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Copies distributed: 109

BNAPEX 2020 *Cancelled*

The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, has claimed another philatelic show casualty.

We have just received word that the BNAPEX 2020 show, scheduled for September 4–6, 2020 in Halifax, NS has been cancelled.



This follows on the heels of all other stamp shows scheduled in the spring and summer of 2020 that have been cancelled, including Orapex (May 2–3), Royal *2020* Royale (Jun 19–21), and the local shows in your neighbourhood.

Here is hoping that this pandemic is nearing its peak in Canada and things start getting back to ‘normal’ in the very near future.

Happy 25th!

May 1, 1995 saw the release of Canada’s *first* first-class commemorative that had no denomination or value-indicator inscribed on the stamp. The stamp sold for 43¢ at the time, and continues to be valued at 43¢ today.

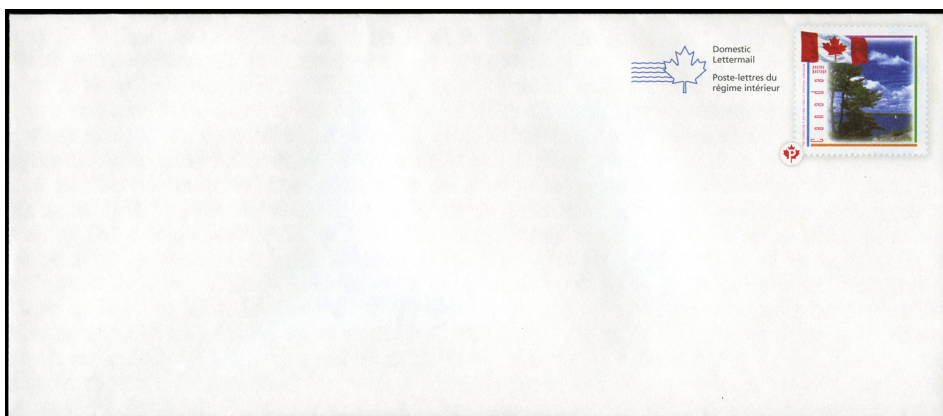


Previous to this, Canada had issued an “A”-denominated definitive on December 29, 1981 (valued at 30¢) and a no-value Christmas stamp on November 3, 1994. The latter was valued at 38¢ and met the Christmas greeting card rate at the time.

The 1995 “Canadian Flag with scene of lake” design was subsequently used on a 2014-issued size-10 Permanent-value envelope.



\$1 Centennial: Selection of Rates/Uses
See page 66



Who are We?

We are the Elizabethan II Study Group under the auspices of the British North America Philatelic Society (BNAPS) — The Society for Canadian Philately.

Our journal, the *Corgi Times* is published 6 times a year.

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Annual Dues

All addresses is C\$10.00 for distribution of *Corgi Times* via a PDF download.

Payment by PayPal is preferred:
ESGTreasurer@rogers.com

If by cheque, please make cheques payable to "The Elizabethan II Study Group" and send to Derek Fleming, Treasurer at the address noted above.

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Canada Post News

Here is what Canada Post is up to these days...

► 2020/1 Quarterly Pack

The first quarterly pack of 2020 appeared in the middle of March. It is advertised as having the stamps issued from January through March.

The postal rate increase this year (January) was the primary reason for this quarterly pack being the *fourth* highest priced quarterly pack ever ... a hefty \$57.45.

There are only four stamp issues included:

- From Far and Wide
- Year of the Rat
- Black History Month
- Dahlia



► 2020 – Eid

There has been very little word from Canada Post in recent weeks. The next scheduled stamp issue is a stamp for Eid, to be released April 24.

As of April 18, the Canada Post website is not showing anything about this, or any other upcoming stamp issues. However, the April 28 *Canadian Stamp News*, published on April 14 does include a full page advertisement for the Eid stamp, illustrated at right.



This issue consists of a single self-adhesive stamp to be issued in a booklet of 10 stamps.

Corgi Times

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Corgi Times is produced with Adobe InDesign CS6® for Windows. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editor at the address above. Electronic format is preferred but not required. Scanned illustrations (300dpi, colour, actual size, JPEG or TIFF, black background) should be sent as separate files from text files. Lower quality images will *not* be printed and will likely result in the article not being printed.

