

# Flag Cancel Study Group Bulletin



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## THANKS FOR YOUR HELP

We are fortunate to have some research articles by two members this issue, David Sessions and R. G. Heasman. Bob has furnished a copy of a letter by the Chief Post Office Inspector on the change from Type 7 to Type 8. I was able to have the letter reduced so it could be shown in its entirety. Dave has four different research articles. I could use more of this type of material to help keep the Bulletin in production. I have written two articles for "Topics" on the flag cancels and would like to see more members of the study group sending more information on any personal research they may be doing to "Topics" to be published. They are always looking for this type of material. I have had only one want list from a member which is listed in this issue and would like to hear from more members so I can put another want list in the next issue. I went to Interpex on March 6, 1981 and was able to find only one cover that was a decent flag cancel. The Canadian dealers there were Richard Lamb, Art Leggett, Harold Gordon, D. I. Jorgensen, Andrew Holtz, and George Wegg. I would like to hear any ideas on a seminar for Bnapex 81 at Ottawa. Anyone that would like to put on a program, now is the time to start thinking about it as it's less than six months away. I would like to hear from the members that are planning on going to Ottawa so we can tell what kind of attendance we may have. We have three more of the original members that want their names back on the list as well as one new member. We now have a grand total of 21 members and expect to see more in the future.

- #15 - David Sessions
- #49 - Floyd G. McNey
- #68 - Douglas W. Lingard
  
- #73 - Clinton A. Phillips

NEW HANDBOOK IN EARLY STAGES

Graham Noble and Ron McGuire are putting together the information for a handbook on the 1939 Royal Visit. Basically the flag cancels are the material the study group could help with so if any members have anything they think will help, please drop Graham or Ron a note. I'm sure the members should be able to help in some way. I have sent photographs of everything I would find to help them. I'm sure that the information in this new handbook will benefit the members and collectors of flag cancels. It will probably give us new information on things we never knew and make our want list just a little larger. Am really looking forward to this new handbook. Haven't heard what the expected date is for release but as soon as I hear from Graham on this will pass on this information.

TYPE 4 MONTREAL

HUB X - 6 STROKES

While talking with Art Leggett at Interpex, we discussed the Type 4 Montreal. All the Montreal Hub X sxi strokes that I have seen are all philatelic and dated June 22, 1897. None that I have seen are postally used and all have been unaddressed. My cover fits this same description. I had to pay more then it was worth in my opinion for a philatelic cover but then, when I got mine, it was only the third example I had ever seen. Art Leggett showed me three examples he had at Interpex and he may still have them. The price is higher now then when I bought mine but this is a decision collectors have to make if they want to have the covers for their collections. If any one is interested in the 4-2, please drop Art Leggett a note.

WANT LIST OF: WILMER C. ROCKET

23-2  
23-3  
23-7  
26-2

28-1  
28-2  
28-3  
28-4

43-2  
53-13  
53-14  
53-16

MONTREAL TYPE 1 FLAGS

DAVID SESSIONS

It will be known to some students that Dies E and F are less common in 1897 than the other dies. Apart from being withdrawn, along with die A, in mid June to make way for the Type 4 Jubilee flags; they were also out of commission for a while earlier in the year. Die E appears to have been withdrawn for a short period in March and early April whilst Die F has not been noted at all in February and March 1897.

Die E's replacement was a wavy line obliteration and Die F's a straight bars obliteration.

The period of use so far noted for the replacement dies are:-

wavy line	-	10 Mar - 6 Apr 1897
straight line	-	30 Jan - 27 Mar 1897.

Members with examples of flag dies E and F close to the dates listed are asked to report them so that the actual periods of withdrawal can be narrowed down. If anyone has examples of the replacement dies used in 1897 but outside the extreme dates listed then I should also be pleased to hear about them. Of course, if someone wishes to throw a spanner in the works, with flags E or F used within the period of alleged withdrawal, please feel free to do so but I should welcome photostat evidence.

Incidentally why the replacements mentioned and not the mysterious Die K?

Comments to David Sessions please, 3 Landfield Close, Henbury, Bristol, England BS10 7ND

TYPE 4 MONTREAL
IMPERIAL HUB X AND Z

4-1	Z	5	*June 21, 1897	July 31, 1897
4-2	X	6	*June 20, 1897	*Aug. 5, 1897
4-3	Z	6	*June 21, 1897	*July 13, 1897
4-4	X	7	*June 21, 1897	*July 10, 1897
4-5	Z	7	*June 20, 1897	*June 30, 1897
4-7	X	5	*June 25, 1897	June 29, 1897

TYPE 4 OTTAWA
IMPERIAL

4-6	Z	June 21, 1897	Aug. 17, 1897
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TYPE 5 MONTREAL
BICKERDIKE

5-1	*July 10, 1897	Aug. 18, 1897
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TYPE 6
MONTREAL - OTTAWA
BICKERDIKE

6-1	Montreal	Apr. 13, 1898	Apr. 18, 1898
6-2	Ottawa	Oct. 30, 1897	*Mar. 2, 1898

MONTREAL JUBILEE (TYPE 4) FLAGS

DAVID SESSIONS

There recently appeared, at auction, a Montreal Jubilee flag listed as 4-2 and I, like some other members of the group I suspect, was all set to bid as the item does not appear too frequently. Fortunately it was illustrated in the catalogue and close examination showed that it was in fact 4-4 one of the identifying strokes having failed to register properly. The auctioneer was advised and quite properly withdrew the item. As this is the second time I have nearly been fooled by poor inking it seems appropriate to remind flag collectors not to rely entirely upon the number of strokes in the first furl; there are other differences, mainly in the number and length of the various strokes in the body of the flag. For systematic examination it is recommended that the flag be divided into the five natural sections delineated by the folds.

As one would expect, the three different flags are normally paired with three specific daters, two described as X and Z in the Handbook and a third which is similar to type Z but with the '7' of 1897 seriffed, we shall call this type Y. The regular combinations are:-

Dater Y, 5-stroke flag (4-1)  
Dater Z, 6-stroke flag (4-3)  
Dater X, 7-stroke flag (4-4).

It is my belief that these combinations will normally be found, commercially used, between 21 June and 10 July 1897. Most examples of the 'abnormal' combinations and dates outside those mentioned appear to be of philatelic nature - cover/cards being unaddressed, lacking backstamp or being a set of Jubilee stamps on individual covers all to the same addressee. It is possible that the cancellations were not officially in use until 21 June (a Monday) and Frederick Landford suggest that those items dated 20 June were in fact made around 25 June. If covers were to be 'manufactured' then 20 June was a reasonable date to choose as this was the actual anniversary of Queen Victoria's coronation. All 20 June items seen by myself have been 'abnormal' combinations of dater and flag. Apart from the two 'abnormals' listed in the Handbook of Dater X, 6-stroke flag (4-2) and Dater Z, 7-stroke flag (4-5) I have seen unaddressed cards carrying Dater Y, 6-stroke flag and I was shown what appeared to be a proof impression of Dater Y, 7-stroke flag at Capex in 1978, all dated 20 June 1897. It may be coincidence but the earliest recorded Jubilee flag at Ottawa is 21 June 1897.

Perhaps it is also worth mentioning here that most, if not all, of the 20 June items are timed at 5-0 which in itself would be unusual. Toronto used a twenty four hour clock and one feels that there could not have been much commercial mail being cancelled at 5 a.m., the time marks most usually seen are between 15.00 and 19.00.

'Abnormal' combinations have also been noted carrying date 22 June and most of these are dated 12.0. The Canadian Postal Museum at Capex showed a complete set of Jubilee stamps on individual covers carrying cancellations of date X, 6-stroke flag (4-2), dated 22 June and all addressed to 'Owen Evans'.

The first Bickerdike machines commenced regular operation at Montreal on 10 July 1897 when at least 3 were in operation (Flags 5-1, 7-5 and 7-6) and all six were in use by 13 July. Thus any Imperial cancellations after 10 July must be examined carefully whilst those dated after 13 July should be regarded with deep suspicion. I should be interested to see evidence of the late dates recorded in the Handbook being examples of regular commercial use.

Two examples do exist of apparent commercial use of an 'abnormal' combination, dater X and 5-stroke flag (not listed in Handbook) both dated 25 June 1897. A photostat in my possession shows time mark 24.0 (i.e. midnight) which is unusual but the cover looks to be a normal commercial example. However, the dater (Type X) is not that which normally accompanied the 7-stroke flag, it appears to be the one normally found with the Type 1 flag, die B.

Comments please to David Sessions, 3 Langfield Close, Henbury, Bristol, England BS10 7ND

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TOPICS
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Topics has a new editor elect as of April 15th, H. Michael Street, P. O. Box 230, Ancastor, Ontario L9G 3N6 and think any help by a Study Group member with any research article would be appreciated. Am looking forward to some new research articles by our members in future issues of Topics.

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THE IMPERIAL MACHINE AT OTTAWA

DAVID SESSIONS

On page 14 of the Handbook the belief is expressed that only one Imperial machine was sent to Ottawa and I have found no evidence to the contrary. This being the case we are left with one or two 'impossible' dates.

The Type 1 flag die was withdrawn to make way for the Jubilee flag (4-6) and was apparently re-introduced on or about 6 August 1897. This being so one wonders how the Jubilee flag came to be used as late as 15, 16 and 17 August as reported. I should like to confirm the date of reintroduction as far as possible and I suspect that the late dates for 4-6 are the results of philatelic practices similar to those apparently carried out at Montreal. I have a commercial example of 4-6 used on 4 August (7-0) and 1-10 used on 16 August (11-0) and should welcome confirmatory reports, with time marks, of usage between these dates. Reports as to the status of any examples of 4-6 used after 5 August would also be very welcome.

Incidentally 1-9 has still only been reported to 11 June 1897 and 4-6 from 21 June 1897; I suspect the latter will prove to be a firm date but should have expected some later reports of 1-9 by now, any offers?

Two points should be borne in mind here (1) Ottawa used a 12-hour system for time marks as opposed to Montreal's 24-hour system. (2) The previous report of 2 August 1897 for 1-10 should be ignored, this is an example of poor registration and is either 12 or 22 August. The impression is on a front only so there is no back-stamp to provide verification.

In passing it is interesting to note the apparent autonomy exercised by individual post offices in this period. The first Imperial machine at Montreal was introduced on 10 March 1896 and was placed on trial until the end of April yet by 1 April 1896 Ottawa too had a similar machine in operation.

Comments to David Sessions please, 3 Langfield Close, Henbury, Birstol, England BS10 7 ND





TORONTO FLAGS TYPE 7/8

DAVID SESSIONS

The point is made on page 18 of the Handbook that correlation between late use of the Type 7 flags and early use of the Type 8 flags would be interesting. A further point is made concerning the reporting of a number of 'impossible' dates. I have always assumed that conversion from Type 7 to Type 8 would involve at least a day and this being so there would appear to be an impossible date in the Handbook. Die D (7-13) is recorded up to 23 Feb 1898 whilst in its amended form (8-20) it is recorded on the same day. Having recently confirmed (8-20) by the acquisition of a cover timed at 19-0 I should be interested to see confirmation of the use of (7-13) on that day; the time mark would be particularly interesting.

Type 7 reserve Die 'G' (7-16) was apparently used on 23 February only, suggesting this was the critical day for changeover. Extreme dates known to me suggest that the regular Type 7 dies were either withdrawn in pairs or in batches of 3 and were back in service within a day or so.

My records show the following revised early and late dates (with time marks where known:-

	<u>Type 7 (late)</u>	<u>Type 8 (early)</u>
A	Feb 23 '98	Feb 27 '98
B	Feb 23 '98	Feb 26 '98
C	Feb 22 '98	Feb 24 '98
D	Feb 23 '98	Feb 23 '98 (19-0)
E	Feb 22 '98 (19-0)	Feb 23 '98
F	Feb 21 '98 (19-0)	Feb 23 '98

It will be seen that the 'E' die in Type 7 format was still in use at 7 p.m. on 22 February and is reported in Type 8 format the following day. This too looks to be pretty slack and confirmation of the 23 February report, along with timemark, would be most welcome.

Now that the dates of conversion have been so nearly pin-pointed it would be instructive if members of the study group holding examples of the extreme dates listed would report on the actual time marks then perhaps we could button up the job completely.

It may interest readers to know that the additional two heavy bars were added to the Type 7 flags at the instigation of Mr. Sweetnam who was Chief Post Office Inspector at the time.

Reports to David Sessions please, 3 Langfield Close, Henbury, Bristol, England, BS10 7 ND

Collectors of flag cancellations have often wondered why the Post Office department saw fit to virtually destroy the rather simple elegance of the Type 7 flags by the addition of two ugly black bars. We have all felt the frustration of trying to find even half-way decent strikes of the revised (Type 8) dies among the thousands which continue to exist, but whose only remaining identifiable characteristics are the bars themselves.

The writer has now seen a copy of a letter in the Canadian Postal Museum which answers the question (and confirms what many of us had previously speculated but had been unable to prove). The letter was written on 9 March, 1898 by M. Sweetman, Chief Post Office Inspector, to The Postmaster General. On the chance that it may be of interest to the Study Group members, the bulk of its contents are reproduced below:

"... on the subject of the cancellation of Postage Stamps by the 'Bickerdike' Stamping Machines, I beg respectfully to state that attention has been given to this matter.

"In the Toronto Post Office sufficient care had not been taken to properly ink the date-stamp and obliterator. The four Postmasters, in whose Offices the stamping machines in question are in use, were all instructed to have special care taken to have the inking suitable attended to from day to day.

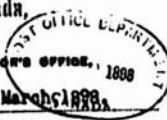
"I also caused two heavy bars to be added to the obliterators in use in the Toronto Machines. These have been in use for a fortnight and work satisfactorily. The obliterators in the machines in the remaining three Offices, - Montreal, Ottawa, and Hamilton, - will at once be similarly altered. This will secure a full measure of cancellation of Postage Stamps".

The reference to Ottawa is of passing interest in that the Ottawa Post Office never had a Type 7 obliterator to convert! It became the ultimate repository of the travelling "G" die - but only after it had already been converted to Type 8 and used for 1 day at Toronto, sent to Hamilton for 3 (reported) days of use, and finally to Ottawa where it is first known on 29 March (new early date) - some three weeks after the letter was written.

Post Office Department, Canada,

CHIEF POST OFFICE INSPECTOR'S OFFICE, 1888

Toronto, 9th March 1888



No 779.

Sir/-

Referring to the accompanying communication from the Postmaster at Toronto, dated 15th ultimo, on the subject of the cancellation of Postage Stamps by the 'Bickerdike' Stamping Machines, I beg respectfully to state that attention has been given to this matter.

In the Toronto Post Office sufficient care had not been taken to properly ink the date-stamp and obliterator. The four Postmasters, in whose Offices the stamping machines in question are in use, were all instructed to have special care taken to have the inking suitable attended to from day to day.

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The accompanying envelopes show the work done by the improved obliterator.

I have the honor to be,

The Hon.

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

OTTAWA.

Chief Post Office Inspector.