

THE FLAG POLE



The Newsletter of the BNAPS Flag Cancel Study Group

Volume 11 Number 1, October 1999

Editor: Tom Almond, 2 Filbert Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks, RG31 5DZ, UK
Phone/Fax 0118 9411 052

Chairman: John Robertson, 10 Pergola Road, Rexdale, ON, M9W 5K5

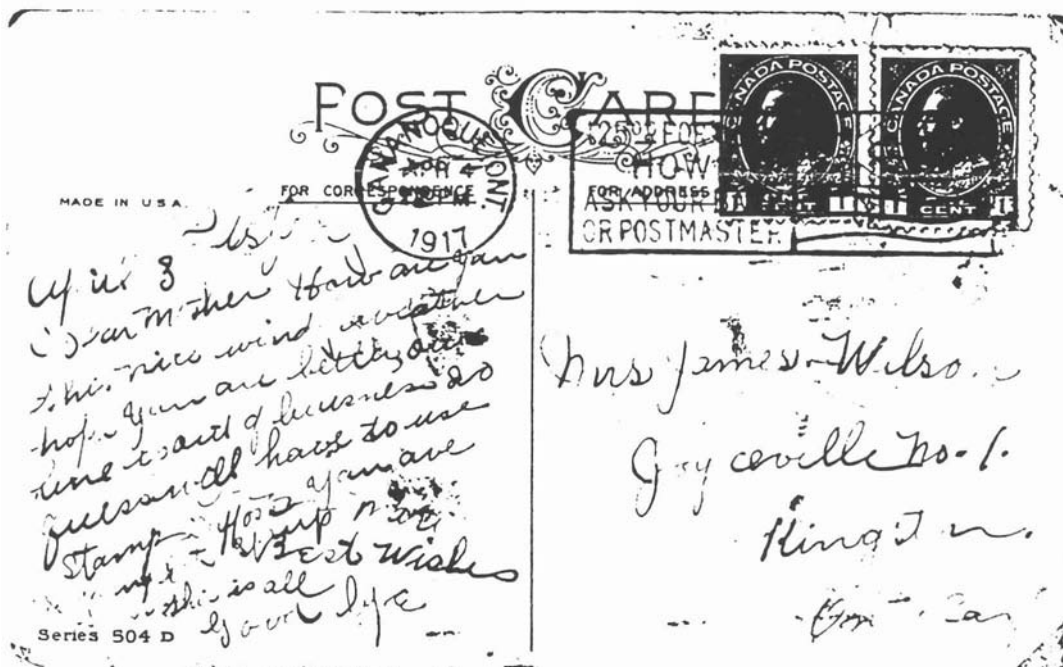
CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is with great relief that I can introduce you to our new/old Editor Tom Almond, who has most kindly volunteered to produce the FLAG POLE. Due to other commitments Michael Rixon has resigned and I wish to thank him for the 4 excellent issues that he produced. The cupboard is bare now, so when you receive this issue please send in an article, or at least an photocopy of a nice cover. Our Editor needs support and you as members are the ones who have to give it.

EDITOR'S REMARKS

I am pleased to return to editing THE FLAG POLE, but I cannot do this alone. I will depend on all of you to provide a steady supply of material in order to ensure a successful future.

The QEII inverted flag in the heading is from a cover in my collection. In addition John Robertson has submitted this example of the LKD of the very scarce Gananoque 29-3 flag.



The 8-23 barred flag with indicia G is among the rarest of the Canadian flag cancels. It was used in Toronto on February 23 1898, between 1500 and 2300 while the Toronto type 7 flags were converted to type 8 by the addition of bars to strengthen their strike.

