



THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

*The British North America
Philatelic Society
Dead Letter Office
Study Group
Newsletter*

Sep - Dec 2011

Issue 8

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BNAPS Conventions Ahead

This year's meeting was a quiet affair as many members could not make the convention in North Bay, and some that did attend got tied up in other matters at the convention.

The next convention in 2012 will be in Calgary, 2013 in Charlottetown, and 2014 in Baltimore. Calgary and Charlottetown should be well attended shows.

On another note Ken Lemke won the Best Newsletter Award for the King George VI Study group. Beginning this year, study group newsletters will only be reviewed on a total basis for all issues within the previous year. A minimum of three issues are required for entry.

We hope that everyone had a prosperous philatelic year in 2011 and that 2012 is as good or better.

Chairman's Desk

Another year has passed, a year in which our DLO Study Group has begun to find new members. Furthermore, it has been a year that has seen an increase in collector interest in Dead and Undeliverable Mail. Gary and I have both noticed an increase in questions relating to this type of material, and a move away from 'back of the book' status to a more mainstream placement. We hope this trend continues. New material continues to be found, as Gary's article implies, and as recently as mid-December, a new, and hitherto unknown marking from the UMO in Montreal has surfaced. The field is fertile and I am sure that 2012 will bring many new finds. I have close to 100 changes to my databases, and hope to have an update for posting by the end of June.

I hope that we may see one of two exhibits of our material at BNAPS in Calgary and that several of our members will be able to attend. I also remind people of the Edmonton Spring Show and Royal 2012, also in Edmonton, both of which present national level exhibiting opportunities.

Now that the Christmas season has passed, Gary and I wish you all the best for the coming year.

*Article by
Brian Plain*



***The Canadian Dead Letter
Office Study Group***

The Canadian Dead Letter Office Study Group comes under the sponsorship of The British North American Philatelic Society (BNAPS)

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Editor's Comments

This will be the third edition of the Canadian Dead Letter Office Newsletter in 2011. As new members of the study group or BNAPS viewers scan older issues, we hope that it will peak some interest and allow for a gradual understanding of this fairly complex subject.

If broken down correctly, I believe that Dead and Undeliverable Mail Office material is relevant in part to many other postal history topics. Many people have written me and asked about a particular cover in their area, trying to interpret the whole story.

Certain collectors, historians and specialists gravitate to DLO/UMO covers as they have many facets and elements. Any accumulation of material beyond a basic collection allows one to participate in research and hopefully will encourage an article or two for the benefit of us all.

More questions keep materializing via such articles by Brian Plain in this issue on the direction of mail to the UMO. Myself, I had to dig through my own material and compare them to the ones in Brian's article.

Recent Auction & Sale Listings

A few individual items have appeared in auction catalogues lately, but nothing of any significance.

Ebay has more listings for DLO items, mostly US, Australian and Indian material. Canadian material is quite uncommon.

Usually the more common DLO handstamps are found on Mail Service Suspended covers. The Post Office usually used the same handstamps for every letter. Due to the destinations and suspensions of mail service involved, these covers fetch quite high dollar values.

Mail Directed to the Undeliverable Office

by Brian Plain

Regulation 375, shown in The Canada Official Postal Guide (1955) states “All mail, except newspapers, which for any cause remains undeliverable in any post office, or which cannot be forwarded to destination, or returned direct to the sender under postal regulations, is to be sent, not less frequently than once a month, to the Undeliverable Mail Office.”

Regulation 378 indicates “that the reason for the non-delivery of every article of mail must be stamped or written on the address side before sending it to the Undeliverable Mail Office.” It should also be date stamped with the date of return by the post office returning it to the Undeliverable Mail office.”

Regulation 383 indicates that “Postmasters must exercise the greatest care in seeing that no article of dead mail is detained beyond the proper time.”

