



# Owen Sound Stamp Club

## P hilatelic O wen S ound T imes

Next Club Meeting: June 15<sup>th</sup>

June 2005

In this day and age it might seem that the maxim “there’s nothing wrong with breaking the law – it’s being found out that can be embarrassing” is a universal truth – amongst senior government and corporate officials, at least. As we are assailed day after day by stories of strange record keeping and/or accounting practices, it begins to seem as though the upper echelons of our society have lost their sense of ethical direction.

Of course, there have been problems in the past and it is interesting to observe how they were dealt with then and to speculate on how they would be handled now.

Most members will be familiar with the story of Charles Connell, the unfortunate Postmaster of New Brunswick who thought it would be kind of nice if one of the stamps to be used in his bailiwick was to carry his portrait. It is easy to imagine that Connell was well pleased when he saw the proofs of the new series which included a railway locomotive, a mail-ship, along with portraits of the Queen, the Prince of Wales and, of course, the Postmaster of New Brunswick.

Bear in mind that this was 1860 – stamps had only been around for 20 years or so and one might think that traditions on who might or might not be depicted on stamps would hardly have been firmly established.

Maybe the printers (American Bank Note Co.) warned Connell of impending trouble or maybe they didn’t care. In any case the stamps were printed and prepared for distribution.

Shortly before the series was to be released, Connell’s presumption was recognised and brought forcibly to his attention. In a demonstration of contrition, Connell not only resigned his post, but agreed to pay all costs associated with the printing of his stamp. He also took responsibility for the destruction of all stocks – though a few inevitably managed to escape the furnace and are sought after items today.

Just a year later, in 1861, another scandal erupted.

Perkins, Bacon and Petch were a well regarded security printing company in England who won fame as the printers of many stamp issues including the Penny Black/Red, and the first series from the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius, Trinidad, and a host of other postal authorities. With a portfolio like that one might wonder how they could go wrong, and yet, because of a most unfortunate goodwill gesture, they lost virtually every contract.

In August, 1861, Mr. Ormond Hill, cousin to Rowland Hill, asked J.B. Bacon for some examples of his company’s work to show his friends. Mr. Bacon responded by assembling six sets of 75 postage stamps which were presented to Mr. Hill. The stamps were taken from current issues, printers’ waste, and some were even reprinted from defunct plates. All were overprinted “cancelled”.

Unfortunately, all this was done without the permission of the authorities and, as such, was considered a gross breach of trust by a security printer. Bacon could see nothing especially wrong with his actions “considering the gentlemen to whom the impressions were furnished” but the authorities certainly did and they didn’t care who the recipients were.

Although no charges were laid, Perkins Bacon’s stamp printing days were over for many years opening the doors to rivals such as De La Rue, Waterlow, and Bradbury Wilkinson.

### Stamp of the Month...

As we all know, every four years, the Olympic Games provides a common theme for stamp designers in just about every postal administration around the world.

As an appropriate tribute to this trend, the IOC has co-ordinated a jury of renowned philatelists, artists, and journalists, along with its members, to pass judgement on the



designs and award medals accordingly.

The winner of the 2004 Olympia Prize gold medal was this spectacular design showing a high jumper as he clears the bar. (I don’t actually have this stamp, so I hope it looks as good in print as it does on the screen).

The Prize will be presented to Portugal at the 117th IOC Session on 7 July in Singapore.

## From the President ...

Alan Charlesworth

Thank you! Thank you! One and all for your participation and support at our 10th annual Stamp Show. Attendance was good, dealers were in good humour, displays were resplendent, auction lots sold well, and food and drink were in good supply.

I would like to offer special thanks to all the members that gave most generously of their time and energy:

Bob Watson for overall organization and handling of the displays.

Bob Ford for making all the arrangements for the hall and advertising.

Bill and Barb Shelson for their work on the auction.

Al Roos and Bill Van Trigt for their work on the front desk.

Marion Ace and Carolin Brooks for the work on the food and coffee.

Sheila MacMahon for her help with the junior collectors.

If in any way I forgot someone please let me offer my apologies now.

I have not as yet received the figures as to how well we did this year but I am confident that we all will be well pleased when they are available.

I am looking forward to seeing all the members at this month's meeting and hearing your comments and ideas for future shows.

## OSSC Library ...

Through donations (and even purchases) the Club has acquired a number of interesting books over the years and we look forward to expanding our collection in the years to come.

To be useful, it is obviously important that members should be aware of just what is there. So, at least to begin with, I will make a point of bringing in some of the material to each meeting. I will also include some information about our holdings in the newsletter and, if I really get things together, include a catalogue in the annual calendar.



Illustration from "Canadian E.F.O.s" in the OSSC library.

## The Way It Was ...

The following article first appeared in *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* - March 18, 1911:

### How Stamps are Gummed

Some weeks ago I made a few remarks on the subject of original gum and although the adhesive matter on the backs of postage stamps seems such a commonplace, if useful, part of the labels, it will probably astonish my readers to learn with what care it is applied. Some years ago a Scotch newspaper gave an interesting account of the process from which I take a few extracts.