David Sessions has recorded 2 covers, 2 cards and 2 pieces. However this understates the demand as there are two varieties to be collected. As the illustrations show, the flag is paired with two daters. One is normally used with the Die C flag and the other with the Die D flag. In the letters of TORONTO, the key points of comparison are:

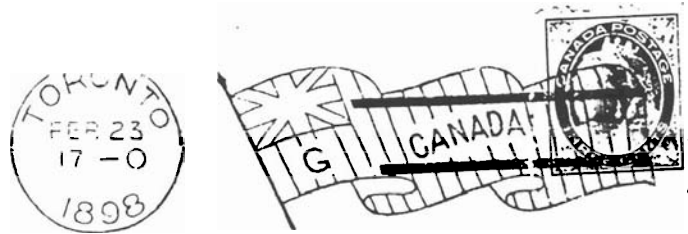
- C Dater First "T" points to middle of "F" of "FEB"
 "R" is narrow; Third "O" is round.
- D Dater First "T" points to top of "F" of "FEB";
 "R" is wide; Third "O" is squat.

Reported time marks are: C Dater 1900 and 2300, D Dater 1500 and 1700



George Heintzman Esq
Toronto
et/o
Heintzman & Co
King of Steel

J. H. HAMMILL
FUEL
193 YONGE STREET
TORONTO.



W. A. ... Esq
...
...
...

And the Hammer Fell.....

By Sally Flagstaff
Perth Enquirer Staff

On Saturday, February 20, I was visiting a girlfriend in Detroit Michigan and we decided to drive up to Waterford to attend the Charles Firby auction that was auctioning off David Sessions' flag cancel collection. This collection is thought to be the third best collection of early flag cancels ever formed and those members attending the BNAPS convention in Orlando will remember that David won the best in show with this exhibit.

When we got there, I met a number of old friends that had previously been introduced to me by Geoff Newman. Larry Paige, Doug Lingard, Bill Longley, Jeff Switt and other members of the flag cancel study group were there attending the sale. Before I get into the sale itself, I should say that the Firby auction was like no other auction I have ever attended, sort of like the Saturn commercial. Those in attendance showed very little respect for Mr. Firby, as they were constantly throwing insults his way, which had the effect of generating a great deal of humour for those in attendance. I had never thought there could be so much fun and laughter at an auction. Those that I had attended previously were very serious and you could have heard a pin drop on the floor. It did not take me long to realize that the real brains behind the Firby operation were Michelle, his right hand person, and his charming wife Anne. When I asked Michelle why she did not evict those customers, like the guy from Texas, who were verbally abusing Mr. Firby, she responded that if she did, no one would be left to bid on the lots. Also, she indicated that Mr. Firby deserved what he got and these verbal attacks on Mr. Firby also helped the consignors, as happy bidders were more apt to make higher bids. This Michelle is truly a very intelligent, organized and hard working woman and I just hope that Mr. Firby is paying her what she is really worth to his firm. When I cornered Mr. Firby and told him that I thought Michelle should receive a raise for what she puts up with, he ignored my suggestion and immediately left the room with one of his bidders.

Just as Mr. Firby was about to start the flag lots, a telephone bidder joined in on the session. After those on the floor took a minute or so to exchanged greetings with the telephone bidder (I have never seen this happen at an auction before) Mr. Firby started on the flags. All realizations provided are hammer prices in US dollars and do not include the auctioneer's 15% buyers commission, although the amounts converted to Canadian dollars do include the buyers commission. Since the US dollar was then in the \$1.50 to \$1.55 Canadian dollar range, each \$100 realization would end up costing a Canadian between \$172 and \$178 in Canadian dollars plus the 7% GST or the 15% HST.

The first lot #951, was a M1a straight line cancel dated March 10, 1996. It was on a significantly cut down envelope but is apparently the only known example dated March 10, the first day that the Imperial cancelling machine was used at Montreal. It had an estimate of \$1000, opened at \$700 and went to the phone bidder for \$750. There were rumours after the sale that the bidder would have paid three times this amount for the lot.

The next lot, #952, was another one of these M1a cancels, dated March 13, on an illustrated advertising cover. It was estimated at \$75 and was sold to a mail bidder for \$200, thus showing there is some demand for these "unattractive" machine cancels.

