



## BNAPS AIR MAIL STUDY GROUP

VOLUME 9 - NUMBER 3

DECEMBER 2001

### BNAPEX 2001:

After returning from the BNAPS meeting at Ottawa I put some thoughts on paper so that I would not lose my train of thought and so that I might be able to help you see some of the things I saw.

First is the fact that the organizing committee had done a wonderful job of getting the word out to the membership. There were 228, or thereabouts, in attendance and this included 37 dealers who are always the backbone of such affairs. Kudos to Doug Lingard and his associates.

Second is the matter of our Air Mail Study Group meeting chaired by George Dresser in the absence of Ed Christman. We had a short meeting to discuss some minor details, but it was agreed that we should keep on doing what we have been doing. This is a group for the members and the editor welcomes any and all suggestions and submissions.

Third, we had a chance to meet and talk with Dick MacIntosh who put several sections of the new AAMS "Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland" together. Dick explained the thinking behind the inclusion of certain items and admitted that there are some revisions needed. Any time a new catalog is published there are bound to be up-dates and added information to be included. We all erred in not sending this information to Dick when the committee under Dick Malott asked us to help.

We are very fortunate that AAMS spent their money to print our new bible and to allow the expansion to over 500 pages and include many new sections not previously included. We thank Dick MacIntosh for the bravery in coming to our meeting, a relatively new member, and standing up for his work. As a matter of fact, the catalog is available and I would hope all members now own their own copy. If not, please let me help you to obtain this monumental work.

Fourth, is the list of members who attended plus a very well known collector of Canada, Nelson Bentley. Listed below are those who attended and the (P) after their names shows that they paid for next year while they still had money that the dealers were looking for.

Alastair Bain	Basil Burrell	Taras Cheberiak (P)
George Dresser	Murray Heifetz (P)	Dick Malott
Dick MacIntosh	Bill Robinson (P)	Brian Wolfenden
Graham Cooper (P)		

Fifth, is the matter of the exhibits that are of note for Air Mail:

Gold	Canadian Air Mail Interrupted Flown Covers 1918 to 1984	Dick Malott
Gold	The SCADTA Air Mail system Canada - Columbia	Ray Simrak
Silver	Newfoundland Air Mail, 1919 - 1949	Dick MacIntosh
Silver	Semi-Official Air Mail Carriers & Their Precursors	Fred Dietz
Bronze	Commercial Airways Limited	A.S. Bain
Bronze	Aerophilately of B.N.A.	Chris Hargreaves

These 28 frames out of 250 used gives the Air Mail area about 11% of the total exhibition. A very fair percentage when one considers all the various interest groups. Bas Burrell

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## PILOT SIGNATURE;

In the August 2001 issue of the Air Mail Study Group Newsletter, page 22, there were a couple of signatures shown for pilot HATTON. One was shown as "H.Hatton" and the other as "V.J. Hatton". This item brought a question from Mike Painter who wondered if we knew the names that the V.J. stood for.

I looked in all my books and asked others at Ottawa, including Dick Malott, but there was a blank. The name "Shorty" was the only name anywhere in the books.

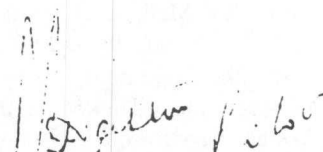
In a recent letter from Mike he said he had casually mentioned the problem to his daughter who works with computer graphics. She said maybe she could find it on the Internet. Mike scoffed a bit and said GO!

His daughter, with the specifics he had given her, found in 18 seconds that "Shorty" Hatton was in fact, "Victor John Hatton"

Score one for the Internet !



H. Hatton



## NEWFOUNDLAND ESSAY

The latest issue of the CAM carried the following article which further illustrates the confusion that was caused by Roessler and his antics. The article by Bonnie & Roger Riga appeared in Scott Stamp Monthly for June 2001. The Rigas attend many stamp shows and carry the cinderellas that abound throughout the philatelic world.

# Fabricating an Airmail Essay for Newfoundland

Scott Stamp Monthly June 2001

▼ BONNIE & ROGER RIGA

Fans of cinderella philately love their rogues, and A.C. Roessler — as such a rogue — has a lot to answer for to the philatelic world.

Roessler, of East Orange, N.J., put many items on the market with doubtful and deceptive provenance. All sorts of spurious issues from many imaginative sites can be traced back to Roessler's fertile and slightly dishonest mind.

Perhaps that is why collectors today, nearly 50 years after his death, are eager buyers of his products, including the bogus airmail essay for Newfoundland pictured here.

In 1922, Newfoundland commissioned an engraved airmail stamp essay, which was printed by the company of De La Rue in shades of

red brown (imperforate), or in sepia with black or sepia with blue (perforated 14 by 13%).

In 1931, Roessler offered an embossed lithographed stamp for sale in ads worded to promote the impression that it was the De La Rue essay. It has a red-brown center surrounded by a dark-green frame. Apparently perforated 11, the bogus stamp is in fact die cut to produce what resembles a perforated edge. This is easily seen since the seeming perforations have printed green edges.

