

O.S.S.C.



# Owen Sound Stamp Club

## Philatelic Owen Sound Times

Next Club Meeting: April 20<sup>th</sup>

April 2005

I recently received a catalogue from Norway Post that got me thinking. The catalogue covers old issues first released as far back as 1863 – and, just in case you were really dreaming, they *are* being offered at something of a premium over the face value: the 1878 1Kr Oscar II is priced at 1,000 Kr (c. \$200). This compares with a Scott (1999) price of U\$25.

All of which raises some very interesting questions with regard to the relationship between Post Office, dealer, and collector.

Now, the way I see the traditional relationship is that Post Offices provide the basic material and collectors buy it. Dealers act as “buffers” by maintaining stocks of new and used, generally out-of-print, material. When it comes to the pricing of stamps, we enter a very sticky arena of supply and demand, to which can be added hype, manipulation, and a few other unsavoury terms. Over the years, rules have been established by a kind of consensus and it all works – most of the time. The catalogue companies fix the prices and collectors accept that some stamps are rare, interesting – and expensive.

Now, suppose those rare stamps suddenly become not-so-rare – but still expensive. How would the market (collectors, dealers, and catalogue companies) respond?

Coming closer to home, how would you feel if Canada Post

were to “discover” an undisclosed number of complete QV Jubilee series (currently listed at c.\$20,000 for mnh very fine)?

Just how many extra sets in circulation would it take to make the price drop to \$2,000 or so? Would you hold off buying your set in the hope that the price might come down a bit in the years to come? Would you prefer to invest in something with a bit more certain future – like Nortel stock?

Seems to me that the hobby would be best served if postal authorities made a point of destroying outdated stock. Greenland Post says that they do this (and there is no reason to suppose they don't), and I'm sure many other countries have such a policy.

It will be interesting to see how many of those old stamps Norway Post sells and how the price varies over the next few years.

### Stamp of the Month...

In 1945, New Zealand issued a pair of semi-postal stamps as part of its long running “Health” series begun in 1929 (and still going in the late 1990's). The surcharge from these stamps was designated to support “Children's Health Camps”.

These particular stamps depict the famous statue of Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, London, England.

Just to remind you, Peter Pan was the “boy who never grew up” and had a number of adventures with like-minded children in Neverland. His story was first told by J.M. Barrie in a play that premiered in 1904 and proved highly successful.

In due course the play became a novel and Peter Pan is now considered a classic fairy tale that can be interpreted in various ways as the reader moves from childhood to maturity.

The inspiration for the characters is thought to derive partly



from the children of a close friend and partly from Barrie's elder brother who died in a skating accident when just fourteen.

J.M. Barrie commissioned the respected sculptor Sir George Frampton to make a statue so that Peter Pan would be remembered after the original play had long faded from the public's memory.

Just to add a little something to the Peter Pan mystique, Barrie arranged for the statue to be installed in the middle of the night so that it would seem to have appeared by magic.

As it turned out, Peter Pan is far from forgotten a hundred years later and the statue itself is a popular feature of Kensington Gardens.

Incidentally, Frampton's other works include several statues of Queen Victoria including one in Calcutta, India, and another in Winnipeg.

## From the President ...

Alan Charlesworth

Spring has sprung the grass has rise, I wonder where all the stampers is?

I for one have been outdoors cleaning up the yard, raking leaves and planning my garden.

And what has all this to do with stamp collecting you ask. Probably nothing unless you want to start a nice collection of flowers on stamps, or maybe vegetables, or public gardens on stamps.

Wow, there is really no end to the topics one could incorporate into a specialty stamp collection just to keep life interesting. Perhaps every one can bring a few off the wall suggestions to the club this month and share their ideas with the rest of us.

Now down to business. Last meeting we discussed what kinds of books or equipment the club could purchase for the common use of the members. I would like to continue that this meeting with the emphasis on books and catalogues that members may wish to take advantage of from time to time. I

have looked into some different forms of software that can be used to generate album pages and will have more info at this meeting.

I would like to announce that we now have ten dealers attending this years show and a theme of Billy Bishop has been chosen. Bob Watson will be able to fill us in on this more at the meeting.

