

Owen Sound Stamp Club

Chapter 191

Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

Next meeting; Wed. April 18th 2012 @ 7:00

From the President...



Well spring has definitely sprung and it is a chance to walk comfortably to the meeting. It seems that the other activities at St George's start before we do and so parking is at a premium when we arrive. It is probably time to discuss the concern about parking and perhaps some you might have some thoughts between now and then to share at the meeting.

I have been and continue to be very busy for the next couple of weeks, so I have nothing much to discuss in the philatelic field since our last meeting. One thing that did appear in my email box is a message that an old friend from the Woodstock stamp club had passed. Gib had a passion for the hobby and when I last saw him a month ago, he was so excited and animated about his exhibit, for which he was awarded a Vermeil! I will miss him but I will also remember his efforts to promote the Woodstock club. But speaking of shows, we'll have a few minutes to update the progress on our own show in September when we get together.

Our last meeting featured a new member who after some searching and guidance from a member arriving late found our meeting in the basement. Since then, I had a call from another stamp collector who is also going to visit us, and hopefully he won't have too much trouble finding us. Our meeting this month will feature Mr. Tom Griffith who is bringing the St Catharines' circuit books for our perusal.

Until the 18th, Cheers!

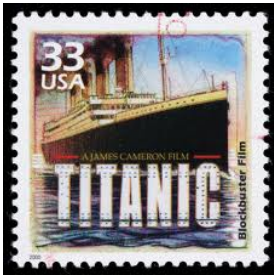
Phil Visser
President OSSC

Owen Sound Club Days

The Owen Sound Stamp Club (that's us!) will be participating in the Owen Sound Club Days at the Library on Saturday April 14th (that's this

Saturday!). Setup will be on Friday 13th from 1:00 to 4:00. The booth will be open to the public from 10:00 to 3:00 on Saturday and the table must be manned from 9:45. If you've got a smiling face and some philatelic enthusiasm then come and give **Bob Ford** a hand. If you plan on being there over your lunch hour please bring your own lunch.

Give **Bob Ford** a call at 519 376-4788.



James Cameron's version of the Titanic story in 1997 made billions of dollars and accrued a sack of Oscar nominations. The movie starring Leonardo Di Caprio and Kate Winslet has been re-released as a 3-D movie this April to honour the

Alaska Highway Part II... by Ralph Wyndham

After something like seven years of writing these little topical articles, I'm still amazed by just how large the story can be that is represented on that tiny piece of paper called a stamp. Last month, our little brown stamp taught us that the performance of black soldiers in the highway's construction was a key event leading to the US Army becoming America's first racially integrated public institution. This month, we take a quick look the actual construction of one of WWII's greatest feats of engineering.



Known simply as 'the road' to the many thousands employed in its construction, the route was chosen to provide a road link between the airfields along the Northwest Staging Route. This was a system of airfields used to fly lend-lease aircraft from the United States to the Soviet Union. High gear was the only speed for highway construction.

Under the highly capable command of General William M. Hoge, a construction plan was devised, 11,000 military personnel were assembled, thousands of pieces of

construction equipment shipped, and lines of established in just a few In addition, around civilians also worked in

An example of the kinds of events engineers had to deal with on a daily

gathered and supply short weeks, 6,000



support of the construction crews. All of this in order to build a road through extremely rugged, sometimes uncharted, territory in difficult conditions. The permanent population of the Yukon at the time was less than 5,000!

Equipment and supplies were shipped through 3 points: by train from Edmonton, Alberta, to Dawson Creek, British Columbia; by ship to Skagway, Alaska then by train to Whitehorse; or by ship to Valdez, Alaska then trucked or hauled by bulldozer to Slana and Tanana, Alaska. Bottlenecks occurred everywhere. Travel conditions could be very onerous. For instance, snowfall was so heavy on the rail line between Skagway and Whitehorse that snow on the railway was sometimes deeper than the height of the locomotives.