Study Group Business

❖ Welcome new members

Rob Lunn (NB)
Richard Wilson (NY)

Planning Calendar

This is a listing of major exhibitions and bourses with a large content of both Canadian Exhibits and Canadian dealers.

The goal is to list events far in advance to encourage either exhibiting or attendance and preferably both.

2020

~~ORAPEX 2020: Ottawa, ON, May 2-3~~ SHOW CANCELLED

~~BNAPLEX 2020: Halifax, ON, Sep 4-6~~ SHOW CANCELLED

The New "Normal"?

by: Robin Harris

Are we in the start of a new "normal", what with the COVID-19 pandemic upon us now for a few weeks? For many, this is a very isolated and stressful time.

But what about for stamp collectors? Perhaps some of us, after these past few weeks have gone by, are now finding this a blessing? How so? Because of the great hobby that we find ourselves able to partake in with the extra free time on our hands. We now have time to spend on our collection that we may not have had in the past. It gives us something relaxing to do to help pass the seemingly longer days go by.

I'm pretty sure collectors are taking advantage of this time. I have received more "stampie"-related questions in the last few weeks than I typically get. It is easy to tell that most of the queries are a result of collectors perusing their collection(s) and catalogue(s) more.

One project that I will be spending more time on is getting back to updating the Elizabethan-era specialized books that I first wrote in 1997. The furthest-along updated book (of the original five) is the 1977-1987 *Environment Definitive Series*. The first edition (1997) had 104 pages. This second edition is


currently sitting at 430 pages. Some of the new features include:

- ❖ digital recreations of press sheets
- ❖ rate cover illustrations
- ❖ product announcement brochures and posters
- ❖ first day covers illustrated
- ❖ references to relevant articles published in specific society journals (RPSC, BNAPS, ESG)
- ❖ auction realizations of significant errors
- ❖ colour images (where available)

A sample two-page spread (showing the 15¢ Canada Violet stamp) is pictured below. The goal is to get this book done as soon as possible. The updating has been going on for far too long!

Low-Value Wildflowers

15¢ Canada Violet



Stamp size: 20x24mm
Design: 16x20mm
Paper: 100 (10410)
Sided engraving (1 colour) with:
Lithography, 3 colours (cns)
Photogravure, 3 colours (cns)
Background: violet
Designer: Heather Cooper
Hidden date: "© 1979" (C3),
reading down on stem.

Format	Issued	Printer	Method	Perf	Plate	Plated	Imprint	Withdrawn	Quantity
Sheet	Aug 16, 1979	BABN	Photogravure	13.0 x 13.3	1a	1	Warning	Apr 18, 1983	243,200,000
Precancel						1	Warning	Jun 30, 1982	

See also:

- sheet layout, page 29
- imperforate, page 47
- perforation illustrations, page 378
- first day covers, page 132
- PS14, page 84
- hook tag line, page 57

15¢ BARN, photogravure, perf 13.0 x 13.3

777 single
purple engraved vertical line (10mm long) between stamps
83 and 84 (left) on the perforation, from field stock, 1 in 3
panels)
T1 untagged error
one-bar tagged, error (G tag)
I "hook tag" line (see page 57)
perfor: CNR, Canadian National Railway, Vancouver - C26
perfor: CNR, Canadian National Railway, Winnipeg - C28

15¢ Precancel — BARN, photogravure, 13.0 x 13.3

xx single
perfor: LA, Province of Ontario, Toronto - L1

Insights:

- the tagging on the BARN printing can be quite "splochy" with uneven edges (due to the photogravure printing process) and tag bar widths ranging from 3mm to 4mm (and sometimes wider). The 15¢ with crisp 4.2mm tagging appeared in June 1981.
- two distinct shades of the violet background exist: one having "more blue" and the other having "more red".

References:

- *Environment Series Constant Tag Flaws*: Corgi Times Feb 2003 (#64, 63)
- 15¢ Canada Violet - Precancel and Perfor (LA) perfor on precancel: Corgi Times Nov-Dec 2002 (#60, 41)
- *Cover Rating*: Corgi Times May-Jun 2002 (#60, 93)
- *POC reported*: Postmarked Ottawa (15¢ Flower reported printed on gum sides: T.C.P. Jan-Feb 1980 (#176, 27)
- *Precancel inscription*: preparks withdrawn after 1 day: Postmarked Ottawa (15¢ Flower precancel inscription): T.C.P. Jan-Feb 1980 (#176, 63)
- *Wide smooth tagging*: Vertical line: Canadian Stamp Varieties (8) (Current "Environment" definitives): T.C.P. May-Jun 1982 (#190, 137-146)
- *Hook tag line*: Canadian Stamp Varieties (10) (Environment Definitives): T.C.P. May-Jun 1983 (#196, 182-184)
- *Hook tag*: Canadian Stamp Varieties (11): T.C.P. Sep-Oct 1983 (#198, 285-298)

