

Owen Sound Stamp Club

Chapter 191
Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

Next meeting: Wed. December 16th 2009 @ 7:00

From the President...



Greetings, salutations and a big HO HO HO and Merry Christmas with best wishes for this holiday season. I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and looking forward to our meeting this month. Since it is so near the Christmas break, our meeting will consist of an opportunity to enjoy each others company and begin the celebrations.

This meeting is more of a social time together and it would be nice to invite our significant others, friends and any other stamp collector you know. Please help out by bringing some treats to munch on and I'll try to arrange some refreshments. Since gift sharing is also something done at this time of year, there is an opportunity to share gift with others who have brought some. The gift sharing is very simple; by bringing a gift you become eligible to take a gift home. These gifts need not be necessarily be stamp related.

There will also be an opportunity to enter a one page display at the meeting. This month's topic is simply "Christmas." Let's see what creative displays we can come up with. The topic for January is the Chinese New Year which is the Year of the Tiger in 2010, so see what you have in your collection that features tigers. If anyone has any future topics, please share your idea with us at the meeting

The meeting will also feature the funny and zany "President's Auction." If this new for you, well come on out and see what you can buy with the President's funny money. This will be distributed at the meeting before the auction begins. The funny part will be to see how you can buy something you really want. Do you save your "money" or make a stab at something else and hope you have enough left over until later. That's exactly what John Cortan did last year. I wonder how much money he made off those stamps! Philatelic donations for the auction are most welcome.

*I am looking forward to seeing you at the St. George's church on the 16th.
Cheers.*

Phil Visser

Coming Events...

DEC. 19, St. Catharines, ON

Holiday Inn Stamp Show, Niagara Room, Holiday Inn, QEW at Lake St. Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free parking and admission. Specializing in stamps and covers of Canada and the British Commonwealth. Sponsor/Affiliate: Roy's Stamps. For more information, contact Roy Houtby, telephone: (905) 934-8377 (905) 934-8377 .

JAN. 2, 2010, Moncton, NB

STAMP FAIR, 100 War Veterans Ave. Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free parking and admission. For more information contact Paul, telephone 506-875-2684 506-875-2684 .

JAN. 9, 2010, Brantford, ON

Annual Stamp Show, Woodman Community Centre, 491 Grey St. Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., free admission, free parking, stamp exhibits, junior exhibits, 15 dealers, silent auctions, club circuit books, wheelchair access, lunch room. Sponsor/Affiliate: Brantford Stamp Club. For more information contact Dan, telephone 519-442-3242 519-442-3242 , email shasland@kwic.com. Website: <http://www.brantfordstap.org>.

JAN. 15 - 17, 2010, Toronto, ON

Unipex Stamp and Coin Show, Rameses Temple Shrine Club, 3100 Keele St. Hours: Fri. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., TTC service to the door, licensed snack bar, free parking, door prizes. For more information, telephone 416-242-5900 416-242-5900 .

JAN. 23, 2010, St. Catharines, ON

The 61st Cathex, Grantham Lions Club, 732 Niagara St. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 12 dealers, club circuit, lunch counter, free parking, free admission. Sponsor/Affiliate: St. Catharines Stamp Club. For more information contact stuart.keeley@sympatico.ca.

On the Cover... The Nativity Scene



Last December's *On the Cover* article featured a Nativity stamp depicting a miniature sculpture of the baby Jesus. Canada Post has returned to the creators of the Christmas stamp for a set of three more stamps to celebrate Christmas this year. Once again lime wood figures sculpted by Antonio Caruso have been photographed by Michael Rafelson. The photos were then put into the capable hands of the graphic designer Joe Gault who sets the tone and creates the backgrounds and layouts.

While last year's stamp showed just a hint of his mother looking over him; this year's domestic rate stamp has a more complete view of the Mother Mary

standing over her child. The background glows with warm gold and orange tones. The ninety-eight cent United States rate stamp features a magus with a censer perhaps filled with frankincense. It is coloured in red and deep oranges. Purple tones have been used on the International rate stamp. On this stamp the bent figure of one of the good shepherds carries a staff and has a lamb on his shoulders. It is available in a booklet of six as is the U.S. rate magus. The Madonna and child is a Permanent stamp that comes in a booklet of twelve.



As has recently become the custom in Canada and some other postal jurisdictions, a souvenir sheet is also available with the Christmas stamps on them. The sheet also contains the blue Christ child stamp from 2008. The only Official First Day Cover for this set has the full souvenir sheet on it. It is cancelled at St. Mary's Newfoundland.

If you've still got any money left after purchasing the souvenir sheet, the OFDC and all three booklets then you can purchase the 'Christmas gutter product'. The gutter product is essentially the U.S rate booklet and the international rate booklet that haven't been cut apart. (Although still called booklets these items are single small pages).

The carvings themselves are a part of a traveling exhibition which is in Oshawa

The stamps on the souvenir sheet are placed roughly in the positions that you would view the actual carved creche. The widely spaced stamps have delicate images of cherubs and angels in the background that can be used as stickers. They

this month. Don't forget, these delightful carvings are only a mere five inches in height. What appropriate subjects for stamps.

Handel's Messiah

By Ralph Wyndham



One of the most enduring and popular pieces of music heard during the Christmas season is the oratorio, 'Messiah', by George Frideric Handel.

Handel was born in Germany in 1685. Though his family was not musical, Handel himself was drawn to music and proved to be something of a prodigy. By the age of seven he was already an accomplished performer on the harpsichord and pipe organ. His father wanted him to study law, for which Handel enrolled in the University of Halle but he

eventually gave it up and went back to music.

George Friderick Handel appears on this 1935

In the early 1700s, Handel went to Italy where he learned Italian music styles including opera. He settled permanently in London, England in 1712 where the public had a great appetite for the Italian operatic style that he was so adept at composing. Over the years, however, Italian opera fell out of fashion in England. Handel struggled on, continuing to produce operas, until he recognized that the oratorio had replaced opera in London's entertainment market.

While similar in structure to opera, the oratorio was a bit more versatile and accessible. Operas dealt only with secular themes written in Italian. The oratorio was written in English so everyone could understand the words and could present both secular and religious themes. Most importantly, the oratorio required no stage, no costumes, no sets or props and could be performed in theatres or churches by both professional and amateur groups.



There was considerable controversy surrounding the religious oratorio. Religious leaders of the day believed that both the theatre and Handel's music were subversive and profane. The bishop of London was outraged in 1732 when he learned that members of the cathedral choir sang in a performance of 'Esther', an Old Testament story.

A great admirer of Handel, Ludwig van Beethoven said, "I

In the summer of 1741, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, William Cavendish, invited Handel to perform a series of concerts in Dublin. Perhaps to escape the political heat in London for a while, Handel readily accepted. Wanting a new piece to perform in Dublin, the composer promptly sat down, and at his usual break neck pace, wrote the music for a new oratorio using a libretto ('lyrics' and performance directions) by Charles Jennens, in just 24 days.

Handel named the new piece simply 'Messiah', meaning the 'anointed one', referring to Jesus. Jennens' libretto threads together stories from both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible to present a story of Jesus' life and teachings. The piece has three parts. The first deals with His Advent and scenes of the Nativity. Part two presents His Passion and Resurrection; part three presents the spiritual messages of Christ's teachings.



venue for many presentations of Messiah, appears on this 1987 stamp

Handel arrived in Dublin in December 1741 and presented a dozen successful concerts prior to the first performance of Messiah. Messiah's path to its premier was a bit of a rocky one. There were many production difficulties and rearrangements of the score. And the political troubles also persisted. Jonathan Swift, author of Gulliver's Travels, now

Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, postponed the premier for a while. He objected to the title, wanting it to be renamed 'A Sacred Oratorio', and wanting proceeds of the performance to be donated to charity.

The oratorio, originally intended as a piece for Easter, premiered April 13, 1742, a couple of weeks after Easter Sunday. In a clever promotional move on April 12, Handel opened the final rehearsal of Messiah to the public. Word of the wonderful new music traveled fast and hundreds of people had to be turned away at the door the following day.

A choir of just 26 boys and five men from the choirs of St. Patrick's and (Handel's Messiah continues on page 4)

(Handel's Messiah continued from page 3)

Christ Church Cathedrals sang in the first performance. In contrast, in Victorian England, large choirs became the rage. Massive presentations of Messiah featuring up to 3,000 voices took place in London's Crystal Palace.

Rearrangement of the score that was a problem prior to the premiere



Hector Berlioz unflatteringly referred to Messiah

seems to me to be one of the very strengths of Messiah. Handel himself presented the oratorio many times often rewriting passages to suit the skills of choir or soloist and to what instruments were available in the orchestra. Messiah's score has been altered so many times over the years that it is difficult to decide just what represents the 'definitive' official score for Messiah. This situation led composer Hector Berlioz to describe the oratorio as "a barrel of roast pork and beer".

Regardless of how Berlioz felt about Messiah, this masterpiece has been enjoyed by countless millions of people over the last 267 years and no doubt will be enjoyed by many more in the future.

Thanks Ralph!

The Spotlight...by Marion Ace



Since it is Christmastime I think that I'll keep with that theme. That is not a problem for me because I love Christmas stamps. My



Grandparents came with their daughters to Canada from Wales so

eat Britain's Christmas angels from 1972, 1973 and 1978

when I was collecting my first stamps I couldn't wait for the Christmas cards that came pouring in from Britain. Back then people sent lots of Christmas cards. You would receive them from everybody you knew including anyone you did business with. Mailing letters was not expensive and Christmas cards even had their own cheaper rate. Over the years I have found that many of Britain's Christmas stamps are bright, colourful and cheery; to me that's just what Christmas should be. When trying to decide which British Christmas stamps are my favourites I discovered that all three of their older sets of angel stamps held that spot close to my heart. They are all rich and luxuriant with colour and visual texture. I can imagine any one of them as a creation made of rich fabric and gold thread. In 1999 Britain started producing square Christmas stamps as part of their millennium series. After a couple of years the squares got smaller. Now they have gone to small rectangular stamps. I find the smaller stamps too small. In 2007 another set of angels was issued in the smaller format. See for yourself. I think they just don't have the same impact.

I hope that everyone will participate in this column. The 'spotlight' can be on something unusual or something that you are just fond of. You can write a paragraph or two or a page or two. I will need a good scan or photo of the item or you can leave it

From the Editor...

Hello everybody! I actually missed November's meeting. My darling husband was kind enough to share his nasty germs with me but nasty old battleaxe that I am, I declined to come to the meeting to share them with you. Unfortunately, I missed the opportunity to browse through Gerd Fehler's stamps. I hope that everybody found some interesting items. It seems that Gerd was a busy fellow since he also won the One Page Challenge. Don't forget to bring Christmas pages.

Annual dues are due again in January. Any of you who we haven't heard from in some time and didn't pay last year will be weeded off of the newsletter list shortly.

I look forward to gaining a couple of pounds at the meeting, so bring lots of goodies. There will also be a gift exchange for those who choose to participate...nothing too fancy just \$10 or so.

If you're able to contribute something interesting for the President's funny money auction that would be great! Bring on the funny money Phil!

Merry Christmas everybody.

See you on Wednesday,
Marion Ace, Editor OSSC

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The Owen Sound Stamp Club meets at 7:00 pm on the third Wednesday of each month in the basement of St. George's Anglican Church (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 often held at 8:00 pm. There are presently about 20 active members whose interests cover just about everything at all levels, from beginner to expert.

Guests or new members are always most welcome.

Annual membership fees: Full-\$10; Family-\$15; Junior- Free

Members and guests contribute \$1 at each meeting which is passed directly to St. George's Church in appreciation for use of their room.

The OSSC Newsletter is distributed to all members. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are expressly those of the individual author.

Contributions to the newsletter are most welcome. Please submit any news, information, opinions or announcements to the editor.

Club Officers:

President: Phil Visser (519) 376-6760
RR #5., Owen Sound ON N4K 5N7

pvisser@hurontel.on.ca

Vice-Pres: John Cortan (519) 395-5817

P.O. Box 295, Ripley, ON NOG 2R0

jcortan@hurontel.on.ca

Sec./Treas: Bob Ford (519) 376-4788

721 8th Ave. E., Owen Sound, ON N4K
3A5

robford@log.on.ca

Editor: Marion Ace (519) 934-1998

P.O. Box 286, Tara ON NOH 2N0

marionace@bmts.com