Lot #954, one of the highlights of the sale was the 1-1 flag cancel on a government postal card that was a bit stained and estimated at \$1300. It opened at \$800 and was picked up by a floor bidder, who just about fell off his chair when he bought it for only \$850. Again, those in attendance thought this item might have realized almost double the winning bid.

Lot #957, a nice 2-1 Straight Jack flag cancel dated April 11 and the first day of use, was estimated at \$350. It opened at \$225 and was knocked down by a floor bidder for \$350.

Lot #996, estimated at \$200 was one of the so called philatelically inspired 4-8 flags dated June 20, with the

7 stoke obliterator as used with the Y dater hub. It is the only known example used on a Post Office Department OHMS cover. It opened at \$130 and with spirited floor and phone bidding was picked up by the phone bidder for \$450. Larry Paige and Doug Lingard told me afterwards that only a few of these philatelic creations have been reported but they were surprised that someone would pay almost \$800 Canadian for one.

Lot #999, with an estimate of \$850 and one of the gems of the sale, was the 4-1 flag cancel that has been reported used on only June 25 and June 29. It opened at \$750 and was secured by a floor bidder for \$1000.

One of the most interesting lots was lot #1011, a 1-8 "K" Ensign flag cancel and which was estimated at \$800. It opened at about \$650 and was run up by book, floor and the phone bidder to \$1500, even though it was not a full impression of the cancel. At over \$2600 Canadian, this is an all time record for a 1-8 flag cancel.

The next two lots (#1012 and #1013) were very scarce Type 3-1 and 3-1A flag cancels. They eventually found homes after spirited bidding at \$325 and \$375 respectively.

Lots #1015 and #1016 were Type 5 flag cancels. The first was a nice illustrated 5-1 advertising cover dated July 14 and the second was a cut down 5-1A cover dated July 17. After a flurry of book and floor bidding, each one realized \$425.

The surprise of the sale was lot #1028, the Montreal Type 6-1 flag cancel which was estimated at only \$500. With spirited bidding it edged its way up to \$1900, which is over \$3300 Canadian. Larry and Doug mentioned that a much better copy had realized \$3300 in a Ron Leith sale a few years ago, and they were surprised this one fetched so high a realization. Perhaps I should mention that by now, a second telephone bidder, unknown to those in attendance, was also an active bidder on this lot and helped push it up to its final realization. It was rumoured that this underbidder was not a member of the study group and did not even collect flag cancels as he specialized in the Leaf Issue stamps. Assuming that this information is true, it just shows how those collecting other fields of Canadian philately value our attractive flag cancels and what they will pay for them.

Lot #1061 and #1062, the rare Toronto Type 7-16 "G" and 7-17 "H" cancels did quite well also. The "G" was sold for \$425 and the rarer "H" after opening at \$350 eventually realized \$850. After the auction, Larry Paige was overheard saying that the selling price for the 7-17 was probably more than double that of any previous 7-17 realization.

The room was silent, for one of the few times, as the auctioneer called out lot #1064. This was the very rare Toronto 8-23 "G" flag cancel that has only been reported used on March 23 and which was estimated at \$850. The example was on a government postal card and had a Hamilton receiver marking over the Toronto dater hub. Nevertheless, the first phone bidder paid \$1500 for this item and there were rumours after the sale that he was prepared to go much higher if it had been necessary.

Lot #1111, the Victoria Type 13-1 flag cancel also set a new price record for this particular cancel. Even though there are at least 25 examples of this cancel, this one realized \$750 which is about \$1300 Canadian with the buyers commission added.

