealed themselves within seconds. Here lies the challenge for collectors in finding the differences between the Style 9 and Style 10 on Scott #217, but the VSC6000 has allowed me to see that the space between the "7" and "0" is farther apart for Style 10.



A third test was needed to make sure that the 3 cent stamp was indeed Style 10. To confirm if the KG V and KV VI stamps were both Style 10, the comparator tool was used again. This test was done by comparing the three cent King George V with the 1 cent King George VI, both supposedly Style 10. Using the computers shifting abilities, the bottom lines of both stamps were superimposed over each other and then the numbers almost exactly came over each other, but it was seen that the top two lines did not come on top of each other. The difference is minute, a few mils, but it was clear that they were off. My library contains a book from the Precancel Committee of BNAPS, "The Canada Precancel Handbook", and it suggested that the shifting of rollers did occur, which indicates this isn't a new variety. It is possible to see what challenges there are for the ordinary collector with which to fill a collection.

I also recently found a stamp issued by the United States that seemed strange. The stamp is reasonably well centered and the cancel on this high denomination was also fairly light, making it a welcome addition into the collection. There were a few hinge remnants on the back, so time was taken to soak off the hinge remnants. After drying it in the drying book, the stamp appeared to be upside down from how I put the stamps normally between the pages. However, as the scans show, this is not the case. There is a mirror image of the front on the back of the stamp, but slightly shifted.



Further research was needed to discover what this oddity was. In the book "Fundamentals of Philately" by L.N. Williams, there is a chapter titled "Printing Problems and Varieties." The dictionary at the end of the chapter calls this oddity a "Set-Off." A "Set-off" is "...an additional unintended impression or part impression of the stamp design on the face or back of a stamp..." Williams' goes on to explain that this additional impression occurs when this sheet comes into contact with another sheet where the ink is still wet and so the image from the wet sheet is transferred onto the back of the other sheet on top of it. Seeing a "Set-off" is a first for me, but Garfield pointed out that set-offs can be found on the Large and Small Queen series Canada issued in 1868 and onwards.

A final item to research was from the area of specialty that convinces me to keep on looking, and that is Scott #1 from the Netherlands. There were six plates used to print the stamp before the next series of stamps was issued. Both plates 1 and 6 were printed on thin and thick paper. My curiosity made me wonder how thick was thick and how thin was thin. Here again Garfield came to the rescue with the tools at his disposal. With an electronic micrometer the thickness was quickly provided. The thick stamps came in at about 800 mils, apparently thicker than most stamps. When the thin stamp was measured it came in at just under 500 mils. We then measured two copies of the thin stamp and they had different thicknesses! This was a problem to say the least except when we looked at the back of the thicker of the two, and we saw that there were stamp hinge remnants on it. Well, another trip will be needed to see if they are the same thickness or not.

Although this stamp was not reviewed during this visit on January 2nd, the VSC6000 was instrumental in proving that this 5 cent Beaver (image on the left) was a real stamp. The obvious thing about the stamp is the size. The very large margins at the top and bottom of the stamp were an obvious give away and so several possibilities can come forward for this stamp.



This odd appearing stamp is 24 mm wide and 23 mm high while the normal stamp is 25 mm wide and 21 mm high. Using the VSC 6000, Garfield was able to compare the engraving of a "good" copy with that of this oddball and it proved that this odd shaped stamp is an original. Obviously the sheet of stamps that this one was a part of what was approved by the inspectors and released for sale.

I hope these two articles have raised an interest in travelling to the Greene Foundation to explore what is there to enhance a personal collection.

Summary Tip #6: De-mystifying "Unmounted Mint/Never Hinged (UM/NH)"

Dear Philip,

When a collector tells you that they only collect unmounted mint and they are looking for an unmounted mint 1d black you know that things are getting out of control how many unmounted mint 1d blacks exist after 169 years!

Or, what about the collector who collects unmounted mint 'fine used'? an impossible condition contradiction. So what is UM/NH and how should it affect our collecting?

Europeans have another term for Unmounted Mint - Post Office Fresh - often symbolised by **. Perhaps, in a way, combined with the American Never Hinged this sums up the expected condition of the stamp. UM/NH has become the philatelic industry 'gold standard' that many collectors collect by ... unfortunately this can lead to all manner of problems, as we shall see, but first ... Time - past, present, future is the arbiter of condition and acceptability.