To facilitate the direction of such mail to the Undeliverable Mail Office (UMO), it appears as though post offices were issued with a bilingual hand stamp that reads UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE / BUREAU DES REBUTS. Recently, proofs of this type of marking have come to light that show that there were different times of manufacture and different printing dates. [See bottom of this article]

Figure 1, provided to me by Doug Watson of Victoria, shows a sheet of proof strikes that was struck using handstamps available for use in the post office at Maidstone Saskatchewan in 1976. The above handstamp is seen vertically near the left centre of the image.

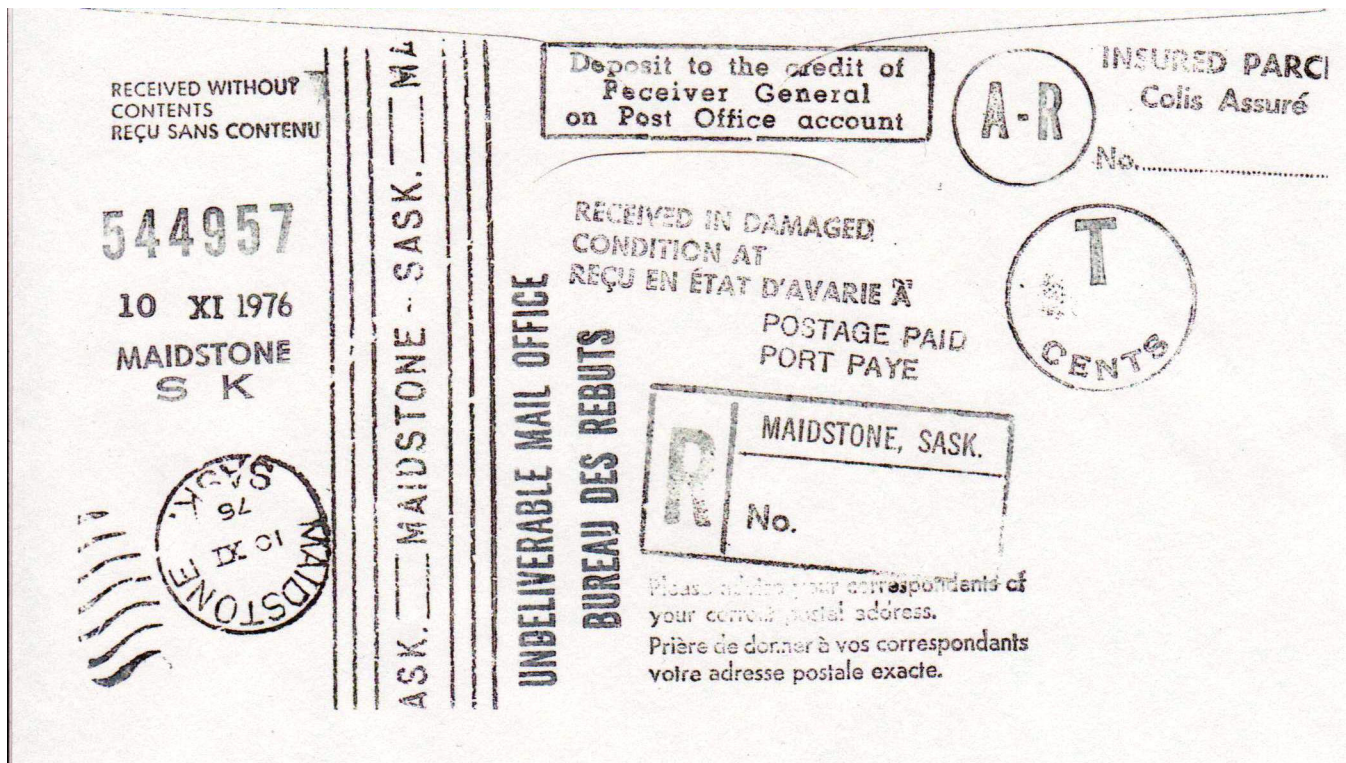


Figure 1.

THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

Figure 2 shows a cover mail at Wolfville, Nova Scotia on November 17, 1966. Addressed to CFB Cold Lake Alberta, it failed of delivery as the addressee had moved and left no forwarding address. The handstamp was applied directing the letter to the UMO and the cover was date stamped at Medley on November 24th.



Figure 2.

Figure 3 also shows the use of the handstamp however the postmaster at Nakusp did not apply a gateway marking stating the reason for non-delivery, assuming that the complete absence of an address was obvious. The letter was date stamped at Nakusp on June 1, 1963 and arrived at the UMO in Vancouver on June 12th.



Figure 3.

THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

Figure 4 shows a registered cover mailed at Allenford, Ontario on August 19, 1965. Addressed to Chippawa Hill, it failed of delivery. After a notice was sent and the cover remained uncalled for, it received the UMO handstamp and was forwarded to the UMO in Toronto, where it arrived on September 2nd.



Figure 4.

The proof strikes are those listed by J. Paul Hughes, taken from the Prichard and Andrews proof books. These four are the only proofs I have seen, but they may represent only ‘samples’ of actual handstamps that were made.

Proof strikes from PROOF STRIKES OF CANADA, SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUME XXXV11, by J. Paul Hughes, Pub. Robert A. Lee Philatelist Ltd., Kelowna B.C. 1995

Proof dates are shown at the end of each marking

UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE BUREAU DES REBUTS ^{AP} ₆₈	50x10mm Letters 3.5mm
UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE BUREAU DES REBUTS ^{Jh} ₆₈	53.5x13.5mm Letters 4.75mm
UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE BUREAU DES REBUTS ^{OC} ₆₉	53x13mm Letter 4.5mm
UNDELIVERABLE MAIL OFFICE BUREAU DES REBUTS ^{DE77}	49x7mm Letters 2.25mm

THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

6 D. L. (a) – O.H.M.S. Returned Dead Letter Envelopes Registered

by Gary Steele

Upon recently obtaining a Returned Toronto Dead Letter Office Registered envelope with a Toronto Wax Seal I noticed that a few registered Return DLO envelopes are of a small size and have the size designation **6 D.L.**

While examining the following and other items Toronto, Halifax and several other city DLO's had their names imprinted directly on the envelopes rather than using the less common handstamps. There appears to be no pattern, as Ottawa has imprinted returned addresses on only some of the envelopes.



THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

Note the difference in quantity printed between the Toronto 65,000 print run on February 16 1915 and the Halifax 15,000 print run on January 15 1916.

As always, more questions arise than answers. Were the printing quantities for only the city whose name appeared on the envelope or does the quantity represent a total print run that was shared among several other offices? Were the office names printed on the covers locally? Does anyone know the answer?



THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

**Dead Letter Office
APR 28 1926
Toronto, Canada.**

New Handstamp by Gary Steele

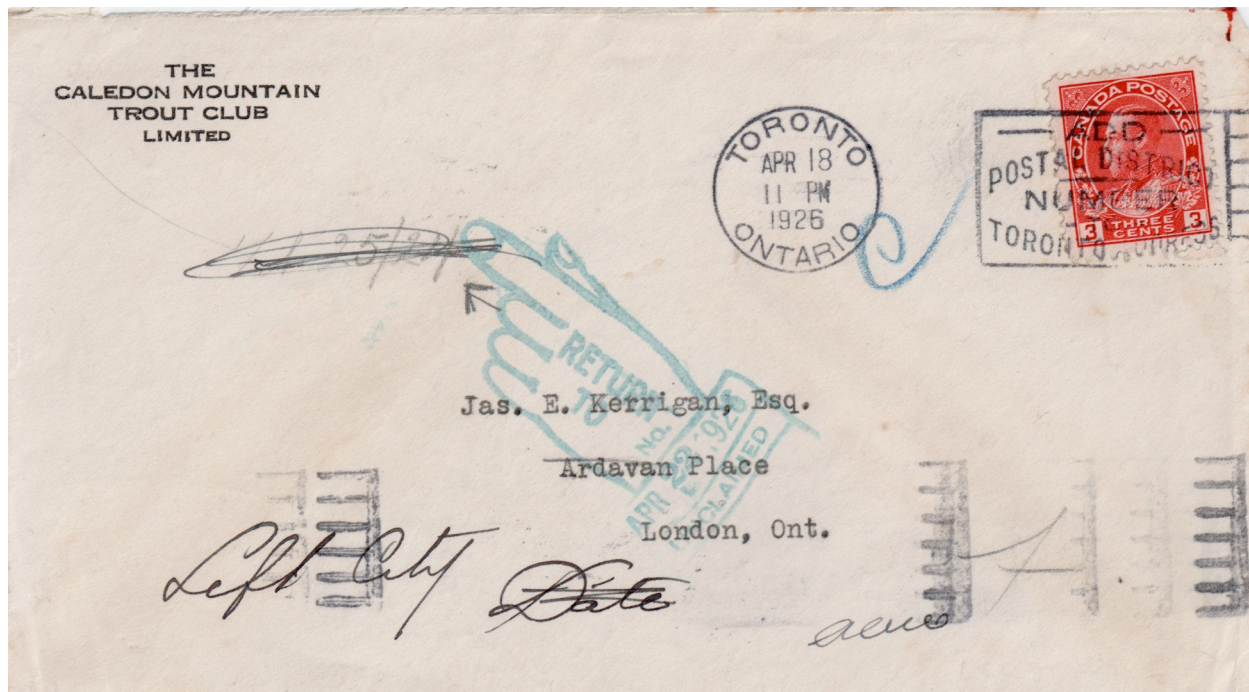
Similar to my last report this item does not have any known proof. There are many different types of Toronto oval DLO handstamps, however, few start with the words 'Dead Letter'. Most start with the words 'Branch Dead Letter Office'.



In addition any that do start with 'Dead Letter Office' usually have a letter or number above the date. This item does not appear to have any letter or number above the date.

I believe that we may conclude that a new handstamp has been discovered. The dimensions are 52mm x 31mm, double oval, green ink. All letters are sans-serif and mixed, with a period after 'Canada.'

Franked with an Admiral 3 cent stamp at Toronto, Ont. On APR 18 1926 this letter was sent to London, where a manuscript 'left city' and RETURN TO pointing finger were applied. It was then sent to Toronto on APR 22 after receiving a London machine marking, and received in Toronto DLO on APR 24 1926. There it was processed before being mailed out on April 28 1926, likely in a Dead Letter Return envelope.



War Tax and the DLO

by Brian Plain

On the 25th of March, 1915, a circular to the public appeared in post offices announcing the imposition of War Tax on letters and postcards. Figure 1 is a partial copy of the notice, obtained from Library of the Postal Museum of Canada that appeared under the signature of R. M. Coulter, Deputy Postmaster General. On the same day, Coulter also sent a Circular to Postmasters that outlined in further detail the requirements of the new tax. This caused some confusion, and on April 9th 1915, he issued a second, and clarifying Circular to Postmasters, obtained from the same source, that specifically mentioned the Dead Letter Office [Figure 2].

