



Next Club Meeting: July 18th

July 2001

Just been reading a biography of George VI that didn't have much nice to say about his father, George V. According to the author, apart from being an extraordinarily unloving parent, George V was grievously ill-educated and the only book he ever opened for pleasure was his "beloved stamp album"!

Well... If a king was to restrict his interests to one book, what could be better than a stamp album?

Bob Watson (Ed.)

What's New from Canada Post

To start this issue's list of new stamps, let me first make a correction on last month listing: I omitted the release of the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in Edmonton. These Championships are to be held August 3–12. Canada Post issued two stamps for this occasion on June 25th. One depicts a track event and one the pole vault. These games are held every two years. Paris, France, will hold the 2003 games. The stamps are printed in panes of 16, set-tenant vertical. The FDC was cancelled in Edmonton and priced at \$1.00 apiece (plus the value of the stamps). Up till now the cost of an FDC was \$0.30, an increase of 233%. The US charges 21¢ for their envelopes.

The "Roses", which I mentioned last month, will appear on August 1. They will come in a booklet of 12 self-adhesives for \$5.64 as well as a souvenir sheet of 4 @ \$1.88 with regular gum and perforation.

Three hundred years ago, a group of about 1,300 First Nation people, gathered in Montréal, and after years of negotiations signed the so-called Callière treaty, which ended years of hostilities between New France and the First Nations. To commemorate this event Canada Post will issue a 47¢ stamp on August 3. It should be noted that Onanquieré, the Potawatomi. Chief is depicted on the stamp. Is there an Owen Sound connection???

The traditional summer issue of the Art Canada stamp will take place on August 24. These stamps are big – and this one, the fourteenth, is no exception. I have seen my brother-in-law fighting to get this size stamp on the back of a picture post card and manage to get an address on it as well. Big stamp: small(er) address! This creates many damaged stamps on arrival: too close to the edge. Let's get bigger postcards!! The painting by Jack Shadbolt shows "the Space between Columns #21 (Italian)" which is on display in the Vancouver Art Gallery. As usual, a pane of 16 stamps of \$1.05 ea will be released.

If we hear "Shriners", we think of those Fez wearing guy's on

scooters in almost every parade. They are great fund-raisers and most of their efforts is aimed at helping to maintain Shriners' Hospitals for the treatment of orthopaedic and burn victims among the youth. On September 19, a 47¢ yellow stamp, showing a clown and a child throwing away crutches, will be on sale. "No-one should walk alone" is their motto, so take a friend to the post office when you purchase these.

The "Théâtre du Nouveau Monde" in Montréal and "the Grand Theatre" in London, ON, both have events to celebrate. The former its 50th anniversary and the latter the centennial of its existence. On September 28 (the day of the invasion of the scarecrows in Meaford), Canada Post will be issuing two 47¢ set-tenant stamps. The Montréal one focusses on stage performances and the London one emphasises the building and features the "ghost" of its founder A.J. Small which is believed to visit his brainchild once in a while. For \$1.94 the FDC, cancelled in both places and showing the ghost distinctly, is all yours. Four million will be printed by Ashton Potter (hopefully still in Canada). Perforation is 13 all round.

For a quick recap:

Jun 25	Athletic Championships	2 × 47¢
July 1	Pierre Elliott Trudeau	1 × 47¢ + sheet
Aug 1	Roses	4 × 47¢ + bkt.
Aug 13	Peace of Montréal – 300 years	1 × 47¢
Aug 24	Art Canada	1 × \$1.05
Sept 19	Shriners	1 × 47¢
Sept 28	Théâtre Montréal/London (incl. ghost)	2 × 47¢

I wish you all a very good summer.

Charles van Rompu

Plate Blocks — what they are all about.

Earlier this year, someone asked in the Internet newsgroup *rec.collecting.stamps* why plate blocks were considered special in philatelic circles. The following is one of the replies.

If any plate block collectors in the club has any comments on this, it would be great to hear from you!

All the answers given are correct but perhaps if there were some history attached you would see how plate blocks and also plate number coil strips came to be collected.

Back in the foggy days of time when stamps and stamp collecting were in their infancies, postal administrations issued stamps for one reason and one reason alone, to show prepayment of the fee for delivery of an envelope or parcel.

Since they did not care what collectors thought, if they were even aware that there were collectors capable of thought, and had not figured out how to scam people out of money by getting them to retain sheets, mini sheets and sheetlets of these stamps so that they could hold the payment and not have to deliver the service, they simply printed stamps from plates.

When a plate was worn out or cracked beyond simple repair they used a new plate. They did not tell anyone in particular, especially collectors.