I spoke with Kim Scarrow this week who takes care of the youth group for the club and unfortunately she will not be available to help out at this years show as she has been busy with home renovations. Please note never look behind a wall in an old house the reno monster lives there. Let us all wish Kim good luck with her Reno's and hope she can be back at our meetings real soon. If any one would like to help out at the show in Kim's place we would be most grateful.

See you all real soon.

## Canadian "War Tax" Stamps ...

The idea of raising money for waging war through a tax on postage items was first tried by Spain in 1874. Evidently, the results were worthwhile because, when World War I arose, many countries adopted the scheme to increase their revenues.

In Canada, the Special War Revenue Act was introduced on 12 February 1915 and this imposed a tax levy on many goods and services, including the carriage of mail.

It was decided that payment of the tax would be indicated by the use of postage stamps overprinted with the inscription "War Tax". Accordingly, the 5, 20, and 50¢ Admirals were so overprinted to indicate payment of the tax on liquor, medicines, and perfumes respectively. The tax on mail was fixed at 1¢ per item and there was a 2¢ tax on money orders to be met by a special edition of the 1 and 2¢ Admirals.



All of these were intended to be used purely as fiscal stamps. In other words, a letter should include the correct postage AND a 1¢ "War Tax" stamp.

Presumably, this allow the Revenue Dept. and Post Office to keep their accounts distinct – even though both were Government organs at that time .

Unfortunately confusion reigned in the minds of both the public and local officials. To begin with, where supplies of overprinted stamps were inadequate, plain postage stamps were readily accepted for the tax on alcohol, medicines, and perfumes because, presumably, the tax was remitted by the retailers who could make appropriate book-keeping entries.

But when it came to postal items, did it really make sense to use two stamps on a postcard (1¢ postage + 1¢ tax) when there was a 2¢ tax stamp readily available? After all, it had "Canada Postage" written all over it. On the other hand, if I had a stock of standard postage stamps in my mail room, did I really need to buy the special tax stamps too? The money was all going to the government anyway so it's not as though they are losing out.

In spite of a specific directive to postmasters that only the war tax stamps could be used to meet the tax component and only standard postage stamps could be used to pay postage, it soon became apparent that this was just not going to happen and the 1 and 2¢ stamps were soon simply absorbed into general use. Indeed, even the higher value (5, 20 and 50¢) overprinted stamps can be found being used postally. All in all, it appears that covers showing the correct use of postal and fiscal stamps at this time are harder to find than ones with incorrect use!

In 1916, "tax included" semi-postals were issued for 2+1¢ which solved most of the problems.

During WWI, many countries added a war-tax surcharge for

mail – typically 1¢ or ½d. Most issued overprinted stamps to include the surcharge but others, such as Great Britain and the U.S., simply required the use of higher denomination stamps.

Unlike income tax – also widely introduced at this time as a war-tax – postal taxes were generally rescinded within a year or two of the conclusion of hostilities.



Issued 1st Jan. 1916

Issued 29th Aug. 1916

## Stamp Grading...

Few would argue that the quality (and its corresponding value) of any stamp can vary from “beautiful” to “horrible”. Unfortunately, trying to quantify the factors involved in what transforms one to the other is not so easy.

Just as a reminder, Scott uses the word “Grade” to refer only to centring (and to the cancellation of used stamps). Everything else such as tears, missing perfs, etc. is covered by “Condition”. Thus a stamp with perfect centring and a heavy crease would be “Extremely Fine” (but damaged).

On the other hand, Unitrade combines these aspects under the heading of “Condition Grading” so the above stamp would simply be classed as “Very Good”.

Whatever approach is taken, the position of the stamp image within the perforation lines is an important factor in the overall appearance and value of a stamp. While it is pretty plain when the perforations are cutting into the design, deciding between “perfectly centred”, “well centred”, and “slightly off-centred on one/two sides” can be something of a challenge.

For those of you with computers, a program called *EzGrader* attempts to remove the subjectivity of measuring how centred a stamp is (and gives a perf. count while it’s at it).

I have played with this program a little and have found it to be simplicity itself to work with.

