

March-April 1988

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN SEMI-OFFICIAL AIR MAIL STUDY GROUP

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Robert W. Marcello, Editor



PROGRESS REPORT, APRIL 1988

When this study group was in its early stages last year, I was told by several people in the know that getting input from members might be difficult. They said things like, "Only two or three will contribute anything ... it's hard for many collectors to come up with any material."

Well, after the first newsletter was sent out, what a pleasant surprise it was to receive an almost overwhelming response from members! With more material coming in than could possibly be covered in this second newsletter, we have plenty of topics left to work on for the next issue.

Although I was confident from the beginning that a renewing of the study group would be worthwhile, and was fully prepared at the time to do all the work necessary to get us started and into high gear quickly, it was gratifying to see so much input and positive response from members. Sincere thanks to all of you, for your instant support and participation, and for the many kind comments you made about our first newsletter.

Membership has almost doubled since the January report. We have 24 members now, and can expect one or two more prospects to join by summertime.

-Bob Marcello

-R.W.M.

PHILATELISTS IN SECLUSION

We are fortunate to have found an interesting specialty and joined an appropriate study group. Many others, perhaps oblivious to the benefits of participating in a study group, have settled for collecting in virtual solitude. While they may enjoy philately in seclusion, it's possible they don't realize what they're missing.

Les Winick made some relevant comments about specialty groups in his regular column, "The Insider," in the February 8 issue of Linn's Stamp News: "If you are a ... dealer," he wrote, "why don't you belong to a specialty society of an area that you deal in? If you are a collector, why don't you join a specialty group in your area of expertise?"

Mr. Winick got right to the point: "I've met many collectors who think nothing about spending literally thousands of dollars on their collection, but won't spend \$15 to join a specialist society. I really don't understand this mentality."

Frank Waite, writing in the January-February 1988 issue of BNA Topics, expressed a similar view: "I was quite shocked to learn ... that only 15 to 20 percent of the membership belong to a study group ... this figure is probably high as many members belong to several groups. It is beyond my comprehension that one would join a specialist society, and then not take advantage of the expertise available. This is the same as placing money in the bank and then refusing the interest that accrues."

I agree wholeheartedly.

We know there are others in BNAPS who have some interest in Canadian air mail. I'm sure they'd enjoy the benefits of participating in our study group, if only they could be persuaded to do so. Perhaps some of these people are unsure of what is expected from them if they were to belong to a group. They may not realize how uncomplicated it is. All that's needed is an interest in the particular specialty and a desire to learn.

Maybe even the two simple words that describe us tend to intimidate. Does "study group" sound too serious, too scholarly? If, for example, we had called ourselves the BNAPS Canadian Air Mail Club, would some collectors have felt more comfortable about approaching us and joining the group?

We're running an ad for the year in BNA Topics, inviting other BNAPS members to join us. Also, each new applicant for BNAPS membership who lists semi-official airmails as an area of interest on his application will receive an invitation to join our group. And we definitely should try to contribute a semi-official air mail story this year to BNA Topics; this might help promote Canadian aerophilately among some of the 1400 other BNAPS members. If you know of additional ways to enlist likely study group members, please share your ideas with us.

-R.W.M.

UPDATE: YUKON AIRWAYS & EXPLORATION CO., LTD.

In response to Jim Miller's questions in the last news-
letter, the consensus is that "commercially used" Yukon Airways
covers exist, but are not common.

From Trelle Morrow: "Yes, there are pieces of commercial
mail in collections. These are not common and the dates will be
different usually than the First Flight ... the first mail ever
carried by Yukon Airways (Nov. 11, 1927) can be called commercial.
It was not intended to be otherwise."

Figure 1
shows a photo-
copy of a
photocopy of
a photocopy...
of a cover
sent on the
Nov. 16, 1927
flight from
Dawson to
White Horse.
The cover was
sent by Mrs.
Cruickshank,
the pilot's
wife, and is
addressed to
her father in
Vancouver.