However collectors noticed that there were minor differences between some of the stamps that they acquired and puzzled over such questions as to how there could be seventy or eighty different minor varieties of the same stamp that was supposed to have been issued in sheets of, say, fifty stamps, unless a second plate had been used.

In many cases the post office would use, over time, five or ten different plates, each of which would have a different number. There were also times when some plate was modified to correct an error in the engraving, or the lines were deepened to give a crisper finer print or even to repair a crack that may have developed.

Collectors puzzled over this and eventually tried to reconstruct a plate from used examples, especially multiples so that one stamp could be proven to have come from a particular plate and by comparing pairs it's position could be discovered, and plotted.

Now it becomes obvious that a block of four or eight with the plate number still readable in the attached selvage would form the cornerstone of such an effort.

Books have been written by collectors who became experts in solving the puzzle of which position of which plate a given stamp came from. Also arguments between specialists about such positioning and derivation often rose to a level that makes what netizens call a "flame war" look like a tea party.

So since a block with the number was the key to a sheet that a collector might be trying to reconstruct it had a certain premium over and above what a simple block or accumulation of similar stamps were worth.

Then in the early part of the last century devices were invented that made the reproducing of an image across a sheet (or pane) virtually identical and also made printing faster and perforations more accurate.

Stamp issuing organizations began to announce the date of first issue and formats of their products. So the puzzle as to how many plates were used and when they were printed and issued became common knowledge, at least among collectors who cared. Whole

sheets were retained with all the stamps attached, so it was no longer necessary to try to piece together all the small multiples and discover identity characteristics for each stamp/ location of each plate run.

But many other collectors had discovered that some of these older plate number blocks had a premium to specialist collectors so they began to hold on to them also. Never mind that the original reason for their value to a specialist had become moot. If some older plate blocks were worth more to specialists, then the blocks in hand must be worth more, was the trail of logic.

Again some collectors decided that accumulating stamps in blocks, especially plate blocks was an attractive way to collect stamps.

So it became reasonable to keep blocks separate especially those with either the plate number or a printers logo. Some collectors decided that it would be nice to mount a block from each of the four corners which, if they had the same number, would prove that they were from all four of the four panes of the sheet.

Soon albums were produced and the catalogs took notice of the increased demand for blocks with the plate number inscribed in the margin.

Again modern technology has stepped in and newer kinds of equipment has made, with few exceptions, all the stamps of a sheet virtually identical with a few exceptions. Modern production methods have increased the run of the presses so that most times there is no lack of a given stamp.

But by then collectors had gotten into the habit of collecting and keeping these supposedly more valuable corner blocks and postal administrations had gotten wise to the market potential of these stamps.

The presses are cheap to run and require few men to tend them. Big profits could be made. And so they did – producing a never ending stream of sheets and plates with the numbers attached.

cont. p4

The \$1,000,000 dollar questions.

Last month's questions:

1. **Benin** in Africa, as many of you may have known or guessed, was called... "**Dahomey**"
2. How many countries will introduce the **Euro** on January 1, 2002? Originally there were eleven but the addition of Greece made it a total of **12**.

And Now The Questions For July:

1. The Royal Philatelic Society, was not always called this.

What was it named before ? ? ?

- a) Canadian Philatelic Society
- b) Hamilton Philatelic Society
- c) Société Philatelique de Montréal
- d) Vancouver Stamp Club

2. In which year was the above organization given Royal assent and changed its name to the present ??

- a) 1923
- b) 1941
- c) 1959
- d) 1964

Answers in the next issue!

Charles van Rompu

Identifying Common Stamps: Australia “Roo” Series (low values).

In times gone by it was not uncommon for a single design of stamp to remain in use for many years. In that time there would likely be identifiable varieties as a result of changes in colour, watermark, perforation, type of paper and/or gum, to say nothing of retouches to the plates or even re-engraving of the dies.

Some catalogues are rather more sensitive to these differences than others. However, it can be frustrating trying to assign a number to a stamp when it could be any one of several varieties referred to over two or three catalogue pages.

The following tables are designed to simplify this task by pointing out the essential features distinguishing one variety from another.