Low-Value Wildflowers

Hook tag constant tag variety (787)

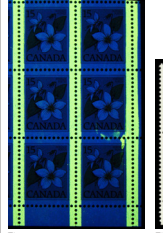


Fig. 1 "Hook tag" line image cropped from full pane of 100.

Fig. 2 "Hook tag" line in lower right corner block of 4.

Tag shift






Fig. 3 One-bar tagging error at right (G2aR).

15¢ Third Class Printed Matter rate (0-50 gram). Mailed to Toronto, Ont.



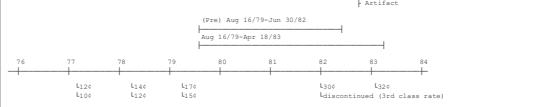
Single 15¢, Third Class mailed to Toronto, Ontario, Aug. 22, 1979 paying 15¢ rate (0-2 oz).



Usage:

The 3rd class/greeting card rate (0-2 oz.) was 15¢ from April 1, 1979 to June 30, 1979; 0-50g (metric) from July 1, 1979 to December 31, 1981.

Artifacts



Superseded by the Artifact series which began to appear on October 19, 1982.

D. Robin Harris

Canada Post 2020 Stamp Program

Issue dates are subject to change by Canada Post. Shaded entries are changed/new from the last time we presented this list.

Issued	Description	Scott#
Jan 13	From Far and Wide definitives (9 designs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent™ (92¢), self-adhesive booklet of 10 (5 designs) • Permanent™ (92¢), self-adhesive coil of 100 (5 designs) • Permanent™ (92¢), self-adhesive roll of 5,000 (5 designs) • \$1.07, self-adhesive roll of 50 • \$1.30, self-adhesive roll of 50 • \$1.94, self-adhesive roll of 50 • \$2.71, self-adhesive roll of 50 • \$1.30, self-adhesive booklet of 6 • \$1.94, self-adhesive booklet of 6 • \$2.71, self-adhesive booklet of 6 • \$11.62 gummed souvenir sheet of 9 • \$2.71 postal cards (one of each design) [set of 9 for \$21.68] 	3221–25 3212–16 3207–11 3220 3217 3218 3219 3226 3227 3228 3206
Jan 17	Lunar New Year: Year of the Rat (2 designs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent™ (92¢) pane of 25 • Permanent™ (92¢), self-adhesive booklet pane of 10 • \$2.71, self-adhesive booklet pane of 6 • \$2.71 souvenir sheet • \$2.71 (Rat) and \$2.65 (Pig) “transitional” souvenir sheet • \$32.52 uncut press sheet of 12 souvenir sheets • \$2.71 postal cards (one of each design) 	3229 3231 3232 3230 3230a
Jan 24	Black History Month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent™ (92¢), self-adhesive booklet of 10 	3233
Mar 2	Flower: Dahlia (2 designs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent™ (92¢), self-adhesive booklet of 10 • Permanent™ (92¢), self-adhesive roll of 50 • \$1.84 gummed souvenir sheet of 2 	
Apr 24	Eid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent™ (92¢), self-adhesive booklet of 10 	
Apr 29	V-E Day, 75th Anniversary	
May 7	Group of Seven, 100th Anniversary	
May 20	History of Radio	
TBD	Legends of Ballet	
Jun 30	Vintage Travel Posters	

Articles Urgently Needed

Elizabethan II Marketplace

Classified listings in the Market Place are \$1.00 for 25 words. Additional words are 5¢ each. Camera ready display ads (preferably 300dpi, black and white tiff scans) pertaining primarily to the Elizabethan era will be accepted at the following rates: 1/8 page \$5.00; 1/4 page \$8.00; 1/2 page \$15.00 and a full page at \$30.00. 25% discount for four consecutive insertions of the same ad. Full payment must accompany ad. Payment in Canadian funds to: Elizabethan II Study Group. Mail to Editor: Robin Harris, PO Box 2243, Beausejour, MB R0E 0C0, Canada.

