



Continuing with the theme of “Buying & Selling Stamps” from our last issue, the following correspondence recently took place on the Internet in the newsgroup rec.collecting.stamps.discuss.

First message — the question:

Hello,
 We have just received a 70 year stamp collection as a donation. (I am the collectibles person at a local nonprofit thrift store.)
 I, not knowing much about stamp collections, am seeking advice on the best way to sell the stamps. Is it best to keep the collection together? Parcel it out by country or year? Sell it at an Internet auction or through a dealer? Also included are many early postmarked envelopes from as far back as 1895 and many “first day of issue” envelopes. The collection has been appraised at \$12,000. Any advice would be appreciated.
 Kelly Nolan

Reply #1:

A few ideas:
 1) That's almost enough to consign it to an auction house, especially if you have zero idea how to websell and don't feel up to it. This will take some time, though, and \$12,000 is kind of borderline for consigning (depends how concentrated the value is: in a few items, or spread out a lot over small items).
 2) Selling straight to a dealer will be fastest, easiest, but will get you a very tiny fraction of value.
 3) If you are willing to do a little work learning, you may get the

most money out of it fastest by selling on eBay. Covers are very popular (some might say bidders bid foolishly high on them, even). But there is a learning curve. You can't really just jump into eBay with no feedback and post a high-priced item without a few problems. You would best start by selling lesser items, build up feedback and buyers, and then post the “bigger fish.” Plan on a few months for this idea, but you could reap a tidy sum.
 Good scans on popular US material sells itself on eBay, rest assured. The only question usually is whether some items are authentic (completely genuine). You would definitely want to break out individual lots if there are some covers/stamps of value, then sell the remainder in bulk lots. That's typically how things are done to maximize profit and minimize work. There is good help available on the eBay Stamps message board, amongst the occasional chitchat, etc.

Reply #2

please respond if you have info. on a MISSING COLLECTION Stamps,coins, personal belongings, possibly given away to a thrift store in Central Valley area, please respond, asap. Very appreciated.... Able to identify...

Condition and Grade

The matters of “condition” and “grade” are inseparable from any discussion on buying or selling stamps. While seeking definitions of these two terms recently, I was somewhat surprised to find that there is far from universal agreement on how to interpret these terms.

The following is a distillation from several sources and if anyone has additional information and/or comments, please let me know!

Most books and catalogues seem to use the term “grade” to assign an overall assessment of a stamp’s “condition”. A notable exception is Scotts catalogue which makes a clear distinction between “grade”, which is concerned only with a stamp’s centring and cancellation, and “condition” which covers everything else.

The following six factors are assessed when considering a stamp’s condition.

Used or Unused

Whether a stamp is used or unused is such an important condition factor that every catalogue has separate entries for the two states.

The virtually universal use of cancellations usually make it pretty

straightforward to tell if a stamp is used but, as with everything, there are some grey areas.

- ♦ Pen/pencil cancellations usually (but by no means always) indicate that the stamp has been used for revenue rather than for postage. This renders the stamp a “used fiscal” stamp rather than a postage stamp and it becomes a Back-of-the-Book item for specialists.
- ♦ Stamps that have been cancelled to order (CTOs) are something of a speciality.
- ♦ Is there any way to distinguish between a postally used stamp that has escaped being cancelled and an unused stamp that has lost its gum?

Position

The ideal position of the design is to be perfectly centred with respect to its perforations/margins.

Gum

For unused stamps the ideal is for the original gum to be unmarked with no trace of a hinge mark. Over the last 50 years or so

the matter of hinge marks has become increasingly important as collectors have moved away from using hinges to mount their stamps. These days any description of an unused stamp will almost always include the terms: NH (never hinged); LH (lightly hinged); or H (hinged – probably heavily!). Apart from hinge marks, probably the most common form of gum damage is caused by sticking to album pages in moist climates and cracking. Re-gumming stamps is a no-no and, if detected, is considered equivalent to “no gum” or worse.

Used stamps are not expected to have gum and I have seen no reference to credit being given for retaining traces of the original gum.

Cancellation

A cancellation demonstrates that a stamp has been postally used. The ideal is light, clear, and minimally intrusive on the stamp design. Heavy and smudged cancellations always reduce value unless they transfer the stamp into the realm of “postal history” (which is a different matter altogether).

Colour and Print Quality

The design should be sharp and clear with strong colour(s). With engraved stamps the print quality generally deteriorates over the life of the plates so examples from early printings are often better than later ones.