Although there were some record realizations, there were some good buys as well. For instance, Lot #994, a Montreal 4-7 with a cover crease at the bottom of the cover but dated June 21, the first day of use for this cancel, was estimated at \$100 and realized only \$12.50

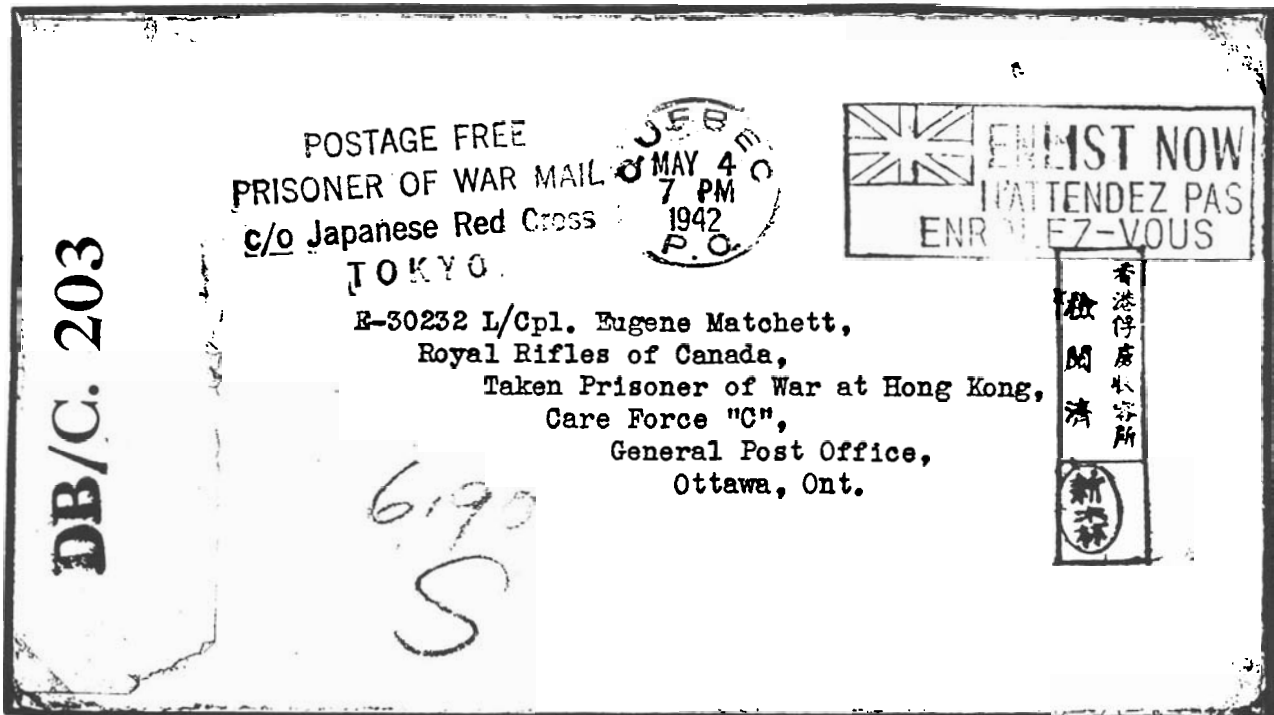
After the sale, those in attendance seemed to be pleased with the results. Everyone got something they wanted and they were overall pleased with the realizations that the better material obtained. It showed that there is quite a demand for the better Canadian flag cancels, and some of them realized from about 2 to almost 4 times estimate. The above lots were chosen from the 173 that were auctioned off to show study group members what the better Canadian flag cancels are realizing today.

THE STORY BEHIND MY COVER

By Doug Lingard

Perhaps in an effort to help our editor, who is having some difficulty in obtaining articles from the members, we could all contribute to a new "THE STORY BEHIND MY COVER" or "MY FAVOURITE COVER" column in each issue of *THE FLAG POLE*. If each member sent in just one cover with the story behind it, Michael would have enough articles to fill up many newsletters.

I am kicking off this new column with my favourite World War II ENLIST NOW cover.



Quebec City bilingual flag cancel with Canadian censor tape and Japanese censor? marking on a cover addressed to a Canadian soldier taken POW at Hong Kong.