If there is one thing above another which has been brought down to an exact science, it is the gumming of adhesive postage stamps. The precautions taken to secure a uniform coating of gum on the back of stamps approaches the marvellous. When the stamps are gummed they are tested to establish if the coating varies on sheets one seven-thousandth of a pound.

The stamps, after being printed, go to the gumming room. Pipes convey the gum in a heated and melted state to small vats, into which it is slowly dropped as needed. From these vats it is allowed to ooze slowly onto rollers. The sheets of stamps pass under the rollers, receiving a thin coating of gum, and then drop onto a continuous coat or belt. The belt carries them into vats which contain coils of steam pipe 50 feet long. The slow passage of the freshly gummed stamp sheets through the vats dries them. When they reach the other end of the vats they are dry enough to be piled one upon another, counted, tested, and sent to be perforated.

The precautions taken to ensure uniformity in the gumming are the most interesting part of the work. Each morning when the workmen report for duty they are given a series of blanks, which they must fill out during the day as their work progresses. A most careful account is kept of every ounce of gum given to the men and of every sheet of stamps which they handle. The system is an absolute check on the stamp sheets, but was designed to ensure the use of the proper quantity of gum in proportion to the stamp sheets.

When the work starts in the morning each of the men is charged up with so many sheets of stamps and so many pounds of gum. He must spread that amount of gum over the given number of sheets. Exhaustive experiments and exact scientific calculation have determined the proportion of gum and paper.

Rigid and continuous inspection and the keeping of a running account with each operator in the gumming room makes it almost impossible to neglect any sheets or to dispose of the gum except by spreading it with absolute uniformity over the sheets. The little vats which hang over the rollers contain delicate instruments, which show the temperature at which the gum is kept and its specific gravity.

Moisture in the atmosphere presents the greatest problem to the operators in the gumming room. The quantity of the gum varies with the seasons. To secure the desired results it is not only necessary for the employees to be carefully watched, but the actual atmospheric conditions in which they work are carefully regulated.

## Show Review ...

A couple of days after our show, I came across this account of the tenth decadal(?) World Stamp Exhibition held in London, England, in 2000:

The vast Earls Court Exhibition Centre was an ideal venue for The Stamp Show 2000. This seven-day event, which was promoted as “the exhibition of the decade, if not the century”, was organised by Royal Mail with the assistance of a Philatelic Board and a large band of volunteers. The exhibition brought together almost 3,500 frames of the world's best exhibits. Only the war years have intervened in holding this world-renowned philatelic event since it commenced in 1890. This year's show maintained the exemplary standard with an astounding range of exhibits on display with overall standards continuing to rise.

Collectors found the lure of the incredible range of stock on offer at the stands of 200 dealers from around the world irresistible, despite the obvious pain in the hip-pocket area. In addition, 129 Postal Administrations were represented.

Special features included a display of gems and rarities from the Royal Philatelic Collection and the British Library, and classic Post Office posters. The four printers of stamps for Royal Mail each had a display stand demonstrating design and technical aspects and printing methods. The printing of sheets of Penny Blacks from a modern plate created from an original die of the Penny Black, printed on an original Perkins, Bacon & Petch printing press was fascinating. Along with many others I found this informative hour-long demonstration compulsive viewing which led me to return more than once. Exhibition souvenirs included a Jeffery Matthews miniature-sheet featuring ten of the colours for the Machin definitives, an Exhibition miniature-sheet and a Millennium stamp booklet. Customers were well catered for in a large Royal Mail retail area – either by self-service or by face to face contact.

*So, let's start preparing for next year, eh?*

## Curiosities ...

According to both Stanley Gibbons and Scott, the King George VI lithographed definitive series of 1937 was reissued in 1941 using paler colours.

As the scan to the right indicates, the difference in colour was not very great and neither catalogue gives any hint as to why the changes were made.

As it turns out, the reason for the changes was the implementation of a “war economy measure” on the basis that paler colours mean less pigment means cheaper stamps – but without an obvious reduction of quality which might lower morale on the home front.

What has proved to be a bit of a philatelic puzzle is the matter of exactly how this colour lightening was done.

In essence, philatelic experts seem to agree that there are two ways the stamps could have been lightened: either the ink could have been diluted, or the plates recreated but with shallower recesses to hold the ink (which would result in less ink being used and a paler image).

Shortly after the stamps were first released, Peter Rang wrote in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* that after careful study he felt there was no doubt that the plates had been redrawn. In particular he noted that it was only the background that had been lightened and that the head itself was the same as before. A little later, Rang wrote that his surmising had been confirmed by the Post Office authorities who said that:

“the lighter background was obtained by making a new drawing of all but the head in a lighter tone; the old head unaltered was then superimposed on the new background, thus creating a new original from which new printing cylinders were obtained. The ink was unchanged, but the economy lay in the smaller quantity used owing to the shallower ink-holding



recesses of the background.”

In 1981, Peter Worsfield wrote a story in the *Philatelic Bulletin* about this issue and said that the printers had looked at a number of options including diluting the ink and redrawing the plates.