For those 'Stamp Tips of the Trade' readers who are overseas - forgive the illustration of periods set by British Monarchs! Other countries will have their own 'defining break-points' - but much of what follows will 'translate' into other countries/areas.

QEII 1952>2009 - although some may not think it - if you collect stamps from the last 57 years - these are modern. If you are collecting mint stamps - you should purchase UM/NH stamps. By choosing to hinge (mount) your mint stamps - you are making a statement that you are less concerned about 're-sale value' - and if you purchase mounted mint sets of the last 60 years or so - you should be paying less, considerably less than UM/NH. SG catalogue prices are for UM/NH.

KGVI 1936>1952 - It should not be forgotten that Stanley Gibbons (SG) catalogue prices are still for UM/NH. For GB issues SG catalogue prices are often considerably above current Dealer prices - but British Empire sets often command / realise a far higher percentage against SG catalogue. Supplies of these are far more limited than for British stamps of this period.

Collecting UM/NH KGVI becomes increasingly expensive. As a rule, GB should be collected UM - whereas British Empire is equally popular (and widely collected) in mint hinged condition as well as UM/NH. You may well be thinking - what do we base this statement on? It is based upon our desire to buy - and that is based upon demand from collectors. Interest is fast increasing in KGVI - many collectors confine themselves to this period.

KGVI 1910>1936 - 1936 is regarded as the end of the 1840>1936 'classic period'. It is a good 'break-point' at which to define a collection.

Let's examine British issues - this is where, working backwards - SG starts to price mint stamps in hinged condition - as well as UM/NH. There is good reason for this - UM/NH is considerably scarcer. This is reflected in SG prices - up to 150% higher for UM/NH. Larger quantities of British stamps were printed - so that, even with this premium, it is possible - with care - to collect UM/NH. But, beware - with premiums being significant - there is an increased likelihood of your purchasing the lightest of hinged stamps, from a less than scrupulous source, as an UM/NH. This is also the period where 're-gummed' issues are more likely to start surfacing. A re-gummed stamp - is as it sounds - gum has been added to make it appear better than it was - or original gum has been redistributed. In both cases - study of the gum upon the cheapest stamps of the period - should assist detection.

Such price differentials is one reason why I personally like handling mint hinged stamps - you know what they are! However, these differentials are as nothing to some other countries - consider a German Deutsches Reich at £3 hinged against £26 UM/NH! Consider the temptation for some to 'dress mutton' and sell as 'lamb'.

British Empire 1910>1936 - SG rightly does not price this material in UM/NH condition. Printings were often so small - that although UM/NH exists it rarely exists, so to speak. UM/NH will sell for high percentages of SG catalogue price, but so will the finest lightly hinged material. Re-gumming is not so often seen as in mainstream country issues, the main danger is to purchase a stamp so lightly hinged that it appears UM/NH.

QV - KEVII 1840>1910 - British Issues - SG again gets it right by pricing UM/NH from the 1887-92 'Jubilee' issues onwards. Yes, earlier genuine UM/NH exists-often from/in larger multiples - and dealers price and sell it at significant premiums - but pre 1887 it is not practical, or affordable for most, to collect UM/NH - this is where those that collect unmounted mint 1d blacks - may have lost touch with reality.

It is possible to purchase very high quality mint Queen Victoria - but it comes at a significant price. 'Spacefillers' (second/third quality) are often available from as little as 10%, or less, to 20% of catalogue upwards.

British Empire 1840>1910 - SG prices for fine mint hinged quality only. UM/NH exists but is basically the highest quality and is rarely available. Finest mint lightly hinged is the best standard to aspire to own. Once again - be careful UM/NH may simply be the lightest hinge imaginable.

And finally - what of that rare condition - unmounted mint fine used? Never forget that a postally used stamp will have no gum. Thus, a stamp hinge on the reverse will not affect the reverse, and in many cases (although not recommended for earlier material - 'fugitive colours' for example may 'run' - a stamp hinge can be lightly removed or soaked off). A CTO (cancelled to order) stamp - may have full gum upon the reverse - but this is not a requirement of being a used stamp.

Whatever you do, always buy from a reliable source, one that you know is committed to stamps and to their collectors. Cheapest is not always best.

Happy collecting from us all,
Andrew

PS. If you find this 'tip' interesting please forward it to a philatelic friend.