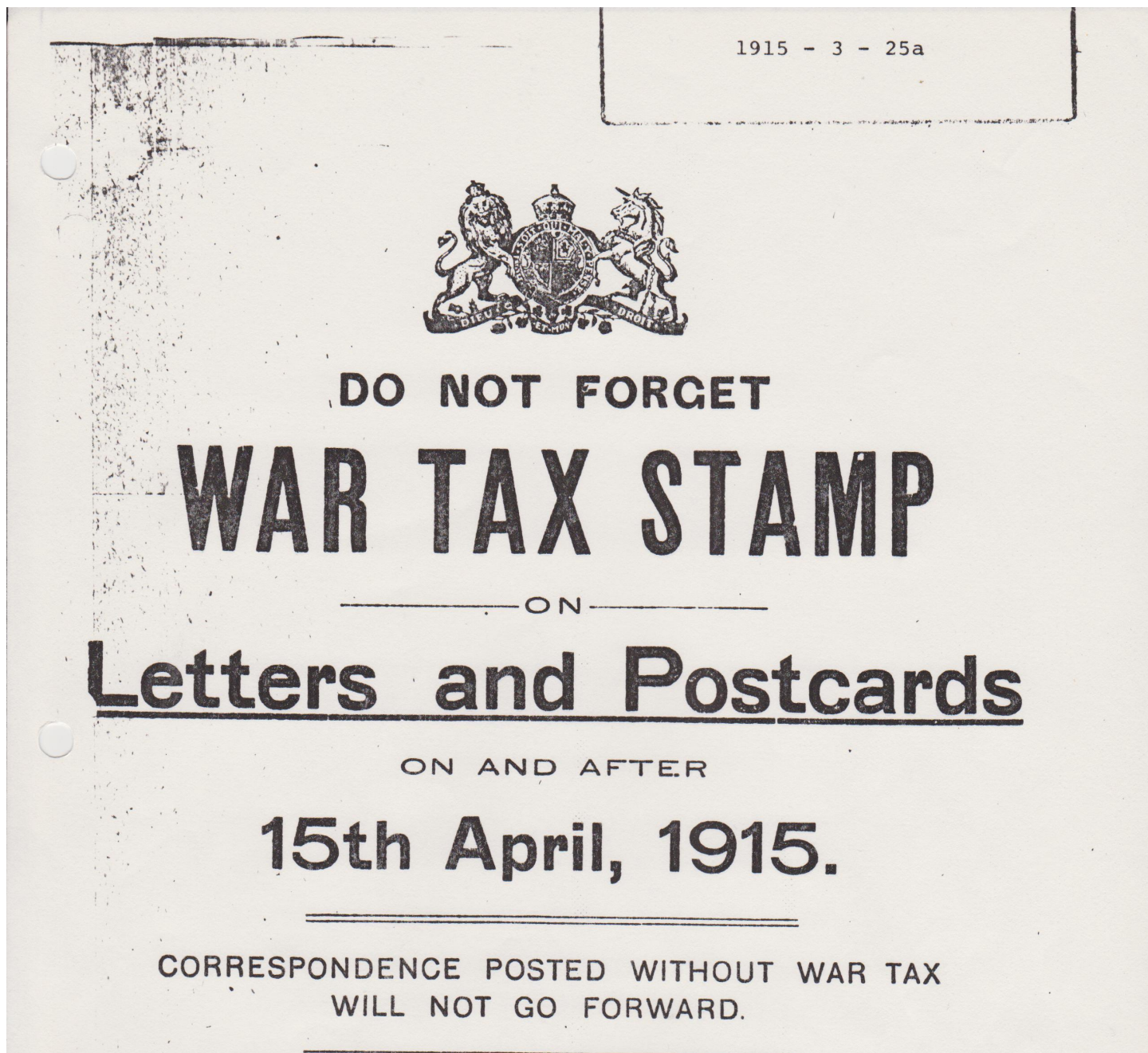


Figure 1

CIRCULAR TO POSTMASTERS.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, CANADA,

OTTAWA, April 9, 1915.

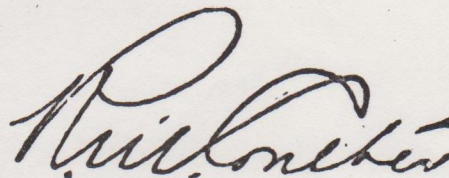
RE WAR TAX.

With reference to Departmental circular of the 25th March, respecting the War Tax, there are two points to which the Postmaster's attention is especially directed:—

(1) Any letter or postcard liable to the War Tax, which is mailed without that tax having been prepaid either by a war stamp or by extra postage, but the sender of which is known, must be returned at once by the Postmaster direct to the sender after the postage has been cancelled and the letter has been date-stamped and endorsed "Returned for War Tax."

When the sender is not known, such letter or postcard must be date-stamped and endorsed "War Tax" and sent immediately in a special return to the nearest Branch Dead Letter Office.

