

THE FLAG POLE



Newsletter of the BNAPS Flag Cancel Study Group

Volume 2 Number 1 June 1988

Editor T.E.Almond, 2 Filbert Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG3 5DZ, England.

NEW EDITOR'S FIRST MESSAGE

I have been thinking about this first message for several months now and I am still unclear about what I should say. But if I don't start I will never finish, so here goes.

I must begin by paying a tribute, on behalf of all members of the Flag Cancel Study Group, to Doug Lingard, my predecessor. He has produced four superb newsletters, which have given our study group an enormous boost. I use the word "produced" deliberately, not only has Doug edited the Flag Pole, but he has also produced many of the articles published in it. Fortunately there are indications that he has other major articles in the pipe line. His will be a very difficult act to follow.

You may be wondering why a very new member of the Flag Cancel Study Group should be undertaking the job of editor. At times, I also wonder. From the point of view of the Flag Cancel Study Group, I appear to have one major qualification - I volunteered. While I have no experience as an editor or as an author of major, or even minor, articles, I am keen to attempt the job.

Personally I believe that the group is important and that there is much research left to do. If the group is to flourish an informative newsletter is vital. This will enable information to be exchanged on a regular basis. Clearly it should present major, carefully researched articles, but it should also present snippets of information such as news, reports of finds, new dates etc.

I plan to publish quarterly, in June, September, December and March but I will need material in order to produce a worthwhile publication. In view of postal delays, pressure of work etc. it is best if you send me material direct, rather than via Doug or Bob. I will be delighted to receive anything of interest that is fit to print. At present I am underwhelmed with material, I am sure this can be rectified.

This issue contains material predominantly from this side of the Atlantic and it has been delayed for several weeks in the hope that more material would arise. I trust that the next issue will be more cosmopolitan with material from many more sources.

ORAPEX 88 REPORT

Doug Lingard

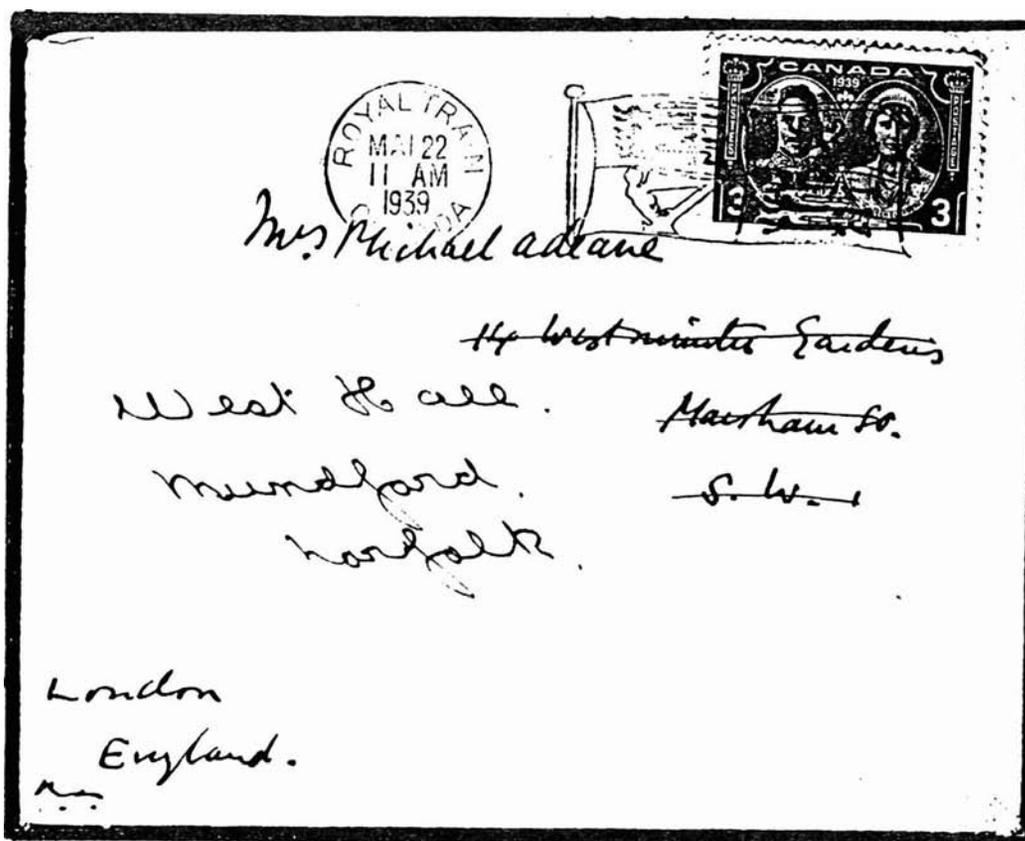
Five of us got together to discuss Flag Cancels at this years ORAPEX in Ottawa. Those present were Ron Kitchen, Wally Gutzman, Geoff Newman, Ray Horning (not a member) and Doug Lingard. We were all impressed with the photocopies of the Larry Paige exhibit which was available for review. Also it was an interesting experience meeting other philatelists who shared the same interests, as most of us have infrequent contact with our colleagues.