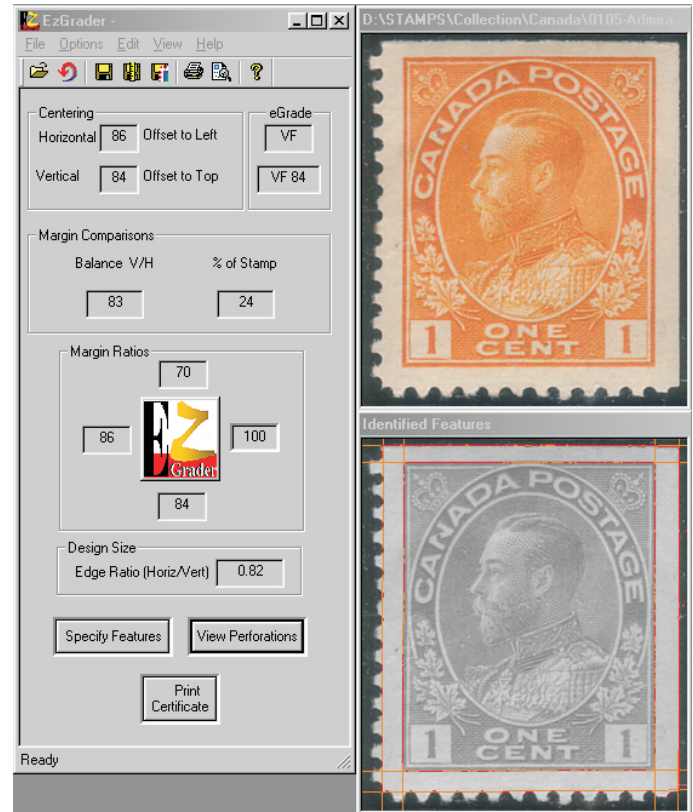
The first step is to acquire an image of the stamp and save the image as a file. My (limited) use of the program suggests that it prefers a strongly contrasting background and that the image be straight.

Open the file in *EzGrader* and immediately the program calculates the relative size of the margins and gives a grade. Click on the “View Perforations” button and a display comes up indicating a perforation count for each side. The “Specify Features” button leads to a form that allows you to note if the stamp is imperforate on one or more sides (as in this example).

The only problems I found was when trying to get readings on

used stamps with heavy postmarks or when the postmark included straight lines that were close to the stamp border. In those cases the guidelines *Ez Grader* generates before doing its calculations were way off – and I haven’t been able to find a way to nudge them to where they should be.

*Ez Grader* can be downloaded from <http://www.stamppgrader.com>. Registration is \$50. The unregistered “trial” version is free to use indefinitely, but does not include a manual.



## In Case you were Wondering ...

“Tagging” on stamps refers to the inclusion of a clear phosphorescent die that may be added to the stamp paper before printing or to the face of the printed stamp.

Although tagging is not obviously visible to the naked eye, tagged stamps will glow when exposed to UV light.

Stamp tagging was introduced in the 1960’s as one of the early stages in automating the mail handling process.

Machines were developed that would detect tagging and orient the mail so that all envelopes were right way up and facing front.

This makes them ready for checking that the correct postage has been applied, the cancelling machine, and preparation for sorting.

Exactly how a machine can flip variously shaped envelopes so that the stamp is in the top right corner is beyond me and, along with sewing machines and pea pickers, is included in the category of things-that-I-can’t-see-could-possibly-work-but-obviously-do!

## Czesław Slania ...

Czesław Slania passed away on 17th March 2005 at the age of 83, following a long period of illness.

Czesław Slania (pronounced “Chess-waw swan-ya”) was born in Poland on 22nd October 1921 and settled permanently in Sweden in 1956. Three years later he began engraving stamps for Post Sweden. Since then he has engraved over 1000 stamps and banknotes for more than forty countries around the world (incl. Canada).

In spite of ailing health, Czesław Slania worked to the end and his last engravings were for the United Nations’ 60th anniversary in Feb. 2005.



Next Meeting ... Wed. April 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm

**B**ob Ford is expecting to have books from the Royal for the meeting. As always, if any member has any material to sell or trade, bring it along!

**Upcoming Events:**

**April 29-30 (Fri.-Sat.):** The Hamilton Stamp Club is sponsoring SPRINGPEX at Bishop Ryan Secondary School, **Hamilton**. 20 dealers, sales circuits, youth booth. [http://home.cogeco.ca/~hstampclub] Hours: Fri.: 5-10; Sat.: 10-5.

**May 1 (Sun):** The Stratford Stamp Club will be holding their Mayday Stamp Show at the Kiwanis Community Center, 111 Lakeside Dr., **Stratford**. Free admission. Hours: 9:30-3.

**May 7 (Sat.):** The Saugeen Stamp Club will be holding their annual show at the Grace United Church Hall, 310 12th St., **Hanover**. 12 dealers, youth table, door prizes and lunch counter, free admission and parking. Hours: 10-4:30.

**May 7 (Sat):** The Scarborough Stamp Club is sponsoring SCARPEX '05 at the Cedarbrook Community Centre, 91 Eastpark Blvd., **Scarborough**. 18 dealers, club circuit books, 5- and 10-cent books, sales table. Free parking and admission. Hours: 9-3

**May 14 (Sat):** The North York Philatelic Society will be holding NYPEX 2005 at the Carnegie Centennial Arena, 580 Finch Ave. W., **Toronto**. Free admission. Competitive exhibits. Hours: 10-4:30

**May 29 (Sun):** Owen Sound Stamp Club will be holding its annual Show & Bourse at the Bayshore Arena in **Owen Sound**. 10 dealers, silent auction lots of displays!! Hours: 9-4

**May 27-29 (Fri.-Sun.):** The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada is holding ROYAL \* 2005 \* ROYALE at the London Convention Centre, 300 York St., **London**. 350 frames of exhibits, 50 dealer booths, seminars, meetings, and philatelic displays, including Canada's most famous printing error. Hours: Fri: 10-5; Sat: 10-5; Sun: 10-4.

**OWEN SOUND STAMP CLUB**

**Chapter 191**

**Royal Philatelic Society of Canada**

**T**he 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.

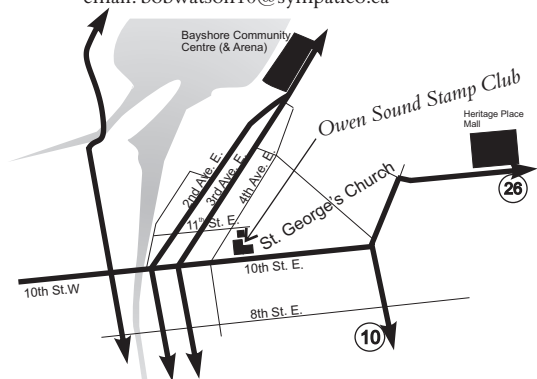
Annual Membership fees: Full: \$10; Family: \$15; Junior: Free. In addition, all members and visitors are asked to contribute \$1 each meeting which is passed directly to St. Georges's Church in appreciation for allowing us to use their room.

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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Stamp on the Envelope ...

**A** cynic might say that this series of four stamps was an attempt by Canada Post to cash in on the "bridge thematic" market with four "artistically distorted" photos that just happen to include the photographer's brother and wife.

I'm not too sure what a non-cynic might say.

Actually, according to the write up in Canada Post's *Details*, the pictures were designed to show the bridges as a "user" might expect to see them. Interesting idea but it does make it very difficult to show the bridges' unique characteristics from that rather limited point of view.

<i>Series:</i>	Bridges	<i>Layout:</i>	Pane of 16 stamps
<i>Title:</i>	Jacques Cartier Bridge, QC (75th ann. opening)	<i>Des.:</i>	Smith-Boake Designwerke
	Souris Swinging Bridge, MB (101st ann. opening)	<i>Photo:</i>	Sid Tabak
	Canso Causeway, NS (50th ann. opening)	<i>Print.:</i>	Canadian Bank Note
	Angus L. Macdonald, NS (50th ann. opening)	<i>Process:</i>	Lithography (10 colours)
<i>Issue date:</i>	2nd April, 2005	<i>Paper:</i>	Tullis Russell Coatings
<i>Denom:</i>	50¢	<i>Gum:</i>	Pressuere-sensitive
		<i>Tagging:</i>	General, 4 sides
		<i>Size:</i>	56 mm x 26 mm
		<i>Perf.:</i>	12½ x 13
		<i>No.</i>	5,000,000