From Far and Wide Definitives: Geographical Locations

Just where are those *From Far and Wide* locations found across Canada? A picture is worth a thousand words...

If any member has visited any of these locations, and has a picture very similar to what is presented on the stamp, please forward it along ... with a brief story of your adventure!



A 6¢ Wilding Cover and a Mystery

by: Ingo G. Nessel, FRPSC, FRPSL

The Wilding definitive issue was in use from 1954 through 1961. The 1¢–5¢ values are all relatively easy to find on cover, but the 6¢ “high value” of the set is elusive on cover. Elusive but not scarce because after all, 50 million them were printed. The ideal is to find a single franking. Two examples of correct single-franking usage are:

1. 1–2 oz. drop letter
2. 1st oz. surface letter to non-British Empire UPU countries

But I digress. The subject of this article is a locally mailed registered letter franked with 4 of the 6¢ orange Wildings. It caught my eye and in a dealer’s box and I couldn’t resist it! First off, the four stamps are not a single block, rather a block of 3 and a single. The rate is 4¢ local (drop) letter for the first oz. plus 20¢ registration fee for up to and including \$25 indemnity. It was mailed by the senders to themselves on November 8, 1957 from the Toronto Weston post office. The back flap is sealed with wax. Nothing rare here, just a nice example of commercially used multiple 6¢ Wildings. But the story continues . . .



I was happy to find the cover had its enclosure and it presented a mystery. It is a small sheet of paper headlined “Monday September 9th, 1957” addressed “TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN” and contains a certification of two gentlemen’s conception of an invention. The document is signed and witnessed. So questions arise:

- Why would the inventors send the conception of an idea by registered mail to themselves? Would that make it more “official”?
- And why mail it two months after the date of the document?
- Who were these inventors?

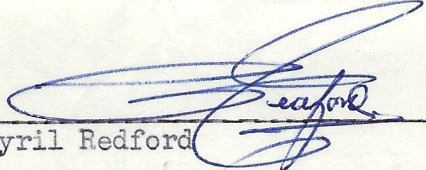
Attempts to Google the two gentlemen did not reveal much, except that one of them, Mr. Cyril Redford seems to have been more active in the field of inventions. If anyone has more information on either Redford or Joseph D. Brown, or can answer any of the questions, your enlightenment will be appreciated.

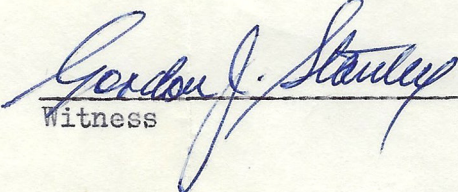
Monday September 9th, 1957

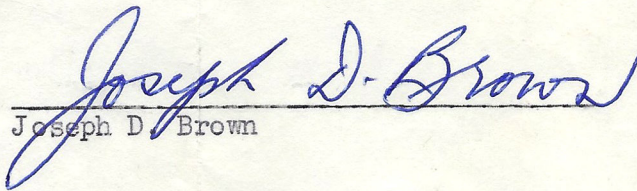
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

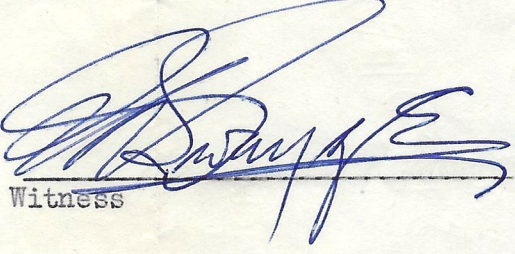
This is to certify that on Monday September 9th, 1957, we the undersigned, conceived the idea of a product to be known as a FILMSLIP, the basis of which is a length of film either coloured or black and white, upon which are printed by photographic or any other means a series of still pictures in sequence.