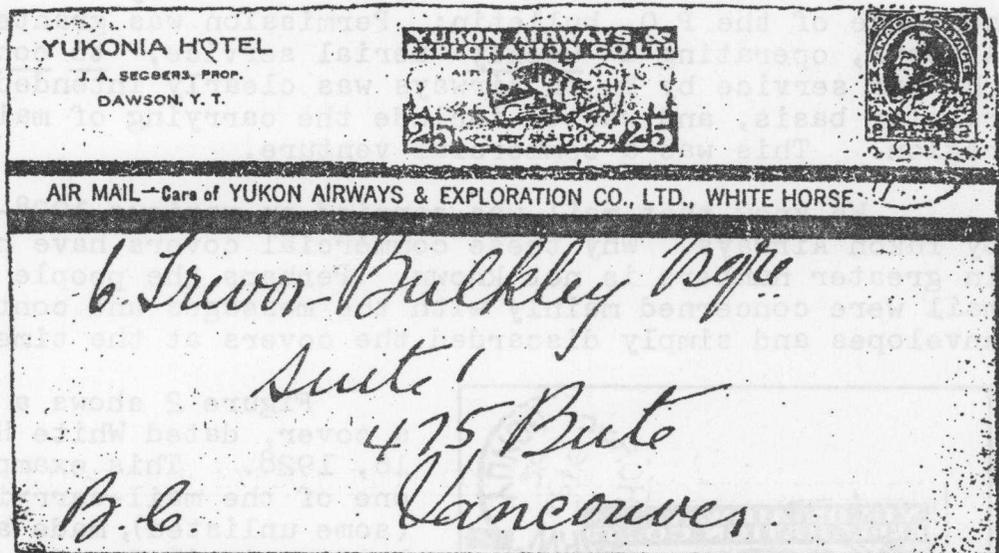


Figure 1

Haughton Sanguinetti has provided information from a notice
published in The Post Office Weekly Bulletin (Ottawa), Nov. 5,
1927. Announcing the new Air Mail Service in Yukon and Atlin
Districts, it says, "Permission has been granted to the Yukon
Airways and Exploration Co., White Horse, Yukon, operating an
aerial service weekly between Dawson and White Horse (serving
Mayo Landing, Keno Hill and Wernecke en route) and at various
intervals between Atlin and White Horse via Carcross, to convey
letters by this service under certain conditions which are as
follows:

"(1) 'VIA AIR MAIL' to be prominently written on the ad-
dress side of each cover or the letter to be enclosed in special
cover furnished by the Company.

"(2) The usual Canadian postage to be affixed on the
address side of each letter.

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Update: Yukon Airways & Exploration Co. (cont'd)

"(3) A special aerial sticker sold by the Company or its agents representing a charge of 25 cents an ounce, in payment of the special charge for transmission by aerial service, to be placed on the back of each cover.

"(4) Senders to assume all risk.

"Postmasters will please give the above every publicity through the press and otherwise."

Commercial covers? Consider several key words in the first sentence of the P.O. bulletin: Permission was granted to Yukon Airways, operating a weekly aerial service, to convey letters. The air service by Yukon Airways was clearly intended to be on a regular basis, and was to include the carrying of mail within the region. This was a commercial venture.

We know that mail was carried on various 1928-29 flights by Yukon Airways. Why these commercial covers have not survived in greater numbers is not known. Perhaps the people receiving mail were concerned mainly with the messages and contents of the envelopes and simply discarded the covers at the time.