Every time I look at this cover sent to a member of the Royal Rifles of Canada, who was taken prisoner of war at Hong Kong, I think of how those 1900+ ill-prepared Canadians were sacrificed at Hong Kong. For those members who may not be familiar with the story, Canada was asked to send a couple of battalions to reinforce the British garrison at Hong Kong. The British claimed that with a couple additional battalions of men, they could probably hold Hong Kong, or at least hold it for a long time, against an attack. Canada agreed with this request and sent over a Quebec based unit, the Royal Rifles of Canada and a Manitoba based unit, The Winnipeg Grenadiers. Shortly after they arrived in November 1941, the Japanese attacked and what was left of the British force surrender on December 25, 1941. When the Japanese attacked, most of the Canadians' military equipment was still en route on another vessel, which was rerouted to help the Americans in the Philippines. Several hundred Canadians were killed in combat at Hong Kong and several hundred more died in Japanese POW camps. Those who survived this ordeal, were barely alive when freed in 1945.

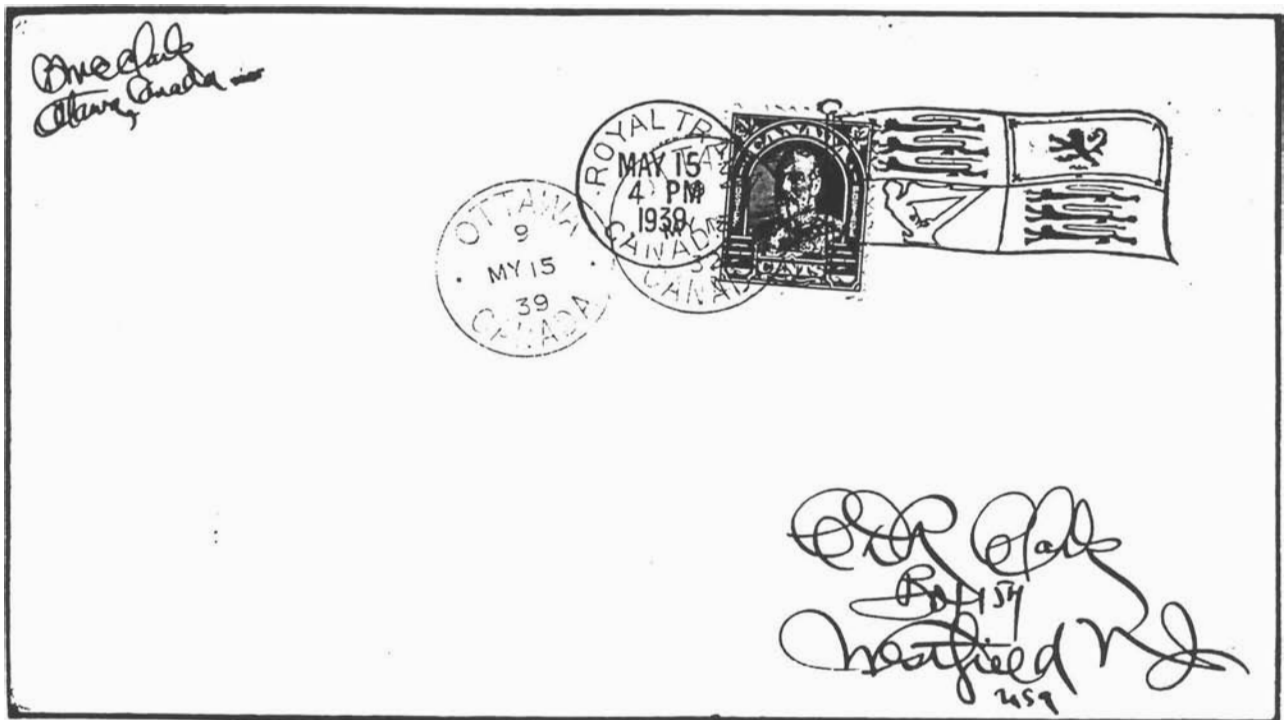
Recently there was a demonstration at the Japanese Embassy here in Ottawa to support the ongoing request for compensation for the work done by the POWs for the Japanese. I attended thinking that there would be a few former POWs who might have known Cpl. Matchett. Unfortunately, there were no former Canadian POWs (I was told that as a result of their treatment in the hands of the Japanese, most of those still alive are in very bad condition in nursing homes) but I did speak to a former Dutch POW who had been taken POW in the Dutch East Indies. He was not aware that philatelists collect POW covers and **was shocked that this one had survived**. During his captivity from 1942 to 1945, he did not receive any mail, and to the best of his knowledge, none of his Dutch colleagues in his POW camp in Malaya, received any mail either. Obviously, covers to Japanese POWs are quite scarce.

These Japanese POW covers would only be found with the ENLIST NOW flag cancel dated from either December 1941 or more probably January 1942 to early July 1942. Over the years I have seen examples from both Quebec City and Winnipeg, but do not recollect seeing any from other cities. Do any members have examples from other cities? If so, would they kindly send either me or the editor a photocopy.

New Royal Train Time Mark Has Been Found

By Doug Lingard

Those of us who collect the 1939 Royal Train Cancels realized that most covers you find are first day covers (FDCs) dated May 15th, with Royal Visit stamps. However, every now and again an interesting item surfaces such as the following cover. It has a 9 AM Ottawa CDS cancel but since it was not a FDC of the Royal Visit stamps, it was dispatched to Montreal for a Royal Train cancel. Here it received a 4 PM Royal Train English Flag Cancel, which is thought to be the first reported May 15th use of this time mark for either the English or the French flag cancels. If another member has an example of the 4 PM May 15th time marking with either the English or French Flag Cancel, please send a photocopy to Doug.

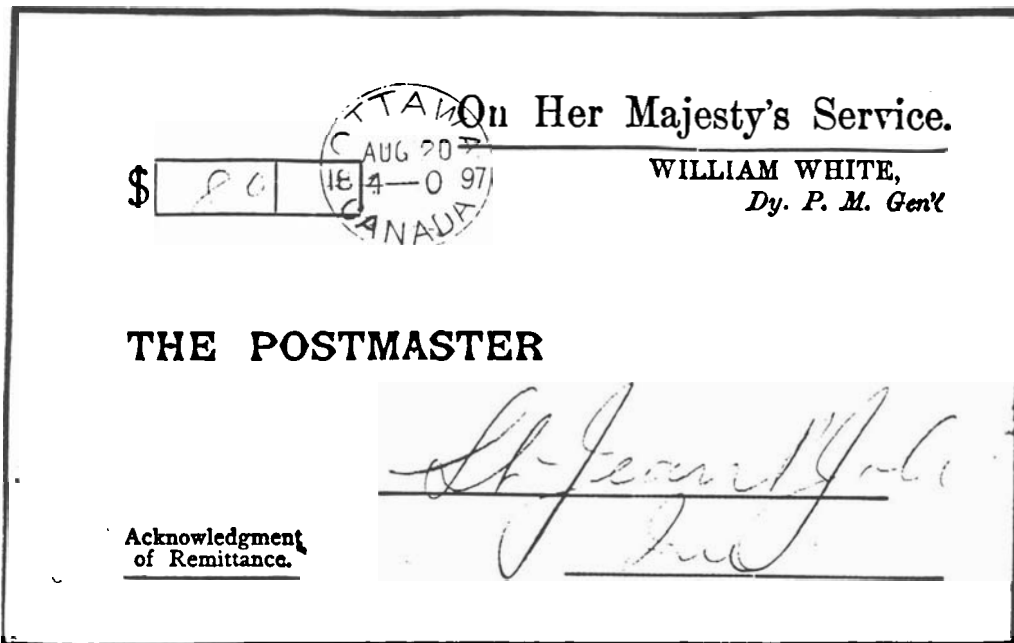


The cover with the 4 PM time marking. Other time markings known used with the English Flag Cancel for May 15th are 3 AM, 4 AM (rare), 9 AM, 10 AM, 11 AM, 5 PM, 7 PM, 9PM, 10 PM and 11 PM. The 3 AM, 9 AM, 1 PM, and 5 PM time marks were used with the French Flag Cancel. I also understand that another ember will report a new French time mark for May 15th in the next issue of *The Flag Pole*.