After a number of trials, the ink dilution idea was rejected because it was believed that the results would not be light-fast, and, indeed, new plates were created. To put the cap on the argument, Peter Worsfold ends the article by pointing out a letter from Edmund Dulac to the Post Office about the re-engraving, and the Post Office reply which stated that it had acted immediately and without consultation due to the circumstances of the times.

All of which might be considered to be pretty conclusive.

Except that ...

Richard West recently wrote an article appearing in *Stamp Magazine* in which he claims to have done all kinds of research based on correspondence in the official archives, etc. and determined that fears regarding colour-fastness of diluted inks were unfounded and, indeed, that was the chosen measure eventually taken.

At stake here is the question of whether the 1941 series is “redrawn” or simply a “colour change”.

Next Meeting ... Wed. June 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm

As always, if any member has any material to sell or trade, bring it along!

**Upcoming Events:**

**June 18 (Sat.):** Burloak Stamp Fair will be held at the Bulington Seniors Centre, 2285 New Street (at Seneca), **Burlington.** 6-9 dealers; free admission and parking.  
Hours: 9-3

**June 25 (Sat.):** Stamp Show at St. Bonaventure Church Parish Centre, 1300 Leslie St., **Toronto.** 18 Dealers. Free admission.  
Hours: 9-5

**July 9 (Sat.):** Stamp Show at St. Bonaventure Church Parish Centre, 1300 Leslie St., **Toronto.** 18 Dealers. Free admission.  
Hours: 9-5

**July 16 (Sat.):** Burloak Stamp Fair will be held at the Bulington Seniors Centre, 2285 New Street (at Seneca), **Burlington.** 6-9 dealers; free admission and parking.  
Hours: 9-3

**July 23 (Sat.):** Stamp Show at St. Bonaventure Church Parish Centre, 1300 Leslie St., **Toronto.** 18 Dealers. Free admission.  
Hours: 9-5

Stamp on the Envelope ...

Homer Watson is not a household name in Canada these days, but in his heyday of the late 1800's he was one of the most successful (and respected) artists in Canada.

He was born in Doon, near Kitchener, in 1855 and demonstrated artistic talent from early childhood. He moved to Toronto in 1874 and worked in a photography studio where he became acquainted with a number of artists of the day and strove to improve his artistic technique.

His style was definitely "realistic landscapes" and his work has been grouped with that of Constable. Many of his canvasses depict the countryside around Kitchener and he was particularly interested in portraying the pioneer society and the various moods of nature.

Homer Watson's career was significantly enhanced when Queen Victoria purchased *The Pioneer Mill* in 1880 and he created most of his best regarded works over the next 20 years. *Down in the Laurentides* was completed in 1882.

In 1907 he worked with Edmund Morris, the historical artist, to establish the Canadian Art Club to promote the work of Canadian Artists.

This issue is something of an omnibus commemorative series marking the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the National Gallery of Canada, the 150th anniversary of Homer Watson's birth, and the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Canadian Academy of Art (Homer Watson being a founding member).

**OWEN SOUND STAMP CLUB**  
**Chapter 191**  
**Royal Philatelic Society of Canada**

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 10<sup>th</sup> St. E. and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 20 active members whose interests cover just about everything at all levels from beginner to expert. New members are always most welcome.

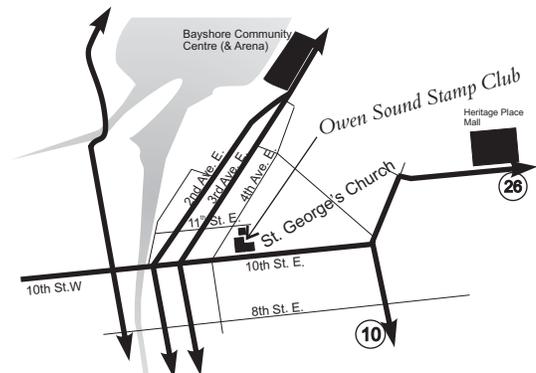
Annual Membership fees: Full: \$10; Family: \$15; Junior: Free. In addition, all members and visitors are asked to contribute \$1 each meeting which is passed directly to St. George's Church in appreciation for allowing us to use their room.

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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<i>Series:</i>	National Gallery of Canada – 125 <sup>th</sup> ann. f.	<i>Print.:</i>	Lowe Martin
<i>Title:</i>	"Down in the Laurentides" by Homer Watson	<i>Process:</i>	Lithography (8 colours)
<i>Issue date:</i>	27 <sup>th</sup> May, 2005	<i>Paper:</i>	Tullis Russell Coatings
<i>Denom:</i>	50¢	<i>Gum:</i>	PVA
<i>Layout:</i>	Pane of 16 stamps	<i>Tagging:</i>	General, 4 sides
<i>Des.:</i>	Hélène L'Heureux	<i>Size:</i>	49 mm × 32 mm
		<i>Perf.:</i>	13¼
		<i>No.</i>	3,000,000