Work on the highway began officially on March 8, 1942, and once underway, high gear was the only speed for construction which went on around the clock in 10 hour shifts. Construction began at five points along the route with crews heading in both directions from those points.

First Nation guides were hired to help find a path through the wilderness for the road, but surveying where it would be built was mostly by line of sight. Someone would climb a tree or on top of a bulldozer and point to a spot in the distance. The most direct route to that distant point would then be marked by tree blazes or survey flags. Bulldozers would follow close behind clearing away vegetation and levelling the ground. Two or three miles per day could be "roughed in" in this way.

Next, just behind the bulldozers, came a crew to build temporary bridges, install culverts, and dig ditches. Trying to keep the new road surface as dry as possible was very important. Permafrost, permanently frozen ground, presented a unique problem. It was learned very quickly that if the road bed was prepared over permafrost in the conventional manner, it would never stabilize because the (Alaska Highway Part II is continued on page three)
(Alaska Highway Part II is continued from page two)

Signpost forest was started in 1942 by homesick U.S.

Army G.I. Carl K.

Lindley. While

working on the

Alaska Highway,

he erected a sign

stating the distance

ground beneath thawed continuously creating frost heaves, pot holes and quagmires.

The solution to this problem was to leave the ground surface intact but for levelling all the vegetation. Then, logs were laid across the road bed



and then even more insulating vegetation would be laid on top of that. Dirt, sand and gravel were then dumped on top of the insulating materials to make the road bed. The result was a road that resembled a dike snaking across areas of permafrost.

Finally, as far as 40 miles behind the bulldozers, came the 'finishing crew'. Their job was to upgrade the raw road bed. They widened narrow sections, straightened excessive curves, eliminated excessively steep grades and filled swampy sections with gravel. The result of these efforts under very

difficult conditions was a to 24 feet wide. In reality, it very wide trail unfit for

The Road's official end of construction. Once the completed their job, the road Public Roads

Washington, D.C., which to carry on with road removal of steep grades and control of the road was

agreement, to the Canadian Army, Northwest Highway System, on April 1, 1946, these upgrades had already reduced the road's length by 258 miles. Ongoing improvements have reduced the road's total length to less than 1400 miles.



'military' grade road 18 was little more than a civilian vehicles. opening did not mean the US Army's engineers had was turned over to the Administration in hired private contractors upgrades including the excess bends. By the time handed over, per

Mileposts were originally posted along the highway every two miles to mark actual driving distance. The Canadian section was marked with mileposts based on the 1947 road until 1978 when they were replaced with re-calibrated kilometer signs marking actual driving distance along the now shorter road. In the state of Alaska, however, mileposts still mark distances along the original road's path and do not reflect actual driving distances today.

Our Bill Findlay's photo of an abandoned

British Columbia and Yukon maintain a number of mileposts of historical importance to the original route that no longer match actual driving distance. Thanks to all the rerouting done since its construction, only about 20% of the modern Alaska Highway lies directly upon the path created for the emergency road built in 1942. Some portions of the original route are

still used as local roads; some have been abandoned, left for the wilderness to reclaim; some have been ploughed up.



The Titanic and her sister ship, the Olympic were built in Belfast, Ireland. The photo was taken by Fr. Browne who enjoyed the first legs of the maiden

On the Cover...the Titanic



Most people have heard about the sinking of the Titanic although, there are apparently some young people who thought it was just a movie! But no...it was real and it happened one hundred years ago on April 15th 1912. It was a luxury liner, the largest yet to be built and thought to be virtually unsinkable. It was a terrible disaster killing some 1500 people. The miracle is that more passengers weren't aboard. This was RMS Titanic's maiden voyage and there was a lot of hype about it. There was a coal strike in Britain at the time

and many potential passengers put off traveling until they were sure the ships could actually leave port. In fact some coal was transferred from nearby ships to allow the Titanic to set to sea. The ship had the capacity to hold 3,339 passengers and crew but instead carried 2224 of which about two thirds perished (nearly 1,500). There were nowhere near enough lifeboats to allow complete desertion of the ship even though it did carry four more than required by law. This disaster played a big role in the movement for much tougher safety requirements upon the water. While there were not enough lifeboats the sad fact is that most of them were not filled to capacity, some were nowhere near full. One can only imagine the chaos and fear that must have ran rampant, despite the band playing to the bitter end.