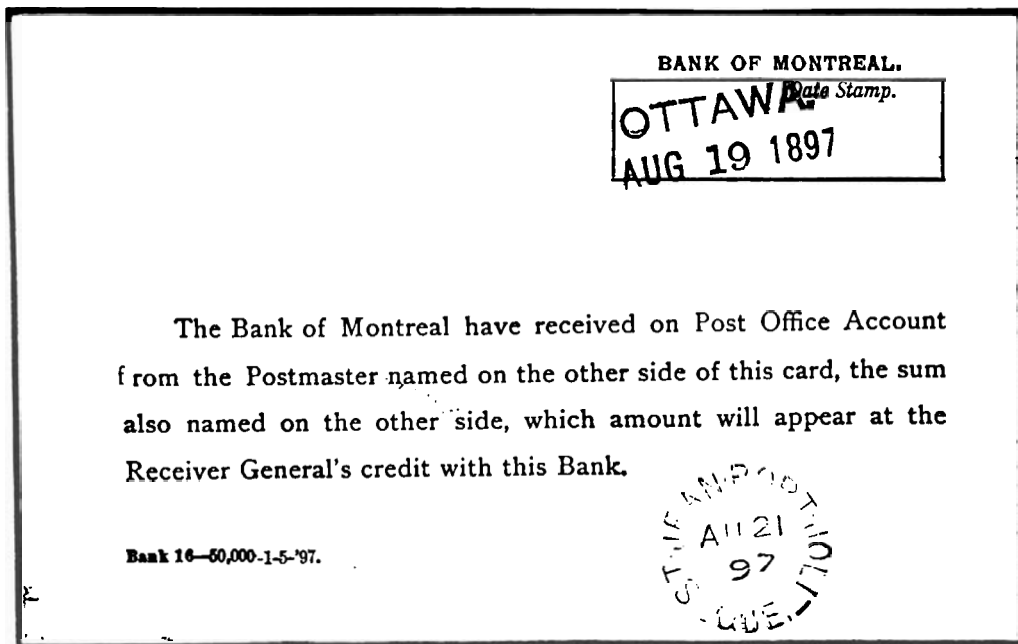
A Most Unusual Imperial Machine Cancel

By Doug Lingard

Although Montreal and Hamilton used the dater hub as a receiver cancel on incoming mail, this writer has never before seen just the dater hub used as a dispatching cancel. The Ottawa dater hub shown below, known as the Z dater hub, was used as a dispatching cancel on a very thick Bank of Montreal acknowledging of remittance card to a post master. Since it received free franking privileges, there is no stamp and thus no need for the flag obliterator. However, almost all of the other Ottawa free franking covers I have seen from this time period, have an Ottawa free franking hand stamp. A few have had the dater hub and flag cancel obliterator. My question is was this card too thick to pass through the part of the cancelling machine that applied the flag cancel obliterator or was it sometimes the practice of the Ottawa post office to remove the flag cancel obliterator when free franking mail was being processed? Perhaps other members can check their Ottawa cancels and send me a photocopy of any similar usage of the Imperial or Bickerdike dater hubs and even any usages of the Imperial or Bickerdike dater hub/flag cancel combinations cancelling free franked mail, as this usage of these flag cancels is uncommon as well. If enough members can send in photocopies, we might be able to determine if this was a one off experimental usage or if it was an ongoing usage that has escaped investigation until now.



The front of the very thick card showing the Imperial Z dater hub dated August 20, 1897.