Assigning a grade based on condition

Grade	Condition					Comment
	Position	Colour	Cancellation (used)	Gum (unused)	Faults	
Superb	Perfectly centered. Clear margins.	Strong colour. Clean, sharp design.	Clean and sharp. Well positioned	Unmarked	None	The ideal specimen.
Very Fine	Well centered. Clear margins	Strong colour. Clean, sharp design.	Clean and sharp. Well positioned	Trace of hinge	None	Most collectors would be proud.
Fine	Not centered but well clear of margins or perforations.	Slightly dull colour.	Light, smudged but legible. Any position (but not hiding any important features of the design).	Distinct hinge mark(s)	None	Most collectors would accept this grade – especially for higher priced stamps.
Very Good	Clear of margins or perforations.	Some fading.	Medium, barely legible. Covers important part(s) of the design.	Some gum damaged or missing.	Very minor eg. a nibbed perforation; closed pinhole; small thin area.	Most collectors would keep these but be prepared to upgrade if occasion arose
Good	The design touches the border or perforations on one or two sides	Significantly faded	Heavy, illegible. Difficult to pick out details of the design.	Significant gum damage.	Minor. eg crease, light staining, pinhole, significant thin areas.	Most collectors would not buy singles at this grade.
Average	The border or perforations impinge on the design.	Design degraded.	Virtually obliterating the design.	No gum	Significant eg. tear, moderate staining.	Most collectors would only have these in their possession because no-one else will take them and they haven't the strength of will to throw them out.
Fair/Poor/Space Filler		Identifiable.			Serious eg. part missing, serious staining.	

The matter of colour shades are harder to work with and it can be difficult to decide whether these are the result of legitimate colour changes, poor printing, or simply fading. Stanley Gibbons lists many more colour varieties than Scott.

Defects (Faults).

This includes anything that has damaged the stamp and always lowers its value. Accidental faults include tears, creases, clipped perforations, and thin spots/holes. Faults may also arise from devious attempts to deceive and including removal and/or lightening of cancellations as well as regumming.

Grading

With the exception of Scott, the general consensus seems to be that grading is the process of taking all the factors of condition as outlined above and assigning a value on the lines outlined in the table (below). As mentioned above, Scott insists that a stamp be graded based on centring (and cancellation) only. Even though Scott is considered highly authoritative in N. America, it is hard to imagine someone claiming a perfectly centred stamp with a washed out design and torn corner to be “Very Fine” (but damaged). The Unitrade Canadian catalogue does not separate Grade and Condition that way.

Bob Watson

Note: A stamp must meet **all** the conditions associated with a grade to qualify. Thus (if using the above chart) a stamp with a well centered sharp design with strong colour, unmarked gum, and no faults would be graded as Very Fine. If the same stamp had a crease, it could not be graded better than Good.

What's New From Canada Post

By now you must all have seen and bought the colossal stamps issued for the Tall Ship Halifax occasion. These beautiful stamps were issued in a booklet of 5 se-tenant pairs with a simulated wavelike perforation.

August 18th was the day chosen by Canada Post to introduce us to an other Canadian "first": a linerless self-adhesive coil. Imagine it as a roll of Scotch tape, printed with stamps with perforated edges for easy removal. The production of these rolls of 100 46¢ stamps has run into trouble, causing a delay.

Both the forgoing releases are going to be a challenge for "Mint" collectors. The booklet of Tall ships is too big to display in any album in an open fashion, while the linerless stamps are no longer mint if you fasten them to the page.

September 1st is the 100th anniversary of the Department of Labour. The Stamp issued to commemorate this event is an illustration by Toronto artist Sandra Dionisi who is known for her work on book and magazine covers. 3 million stamps, each measuring 32x40 mm, will be printed in panes of 16 at 46¢ each. The purchase of a full pane will set you back by \$ 7.36 +GST. If however, you would buy a new booklet of 30 stamps self-stick 46¢ from that date on, you could win big in the "scratch-and-win" contest. The booklets will be specially marked. (Another challenge for Mint collectors)

The year 2000 is the 25th birthday for Petro Canada and Canada Post will remember this fact by issuing a commemorative booklet of 12 46¢ stamps on September 13th. These stamps will also be of the self-adhesive variety and will have a simulated perforation which looks more or less like this:



October 2nd will be the start of the Annual Stamp Collecting month. This year the theme will be "Whales". A foursome of se-tenant design stamps will be released that day. Of the many species who live around Canada, four are chosen: a single image, which covers the selva area as well as the entire pane, features the heavy bowhead, the "smiling" beluga, the tusked narwhal and the blue whale. The first day cover will be cancelled in Tadoussac, Que. which is in the selva area.

Christmas stamps this year will be available from November 3rd. They will be available in sheets as well as booklets. Ten stamps per booklet for the 46¢ variety and five in the booklets of 55¢ and 95¢ and will depict Nativity scenes.

Remembrance day is chosen for two stamps commemorating Regiments. Les Voltigeurs du Québec and Lord Strathcona's Horse.

And if you thought this would be all for this year, hold your horses. Since the postal rates are going up per January 1st 2001, a series of new definitives will be issued. Domestic goes from 46ct to 47ct an increase of 2.2%. USA goes from 55ct to 60ct a 9.1% increase while international goes from 95ct to \$ 1.05 a 10.5% increase.

