

O.S.S.C.



Owen Sound Stamp Club

Newsletter

Next Club Meeting: January 15th

January 2003

Looking at the calendar, it is readily apparent that we are entering the heavy duty show season — in Southern Ontario, at least. I know that several of our members drop in on shows as far away as Hamilton and I will do my best to note upcoming events on p.4 of the Newsletter. If you should receive notices of shows in the region, please let me know so they don't get forgotten. Also, if any member should visit a show and would care to write a few words for the Newsletter about it, that would be most welcome!

Some readers may be wondering why there have been no auction reports in recent months. Well, the long and the short of it is that there just haven't been enough members at our meetings to run an auction. It seems that without at least fifteen members present, the chances of more than two people wanting the same thing become minimal. Under such circumstances it is very difficult for the auctioneer to generate much excitement!

Let us hope that over the next few months we will be able to get a few more members who will bring our meeting attendance back to levels that can sustain a lively auction.

What January Newsletter would be complete without the usual reminder about annual fees? As always, these are due at the first meeting of the year and I am pleased to say they remain at the

extraordinarily modest level of \$10/a (\$15.00 for family membership with shared Newsletter). These fees (just) cover the cost of sending out the Newsletter each month so, to be sure of getting the February copy, please make sure your cheque gets to either Bob Ford or myself by the first week of February or even better at the January meeting!

Please note also, that January is the month of our Annual General Meeting of which the primary business is the election of club officers.

Please note also that we expect to be getting circuit books from the Royal for the January meeting. These books generally contain better quality (and higher priced) stamps so don't forget a trip to the bank machine on your way to the meeting!

Bob Watson (President)

Stamp of the Month...

Bob Watson

This rather ordinary looking Spanish commemorative stamp was prepared by Spain's State Mint in Madrid for release on September 19, 1977 - opening day of the Tenth World Judo Championships due to be held in Barcelona.

Unfortunately, just before the event was due to begin, it was cancelled because of political problems relating to whether a team from Formosa should be allowed to compete.

Although supplies of the stamp had been distributed throughout the country, the Spanish Post Office ordered the issue to be withheld from circulation and returned to the printers for eventual destruction. In spite of everyone's best intentions, a rural post office in the province of Grenada failed to heed the call and some of the stamps were sold.



When news of this leaked out, philatelists and dealers had a fine time trying to lay hands on copies and were said to be offering up to \$300 for a nice example.

Meanwhile, the Post Office didn't know how best to handle the situation. In due course they decided to end speculation (and dispose of their stocks) by releasing the issue after all.

So it was that the first issue of 1978 was a stamp dated 1977 marking an event that never actually happened.

But... if you happen to be sorting through a bunch of Spanish covers and see this stamp, just check the postmark. If it says "1977", a postcard from your cruise ship would be nice...

On the whole, letters written a hundred or more years ago were not intended to be preserved for posterity. Their envelopes even less so. While many covers can still look remarkably fresh after a century in an album, some paper will yellow and begin to disintegrate after just a few decades. The following is a condensed version of some notes written for the American Philatelic Society on how to prevent those rare and unusual covers turning into dust. . . .

Some Notes on Stamp and Cover Preservation

by Arlene Sullivan, RPSC, BNAPS

There can be no doubt that the greatest enemy of stored collections is water in the atmosphere - either too much or too little. Depending on the kind of climate you live in, you may need to either increase or decrease humidity in the room where you store your collection. Generally homes in temperate climates that use central heating provide good conditions for storing stamps. If you are comfortable, your stamps probably are too. Be especially careful if you are storing your stamps in a basement or attic. If there is any hint of dampness, or if the temperature is high, move your collection to another space. I would guess more collections have been destroyed by inappropriate storage than by any other cause.

Take the time to go through your albums and boxes once every few months even if you are not currently using them. This allows the stamps to air, and gives you the chance to inspect them for any problems that may be developing.

First Aid

The following “recipes” are supplied for use in arresting or reversing some common problems that may arise with stamps or covers in your collection. I would tend to try and preserve only those covers and philatelic items that will die an imminent death anyway.

These recipes are all water based and non-toxic, but please observe some basic precautions. If you have the faintest doubt that anything on the cover or stamp may run in aqueous solutions (water), leave them alone! Ink can be tricky, as can cancellations. Watch also for wax seals and other attachments, as these too can come loose with handling combined with just a little moisture. When mixing and handling solutions, don't use kitchen utensils, as they may have traces of food or grease on them - invest in a few new, clean, spoons, containers and sprayers.

Use distilled water; tap water may contain minerals or salts that will react with your cover or stamp.

Use fresh solutions; old solutions may not work (especially hydrogen peroxide).

Spray solutions outdoors, or at least in a well ventilated area, and don't breathe the spray in.

And last, but very important - make sure your cover or stamp is dry before storing.

NB: if you are not willing to lose the stamp or cover, don't experiment with it! If what you have is precious or valuable, please look into professional conservation.