MAI I HAVE YOUR ASSISTANCE PLEASE?

David Sessions

While much of the material related to the Royal Tour of 1939 is a product of fevered philatelic imagination, the post office officials; Major G.W.Ross, A.W.Pasco and L.Gignac, were, as far as we know, reasonably free from taint.

Three postmark errors are known; two minor and one major. The nature of the errors is such that they are unlikely to have been philatelically inspired. The minor errors relate to the misplacement of indicia in the handstamps so do not concern us here; the major error relates to the flag cancellation and occurred on 22 May. On that day the French date, 22 Mai, was inadvertently fitted into the English dater.



Unusual dater error - "Mai" instead of "May"

The error has been known for a number of years but very few examples have surfaced. The King and Queen were in Toronto on that day so probably there was little letter writing done on the Train itself. In listing it, Ed Richardson

reported both possible versions i.e. the French date in the English dater and vice versa. I have never seen an example of the English date in the French dater and Graham is of the opinion that it does not exist.

Assuming the error to be genuine, how quickly was it spotted? One assumes that the wrong date was inserted when the post office commenced operation that day. Was the error spotted during the day and corrected, or did it run through until the date was changed next day?

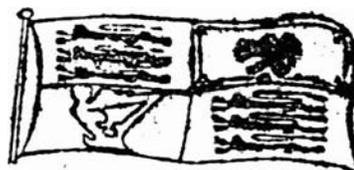
It would be instructive if members could check their collections and report any examples of the Royal Train flag used on 22 May. Please indicate whether your example is 'normal' or 'abnormal' and, if the latter, confirm that it is the French date in the English dater. In all events, please indicate the time mark. Photocopies would, of course, be greatly appreciated if possible.

THE ROYAL PURPLE

David Sessions

While on the subject of the Royal Tour, how about the purple flag? The story is well documented as to how the intention was to use purple ink to cancel mail posted aboard the train and how it proved most unsatisfactory, particularly when used in the cancelling machine.

Cancelling of FDC's started at 3 am on 15 May and the unsatisfactory results were soon noted. Major Ross ordered the destruction of the covers already cancelled but could not consign the few registered covers already processed to oblivion. Thus the scarce purple flag should exist only on registered covers timed at 3 am on 15 May. But I, and no doubt others, have an example on card, addressed to a postmaster, with no stamp affixed.



THE POSTMASTER,
TOLEDO, ONT.

7 Was the card postmarked as a favour to this (and other) postmasters or was the intention to send a sample to all postmasters? It is understood that about a dozen registered items survived the destruction and I have not yet been able to acquire one. I wonder how many of the 'favour' cards exist? If you have an example of either a registered cover or a card with the purple flag, then I should welcome a note. If you are reporting a card then a note of the addressee would also be welcome.

ROYAL TRAIN CANCELLATIONS, PART 2

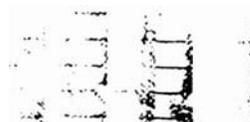
Tom Almond

As a footnote to the above article, I would also like to pass on Graham Noble's views on the destruction of covers with purple cancellations. In a letter he wrote:-

"As to the story about all but the purple registered covers being destroyed I do not exactly know what happened. It is true that virtually all the known purple covers are either registered or special delivery items, but I do not know if that was due to the others being destroyed, or whether they decided to start the process with these special items. I rather think that the latter is the case for, while registered covers could not be destroyed, there was no reason why the special delivery items could not have been replaced. Perhaps more importantly I have never seen a RT cover that appears to be an official replacement, nor has any been described in all the literature on the subject and I have located every article written on the Royal Visit and I have examined over 3,000 covers. The material examined includes all the leading collections including those formed contemporaneously with the visit and two inside collections formed by one of the RT postal officers and the Superintendent of PO responsible for arranging the postal service."