There are all kinds of stories told about the grandeur of the ship, the voyage, about some of the survivors and some of the rich passengers, about the sinking and how the closest ship did not hear their distress call. Since then there are many more stories about the search and discovery of the wreck, of

the various artifacts found strewn across a few miles and about the continuing development of technological devices used to search, map, scan and retrieve the decaying parts of the once grand ship. There are numerous sources for these stories about the Titanic so perhaps we will ask the questions that are the most pertinent to us as Canadians and as stamp collectors, philatelists and postal history buffs:

As Canadians what does the sinking of the Titanic have to do with us?
 ...And what about the mail?

There are several postal administrations in the world that issue oodles of stamps about everything and everyone with no relevance to that country or state. We are a lot pickier here in Canada. We expect our postage stamps to raise awareness about our heroes, artists, flora, fauna and all kinds of historic events. When it comes to the Titanic there are three main Canadian ties to the event:

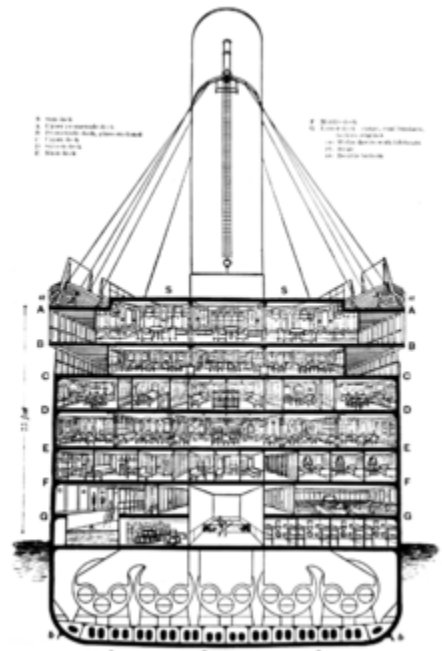
1. There were thirty-five Canadian residents aboard the RMS Titanic and more who were on their way to visit or immigrate. More than half of the residents died but only a handful of their bodies were found.

2. The Marconi wireless station at Cape Race on the southeast coast of Newfoundland was the first land based wireless station to receive the Titanic's CQD distress signal. CQD was the traditional distress signal at the time but the newer SOS was also called. A young radio receiver may have been quite bored listening to a steady stream of greetings and messages from the passengers of the Titanic when the shocking news of the Titanic striking an iceberg came through. Although the news was shocking it was not believed at first that the grand ship would sink. The Cape Race head operator Walter Gray was quickly summoned. (On the Cover... Titanic - Part 1 continued on page five)

(On the Cover... Titanic - Part 1 continued from page four)



The Transatlantic Beacon of Cape Race



Mr. Gray later wrote about how the horror gripped him when he received the message "We are now sinking slowly by the head. Putting women and children off in boats. Weather remains clear and calm," from the Titanic's head operator Jack Phillips. The fear was all the more real since the two head operators were friends from taking their Marconi training together.

The Cape Race Marconi station played a pivotal role in coordinating rescue efforts among the ships in range of the Titanic and later with the efforts to retrieve bodies.

3. Canadians played a major role in the retrieval of the dead bodies. Halifax was the closest city to the wreck site that had railway and steamship connections. White Star Lines, owners of the RMS Titanic hired ships out of Halifax to search for the deceased. On April 17th 1912 the CS Mackay-Bennett was the first to head out. It was supplied with undertakers, coffins, canvas bags, embalming supplies and a minister.