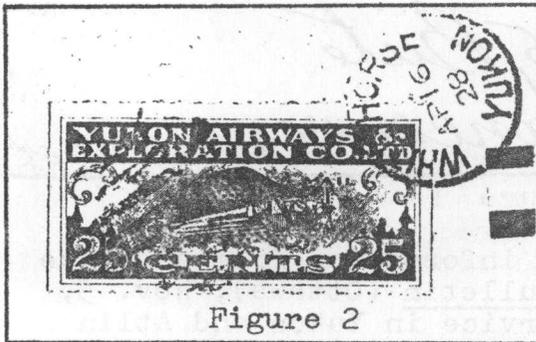


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows a portion of a cover, dated White Horse, April 16, 1928. This example is from one of the mail-carrying flights (some unlisted), made almost daily, between April 2 and April 18, 1928.

Basil Burrell says, "I talked with someone at Dearborn two years ago who had done a lot of research on this company and checked the dates of travel of the planes.

I don't know if it was Jim Miller, but there is a wealth of information available by this person." (Can anyone in our group supply more information on this?)

Reported flights by Yukon Airways and dates of known covers may be included in a future issue of the newsletter. We would like it to be a fairly comprehensive view of what is known. At this point there is a bit of contradictory information on hand, with some supposed facts sketchy at best. Members having any of these covers with clearly identifiable postmarks could help by sending us the relevant information.

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Update: Yukon Airways & Exploration Co. (cont'd)

It seems fitting to end this update with some comments from the April 13, 1928 edition of The Whitehorse Star newspaper ...

"A few years ago if a man had suggested that people would soon be travelling from Dawson to Whitehorse in a few hours he would have been placed under observation. If within a reasonable time he did not revert to the idea that the good old way of spending twelve to fourteen days in making the trip would always be good enough for Yukon, he would be taken outside as a mental case.

"Now Dawson is only four hours from Whitehorse and Mayo about two hours. Air transportation has brought the change. And it is a change decidedly for the better.

"On Saturday morning a number of people left Mayo by trail and travelled continuously night and day to connect with the train leaving here Wednesday morning. They arrived in Whitehorse just an hour before the train left. On Tuesday afternoon three passengers left Mayo on the Queen of the Yukon (the airplane depicted on the Yukon Airways stamp) and landed in Whitehorse three hours after they stepped into the plane at Mayo, and forty-five minutes of that time was spent on Lake Lebarge waiting for the storm to pass. Mail and express leaving Dawson in the morning was in Whitehorse in the afternoon.

"Air transportation is a great boon to Yukon. Isolation no longer exists.

"A survey of the whole overland transportation problem should be undertaken by the Government without delay and some solution arrived at whereby residents of the northern part of the Territory would be assured of a permanent air service.

"The Queen of the Yukon has certainly injected new life into the Territory."

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LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Cataloguing, Cross-Indexing and Plating

Responding to several related questions and observations made by members in the January-February newsletter ...

Basil Burrell tells us he started a cross-index and will update it, "...as I am sure I fell into the Scott trap of back-grounds on Elliots."

Trelle Morrow writes, "It's difficult to exceed Sissons 1978 catalogue and this is the one I prefer. My own listing of the Patricias is simply an extension of Sissons. I don't know why the modern catalogue writers need to get everything screwed up when the basic work has already been done years ago. I will continue to use the Sissons numbering system."

"I did prepare a rough cross-indexing system for Sissons, Scott and Canada Specialized. All have their weaknesses, but after doing this I became more convinced that the Sissons was still the best answer; unlisted varieties can be added easily by simply calling the item a,b,c, etc., but with still the same numerical prefix such as CS47 or whatever."

Murray Heifetz offers some food for thought: "...you refer to 'misinformation ... available in catalogues commonly accepted as gospel.' This is a pet peeve of mine. If the BNAPS group can do nothing more than act as a catalyst to change this, it will have been worthwhile. The semi-official section of both the Canada Specialized and Scott have had many errors up to about a year ago. In fact, Scott obviously copied the Specialized verbatim, with all its errors, but quite inferior in layout and listing. As a result of some detailed input to both cataloguers from several sources they have made corrections, but still have much more to do. They both have received sufficient 'corrective data.' It remains to be seen if this will be applied."

