

THREE CENTS SMALL QUEEN 1870 – 1897

Background: In late 1869 after eight printings of large Queens a decision was taken to reduce the size of the three cents stamp from 24 X 20 mm to 20 X 17 mm, that is from large Queen to small Queen. It has been suggested by both the Duckworths and Hillson and Nixon that this was done to obtain more stamps per impression, but the first small Queen plates comprised 100 subjects, same as the large Queen plates, so this could not have been the reason. Cost was not the reason either as the printers price for the smaller stamps was the same as for the old. That is 25¢/1,000. This exhibitor is of the opinion that the reason the stamp size was reduced was that the public had become accustomed to stamps the size of the pence and first decimal issues and wanted a return to that size.

Purpose: This collection of the three cents small Queen has been prepared to show the evolution of the stamp in terms of changes in: Shade, perforation and paper resulting from the many printing orders. No trade sample proofs (printed on thin card in black, red, brown and green) or proofs prepared by competitors vying for the printing contract (Canadian Bank Note Engraving and printing Co. proofs of 1891) are shown as they played no part in the printing of the stamps. This exhibit will show 137 deliveries, orders and classes. This is a stamp collection supported by one proof. You will not find here large multiples or rate covers to exotic locations.

Plates: For the three cents small Queen 24 plates have been recorded. The plates were never hardened, so they could be re-entered when necessary.

Colour: The colour names for the stamps have been taken from the Stanley Gibbons colour key No. 2530.



Plate proof
On India

Papers: For purposes of this study the Duckworth numbered identification system has been used for paper 10b and extended to include the papers introduced after paper 10b. Papers 16 and 17 are only known used for the 15 cents large Queen. Papers 1 to 10a were used for the large Queens.

Perforations: The perforations gauge 11.6 (usually reported as 11½), 11.75, 11.9, 12.1 (both usually reported as 12), 12.3, (usually reported as 12¼) and 12.5. Perforations have been measured with a Stanley Gibbons Instanta gauge.

Paper thickness: Paper thickness has been measured with a Mitutoyo No. 2804S-10 paper micrometer. Four measurements, one in each quadrant of the stamp were taken where possible and the average reported. Care has been taken not to take measurements at points where the dated cancel has become embossed in the stamp which can increase the apparent measurement by as much as 60%. The gauge is marked to 0.0001" but the marks are about 1/8" apart so a result with the fifth digit after the decimal point being either a 5 or a 0 can be accurately interpolated.

SIGNIFICENT ITEMS:

- Copy of the first delivery perforated 12.5;
- Copy of the "spot on nose" variety;
- Copy of the "vampire bite" variety;
- Stamps perforated 12.1 X 12.3 at Printing Orders 74 and 75.

- Plan of the exhibit
1. Title
 2. Papers
 - 3 – 4. Deliveries
 - 4 – 14. Orders
 - 15 – 16 Classes