

The Pilot's Log

Newsletter of the BNAPS Air Mail Study Group

Volume 17 – Number 3

October 2024



Annual Day of Aerophilately in Toronto - Sunday November 3rd

This will be a joint meeting of the BNAPS AMSG and the CANADIAN AEROPHILATELIC SOCIETY. There will be an in-person meeting at the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, 10 Summerhill Avenue, Toronto, from 11.15 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

The first part of the meeting from 11.15 to 1.00 PM will be broadcast on Zoom. – It will feature a presentation by Marc Castel about his research into the 1927 London to London flight and the CLP6 semi-official stamp.

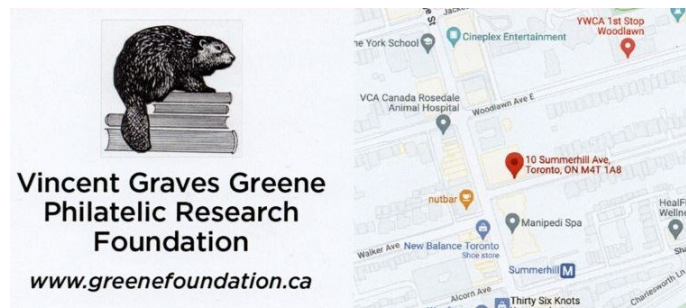
The live meeting will continue with lunch on Yonge Street, followed by an open frame session at the VGGF when people can put up exhibits and other material to look at and discuss, and also buy and sell items.

The Zoom link will be

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85014419917?pwd=K9T8r4twliuYMio13NL79SXYQbknnL1>

For more information, contact: hargreavescp@sympatico.ca

The Canadian Aerophilatic Society is offering a free one year membership to new members who receive their journal by email: to join just send your address to bjnepean@trytel.com



The VGGF library will be open from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on Sunday November 3rd.

For more information about the library and its terrific collection see

<https://www.greenefoundation.ca/library> or contact Natalie at 416 921 2073

COMMEMORATING THE CENTENARY OF LAURENTIDE AIR SERVICE LIMITED AND CANADA'S FIRST SEMI-OFFICIAL AIR MAIL STAMP



The occurrence of gold in the Rouyn Lake area of Quebec had been known for many years, but it occurs as flakes embedded in quartzite rock. Extracting the gold from the quartzite is a challenging process which requires heavy equipment to mine and crush the rock, so that the gold can be dissolved out using cyanide. The challenge for prospectors was to find gold in sufficient concentration that it would be economically viable to develop a mine and processing plant.

In 1922 Edmund Horne discovered a high-grade gold deposit in the Rouyn Lake area, but reaching the deposit from the closest station at Angliers involved a two-day trip by water, involving four boats and several portages.

In 1924 mine developers asked Laurentide Air Service Limited to provide an alternative method of transportation, and the company inaugurated Canada's first scheduled air service. The service was operated by three Curtiss HS2L flying boats, which had originally been built for antisubmarine patrols on the East Coast in World War I, and could carry a crew of two and three passengers. The aircraft were cheap and rugged, though difficult to fly.

Flights were initially made between Angliers and Rouyn Lake, but the water at Angliers was often obstructed by logs and debris from forest fires, so the base was moved to Haileybury.

The flight from Haileybury to Rouyn took one hour, and the fare was \$60 – equivalent to about \$1,000 today. However, the service was economically marginal, as there was a lot of freight to be flown in to the mines, but very little to be flown out. (By the end of 1924 some 51,000 pounds of freight had been carried into the goldfields, but only 2,000 pounds was carried out on the return trips.)

To generate more revenue, Laurentide asked the Post Office for permission to charge for mail that it was currently carrying to and from Rouyn on a courtesy basis.

The Post Office allowed the service to operate on a “semi-official” basis. – Laurentide was allowed to issue stickers to show that payment had been made. These stickers were issued under the regulations governing charity labels: they were not allowed to show a value, and were supposed to be placed on the back of the envelope so that they were not confused with regular postage stamps. The stickers were sold at some post offices, but the Post Office Department did not accept responsibility for delivery of the mail after it was handed over to the airline.

The air mail service evolved slowly. Post Office permission was granted on August 9th 1924. 200 “stickers” were ordered, and produced as 25 booklets, each containing four panes of two stamps. The stickers came out on August 30th, and the first recorded use was on September 10th 1924.

However, in 1924 there was great public interest in gold mining, aviation, and philately. The *Montreal Gazette* ran a news story about Rouyn Lake each day, and when it reported that Rouyn had an airmail service, there was a great demand from philatelists for the semi-official stamps, and for covers flown on the flights. This demand took Laurentide by surprise, and led to further printings and a new design. By the end of the year 9,080 stamps been printed.

For BNAPEX 2024 in Kingston, Dave Bartlet produced souvenir covers commemorating

- The 351st anniversary of Count Frontenac meeting the Haudenosaunee at the future site of Kingston
- The 100th anniversary of the RCAF.
- The 100th anniversary of Laurentide inaugurating the first Canadian airmail service, and of it issuing Canada’s first semi-official airmail stamp..



A few of these covers are still available:

- **Laurentide and Semi-Official 100th Anniversary pair of covers - \$15**
- **RCAF Cover with single stamp \$3 or a pair of stamps \$5**
- **Kingston City Hall with RMC Overprint - \$3**

Single overprinted stamps, and a sheet of the RCAF overprinted stamps, can also be purchased.

Orders should be sent to Dave Bartlet at dave.bartlet@shaw.ca

The stickers and proofs used on the Laurentide Centenary covers were originally produced for the 50th anniversary of Laurentide Air Service Limited in 1974. Many thanks to ESJ van Dam

<https://www.canadarevenuestamps.com/> and to Lee Stamp Sales <https://www.leesales.ca/> for donating the labels to BNAPS and the CAS for use on these covers.



The Curtiss HS2L *La Vigilance* is a stunning exhibit in the Canada Aviation and Science Museum in Ottawa. It had crashed on September 2, 1922 into Foss Lake, Ontario, where it remained until 1967, when Donald Campbell of Kapuskasing reported the location of the wreck at the bottom of the lake. The hull, along with metal parts and fittings from the aircraft, was retrieved by the Museum during a salvage operation between 1968 and 1969. The original hull was preserved separately and is displayed next to the reconstructed aircraft, which was built using parts from three different HS-2Ls. Restoration of this HS-2L lasted from 1970 until 1986, making it the largest and longest restoration project the Museum has undertaken. However, *La Vigilance* did not carry mail for Laurentide.

The AMSG is operating on a cyber-only basis, so no membership dues are required.

We aim to hold three meetings per year:

- A Zoom meeting jointly with the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society on the first Sunday in February
- An in-person meeting at BNAPEX
- A hybrid in-person and Zoom meeting jointly with the CAS on the first Sunday in November

Anybody who would like to be added to the AMSG email/membership list should just send their email and postal address to the editor, Chris Hargreaves, at hargreavescp@sympatico.ca

BNAPEX 2025
Vernon, BC



Bourse with dealers from across Canada

BNAPS Study Group Meetings

Dinner at Gray Monk

Day Trips for Guests

Past Presidents' Reception

Awards Banquet

Host Hotel: Prestige Vernon Lodge Conference Centre

Resv. 250 - 545 - 3385 reservation code: BNAPS