"A historical tracing of currently listed data would suggest that much was originally picked up from Jarrett and then from Morgan in the late '20s and early '30s, repeated from catalogue to catalogue and from articles in philatelic journals, without change and without effort to reverify the data. It's about time we successfully obtain corrected listings, reasonably good market valuations and, perhaps most important, a complete revision of the reported number of covers and stamps issued. Some of the reported numbers of covers are so low in relation to their frequent and plentiful availability as to place the whole collectible specialty in disrepute."

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Letters and Comments (cont'd)

"However, I have a greater problem and don't know whether we can ever solve it, as it is an editorial problem of catalogue producers and applies to all areas of stamp collecting. I refer to the arbitrary selection of varieties and errors which, by their catalogue listing, elevates them to a rarity category and increased valuation not available to other positions in the sheet. For example, the Richardson plating of the Cherry Red shows two printings with several distinct plate varieties. Only the 'A crossbar' variety is listed. In the Commercial Via Air issue only the 'broken C' is listed, but this is a single constant position and every other position for this printing can be plated. The worst is probably the Jack Elliot series, where the sheets are all printed from four different cliches, but only the 'broken leaf' seems to have been selected. While these items are selected as worthy varieties for listing, many true errors and varieties of design, separation, gum, colour, etc., are omitted. We need a true specialized catalogue or section which is much more detailed and accurate than those currently available."

Varieties

Several of you responded to Mike Painter's observation in the January-February newsletter, about dot varieties on stamps of Klondike Airways. All agree, their panes have the same dots as described by Mike. There were no reports of a pane without the dot varieties.

Dave York mentions having seen a vertical strip of 10 of the Yukon Airways stamp with the "2" in the lower part of "C" in CENTS variety. But in the strip that he saw, the variety appeared in both the fourth and ninth stamps in the pane. (The '85 Report states that stamp 9 is a constant variety, but doesn't mention anything about stamp 4.) Dave wonders if the Yukon pane was produced from two impressions of five stamps.

Donald Cox, of Australia, tells us he had some enlarged photos (which he sent to another study group member) of the Yukon "ArRWAYS" variety and the "2" in "C" of CENTS. He had never seen these illustrated before. Also included in the photos, Don says, was an unrecorded variety: Dot between "N" of YUKON and "R" of EXPLORATION. He noted that this also shows a partial doubling of letters.

We'll try to locate and borrow Don's illustrations for a future issue of the newsletter.

CSDA SHOW IN TORONTO

The first Canadian Stamp Dealers' Association stamp show and exhibition will take place this year on June 17-19 in Toronto, at the Sheraton Centre, 123 Queen Street West, in conjunction with the American Topical Association Convention (TOPEX '88).

June is a lovely time of year to visit Toronto. I plan to be there. In addition to the CSDA show, several local auctions are scheduled for the week as well.

I welcome the opportunity to meet members of our air mail group who will be in Toronto. Study group member John Jamieson, of Saskatoon Stamp Centre, will have a booth at the show. I'm sure that John would also be happy to meet members of the group. When you stop by his booth, tell him you'd like to meet the study group people. Perhaps we could chat over coffee at the show's concession or lounge area.

Incidentally, it was good to see the nice folks of Saskatoon Stamp Centre and their success story featured in the April 30 issue of The Stamp Wholesaler.

Complimentary show passes, worth \$3 each admission, are enclosed with this newsletter.

Looking forward to seeing some of you at the show ...

—Bob Marcello

WORLD WAR II VINTAGE

The sergeant was instructing the new paratrooper before his first jump: "Count to 10 and pull the first rip cord. If it doesn't work, pull the second rip cord for the auxiliary 'chute. After you land, a truck will pick you up."

The paratrooper jumped, counted 10 and pulled the first cord. Nothing happened. He pulled the second cord, and nothing happened. Plummeling toward the landing area, he muttered to himself, "I bet that damn truck won't be there either."