(2) The War Tax may be prepaid in any convenient way; for instance, an ordinary two cent stamp may be used to prepay postage one cent and War Tax one cent on a drop letter.



Deputy Postmaster General.

15,000-9-4-15.

Figure 2

THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

At a recent bourse, I acquired the item shown below. The cover was mailed at Victoria on May 6, 1915 to a local address. Prior to April 15th of that year, the drop rate was 1¢ per ounce, but this rose to 2¢ on April 15th. Figure 3 illustrates the cover. The sender attempted to pay the 1¢ additional tax by the addition of a cutout from a 1¢ Admiral postcard, something that was not allowed. The postal clerk applied the handstamp RETURNED FOR WAR TAX and as per the regulation seen above, forwarded the item to the Dead Letter Office. It was date stamped on arrival the following day with the VIC1-a1 hammer [Figure 4]. Eventually the shortfall was paid and the item forwarded to the addressee, the 1¢ added postage being canceled with an unidentifiable handstamp. The Victoria DLO cds is the latest known example on cover although a strike is known on a facing slip dated July 15, 1915.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Dead Letter Office Per Postmaster's Information Book 1940

Continued...

Page 75. Section 570. Special Dead Matter. –

Special Dead Matter consists of letters and other articles of mail which cannot be forwarded to destinations or delivered owing to being obviously improperly addressed, lack of address, unpaid or insufficiently prepaid items which cannot be sent forward unless fully prepaid, articles which having become detached from their covers are found loose in the mails and cannot be identified, letters or other mail refused by the addressees, mail bearing previously used postage stamps, articles contravening the postal regulations and prohibited articles as set forth in the Canada Official Postal Guide.

Page 76. Section 571. Frequency of Special Returns. –

Special returns of articles of mail described in the preceding sections are to be made as frequently as such items are received.

Such articles should be forwarded to the District Dead Letter Office by first mail after receipt.

Page 76. Section 572. Special Returns to be Serially Numbered. –

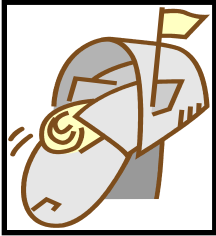
Each return of ordinary special matter is to be serially numbered.

A new series 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., is to be commenced on the first of April each year.

Page 76. Section 573. Making up Special Returns of Ordinary Mail. –

- (1) Form 17 D. L. (g) is to be used for special returns of ordinary mail.
- (2) The number of letters, post cards, parcels or other items of mail included in the return is to be given separately, the form serially numbered, date stamped and signed by the Postmaster.
- (3) Form 17 D.L. (g) and letters, etc., are to be enclosed in envelope 3 D.L. (g) which is to be plainly addressed and date stamped.
- (4) If the mail is too bulky to be enclosed in the envelope a parcel or bag (if necessary) should be made up.

Member's Mail



We would like comments, suggestions, notes on articles, and questions posted in this section. This will be a forum for trying to use the expertise of all members. There will also be a Bulletin Board that we can use in-between newsletters to hash out certain key points and then have more concrete notes for the newsletters.



Want List and For Sale

Wanted – Documents related to the Dead Letter Office, Canada prior to 1900 bcplain@shaw.ca

For Sale - Canada covers, precancels, plate blocks and other postal history. If nothing showing in your area please email with your want list.

www.canadapostalhistorycovers.com

Wanted - DLO handstamps on cover 1954 down, Registered Ambulance/Return Letter Envelopes with Wax Seals, any DLO correspondence with handstamps and Moose Jaw Local Office. Please e-mail gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca

Wanted – Place your ad here

Wanted - Mail Service Suspended covers from the Second World War with or without DLO handstamps, please e-mail and I will advise if any particular country is still required: gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca

For Sale - 1 Cent Jubilee 1897 covers with and without combinations of other stamps. Please email for list or any specific needs. Also have precancels off cover and cancelled stamps gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca