

Owen Sound Stamp Club
Chapter 191
Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 16th 2016 @ 7 PM

From the President...



I am not sure where the time has gone, but it is time to make a call out about the upcoming meeting on March 16th. The date is significant for a number of reasons. It is the third Wednesday of the month and so a Stamp Club meeting, but also this date is the March Break for high schools, and so the St Mary's High School is closed for the week. Because of the high school closure, this month's meeting will be held in the Julie McArthur/YMCA Rec Center. The meeting room is actually the daycare facility which is just past the pool from the south entrance to the YMCA. The address is 700 10th Street East, Owen Sound.

The meeting will feature a guest speaker, Mr Dave Hannay from the Kincardine area. Dave is a revenue stamp collector and he will share with us some of his knowledge on this topic. There will also be an opportunity for members to look through the Owen Sound

Club Circuit books. Hopefully members can add pages of extra stamps into the circuit books by giving them to Chris Tschirhart at the meeting.

It is becoming a busy time at work and so there will be two stamp tips from Andrew McGavin and a brief note about the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Foundation. I also have to give a "shout out" to Neil Baxter who brought along a "Treasure Box" of excess stamps for the club. The purpose of the box is to spread them out at a meeting, and anyone can sort through them looking for the gem to add into their collection. For each stamp taken out, a nickel goes to the club, a really cheap way to expand the collection as well as support the club at the same time. There is also an opportunity for everyone else to contribute their own extra stamps and perhaps someone will find a gem for their collection on another occasion. Sorting through the treasure box also builds up members' spirits as they look through the stamps and find one on a topic that maybe another member may be collecting and pass it along.

This will probably be the last newsletter until the month of May, so in April we expect to have a speaker on the topic on perfins, and the May meeting is an opportunity for club members to share on stamp soaking tips, especially on difficult peel and stick ones.

I hope to see you all for a great gathering on Wednesday, March 16th at the YMCA.

Cheers.

Phil Visser
President
OSSC

Next meeting at the Julie McArthur/YMCA Rec Center, 700 10th St East,
Owen Sound

Summary Tip #7: "Catalogue Prices" - common misconceptions.

Dear Philip,

Certainly once or twice a week, and sometimes even more often, we receive phone calls and sometimes letters - all based upon misunderstandings of stamp catalogues. Being UK based - most are based upon Stanley Gibbons' catalogues. Study of overseas 'Scott, Michel and Yvert' catalogues makes me believe that this problem is more pronounced in SG 'Stamps of the World' (STOW).

Generally speaking the callers/writers fall into two distinct categories: those that know little or nothing about stamps and those that know something about them. Dealing with those that know nothing first - they have often consulted Stanley Gibbons Stamps of the World catalogues, either on-line or possibly via the local library - they spot images of stamps that look like those they have and think that they have found something of value.

Of course, such is the perverse nature of philately, 99 times out of 100 (probably more like 499 times out of 500) they haven't found anything of value - but some believe that the dealer is trying to take advantage of their lack of knowledge. The problem is quickly resolved by offering to send them a genuine 150 year old Queen Victoria 1d red free of charge, if they send us a stamped addressed envelope, or a poor quality, but genuine 1d black for £25 if they send us a cheque or give us their credit card number. How useful it would be if these contacts could be warned of the multiplicity of stamps that one image can represent.

Collectors form the second group: so often we are offered collections with 'stratospheric' total catalogue values quite literally running into tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands of pounds total catalogue values! There are three reasons for this:

Quality - the cheapest '1d black' may catalogue £275 - but we sell poorest examples for as little as £20 or less, whilst in our latest auction we offer the best used example that we have ever seen - certainly a 1 in 50,000 exhibition quality example - which as I write is going to realise over £1,000 for a stamp catalogued £275.

Quantity - if a collector possesses 100 of the same stamp catalogued 50p each - this duplicated range cannot be worth £50 - when you can purchase them in our 'buy one - take one free' penny mixes, and other collectors possess hundreds of thousands more.

Mis-identified stamps - a common problem, all philatelists, including us can be wrong. We learn something more each day we work with stamps, that is the joy of stamp collecting.

To be fair to the catalogue publishers and editors reading the 'small print' warns collectors of these issues - but a percentage of collectors persist in their perception that their collection (which has cost very little indeed) is worth a great deal of money. Many never read the small print.

All Catalogue Editors need to attribute a value to every stamp. It depends upon whether the 'Catalogue Publisher' sells stamps - or merely sells catalogues. In the case of SG it is made plain that you can order any of the stamps in their catalogues - consequently lower catalogue prices reflect handling costs, not value. Indeed "the lowest price charged for individual stamps or sets purchased from Stanley Gibbons Ltd is £1" - potentially it costs 50p to bank a cheque and probably £5 for 'SG' to generate an invoice - so thousands of £1 orders would create something of a problem.

Over the course of 35 years full-time philately, I have handled, bought and sold, many millions of stamps. Consider that, with some knowledge and experience the most valuable 'find' that I have made and sold is £1,500 - those that find £50,000 worth of Bermuda 'Perots' at a car-boot sale have indeed won the 'philatelic lottery'. With stamps, as in many things in life, money goes to money, unless incredibly lucky; if you have spent little in 'real' terms, or added

little value by the possession of knowledge then it may be unreasonable to expect much return from the sale of your stamps.

Happy collecting from us all,
Andrew

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

Andrew McGavin

The Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation

By Phil Visser

In the newsletters of January and February, I wrote about my experience of visiting the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation (VGG Foundation) on January 2nd, 2016. It was very interesting and I urge others to take an opportunity to visit when able to do so. The articles only describe two elements that the VGG Foundation lists as its purposes. The following is a cut and paste from the VGG Foundation website (<http://www.greenefoundation.ca/>) and is a complete mission statement for the VGG Foundation:

THE PURPOSE OF THE FOUNDATION

The primary purpose of the Foundation is to encourage and promote research in the fields of philately and postal history. To carry out this purpose the Foundation is empowered to raise and distribute funds, to enter into arrangements with various authorities and to employ staff as necessary to attain its objectives.

FIVE MAIN FUNCTIONS OF THE FOUNDATION

1. The establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive library for research and study purposes.
2. The provision of expertization service for the validation of Canadian philatelic and postal history items.
3. To conduct or support lecture programmes or courses of study designed to improve and expand the knowledge of Canadian philatelists and postal historians.
4. To encourage, participate and organize philatelic and postal history exhibitions, competitions and displays.
5. To underwrite and publish philatelic and postal history research work in various formats.

In addition, the Foundation will make available meeting space for suitable organizations. The Library is open to groups meeting at the offices of the Foundation and at other times by special arrangement.

The time that the Library is open is Mondays – Thursdays from 10:00 to 16:00 (4 p.m.) and the following Saturdays and Wednesdays as listed on the VGG Foundation website:

April 9th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 27th 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

May 7th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 25th 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

June 11th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 22nd 10 a.m. to 7 p.m

The librarian at the Harry Sutherland Library has mentioned that if a group of interested people made arrangements ahead of time, the Foundation and Library could be opened at a mutually agreed upon time. For example, if a couple of carloads of Owen Sound Stamp Club members wanted to visit at a time and date outside of the normal hours of operation, the Foundation would be available.

Summary Tip #8: "Understanding Quality" - Part I

Dear Philip,

In my Stamp Trade Tips #5 we discussed the 'Importance of Condition' - but how do you recognise and understand quality? Of course the easy answer is 'experience', but how do you gain experience when you have not physically handled a particular type of stamp?

There is no substitute for seeing or handling a stamp 'in the flesh', but stamps possess an unusual quality that makes them so suitable for sale upon the internet and for posting and trading throughout the world - they are basically flat. Over the past 10 years I have bumped into a reasonable number of antique dealers who blame the internet, and eBay in particular, for the demise of the 'antique shop'...