Because the separations for this cinderella are created in the embossing and cutting operation, there can be no attached multiples. Offered in 1931 at 50¢ each, these stamps are now sought by collectors of aviation topics, as well as collectors of Canada and those who enjoy the darker side of bogus philately.

They also bring prices considerably higher

than what Roessler asked. That would certainly make the rogue very happy. ▼



A bogus Newfoundland airmail essay, created by philatelic scoundrel A.C. Roessler, bears die-cut edges resembling perforations.

**NORTHERN AIR SERVICE, LIMITED:**

This company issued only one stamp which was first used on the mailed covers June 27, 1925. Flight was Haileybury to Rouyn. The stamps were printed in sheets of 20 (5 x 4) from a plate of 10 stamps (5 x 2) with a wide margin in the center of the sheet. The stamps were also issued in booklets.

There is one variety which is a dot in the monogram, left center in all of the top row of stamps. Stamps at left edge are imperf.

**UNITRADE  
(SCOTT)**

CL5 25¢, blue  
CL5a tete-beche pair  
CL5b blue dot left in mono  
CL5c t-b pr, one w/dot  
CL5d booklet, 2 panes 4  
CL5e pane of 4, 2 top stamps with dot

**DAMES  
1995**

S05

S05a

S05d

S05b

S05c

**DAMES  
1982**

5

5b

5a

**SANABRIA  
1995**

S9

S9a

S9c

S9e

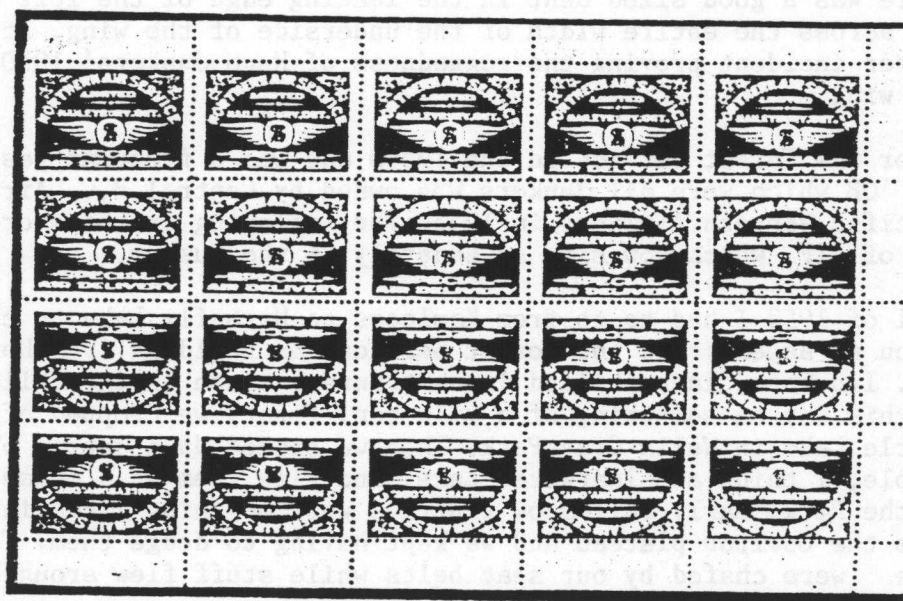
Sheet of 20

S9b

Book pane of 4

S9d

Richardson says that the dot was on top row of stamps. Tell me how we get tete-beche pr with dot on one of them when looking at the full sheet. Please someone let us know where the dot is.



● Fig. 1. Northern Air Service, Full Sheet of 20

## MOMENTS IN THE LIFE OF A BUSH PLANE by Mike Painter

The Canadian Airways Ltd. semi-official stamps, Unitrade CL51 & CL52, have an illustration of a Junkers W33 plane registered as CF-AQW. There were nine of these Junkers W33/34 (the 34 indicated a radial engine and the 33 indicated the original liquid cooled engine) registered in Canada. If you have an opportunity to visit the Canada Aviation Museum in Rockcliffe, Ottawa, you will find among the exhibits the only surviving member of the nine, CF-ATF. From 1931 to 1961 'TF carried airmail and everything else, mainly for Canadian Airways Ltd., Canadian Pacific Airlines and Pacific Western Airlines. In 1961 she was bought from the final owner, Pacific Wings Ltd, and donated to the Museum through the generosity of the Richardson family whose forebear, James Richardson, had founded Canadian Airways Ltd. 'TF had 12,209 hours in the log and of the nine, only 'QW with 14,048.5 hours exceeded it.

This article has a rather tenuous connection to stamps and airmail, but aerophilatelists seem interested in collateral material so I'm passing on these anecdotes about 'TF since they are glimpses of the working life of the bush aircraft that carried so much airmail into remote parts of Canada.

Stamp 33 of what I'm pretty sure is the lower right pane of the Canadian Airways semi-officials has a blue blob below the plane's tail and this constant flaw is generally known as the "tree under the tail" (see sketch at right). This leads nicely into a story about 'TF that Harry Bray, former Chief Pilot of Pacific Western Airlines, told me. Harry was making a drop on a forest fire in the Kamloops district of B.C. in the 1950s. As he tells it he was somewhat preoccupied with a difficult approach through a lot of smoke into rugged terrain. He had slid back the side window of the cockpit to clear smoke that had got into the cabin. Suddenly the top of a large smouldering snag appeared right in front of him. Harry yanked 'TF up but in a split second there was a loud bang and a severe jar. The window slammed shut on Harry's hand, further preoccupying him, but he got 'TF under control and back to base. Nursing a very sore hand, he got out to inspect the damage. There was a good sized dent in the leading edge of the left wing and a sooty scratch across the entire width of the underside of the wing. It just became yet another incident proving the ruggedness of Hugo Junkers' 1910 design of this type of wing.



I worked for the Forest Service in the 1950s and was a frequent passenger in 'TF, 'QW and 'QB which were all Junkers W34 owned by Central B.C. Airways which became Pacific Western Airlines in 1953. The following is the story of a day in the life of 'TF, which now sits so sedately in the Museum.

In the fall of 1953 I had to go from Kamloops to Horsefly Lake to check something out on an access road the Forest Service was building from Horsefly to Quesnel Lake. Ian Watt, later killed in a Stranraer crash in the Chilcotin, was flying 'TF this day on something of a milk run. First, we dropped off some supplies at Murtle Lake in Wells Gray Park. Then we picked up a couple of Wildlife Branch people, I think at Clearwater Lake, and flew them on a moose count to the west of the Park. Early fall snow flurries were marching like giant sailing ships across the Caribou plateau and we kept having to dodge them. The air was lumpy and we were chafed by our seat belts while stuff flew around the cockpit.

We dropped the biologists off, at Mahood Falls I think, then Ian and I

headed for Horsefly Lake. The weather thickened and two or three times we had to land to sit out snow squalls. In one little lake we sideslipped in and there was quite a thud as we landed. Bits of wood in our wake suggested we'd hit a submerged log. Noon came and went and we were still a long way from the lunch we'd planned to have at Horsefly. Ian's stomach was acting up and his Tums had bounced out of his shirt pocket and disappeared somewhere under the rudder pedals when we hit the sunken log. Then Ian remembered that he'd thrown some bits of smoked salmon into the rear compartment when he'd been in Prince Rupert a week or so earlier. He got out on the pontoon and retrieved it and we ate it even though it had got tangled up with chamois used for straining gas. It actually tasted not too bad, but it didn't help Ian's stomach.

We finally made it to Horsefly and Ian waited while I took care of the road work. Just as we were ready to head back to Kamloops we got a radio message to pick up fire equipment at Williams Lake so we set off there. The equipment turned out to be two Wajax pumps, a whole bunch of wet hose, shovels, axes, pulaskis and blankets. We filled the right front seat where I'd been sitting with blankets, put the two pumps on the floor, stacked the tools around them, heaved the fire hose on top and covered it with more blankets. I was just able to worm my way through the door and up onto the layer of blankets. I lay there with my nose just inches from the cabin ceiling. There was no seat belt, of course, but I had nowhere to be thrown around anyway. Ian closed the door on me and I found I could see out of the top two or three inches of the window. It afforded a limited view of a pontoon pretty much awash.

We started up and headed down the lake. 'TF roared mightily but I could still see water washing over the top of the pontoon. After using up all of the four miles of Bill's Puddle we were still nowhere near on the step. Ian tried it back the other way but it was even more hopeless downwind. We tied up and unloaded a bunch of stuff. Ian figured weights and was puzzled. Sure we were several hundred pounds overweight, but the Junkers would normally claw its way into the sky with the load we'd had. Then we found we had two compartments of one pontoon full of water. We'd split it when we hit the log. All we could do now was unload some more stuff to compensate. By the time we'd done this we were too late to beat the curfew into Kamloops. It was already getting dark.

We secured 'TF and the local ranger took us in search of a place to spend the night. It was late, the town was full of hunters and other travellers, and we spent quite a while going from one full motel to another. At last we found what seemed to be the last vacant room in one of the roughest hotels. It had a single cot with a large hole burned in the middle of the mattress. We surveyed it gloomily and decided we needed a beer. But just as we were about to open the door to the beerparlour downstairs, we were nearly bowled over as a battle between several cowboys and Indians spilled into the street. Through the door we could see some of the contest was still going on inside. So we gave up and had a greasy hamburger in the flyspecked hotel cafe. Then we found Ian some Tums and retired to our room where we took turns sleeping on the one man cot.

It was a long day.

#### E-MAIL:

It is true, although I find it hard to believe myself, your editor has gone to the computer for communication worldwide at a reduced cost per missive. My address is at the bottom of page 1 of this issue. I'll be glad to hear when you have the urge.

**THE POSTMARK:**

In February 1954 the official publication of Canada Post. "The Postmark" published the following article on a flight in 1921. This it will be remembered is before any of the Semi-Official airlines got off the ground. We also have to remember that the story is for the personnel of Canada Post. Mainly it is devoted to promotions, births and deaths. It does tend to give a good insight to air mail.

# MAIL FLOWN SOUTH—1921

*(From facts supplied by  
Philip H. Godsell, F.R.G.S.)*

WHILE most of us know that official air mail service to the north dates from 1929, how many realize that perhaps the first mail to travel by air in the Canadian northwest was flown from the wilderness to civilization in 1921?

"The Postmark" is indebted to the celebrated Arctic Explorer and author, Philip H. Godsell, F.R.G.S., F.R.E.S., and to Public Relations Officer A. Kirkby, Calgary, for the story of the trip, and for clippings from the Calgary Herald of May 5 of the story of the circumstances which led to this epochal innovation in the history of the northland.

Mr. Godsell states that up to 1921 the mail from Edmonton to Fort McMurray, 300 miles distant—was handled by a courier, Mickey Ryan who operated a flanged wheel Ford in summer, and sometimes a dog team in winter.

From Fort McMurray 1,400 miles north to Fort McPherson on the Mackenzie the contract was then in the hands of the Northern Trading Company whose headquarters were in Edmonton and which operated a line of trading posts in competition with the Hudson Bay Company, from Fort Fitzgerald to the Arctic.

The mail in those days was carried both by the Hudson Bay Company's craft and the Northern Traders in the summer, and by dog team from Fort McMurray in the winter.

After Mr. Godsell had established Aklavik at the mouth of the Mackenzie River in 1923 the mail run was extended to that point.

"I remember" says Mr. Godsell, "when I first joined the Hudson Bay Company in 1906 we used to get two mails a year in outlying places

like Fort Severn on the Hudson Bay and Trout Lake House. The mail was carried by packet, i.e. Indian-manned canoe in the summer and by dog team in the winter. As far as I can recall the postal service only extended as far as the H.B.C. headquarters at Norway House at the head of Lake Winnipeg where there was an official Post Office. From there northward and eastward it went by Hudson Bay Company packet—the same applying to Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario as well.

Only first class mail was carried by dog-team in winter, newspapers and other second and third class mail piling up till the open water appeared, when it came in by river steamers.

## *The Thunderbird Arrives*

And so, with this background of early mail service in the wilderness, we will turn to March, 1921 when Mr. Godsell was a Hudson Bay Company Inspector at Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie River, 700 miles from McMurray, when the mail flight took place. The following article is composed of extracts from his story which appeared in the Calgary Herald.

"It was late in March 1921 when I returned from Fort Good Hope (1,160 miles north of McMurray) after an inspection of Company posts along the Mackenzie River and my Chipewyan-Cree guide, John Robillard drove my dog-drawn carriage into the snow-filled courtyard of Fort Simpson, N.W.T.

"Word had reached us that Sergt. 'Nitchie' Thorne of the local R.C.M.P. detachment had delivered his prisoner, Albert Lebeaux accused of murdering his squaw, to Inspector Fletcher at Fort Fitzgerald and had gone south to Edmonton by dog-team. There would be no chance

for him to return with mail until July when ice would have cleared from Great Slave Lake. We settled down for a long and tiresome wait.

Royal Mail Leaving Fort McMurray on 2,000 mile trip down the Slave and Mackenzie Rivers to Fort McPherson.

(Photo, P. H. Godsell, Copyright)



"A couple of days later there rose a sudden outburst of excited cries and into the trading store rushed a crowd of frightened Indians.

"The Thunder Bird! the 'Thunder Bird! they cried . . .

"We spilled out into the courtyard.

"The Thunderbird" cried another frightened Indian pointing with trembling finger towards the sky.

"There to our amazement were two glittering planes circling overhead. Not a soul in Fort Simpson had ever seen an airplane. . . .

"As the Junkers zoomed down from the skies dark figures tumbled from Indian cabins. Here, indeed, was the awesome Thunderbird in person, the holy bird that sits aloft on the highest mountains hatching the lightning and making thunder with the drumming of his wings. Yes, here it was, roaring down menacingly, its huge eyes flashing in the sunlight!

"With a hoarse croak of fear old Chippesaw, the medicine man, plunged into his cabin, snatched up a muzzle-loader and dashed outside just in time to take a potshot at the foremost plane ere it straightened and swerved towards him. Throwing away his gun he dashed headlong for the protecting woods followed by other Indians.

"Gliding over the roofs of the Mission building the foremost Junker alighted gracefully. The skis commenced to skim the drifted sur-

face. The weight settled down upon them. For a brief moment the plane rocked as though tossed on billowing waves, then sprawled forward, swayed from side to side and nose dived into the drifts. There was a sound of rending metal accompanied by a cascade of glittering crystals. Then the door flew open and three kicking sprawling humans landed head first on the snow. To the utter amazement of us all there emerged the surprised face and lanky form of Sergeant Thorne.

### *Plane Badly Damaged*

"The other machine, piloted by Elmer Fullerton, alighted without mishap. Captain Gorman, pilot of the first plane, staggered to the damaged machine where examination showed that the prop was completely shattered, the under-carriage wrecked and the wing-tip damaged.

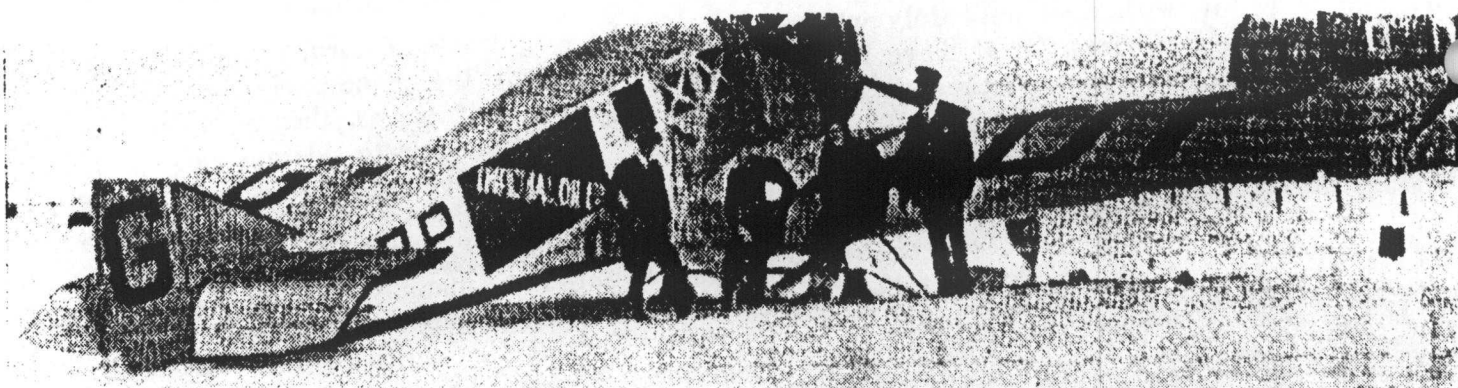
"Back at my headquarters we learned from Gorman the circumstances that had led to the Sergeant's serio-comic turn. The previous summer Theo Link had located the 'Discovery Well' on Bear Island, 50 miles below Fort Norman. To anticipate the rush of stakers expected to overrun the region at open water, Charlie Taylor, Manager of the Imperial Oil Ltd., at Edmonton, had persuaded his head office to purchase these two planes.

"Engaged to pilot the two 175 h.p. all-metal Junkers from New York to Edmonton, the late W. R. "Wop" May and Capt. Gorman en-trained for New York in January 1921 to wing their way across a continent in a tough cold flight. May's machine bore the Canadian registration G-CADP and Gorman's G-CADQ.

"Gorman was forced down at Brandon through poor visibility where his craft was damaged sufficiently to delay him for several weeks. 'Wop' May reached Edmonton through terrible weather at nightfall on January 5, 1921. Here he severed his connection with the enterprise to carry on an airplane venture of his own

and Elmer G. Fullerton was engaged in his place with William Hill as mechanic.

"The machines were flown North to Peace River Crossing where a landing site, hangar and living quarters were established and an advance fuel cache established at Hay River post. All was now ready for the projected flight to Fort Norman. It was at this point that Sergeant Thorne, having completed his eight-week's



(Photo, Courtesy P. H. Godsell, F.R.G.S., Copyright)

**AFTER THE CRACK UP**—Pilot Fullerton examines damaged plane at Fort Simpson, prior to the epic flight with the sleigh-board "prop".

dog-team trek from Fort Simpson, ran across Captain Gorman in Edmonton and gave him information on ice conditions and prospective landing places. Then the thought occurred to Thorne that to return home in eight hours over a route that ordinarily took eight weeks by snowshoe and dog-team would be accomplishing something unusual and spectacular.

"The deal was closed and Sergt. Thorne proceeded north in the cockpit beside Gorman.

### **"Propeller Shivered"**

"With the DQ out of commission it was decided that Fullerton with Waddell and Hill should complete the 350-mile journey to Fort Norman the following day. Since, however, Fullerton's plane had developed engine trouble his propeller, and one of the skis were fitted to the damaged plane and the wing tip straightened. Next morning when Gorman proceeded to 'take off' the machine rocked, and nose dived and this propeller, too, was shivered to atoms.

"Here they were marooned in the wilderness with not a chance to get out until the river steamer called in July—there were no radios in those days—and dog-team travel was out of the question as the ice was getting bad.

"Around the company's mess stove that evening the airplanes became the sole topic of our conversation, the rather doubtful performance of the machines having convinced the Hudson Bay Company men that you couldn't beat the time-worn canoe and dog-team. To these Northerners an airplane was just another of those contraptions that had no place in the North. The fact that Thorne had actually accomplished an eight-week's soul-searing trip in just eight hours now meant exactly nothing now, since the party was marooned by the failure of its machines.

There was one dissenting voice, however, that of Walter Johnson, general handyman about

the post in winter and engineer aboard the diminutive steamer 'Liard River' in summer, who years before had been an expert cabinet-maker.

"Wouldn't it be possible to make another propeller?" I suggested.

"I don't think that it would be too hard," Mr. Johnson replied.

Though Fred Camsell and Elmer Fullerton laughed at Johnson's naivete, Walt retorted, "I've never yet seen a woodwork job that stumped me!"

"Next morning at the scene of the crack-up Walter examined the broken 'props' minutely. Each propeller was composed of nine laminated strips of black walnut glued into a solid block, cut to shape by the most accurate machinery, and tipped off with copper.

"I believe I could make one if I only had the right kind of wood," Walter declared.

"Well, how about using those oak sleigh boards I had shipped in here last summer?" I asked.

### **A Home-Made "Prop"**

"So, with a few steamer-clamps, an auger, a ship's adze, chisels, planes and crooked knives, Walter went to work on the propeller. Day by day he sawed and chipped at the boards. With Hill's assistance tin templates were cut to shape, one unbroken blade serving as guide. Moose hides were put in a caldron and boiled into serviceable glue. Gradually the home-made 'prop' took shape and regulation form. But when completed would it stand the terrific strain—would it drive a 2-ton machine through the air at the required 90 miles an hour to keep it flying?

### **Time Would Tell**

"Meanwhile Fullerton, Derbyshire and Waddell had overhauled the motor and repaired the

damaged skis. On April 15th Fullerton adjusted the scarlet painted, moose-glued sleigh-board prop to G-CADP, climbed into the cockpit and opened the throttle. With a grim nod he signalled us to cast off. The engine barked out in full staccatto. Nervously we watched it roar away. For nearly an hour Fullerton put the ship through her paces. At last the Junker circled and skimmed to a landing. The new prop had responded as though turned out on a factory lathe.

"Though I had repeatedly warned Captain Gorman that the Indians reported an early break-up of the Liard, it was not until eight days had elapsed that preparations were ready for the take-off to Peace River Crossing, 400 miles southwest. Meanwhile the ship had been staked out behind the Island where the Liard and Mackenzie meet. Their preparations completed, Gorman and Fullerton crawled into their blankets at the barracks for a good night's rest. At 5 a.m. we were awakened by an unholy racket downstairs—We found Henry Lafferty in a state of wild excitement. 'De Liard Ribber, she's goin' out!' he yelled. 'De water's risin' fast.'

"Ominous news indeed! When the Liard broke up and hurled its force against the still solid ice of the Mackenzie, it was one of the sights of the north, for it was no unusual thing for the river to rise 20 feet in 20 minutes.

### *A Desperate "Take-Off"*

"Tearing down to the barracks we awakened Gorman and his mechanics and hurried through the bush to see if the plane was still there. It was intact but only 400 feet of solid ice remained for the 'take off'. With desperate haste we piled the stuff aboard as Fullerton feverishly warmed up the engine. We could hear the roar of the ice thundering down towards us.

"Load's too heavy" said Fullerton starting to pitch the baggage ashore. 'I'll have to go alone. Bring the stuff to the little lake west of here. I'll be waiting'. The next moment he had given her the gun. It seemed as though she would never rise. She only cleared the ice barrier by inches. Her skis struck open water, sending the spray flying. Gorman groaned—a slip meant death.

"Beneath the ship surged thousands of tons of grinding, roaring ice. Suddenly she did commence to climb. We could see a thin line of sky between her and the rising mass of hurtling ice. At the foot of the bank where the ship had been resting a few minutes before now roared a mighty flood.



PHILIP H. GODSELL, F.R.G.S.  
Former Inspecting Officer H.B. Company

"Late that evening we ferried Gorman and two mechanics and Jack Cameron across in a canoe. Walter Johnson decided to accompany them to the little lake where Fullerton intended to land. Not until the next day did Walter and Cameron return. They found the plane at the appointed spot. The boys had piled aboard and the ship, with its whirring sleigh-board prop, had headed into the south-west.

"On July 5 the sternwheeler Mackenzie River chugged into Fort Simpson. Then for the first time we learned the outcome of the epic flight. The sleigh-board moose-glue prop had fulfilled Walter's brightest expectations. Four hours after leaving Fort Simpson, Fullerton had set his craft down safely on Bear Lake near Peace River.

"A few days later the Hudson Bay Company's head office in Winnipeg received the first Air Mail from the North which included my report of Walter's miraculous feat, mail which I had handed Gorman on the eve of his departure and which under ordinary circumstances would not have reached civilization until late in August."

**NUNAVUT:**

For those of us who remember Mackenzie and Keewatin Districts a new word has to be introduced, "NUNAVUT". while this article does not touch upon air mail, the thought is that there must be some kind of connection to air mail that would be very interesting. Does anyone have a story on flights in or out, town cancels, backstamps etc ?

Here is a chance to learn about the vast northland from the Wall Street Journal of January 5th, 2001. (Forwarded by Walt Hees)

## Frozen Fortune: Nunavut's Ice May Hide Precious-Metal Trove

By PETER A. MCKAY

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

RANKIN INLET, Nunavut—Flying by helicopter from this Canadian outpost to a nearby project run by the Australian drilling firm Western Mining Corp., the color white is everywhere.

It stretches far over the snowy, flat Arctic landscape to the horizon. Most of this frozen region, formerly part of Canada's Northwest Territories, is so rugged, the white is interrupted only by occasional, isolated huts—places virtually inaccessible until the brief summer, when the sun will shine all day and mosquitoes will grow immense.

But inside WMC's camp, geologists pore over cylindrical rock samples flecked with a different color that locals hope will be more vital to the region's future: gold.

In fact, Canadian government officials and analysts believe Nunavut has

huge reserves of various precious metals, including previously scarce platinum and palladium, as well as diamonds. If these reserves are mined commercially, it could have a considerable effect on world prices. But that is a big if, given that the Arctic conditions are so severe that NASA testers use parts of northern Nunavut to simulate conditions on Mars.

WMC officials believe they have found more than 400,000 ounces of gold at their site, dubbed Meliadine East; they also jointly operate a second 4.96 million-ounce Meliadine West project nearby with Cumberland Resources Ltd., of Vancouver. Those two firms have a lot of company, as such exploration projects have been ramping up in Nunavut (pronounced NOO-na-voot) after an almost 40-year layoff. Even the companies involved admit such undertakings are risky, both in terms of safety and the cost of mining some of the planet's most unforgiving terrain.

But with platinum and palladium prices soaring, and increasingly intricate "forward-selling" strategies by producers becoming more prevalent in the gold industry, mining firms and analysts say

market conditions may be ripe for Nunavut mines to start producing resources potentially worth billions. If that happens, analysts say the output could markedly swing world prices, particularly for scarce platinum and palladium; the latter recently topped \$960 an ounce, up 114% for the year.

The emerging Nunavut mines also could mean survival for another generation of the native Inuit tribe, which gained unprecedented regional autonomy from Canada last year. Locals hope the mines will bring badly needed jobs to stem unemployment rates around 70% in parts of Nunavut, as well as inflated suicide and alcoholism rates.

Conversely, some locals worry about further erosion of traditional culture. And although the Inuit have settled the issues of land rights and royalties to the regional government, it remains unclear how much individual residents will reap from any newfound prosperity.

Nunavut, which means "our land," was created on April 1, 1999—the first major

change to Canada's territorial map in about 50 years. It has only about 27,000 residents—85% of whom are Inuit—scattered over an area about twice the size of Alaska, stretching from the Manitoba border to an archipelago near the North Pole. Temperatures have hit 40 below this year, and wind chills 65 below.

The land has been known to be mineral-rich since at least the 1950s but is only beginning to be fully understood, Canadian government officials admit. The reason for such ignorance, officials say, was a combination of Nunavut's ruggedness, questions about mining rights, and low metal prices that made the region unattractive.

It is that last factor that analysts focus on in evaluating the region—and whether prices have risen enough to justify increased production now. Opinions are mixed, although no one doubts the presence of untapped deposits.

"This could definitely be a major find. I think they are going to come into production, eventually, because there's just not enough metal out there anywhere," said Jim Ryan, an independent analyst who has been closely following the development of Nunavut's main platinum and palladium project, owned by Starfield Resources of Vancouver.

Nunavut exported about \$225 million in zinc and lead last year, all of it from two mines owned separately by Cominco Ltd. and Breakwater Resources Ltd. If successful, the proposed new mining projects in Nunavut could dwarf the region's current mineral exports and provide a boon to the fledgling regional gov-



Thomas Angoshadluk



ernment, which stands to earn royalties of 5% to 14% on each producing mine's profits. Although the development projects are mostly by smaller producers so far, major mining firms such as DeBeers and Echo Bay Mines have also begun projects of their own.

### Exploration Boom

The number of mine exploration projects in the territory has swelled during the past five years to include five potential gold mines; a 10-mile-long deposit with as much as \$2.5 billion in platinum, palladium and other metals; and several possible diamond mines, including one thought to contain as much as three million carats of stones.

The techniques for exploring and mining Nunavut's difficult landscape can vary widely from project to project, since the territory is so vast. All projects scale back or shut down completely in the dead of winter. All use helicopters or local contractors with large all-terrain vehicles for their transportation over land, since there are only 12 miles of roads in all of Nunavut. Also, all companies rely to some extent on sometimes spotty satellite communication with their headquarters.

But projects in the south, such as the two Meliadine gold sites, have the "luxury" of a very brief summer, around late July or early August, in which temperatures hit a balmy 70 degrees or so and drilling takes off sharply. By contrast, the northern parts of the territory, where Cominco's Polaris mine is the biggest project, remain frigid virtually year-round but rely more heavily on water shipping via specially equipped ships, since that part of the territory is a series of islands.

David Christensen, global coordinator of metals research for Merrill Lynch & Co., said the economics of such projects can be tricky, though not impossible for mining firms to surmount even in the bear markets some metals are experienc-

ing. For example, he said many gold-exploration projects around the world would now need a gold price of about \$310 an ounce—about \$35 above the current price—to justify actual production.

By contrast, he said platinum and palladium deposits are so rare, any new one that is found stands a better chance of becoming a real mine.

"It's kind of the Holy Grail of the metals industry right now to find a world-class platinum-group metals deposit in North America," said Mr. Christensen, who wasn't familiar with the Starfield deposit in particular and doesn't believe it has yet caught industry watchers' attention as the long-awaited find.

Certainly, the bloated prices for platinum (about \$610 an ounce) and palladium have Starfield executives hopeful. "The size of this project is so large, most geologists just shake their heads," Starfield President Glen J. Indra said of his firm's Nunavut operation.

### Production Possibilities

The outlook isn't as sunny for projects mining gold and other metals whose prices have languished. Cumberland Resources, for example, acknowledges that gold may have to rise for their two Nunavut gold deposits, totaling seven million ounces, to come into production. Right now, the company estimates its cash costs to mine are \$200 an ounce.

But another solution could be for the company to just find more gold, says Kerry M. Curtis, Cumberland's senior vice president. If the firm's geologists find a larger deposit as they test the land farther down and outward, Mr. Curtis says Cumberland would have enough physical gold to sell forward to finance actual production, even at current low prices.

In Cumberland's studies of its projects' potential, geologists start their ratings of retrievable gold just three feet below the surface, close enough that, if the ground wasn't so frozen most of the year, novices with shovels could reach it.

And some do try just that. Still, many Inuit remain skeptical of the "southerners" who have come to mine.

At a recent mining conference, a government official explains the basics of mining, including the economics of metal markets and the legalities of staking a prospector's claim. He glowingly cites a hypothetical example in which a prospector sells a claim that eventually turns into a \$500 million mine. The prospector keeps a 2% commission and reaps a \$10 million personal windfall during the project's life.

Few Inuit stay through a short break after which the official explains how to apply for a prospector's license. Among the people who walk out is Thomas Angoshadluk, a 26-year-old student in a two-year business management program at nearby Arctic College.

"Ten million dollars is a lot of money," he says of the hypothetical claim. "But it's nothing compared to the guy who's making \$500 million on our land. That's a rip-off."

At least Mr. Angoshadluk showed up. His 30 classmates from Arctic College, who were all registered for the mining conference, didn't come the first day (though some came later). "People knew they were only going to talk about the good things about mining, and they didn't want to hear it," he said. The whole topic can get too heated as locals disagree about the benefits of the new mines, he says. "We were talking about mining in class last week, and the discussion got kind of ...."

Mr. Angoshadluk raised his eyebrows, pointed his thumbs up, his index fingers out, and shook them like recoiling pistols in a shoot-out.

## A LAST MINUTE INVITATION FOR AIR MAIL COLLECTORS:

Just as this issue was going to press the following letter came in and I hasten to pass it along as a piece of needed to know info.

**ROYAL \* 2002 \* ROYALE**

**THE 74TH NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION**

**OF THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF CANADA**

**HOSTED BY THE EDMONTON STAMP CLUB, AT THE**

**EURPOA CONFERENCE CENTRE, WEST EDMONTON MALL**

**MARCH 22 - 24, 2002**

**EXHIBITION THEME: "THE WORLD OF AIRMAILS"**

RPSC and Edmonton Stamp Club members are busy planning what is shaping up to be a tremendous weekend of events. "The World of Airmails" is being interpreted as widely as possible in order that airmails of the whole world are included. Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, the Canadian Aerophilatelic Society and also other specialist societies will be involved.

Two of the judges will be Canadian Aerophilatelic Society member Murray Heifetz and New Zealand's Keith Griffiths - both International Aerophilatelic Judges with FIP credentials. As of November 15 more than a dozen individuals had indicated their intentions to enter aerophilatelic exhibits, with the number of aerophilatelic frames approaching one hundred! The deadline for aerophilatelic entries is February 1 - all other entries by February 15.

Amongst the many exhibitors are several names no doubt familiar to the BNAPS membership - Nino Chioveli, Werner Helms, Dick Malott, Philip Parker, Mike Shand, Bill Topping. Exhibit topics receiving attention include New Zealand Airmails, Balloon Posts, Interrupted Covers, Yukon Airways, Aircraft on Stamps, German Catapults of 1929-1939, Zeppelins- the Portugal Connection, Columbia Airmails, Russian Airmails, and Canada's Experimental Prairie Airmails.

Activities planned include aerophilatelic seminars and displays, a raffle for a hot air balloon ride, and a commemorative flight. Aviation buffs can visit historic Blatchford Field Hangar (now part of the Fort Edmonton Complex), the Edmonton Aviation Heritage Museum, and Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame (located in the neighboring city of Wetaskiwin). And for a break from philatelic activities there's the main venue, West Edmonton Mall - the world's largest entertainment and shopping centre. Speaking of entertainment, even spouses won't want to miss this awards banquet!

To obtain further information contact:

John Powell, Exhibits Chairman  
P.O. Box 399, Edmonton, AB T5J 2J6  
mpowell3@attglobal.net  
OR: Allan Meech, Show Chairman  
ameech@telusplanet.net

#### NEW VARIATIONS ON BC AIRWAYS?:

One of our correspondents has forwarded me a scan of a block of 12, upper right corner of the sheet, of British Columbia Airways, Ltd. With a couple of odd variations that I have never seen or heard of before. The reason is that he has not seen them before and asks if perhaps they are a true variation of just a blob of ink or cracked plate.

The first is in stamp position 8 and  
Consists of a line in the rounded  
Part of the "R", as shown.

line in R

R ←

pos. 8



The second is in stamp position 18  
And consists of a white dot in the  
Space at the bottom of the "S" of  
CENTS.



*Wishing you a Beautiful Holiday Season  
and a New Year of Peace and Happiness*