The reverse of the card showing the St. Jean Port Joli b/s receiver dated August 21, 1897.

We Need Your Help!!!!

By Doug Lingard
Secretary-Treasurer

You will see from our Chairman and Editor's column that the cupboard is bare and we need some articles for *The Flag Pole*. We now have a new editor who has the time available to produce a high quality newsletter. Those who were members of the Flag Cancel Study Group 10 years ago will remember the fine issues of *The Flag Pole* that Tom produced back in the late 1980's and early 1990's. However he cannot do it by himself and needs your input, whether it is a short article, a long article, a story on your favourite flag cancel cover or a question seeking input from other members. Lets all pitch in and help Tom get the newsletter back on its feet as it is the newsletter that holds any study group together.

A few weeks ago I received the first two pages of this newsletter from Tom to distribute to our North American members. Needless to say, I was sort of embarrassed to send out only a two page newsletter since it was the first one we have produced since early 1998. Consequently, I contacted Sally Flagstaff and she agreed to do a two page article on the auction of David Sessions' flag cancel collection/exhibit and I found an article on Enlist Now flags that I had sent off to our former editor, Michael Rixon, a couple of years ago. Also, I filled up a couple of pages on some recent acquisitions. The bottom line is that we all have something we can contribute to the newsletter, if we just make an attempt to do so. For starters, Bob Heasman has promised to do an article for the next newsletter on his most interesting presentation at Vernon on the switching of the "E" and "F" Ensign obliterators at Montreal in the spring of 1897. Perhaps other members such as Harry Machum, could do an article on the 1953 Coronation Flag Cancels? Tom Washington, how about something on the 1939 Royal Trains? Larry Paige, surely you could send Tom enough material to fill up several newsletters yourself. Wayne Curtis, how about an article to compensate for the report that you never sent me 11 years ago? Fred Goodhelpsen, how about an article on the WWI or the 1917 -1919 Western Exhibition Flag Cancels? The point I am trying to make is that if I have been able to obtain or do articles to fill up six pages of *The Flag Pole*, other members should be able to find time to at least contribute one page for our newsletter. When we reactivated the study group back in 1987, we did not charge any dues but insisted that each member contribute to the study group if he/she wished to become a member. This seemed to have worked quite well and we had active member participation. Lets hope that we do not have to revert back to this strategy to keep the study group going. For those members who will say they do not know how to prepare an article, I am sure that Tom would be pleased to receive any material in any format and is prepared to work with the author to put it into a publishable form.

Announcements and Want Ads

May 6-7, 2000 is the annual national level ORAPEX show in Ottawa. Some out of town members such as Larry Paige, Wally Gutzman, etc. normally attend. Contact me at 2425 Blackstone Crescent, Ottawa, ON K1B 4H3 or (613) 737-4864 or lingardd@istar.ca if you would like more information or an exhibitors application form.

August 31-September 2 2000 is the annual BNAPEX convention at Chicago. Those attending Vernon had a great time so try and make Chicago. If you have never attended a BNAPS convention before, I can almost guarantee you will enjoy yourself and will probably get addicted to these annual meetings.

August 31-September 2 2001 is the annual BNAPEX convention at Ottawa. Come and help us celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canada's first postage stamps. This will be a convention you will not want to miss.

Wanted: Royal Train English Flag Cancels dated 10PM May 16, 10PM May 17, 11AM and 6PM May 22, 10PM May 23, 9AM May 24, 8PM May 26, 5PM June 1. Royal Train large English CDS cancels with following time marks: 22 on May 18, 15 on May 21, 11 on May 25, 21 on June 7, and French CDS cancel with 9 and 20 time marks on Mai 18. Will trade flags, Royal Train cancels or purchase for cash. Name your trade. Can anyone help? Contact Doug Lingard, 2425 Blackstone Crescent, Ottawa, ON K1B 4H3 or (613) 737-4864 or lingardd@istar.ca.