... apparently the 'transparency' of information and values upon the internet has 'finished' off the high street 'antique shop' as many remember it. Certainly I know this to be true of certain types of antiques in the U.K. - dealers could 'hide' in their own mystique of knowledge gained over many years of trading, visiting auctions, even museums, that many collectors would be unable to access during normal working hours. Additionally most collectors had an unreasonable 'fear' of attending and purchasing at 'public auction' - citing all manner of 'old-witch' tales - where they might 'touch their nose' and end up winning a lot they could not afford!

Those days of the 'old boys club' of dealers are gone, and the transparency of the internet, apparently, is the reason. But, something different happened along the way with stamps - stamp values were always that bit more transparent in the first place due to their being so well catalogued by Stanley Gibbons and other publishers. In 1980 there were an estimated 300 stamp shops in the UK - today there may be just 30. Stamp collecting and stamp dealing went 'underground' long before the internet took hold. Antique dealers average price of an item might well be £100's - whereas most stamp shops average price might be pence or a few £'s.

So most stamp dealers were forced to adjust to their market conditions of selling by low-overhead methods - from home or office, by mail or at fairs/exhibitions - which is why stamps have uniquely adapted and transferred themselves so well to sale by postal auctions and upon the internet.

The internet is the key starting point to how to learn about stamps and assess quality. Stanley Gibbons makes a start at the front of their 'physical' catalogues by giving an illustration by appearance of good, fine, very fine, and superb quality of an imperforate stamp based upon appearance only. But it is so easy now being on-line - to compare quality by image against description. Put a little quality time aside and start by visiting the websites of the more 'expensive' dealers who retail on-line. Look for high quality and see the high prices requested ...

... now, open another 'browser window' and go to eBay. Start searching for similar, even the same catalogue number stamps in differing conditions. Read the descriptions - compare the starting prices, and put some of these items in your 'watch' category. Be prepared for a shock. You are going to see the most horrendous variances between descriptions, prices and realisations.

Unless you are 'watching' items from the most respected 'main-stream' dealers on eBay - pay absolutely NO attention to sellers with 100% eBay ratings. Yes, your purchases will be delivered - but on the face of it - what you see on the front of the stamp is what you get. There are thousands of eBay sellers with little or no knowledge of what they are selling and thousands with knowledge who know that what they are selling is not what it is 'cracked-up' to be.

I see dealers with 1,000+ feedback 100% ratings offering items described as fine used which are merely average. Be aware that the oldest 'trick in the game' is to describe 'good' as 'fine', 'very fine' as 'superb', and so on. Stamps easily trap the unwary in this respect.

In Part II of 'Understanding Quality' we will discuss what to look for, how to look for it and 'train your eye'.

Happy collecting from us all,
Andrew

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

Andrew McGavin

Coming Events...

- 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, LOR 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...

In one of the newsletters from last year, I mentioned a "watch out" when using Bestine to remove the modern stamps that will not soak off of the paper envelope. I received an update from our newest club member, Randy Rogers, about what to use on the tacky back of stamps after the Bestine has removed it from the envelope. Lesley Anne Botte had said not to use talcum or baby powder but I couldn't remember her recommendation at the time of writing.

Randy has shared that the stamps will yellow if either talcum or baby powder is used, and so between the two club members, it is recommended to use a mineral such as baking powder or soda. Thank you both for sharing your experience with fellow club members. I also want to thank both members for their feedback and remind all other members that this newsletter is open for others to write articles, share information etc. Feedback is appreciated!

You will also note that when we list the Club Officers, a new name has been added. At the last meeting I had asked for a person to step forward and help promote the club via the media. I thank John Lemon for accepting that job and hope that this club can make itself better known in and around Owen Sound. Also, Larry Crane is/will organize with club members the Club Fair being sponsored by the Owen Sound Library. The date is in April and it is simply an opportunity to share our hobby with others touring the fair.

Chris Tschirhart has sent this website along (<http://www.ezstamp.com/ezgrader/stamp-grading-software.htm>) so that club members can grade stamps from their personal collection. I haven't had a chance to test it out, but it might be worth while for members to try out and share experiences with it at another meeting.

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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