Checking paper for Acidity

Determining the acidity of paper can be roughly tested by using bromocresol green, an indicator dye. Touched to the paper, the dye remains green if the paper is neutral, yellow if acidic, and blue if alkaline. This dye is available in bottles or felt tipped pens through scientific or archival supply houses. Be careful, as this will stain.

Deacidification of Paper

The chemicals used in these methods are relatively harmless (they are closely related to baking soda) but as in anything be careful with the solutions, test them on something you don't want first, and make sure you follow the recipe. I imagine that a pharmacist or archival supply house might be able to give you a supplier for these chemicals. If you can't find these chemicals, I see no reason why plain old baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) would not be a good substitute.

Recipe 1 - Make up a 0.12 percent solution of calcium bicarbonate in distilled water. Soak the sheet in the solution for half an hour, then remove, blot off excess solution, and dry between pressing boards. This process neutralizes the acid content and leaves an alkaline residue as a buffer against further contamination.

Recipe 2 - Make up a 10 g per litre solution of magnesium bicarbonate and use a spray bottle to spray a fine mist of solution onto the paper. This method is preferred for fragile items that may not take much handling.

Reversing “Oxidation” on Stamps

A gentle bath in a two to three percent hydrogen peroxide solution will restore the colour in stamps that have lead based inks that have darkened due to exposure to trace amounts of acid. If the colour does not change after a half an hour or so, “oxidation” is not the culprit. This treatment works for restoring colour to the 3¢ Small Queens of Canada. By a different chemical mechanism it will also restore the colour of the “muddy waters” variety of the Canadian 1898 Map Stamp. Research the stamp pigment before using hydrogen peroxide, as vegetable based dyes used in later years may be irreversibly bleached by this treatment.

Stamp Challenge!

Several members either knew, were able to find out, or made a pretty good guess as to why those Australian stamps had different size perforation holes. The stamps shown came from sheets designed to be made up into coil stamps. The two sizes of perforation holes were designed to reduce the risk of tearing a stamp when pulling it from a vending machine while keeping enough strength to prevent the coil falling apart.

Prizes to be distributed at the next meeting!

This month's challenge is more personal:

The following stamp has been sitting in my “Don't Know” stockbook for months and if anyone reading this should be able to identify it, I would be most grateful.



From the Internet ...

Bob Watson

The following items were posted in the Internet newsgroup *rec.collecting.stamps.discuss* over the past month or so. Typically messages to this newsgroup cover anything to do with stamp collecting including "I found this at a local dealer. Anyone know anything about it?" and "Who printed the New Zealand 1922 definitives?"

Rodney (Australia) wrote:

Saw the following in an old copy of Stamp News:

One of the finest collections of Great Britain stamps ever formed, the property of well-known Harley Street Gynaecologist Dr. Douglas Latto, went on display at Stanley Gibbons' Strand Gallery from March 1-30.

Dr. Latto's collection ranks among the finest in the world and includes many fabulous gems of philately. With it he has won a large number of gold medals and awards at both national and international stamp exhibitions. His display of twelve frames at Stanley Gibbons included two of line-engraved issues and ten covering surface-printed stamps.

Among the many outstanding and valuable items on display was an example of the world's first stamp, the Penny Black, from the first position (corner letters A-A) from the first sheet from the first printing plate used to print the stamp, and sent on a cover posted on the first day of stamp issue, May 6th, 1840. He acquired this item from a local estate agent, who found it among his files.

Dr. Latto, who lectures and writes extensively on stamps, is a member of the Reading Philatelic Society, the Great Britain Philatelic Society and the Royal Philatelic Society of London. He is also a member of the Council of the Soil Association and Chairman of the British Safety Council.

to which John Ray (U.K.) added:

In one of his displays at my local club he showed us the 2/- brown of 1880; this stamp is catalogued by Gibbons nowadays at around £7,500 mint, and he had (if I remember correctly) a block of 20 of them.

He also showed the same stamp used on cover, saying that there were only four examples known on cover... "and here are the other three"...

It was that kind of collection.

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If you have stamps that insist on curling into tight little balls that resemble the Dead Sea Scrolls, with a little care they can be saved, and restored to their normal flat appearance. In the case of valuable stamps, it definitely pays, especially since the gum can be saved.

Put the stamp in its curled up form in a glassine envelope, and with one end of a pair of tongs, gently straighten out the stamp from the middle outwards, keeping the envelope itself under slight pressure so that as the stamp straightens, it does not regain its former curled-up shape.

With a finger, put pressure on the straightened out portion, and gently use the tongs to straighten out the other half of the stamp. Be doubly careful that any corner perfs are straightened out, and not folded under.

When the stamp is entirely flat, still inside the envelope, grab the envelope with either hand, between thumb and forefinger, and rub it back and forth over the corner of a desk or table.

Don't be afraid to damage the stamp, for it is safe inside the envelope as long as it is kept in motion across the table edge. The static electricity generated in the stamps by the fast motion will remove the curl, and the stamp when removed from the envelope will then and henceforth lie flat.

Caveat: Act on at your own risk!

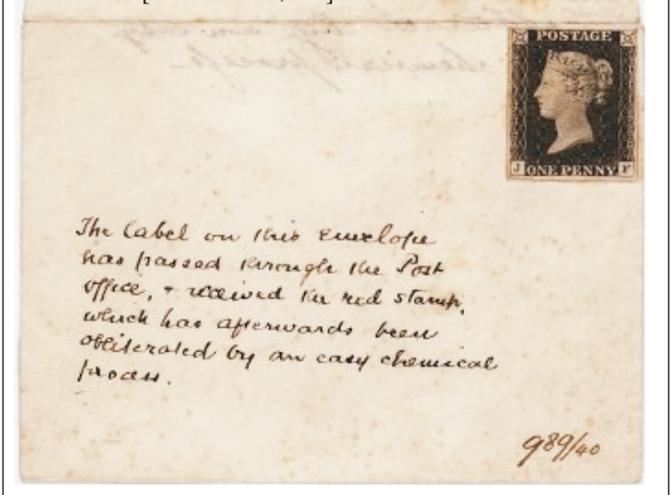
In 1942, Jean de Sperati was charged at Chambéry, France, with producing counterfeit stamps. The 500-odd different types of rarities he forged have a value of over \$4 million on today's market, if genuine. The great problem in detecting Sperati's forgeries lies in the fact that many are part genuine. A particularly good and dangerous forgery was a used £2 Kangaroo. Sperati took a common, low-value Kangaroo stamp and completely faded out the design on it. This left a piece of the correct paper with the correct watermark, correct perforation and even correct cancellation. Sperati then treated the postmark chemically so as to make it porous and subsequently printed the design, denomination and correct colours for the scarce £2 value through the postmark so that the postmark appears to be on top to the design. (Present value: c.\$1000).

Interesting Covers...

This cover was put up for auction a while back. It was used in an experiment conducted in 1840 to determine the effectiveness of various cancellation methods.

This very nicely cut penny black had been cancelled with the standard red Maltese cross used at the time. The cover had been subsequently treated and the mark obliterated using "an easy chemical process" indicating that that cancelling ink needed improvement!

This is believed to be the only example of a cancellation removal trial on a cover in private hands, with the other institutionalized in the British Library as part of the Tapling Collection. [Sold for £15,000]



Next Meeting: January 15th.

Main business at the January meeting will be the “Election of Officers” for the coming year and perusal of the Royal circuit books.

Upcoming Events:

The **Bramalea Stamp Club** is holding its Annual Exhibition & Bourse on Saturday, **Feb 1st**, at the Achrdekin Recreation Ctr., 292 Conestoga Dr, Bramalea. Hours: 9-4



The **Burlington Stamp Club** is holding BURLPEX 2003 at the Appleby Mall, 9 New St. at Appleby Line on **Feb 8**. Hours: 9:30-4:30

The **Owen Sound Stamp Club Annual Show** will be held on Sunday, **May 4, 2003**, at the Bayshore Arena (as usual).

Royal*2003*Royale will be held in Hanover on **May 30 – June 1, 2003**, at the Hanover Regional Aquatic Centre and Coliseum.

The Stamp on the Envelope... —

Like Christmas stamps, the annual release of a Lunar New Year stamp has become a tradition that is going to be hard to quit. Canada Post's designs for the “Year of the Ram” are based on sculptures of a ram (48¢) and goat (\$1.25) created specifically for the stamps. Why a *goat* to mark the Year of the Ram?

Apparently, the Chinese language does not distinguish between a goat and sheep, so there is some confusion whether this is actually the Year of the Ram or Year of the Goat and either interpretation is considered acceptable.

The stamps themselves are expensive productions incorporating 9 colour lithography, foil stamping, embossing, and diecutting for the perforations. Almost too good to use on an envelope to be obliterated with a rubber stamp smudge...

Des.: Three Degrees Creative, Vancouver
(Rosina Li, Charles Reid, Jason Li)
Print.: Lowe-Martin (nine colour lithography, foil stamping, embossing)
Paper: Tullis Russell Coatings
Size: 33mm × 57mm (irregular)
Perf.: 13+:

OWEN SOUND STAMP CLUB

Chapter 191

Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

www3.sympatico.ca/rhwatson/stampclub

The Owen Sound Stamp Club meets at 7:00pm on the third Wednesday of each month in the basement of St. George's Anglican Church (on the corner of 10th St. E. and 4th Ave. E.). The main business of the evening is typically to trade, buy, and sell stamps and philatelic material. An auction is held at 8:00pm.

There are presently about 30 active members whose interests cover just about everything at all levels from beginner to expert. New members are always most welcome.

Annual Membership fees: Full: \$10; Family: \$15; Junior: Free. In addition, all members and visitors are asked to contribute \$1 each meeting which is passed directly to St. George's Church in appreciation for allowing us to use their room.

The OSSC Newsletter is distributed monthly to members of the Owen Sound Stamp Club. Opinions expressed by contributors to this newsletter are those of the named author and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Owen Sound Stamp Club (nor of the editor).

Contributions are always most welcome. If any reader has news, information, opinions, or announcements that might be of interest to the OSSC membership, please contact the editor.

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