	Wmk.	
	Perf.	12
S.G. #	green	1
Scott #	yellow green	1

	Wmk.	
	Perf.	12
S.G. #	red	2
	carmine	2b
Scott #	carmine	2

	Wmk.			
	Perf.	12		
S.G. #	grey	3	35	24(20)
	silver grey	-	35c(35b)	-
Scott #	grey	3	45	38

	Wmk.			
	Perf.	12		
S.G. #	indigo	4	-	25(21)
	deep blue	-	36	-
	deep indigo	-	36b (36a)	-
Scott #	dark blue	4	46	39

	Wmk.		
	Perf.	12	
S.G. #	olive	5	-
	yellow olive	5c	37
	olive green	-	37b(37c)
	light olive	-	37e(37d)
Scott #	olive bister	5	47

4d	Wmk.	
	Perf.	12
S.G. #	orange	6
	orange yellow	6a
Scott #	orange	6

5d	Wmk.	
	Perf.	12
S.G. #	chestnut	8
Scott #	orange brown	7

Sometime between 1991 and 2000, Stanley Gibbons did some renumbering just to keep everyone on their toes. The numbers in parentheses are for those using old catalogues.

The Watermarks

All early Australian stamps were printed on watermarked paper and, with the possible exception of “AU1” and “AU2”, the marks are fairly easy to tell apart.



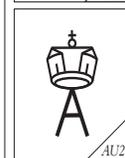
AU1 – Wide Crown over A

SG: W 2

Scott: Wmk 8 Wide Crown and Wide A

The width of the crown is c. 10.5mm

The paper grain is horizontal.



AU2 – Narrow Crown over A

SG: W 6

Scott: Wmk 10 Narrow Crown and Narrow A

Notes: The width of the crown is c. 9mm

The paper grain is vertical.



AU3 – Crown over Narrow A

SG: W 5

Scott: Wmk 9 Wide Crown and Narrow A

Next Meeting: July 18th.

The next meeting of the Owen Sound Stamp Club will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, **July 18th**, in St. George's Church, Owen Sound (as usual).

The Saugeen Stamp Club will be presenting their Circuit books and books from the Royal Philatelic Society may also be available.

Upcoming Events:

Royaloak Stamps (John Cortan) will be setting up shop at the August club meeting (15th August). Apart from his wide range of stamps, covers, and philatelic accessories, John says he will be having a special on 16 page stockbooks: \$12.50 ea or 3 for \$34.00.

Queen's Bush Stamps (Reg Powell) will be at our September meeting (September 19th).

From Other Clubs in the Area...

Royal*2003*Royale

Preparations by the Saugeen Stamp Club for hosting the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada's 75th Show in 2003 are well under way. A show committee meeting held last month indicated that the broad outlines of how the show will be managed have been established and the beginnings of a budget sorted out. Of course, there's lots of filling in to be done and details to be sorted, but there's two years to go yet!



Plate blocks — cont. from p3.

The US POD killed the golden goose when it decided that each colour would require a separate plate number that had to be placed on a separate stamp's selvage. Plate blocks of twenty were issued that were not only expensive to purchase, but were also difficult to mount in a traditional album.

In all this the original reason to collect a block with the number still attached has fallen into the bin marked trivia.

Plate number coils are another matter since the number is printed on the stamp itself thus creating a separate variety from the stamp that bears no such number (numbers).

The choice to keep the coil number stamps along with un-numbered stamps is simply a matter of aesthetics and if three are pleasing to the eye, then five are not necessary. But if the collector wants a strip of five that is his decision for no other reason than that it pleases him/her.

These items will have a premium as long as others are willing to pay that premium, and if that fad ends they will be worth little more than what a series of similar singles are worth.

Charlie Jensen

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 check out the stamps in circuit books from the North Bay Philatelic Society, the Royal Philatelic Society and/or the Peninsula Philatelic Circuit. Members also trade stamps and covers between themselves.

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.

For further information, see us on the Web or contact any of the following Club officers:

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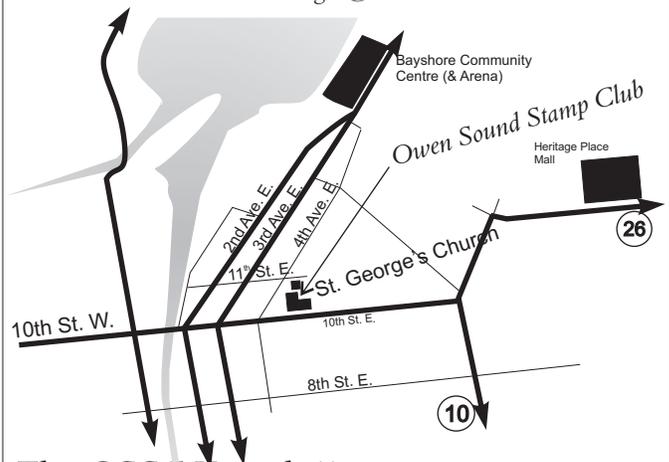
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Opinions expressed by contributors to this newsletter are those of the named author and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Owen Sound Stamp Club (nor of the editor).

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.