They quickly ran out of embalming supplies. This posed a serious problem as regulations did not allow ships to bring unembalmed corpses into harbour. So of the 306 bodies they hauled in 116 were then buried at sea. The bodies of the seafaring crew were buried at sea which is likely what they would expect. It was decided to save the bodies of the first class patrons since proof of death could be needed to settle the estates of the wealthy. Many of the bodies of the domestic crew made it back to Halifax. Unidentifiable corpses and some third class patrons were also buried at sea. Three other ships set out to search but each found few and progressively fewer bodies. The RMS Oceanic found three bodies a month later and 320k away.

This section of the ship shows the many levels of decks. First class passengers on the upper decks enjoyed swimming pools, Turkish baths, squash courts, a gym and elegant surroundings. 3rd class patrons slept in berths for 2 to 10 passengers. There were

All in all only about a third of the approximately 1500 missing bodies were found. The local curling rink was turned into a makeshift morgue for the 206 bodies brought in to Halifax. 56 corpses were claimed and removed by their families. Many of the other bodies were identified but stayed in Halifax to be buried in three different graveyards. The burial services were held in four churches and religious services were held in a fifth church and a synagogue. Generous Halifaxians made sure that all of the coffins were festooned with lilies. Some of the graves have large monuments erected by

their families but most bear a simple granite headstone paid for by the White Star Lines.

The Canadian Titanic stamps honour the efforts of the people of Halifax in the face of tragedy and of the little wireless station on the southeast tip of Newfoundland.

Next month we'll discuss the mail aboard the new ship and these new stamps 100 years later.

Coming Events...

- APRIL 21, Kitchener, ON
Stampfest 2012, Community Christian Reformed Church, 1275 Bleams Rd. Free admission, children's table, 17 dealers, sales circuit. For more information contact Oscar Cormier, telephone 519-742-5892 Website: <http://www.KWStampClub.org>.
- APRIL 14, Hamilton, ON
AppraisalRAMA, Bishop Ryan Secondary School (Quigley at Albright). Hours: Sat. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This event is directed to anyone who has come into possession of a stamp collection but does not know what they have. Knowledgeable club members, and six dealers will be on hand to answer questions and provide guidance on how to continue with the collection or the best way to sell it. No purchases will be made during the event, but appointments for detailed evaluations can be scheduled. Light refreshments will be available along with informative hand-outs. Everyone welcome, no experience required. Sponsor/Affiliate: Hamilton & Burlington Stamp Clubs. For more information, contact Michael Anderson, telephone 905-632-6057 Website: <http://hamiltonstampclub.com>.
- APRIL 27 - 28, Hamilton, ON
Springpex, Bishop Ryan Secondary School cafeteria, Quigley Road at Albright Rd. Hours: Friday voice auction 7:30 p.m. and silent auction, bourse open Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 20 dealers, Canada Post, youth booth, club sales circuit, stamps and supplies, snacks/lunches available. Plenty of free parking. For more information, contact Stewart Hanneman, email stewarts.stamps@gmail.com. Website: <http://hamiltonstampclub.com>.
- MAY 5, Hanover, ON
Saugeen Stamp Club Annual Show, Knights of Columbus Hall, Hwy 4, two km west of Hanover. Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free admission and parking. Dealers, exhibits, club circuit books, door prizes, and a lunch counter. Sponsor/Affiliate: Saugeen Stamp Club. For more information, contact Bill Findlay, email billfindlay@bell.net, or Ralph Wyndham, email rw@hurontel.on.ca. Website: <http://saugeenstampclub.webplus.net/index.html>.

From the Editor...

I know that some of you will not receive this reminder in time to give **Bob Ford** a helping hand at the Library, but some of you will, so give him a call.

I hope to bring some recent Canadian used doubles that I have and I hope some others will too so that we can exchange a few stamps.

It's trivia time! Be sure to read the *On The Cover ... Titanic - Part 1* article and you may win a prize!

Larry Crane won a OFDC of the Joe Fafard's cow sculpture for our first *On the Cover* trivia quiz.

Marion Ace, Editor OSSC

Owen Sound Stamp Club

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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 25 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: \$15; Junior- Free

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