Does anyone out there have information that can throw some light on the question of what really happened? Why not write to FLAG POLE about it?

Just to end this Royal Train section, I have included a copy of a cover with a Royal Train flag (not purple) used as a receiver. The address is simply "Royal Train, Canada", so it may be an example of "fevered philatelic imagination" on the part of post office officials. It raises the question of how often the machine cancel was used as a receiver. I would be interested to receive reports of similar items in member's collections, indicating date, time and whether the French or English flag cancellation was used.



THAT BOTHERSOME 'K'

David Sessions

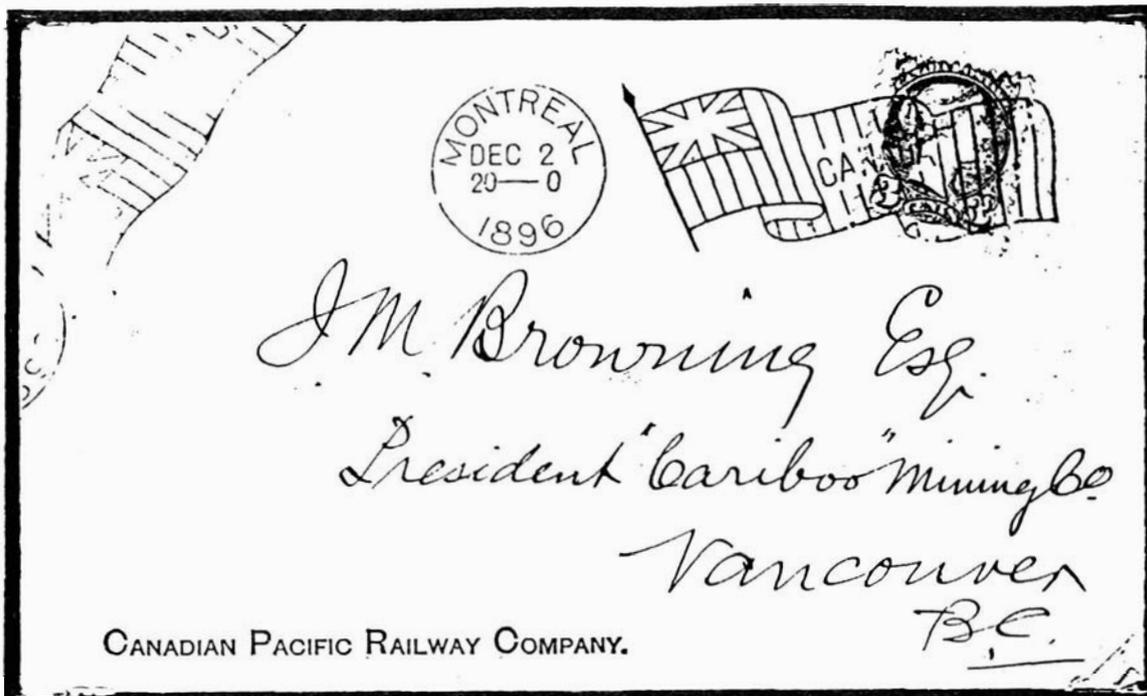
It is generally assumed that the rare Type 1 flag, die 'K' of Montreal, was supplied as a reserve die, along with regular dies 'A' to 'F', in 1896. It is unlikely that we shall ever know why 'K' and not 'G' was selected. Out of idle curiosity I sought to ascertain which flag die was replaced during the seven days that die 'K' was in service.