Andrew McGavin

Coming Events...

- FEB 20 Burloak Stamp Fair
Burlington Senior Centre, 2285 New St., Burlington, ON, L7R 1J4
Hours: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nineteen years of regular monthly shows on the third Saturday of every month. Six to nine dealers, active buyers, and always something new. For more information contact Steve Simon, telephone 905-575-2950, email bas6@bell.net.
- FEB 21 Toronto Postcard Club Annual Show
Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, 6 Garamond Court, Toronto, ON, M3C 1Z5
Canada's largest vintage postcard show. 1,000s of postcards for sale. 40 tables of antique postcards from many countries covering many topics. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission \$5. Free parking. TTC accessible. Details at www.torontopostcardclub.com Email: info@torontopostcardclub.com Web: <http://torontopostcardclub.com/toronto-postcard-show/>
- FEB 27 St. Thomas Stamp Club 30th Annual Stamp Show
Community of Christ Church, 105 Fairview Ave, St. Thomas, ON, N5R 3X4
10 dealers, exhibits, door prizes. Free admission, free parking. No stairs to climb. Phone: 519-631-8180
Email: jcowlard@bell.net
- MAR 19 Burloak Stamp Fair
Burlington Senior Centre, 2285 New St., Burlington, ON, L7R 1J4
Hours: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nineteen years of regular monthly shows on the third Saturday of every month. Six to nine dealers, active buyers, and always something new. For more information contact Steve Simon, telephone 905-575-2950, email bas6@bell.net.
- MAR 19 OXPEX/OTEX 2016
John Knox Christian School, 800 Juliana Dr., Woodstock, ON, N4S 8X3
Over 120 framed exhibits, 4 judges, critique session, 15 dealers, youth gift bags, prize draws, club circuit books, lunch and snack counter, free parking, free admission, everyone welcome. Phone: 519-290-1399 Email: john.mcwilliam@gmail.com Web: WWW.OXFORDPHILSOC.COM
- APR 2 Lonpex 124
Ramada Inn, 817 Exeter Road, London, ON, N6E 1W1
Sponsored by the London Philatelic Society. Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Churchill Room. Exhibits, 12 dealers, draws, free parking and admission. Email: donslau@execulink.com Web: <http://londonphilatelicsociety.com/>
- APR 16 Burloak Stamp Fair
Burlington Senior Centre, 2285 New St., Burlington, ON, L7R 1J4

Hours: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nineteen years of regular monthly shows on the third Saturday of every month. Six to nine dealers, active buyers, and always something new. For more information contact Steve Simon, telephone 905-575-2950, email bas6@bell.net.

- APR 22 Hamilton 2016 Springpex April 22, 2016 to April 23, 2016
Bishop Ryan Secondary School, 1824 Rymal Road East, Hamilton, ON, L0R 1P0
Large silent and voice auction Friday evening with viewing starting at 5 p.m. Saturday is a 20-dealer bourse plus youth booth and silent auction from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. GRVPA club circuit sales books Friday and Saturday. Light food and refreshments with ample free parking. For more information contact Steve Forten
Email: southont@cogeco.ca Web: www.hamiltonstampclub.com
- APR 23 Best Western Stamp Show
Niagara Room, Best Western Hotel, QEW at Lake Street, St. Catharines, ON, L2N 4G9
Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free parking, free admission and free appraisals. Sponsored by Roy's Stamps, specializing in the stamps and covers of Canada and the British Commonwealth. For further information, contact Roy Houtby Phone: 905-934-8377

From the Editor...

I need to make a few corrections about the Greene Foundation, but space is limited in this issue, so I will do so next month. The hours of operation are much more than just the 1st Saturday of the month, as well as the Foundation has other purposes besides the two mentioned in these two newsletters. Computers are lovely but sometimes they don't work. For instance the 1d black is 175 years old and the computer won't let me make the editorial change! I would also remind you that the Owen Sound Stamp Club maintains a web page at www.owensoundstampclub.org and hope you take a few minutes to visit it.



During the school year, the Owen Sound Stamp Club meets at 7:00 pm on the third Wednesday of each month in the cafeteria of St Mary's High School, 555 15th Street East. Meeting agendas will vary between having visiting club circuit books, speakers and an auction. Guests and new members are always welcome. Annual membership fees: \$15.00

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