If anyone has a solution for the mint-collectors how to handle the problems as mentioned before, and since we are getting more and more of these self-stickers, may be we could put this in the next newsletter.

Charles van Rompu



To the editor...

To Friends and Fellow Stamp Collectors in Owen Sound:

I apologise for sending this letter by e-mail (I didn't need to have all of you fighting over the cancelled commemorative stamp).

Just a few short words of encouragement.

Earlier this year I started receiving your clubs newsletter. Although I now live in St. Thomas and am sadly no longer am a member of your club in Owen Sound (the commute would be murder), I have found the newsletter interesting, at times topical, and a great way to keep members in touch with friends and their hobby. Many collectors do not subscribe to Canadian Stamp News or other periodicals. Your efforts to create a periodic newsletter fills a void, by providing current information on stamp collecting trends, if only within your clubs circulation. I think to date the members who have taken the time to voice opinions or who have written a column in support of your newsletter have done a terrific job of trying to ensure their articles are interesting while being accurate and informative.

Congratulations to all of you on your efforts.

As a result of your newsletter I did manage to make that extra effort to attend your clubs stamp show this year. It was good to see a few familiar faces at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Centre. Keep up the good work, I look forward to receiving your newsletters the next edition.

Yours truly

A. J. (Tony) Prinsen

Would any members be interested in putting (free) advertisements here?

Perhaps something along the lines of:

I am looking for used/unused National Parks series (#934 to #937). If you should have surplus examples of these, let me know at the August meeting. Pete Elgar

Or:

I'm selling my collection of MNH Penny Blacks. If anyone is interested, I'll be bringing them to the August meeting. Eric Floss.

If so, please write/email the editor at least two weeks before the next meeting (dealers welcome).

At the last meeting:

After a bit of a delayed start (no keys!) the July 19th meeting got down to business before working on the circuit books.

The Auction scheduled for the October meeting was postponed until the November 15th meeting.

Peter Kritz, president of the Saugeen Stamp Club, attended the meeting and spoke about the Royal Philatelic Society Show to be held in Hanover in 2003. He expressed appreciation for the support of the OSSC at its last meeting and hoped that, although hosted by the Saugeen Club, the Royal Show would be very much an area event. At this early stage in the planning, he was primarily concerned with gathering information from other clubs that had hosted the show and traveling to stamp clubs in the area to explain the project.

John Cortan resolved to contact Bob Ford (who was not present) and hopefully get things moving with the Public Awareness Day project.

Rick Lokos agreed to put together a poster advertising the OSSC for display in the Owen Sound Post Office.

Next Meeting: 16th August

The next meeting of the Owen Sound Stamp Club will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, **16th August**, in St. George's Church, Owen Sound (as usual).

The agenda for the business part of the meeting will include:

- ♦ More about the "Public Awareness Day" idea;
- ♦ Choosing a theme for next years OSSC Show.

Further ahead

Don't forget the Auction to be held at the November 15th meeting. Details of how to submit lots for inclusion in this will be included in the next issue.

Collingwood Show

According to the card handed out at the OSSC Show in May, the **Collingwood Coin & Stamp Club** will be holding their 26th annual show on August 19th, 2000, at the Leisure Time Club, Minnesota Street, Collingwood with free admission and parking.

I was hoping to be able to add more information here, but no further details are available at this time (11th August) so hopefully the show is still on.

If any member should make it to that show, perhaps they would care to note their impressions so that we could include them in the Newsletter?

OWEN SOUND STAMP CLUB

Chapter 191

Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

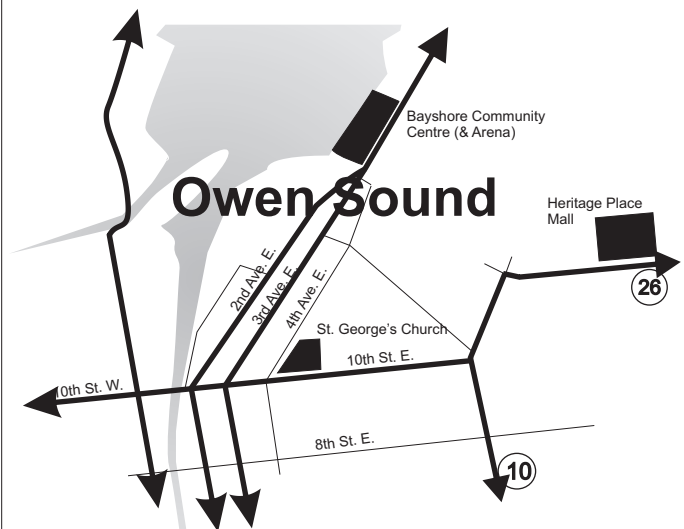
www3.sympatico.ca/rhwatson/stampclub

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 40 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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The OSSC Newsletter

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The OSSC Newsletter is distributed to members of the Owen Sound Stamp Club on an irregular basis (but hopefully several times a year).

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.