This should have been simple enough, the daters have minor differences so one only needs to match the 'K' dater with one of the others and the problem is solved. But the 'K' dater does not match any of the regular 1896 daters! One must therefore assume that a spare dater was also supplied. Meanwhile to answer the question we must apply a process of elimination. I have noted die 'A' on 4 Sep, die 'E' on 8 Sep and die 'F' on 4, 5 and 8 Sep; has anyone got examples of dies 'B', 'C' or 'D' used in the critical period 3 to 9 Sep?

What is even more intriguing, as Bob Heasman has pointed out, is that the 'K' dater matches that used at the beginning of December in the trial of the Bickerdike machine. While it is known that the Bickerdike machine was only really an improved version of the Imperial machine, the companies were competing for a contract and it seems odd that a dater was not supplied for trial purposes. In fact the 'K' dater was only used at the beginning of December, a fresh dater was used in the trials at the end of December.

The examples below of the Imperial flag die 'K' and the trial Bickerdike flag have a common dater. Note the break in the left of the circle just below the horizontal axis and the conformity of lettering.





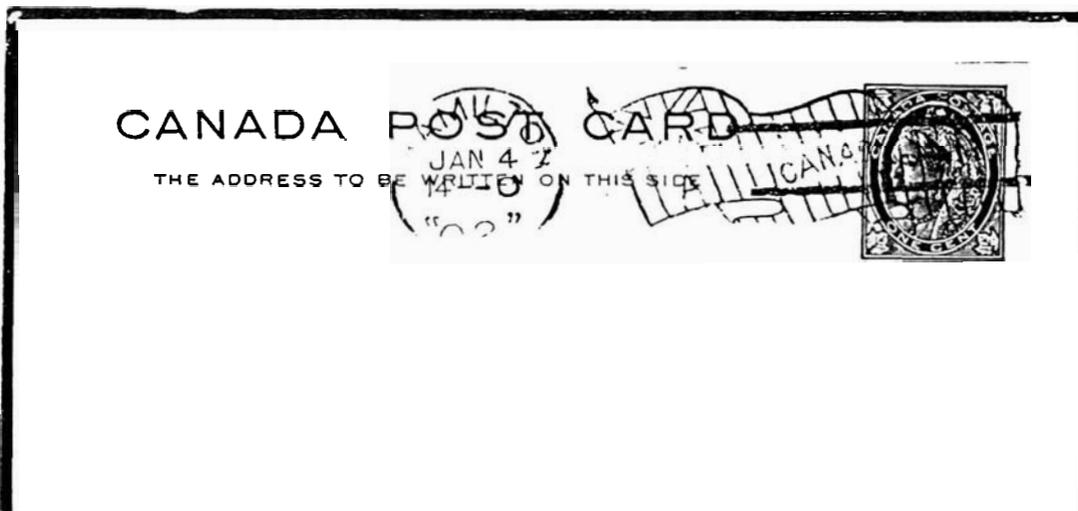
Earliest recorded use of Bickerdike machine, 2 December 1896.

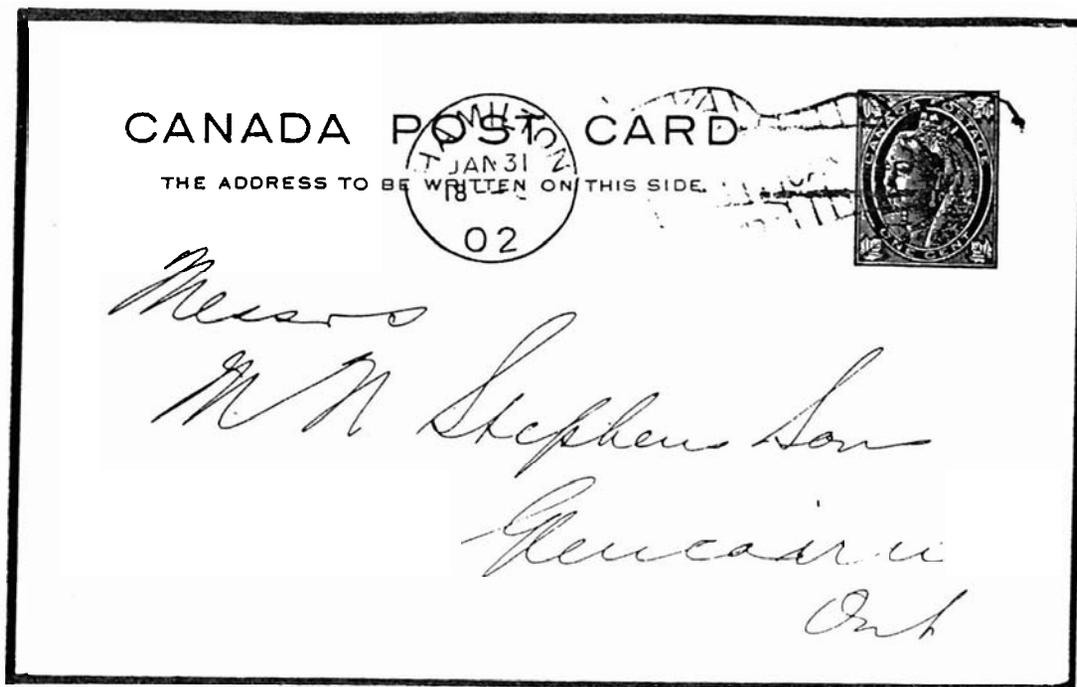
SOMETHING ELSE TO LOOK FOR

David Sessions

In early 1902 the Type 8 flags of Hamilton had "02" in inverted commas in the daters, whereas the M6 bar dies that succeeded them in February had daters without inverted commas. It would have been reasonable to assume that new daters were supplied with the new cancelling dies. Maybe they were, but M6 die A has not yet been reported before 3 Feb. 02 and on 31 Jan. 02 we find the Type 8 flag, die A with the new style dater. An example of the flag on 29 Jan. 02 shows the original dater.

One wonders if the same phenomenon might be found in connection with die B. So far no Type 8 flag, die B, has been noted after 21 Jan. 02, while the earliest M6 die B is 7 Feb. 02. There is 16 days unaccounted for here and the chance of an interesting variety to match die A.





NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome 3 new members to the group:-

27 Walter La Force, 7 Wishing Well Cir., Penfield, N.Y. 14526.

28 Daniel G. Rosenblat, 3612 Wood Duck Circle, Stockton, Ca. 95207

29 Fred Hollenbeck, 11341 Earlywood Dr., Dallas, Texas 75218.

Dan is the Editor of *Slogan Box*, the newsletter of the BNAPS Slogan Cancel Study Group.

Fred is especially interested in the 1939 Royal Train Cancels.

NEW EDITOR'S SECOND MESSAGE

Well, apart from the financial statement on the next sheet, that's all until next time. I have not lost too much hair over this edition, but as those who know me realise I have little to lose any way. It has been great fun preparing this first issue. Next time, given twice the material it should be twice the fun!



**BNAPS Flag Cancel Study Group
Statement of Revenues and Expenses
For the 12 Months Ending May 31, 1988**

Revenues

1987-88 Membership Dues (25 paid-up members)	\$274.00
BNAPS Subsidy	19.50
Donations (Steinhart, Heasman and Lingard @ \$9 each)	27.00
Bank Interest	<u>2.89</u>
 Total 1987-88 Revenue	 323.39

Expenses

Costs of producing and distributing the Flag Pole:

Flag Pole #1 (Typing \$25, distribution \$7.52)	\$ 32.52
Flag Pole #2 (Typing \$25, distribution \$14.19)	39.19
Flag Pole #3 (Typing \$40, distribution \$39.03)	79.03
Flag Pole #4 (Typing \$25, distribution \$28.61)	<u>53.61</u>
Total publication costs	204.35

Office expenses (including purchasing a 3 hole punch, miscellaneous photocopying, envelopes, postage and bank service charges) 29.76

Total expenses 234.11*

Net 1987-88 Surplus 89.28

Add:

Deferred 1988-89 membership dues received in 1987-88 (21 paid up members)	130.50
Deferred 1989-90 membership dues (one member)	<u>6.00</u>

Total Funds on Hand as of May 31, 1988 225.78

Funds on Hand Consist of:

Cash on Hand (Tom Almond)	\$ 32.00
Bank Balance	<u>193.78</u>
Total	<u><u>225.78</u></u>

* Any 1987-88 expenses incurred by Tom Almond or Bob Heasman are not included but will be included in 1988-89 expenses.

Doug Lingard

Prepared By
Doug Lingard (Treasurer)