These may be packed in a sleeve type container either individually, in group or in a type of binder. They may consist of any type of subject material, and are distinct in their make-up from the commonly accepted filmstrip or slide film, in which the film is rolled and stored in a container with the film remaining rolled until used


Cyril Redford


Witness


Joseph D. Brown


Witness

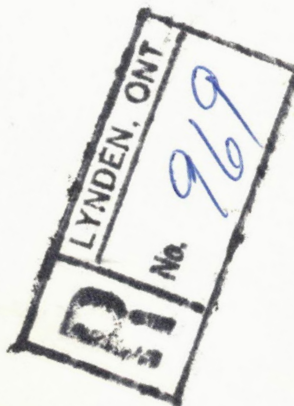
\$1 Centennial Definitive Issue — A Random Selection of Uses / Rates Part I:

by: Scott Traquair



\$1.75 = Money
Packet Rate up
to 8oz. Normally
used by financial
institutions for mailing
banknotes, securities
bonds etc. valued at
more than \$100

Miss Gladys Misner
R. R. 8
Blantford, Ontario



*Royal Trust Savings,
Toronto - Dominion Centre,
Toronto, Ontario.*

REGISTER



\$1.17 = \$1.10 for
Registered indemnity
increased to \$200 plus
7 cents letter mail up
to 1 oz



Above: cropped image at 100%; Below: full cover at 50%

\$3.70 = 50 cents Registration plus \$3.20 Airmail for up to 32 oz. The cover is 10" x 13" and exhibits some wear and tear so could easily have carried this weight.



Right: cropped image at 100%; Below: full cover at 50%

\$1.50 = 50 cents Registration + \$1.00 short paying the \$1.05 Airmail rate to Europe (Italy) for up to 3 1/2 oz. Note the 5 cent stamp may have been to the right of the \$1 stamp and fallen off.





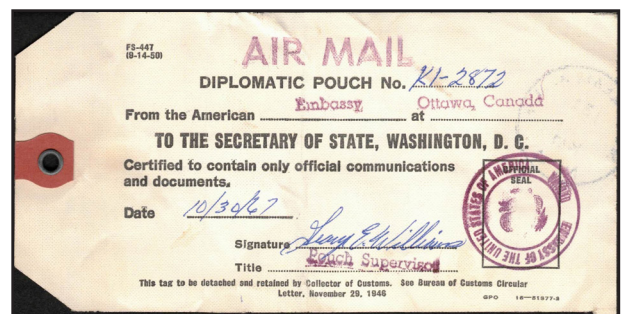
\$1.40 = 50 cents Registration plus 90 cents airmail to Europe (Austria) for up to 8 oz. The cover is reduced at left so easily could have contained heavy documents



Above: full item at 100%; Below: reverse side at 50%

So what does the \$6.80 Centennial franking pay? The pouch appears to have been sent via airmail and although the Ottawa cancels are registered cancels there is no registration hand stamped box, or apparent registration number assigned. Coincidentally the \$6.80 works out well for airmail: first 1 oz at 8 cents and next 112 ozs at 6 cents. Total 113 ozs or 7 lbs, 1 oz. Introducing a 50 cent registration charge results in the remaining amount of \$6.30 not properly paying an airmail rate ($6.30 - .08 = 6.22$ which does not divide by .06 equally).

Could the Diplomatic Pouch No. K1-2872 be a registration number? Could there be a special rate for this type of mail in 1967?



Lowe-Martin Vertical Coil and Booklet Production, or

Orchid Flower Series - Revisited. Part 1

by: M. Zatka

Background

The Lowe-Martin Company Inc. (L-M) took over the Canada Post printing contract for definitive coils and booklet panes sometime in 2004 (first coils released in September 2004 by L-M were reprints of the 80¢ and \$1.40 Maple Leaf coils originally produced in horizontal format by Canadian Bank Note Company), and continues to print stamps in these formats today. All of the stamps are on self-adhesive paper and are die-cut to allow separation of individual stamps. On coils, the diecuts are wavy, or serpentine, in nature, while on the booklets they are straight ("kiss cut"). This applies to the entire Orchid series. As can be seen in Figure 1, published in Canada Post's October–December 2005 *Details* magazine, courtesy of Canada Post, the press is a small unit with a paper web width slightly less than 25cm, that produces in one revolution of the ink and phosphor tagging cylinders a 10 x 10 stamp "pane", plus a small horizontal gutter approximately one half of the size of a stamp. Figure 2 shows one of the "press sheets" Canada Post issued later in the Orchid series that illustrates the pane size and the web margin markings. The \$1.40 coil, as seen in Figure 1, is in vertical format (as used for regular post office coil rolls); however, the press can be set up to print in other format configurations. After die-cutting, edges of the web are trimmed and the web is slit into 10 individual web strips used to produce the final rolls.

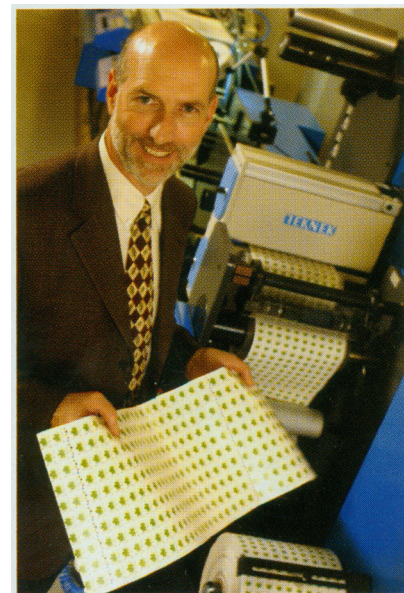


Figure 1

All of the orchid coil stamps in the series (as well as booklet stamps, for that matter) were produced using 5 different colours, and the stamps were phosphor tagged on all four sides. The colours included the three primary ones used in printing: cyan, magenta, and yellow, as well as two custom blends. The first of the custom colours was always used to print the face value of the stamps and on booklets the upper booklet margin, while the other one produced the country name on each stamp and the text in the coil and booklet bottom gutters. The remaining three primary colours, alone, produced the flower images.

For booklet production the same press is used, again with 10 columns of stamps. In this case, the panes were laid out with six stamps (2 x 3), and margins added at top and bottom of the panes. One revolution of the ink plate produced five panes across, and two panes up (i.e. 10 booklet panes in all). As with the coils, this is done with no paper wastage between the panes that would require removal while being slit into the individual pane columns (however, edges of the web at either side do require removal as they contain various plate and production markings not intended to be part of the finished products). Each sealed bundle of 50 booklet panes (as packaged by L-M), therefore, consists of two alternating booklets from one vertical "column" of the web. This has been proven several times through varieties or errors that have been found on the booklets in fresh bundles. The gutter on coil rolls, and the bottom margin on the booklets, contain the printer's name, a letter initial for the paper that was used, designer and photographer information, and colour dots ("traffic lights") showing which colours were used to produce the stamp. Several members of the Elizabethan II Study Group, as well as others, have had the chance over the past few years to tour the production facilities of L-M, and see the various stages of coil and booklet production – unfortunately I have not been one of the lucky ones (so far?)! An excellent summary of one such visit was written by Mr. Leopold Beaudet and can be found in the May-June 2019 issue of *Corgi Times*!

The wavy, or serpentine, patterns on the coil die cutting mats, used on the entire series, were made manually by forming the "peaks and valleys" on each of the 11 blades that make up the overall mat and the diecut pattern. Given the nature of this process, the wavy pattern on each blade (i.e. diecut row on the mat) is not identical (as perforations normally would be). As a result, the peak-to-peak spacing varies somewhat along a row, and also from one row to another. This variability allows each stamp to be "plated" to its original position on the production cylinder. For the fair-hearted: this requires magnificent patience and eyes, as well as a large supply of (preferably) used stamps, to plate an entire "pane" of 100 stamps on a mat! Unfortunately, I don't qualify on either count... Except for two mat patterns, each of these has been painstakingly measured on individual stamps and reported by Mr. Robin Harris (see excellent study article *Lowe-Martin Serpentine Die Cutting* at: <https://adminware.ca/LoweMartin/index.htm>).



Figure 2

Over the period of production of the Maple Leaf and Orchid flower definitive set, 15 different, primary, die-cut mats were used, with several sub-varieties when a mat was temporarily modified or used in an inverted position from normal.

While we are used to measuring perforation on water-activated gum stamp sheets, counting the number of perforations over a 2cm interval, a diecut mat can be measured in a very similar way. In this case the mat gauge is obtained from measurement of the entire width of each stamp on the plate, and reported on the basis of the number of peaks across a 2cm interval, the same as on normal perforations. A special gauge was developed to allow individual measurement of the L-M diecuts, as no other gauge was available in the marketplace that would go to the low peak density used on these stamps. The gauge can be ordered through the *Corgi Times* Editor for a nominal payment and cost of return postage. It should be noted that all of the booklets have straight diecuts to allow separation of the stamps from each other.

The initial set of Orchid coils had diecut “perforations” that ranged from 7.8 to 8.9. This was diecut mat pattern #2, as numbered by Harris (mat #1 was only used on the previous 80¢ and \$1.40 Maple Leaf definitive reprints; Scott #2054–2055). The indicated range does not apply to an individual coil roll, but rather to the entire 10 x 10 stamp layout

All die-cut mats, except the first one used exclusively on the Maple Leaf coils, had several very small roulette-type nicks, or “nibs”, left on each cutting blade, across each stamp, where the blade did not penetrate the paper. This was done to help keep the individual stamps attached to the backing paper, once the web was made into individual rolls — the somewhat stiff stamp paper, coupled with the significant bending of the coil strip onto the cardboard core, allowed some stamps to partially peel off by themselves before they were sold. The mats typically had three nibs on each stamp: one

near each end, and one in the middle. On two of the later mats used on the series the number of nibs was varied between three or four per stamp.

Near the end of the 80¢ (US rate) period in 2005, a small additional (unannounced) production run of the 80¢ Maple Leaf coil was made, likely as a stop-gap to maintain sufficient stock of these until a rate change planned for early the following year took place. Interestingly, this run used the second die-cut mat with nibs (and contained the “ski-slope” variety described later!). The change is easily visible when you know what to look for, but at the time it went completely unnoticed by collectors, including myself. A few rolls and strips of the reprint have surfaced since, but they are very scarce. The associated “ski-slope” variety in gutter strips of six, or even in strips of four, has fewer than 15 copies recorded. It is worth adding that this additional production run may not have been a distinct new press run, since it is possible for the printer to keep rolls of the printed but “imperforate” stamp web until additional quantities are needed (likely cheaper to just die cut and slit the web from a printed web roll, than to set up an entire press run).

Packaging of the coils at the time, and still to date, is being done by hand at the printer. Except for what may have been a short trial period during the 50¢ rate period, the individual, continuous, coil strips are wound onto a cardboard core, and cut into lengths of 100 stamps at the gutter section (in the case of the first-class value), or 50 stamps (all other values). Initially this was done using scissors resulting in straight cuts, though often at various angles. Later on, this changed to a wavy cut - for collectors of the “start” and “end” strips it prevented these strips from being faked from the middle of a roll. Ends of the wound coil strips (“start” strips when opening up the roll...) are then secured with a piece of self-adhesive plastic tape with a printed bar code for the product, using an adhesive that allows the tape to be peeled off the roll without a high risk of removing the stamps at the same time (unless not careful!). It is interesting to note that during the 50¢ rate period I saw coil stocks at post offices in several different occasions without the inner core (including at least one previously unopened box of 10 rolls). The retail outlets claimed that none came with those particular shipments (and it is possible that the printer tried to save on production cost by not using the cardboard core for a while), but it is also possible that the cores were simply removed by an employee or fell out, as the core was not attached to the coil strip and was typically loose in each roll. This practice ended fairly quickly and the start of each coil strip (as it started being wound onto the cardboard core) was then attached to the core with a drop of glue. Again, all of this is still being done by hand, including the packaging of 10 rolls in a small box used for distribution to individual post offices. It is interesting to add that many boxes of 10 rolls contained a roll from each of the stamp columns on the web. This means that usually, (but not always!) one box of rolls was all that was needed to plate the entire diecut mat being used.

On the first coil series (Maple Leaf reprints, and the 50¢ rate period on the Orchids), an end of each box had a stamped number indicating how many rolls were in each box, and the item number Canada Post assigned to the product. With the release of the second Orchid coil set (51¢ rate period) the boxes had a label at one end indicating the same information as before, but with the following added: what web roll the stamps came from, the production date and time, and a bar code. This labelling practice remained during the entire Orchid flower series. For completeness, for a period of time some boxes also had a hand-stamped (or handwritten) number added at the box end, possibly from a person who had inspected the packaged rolls.

Orchid Flower series — Introduction



Figure 3

The main focus of this article will be on this coil and booklet series (Figure 3), as it turned out to be very interesting from a production and varieties standpoint, as well as collecting specialization, depending on how much detail one wants to get into. In all, 19 different stamps were issued in the series during the five years they were used (five different sets issued; in 2009 the series was halted to make room for an Olympic-themed definitive set, and then re-introduced in 2010 for the last time). When different formats of the stamps are taken into account (i.e. regular over-the-counter coils, souvenir sheets, booklets, and “commercial” coils), the series expands to 47 different stamps. Page 752 in the 2020 *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps* (“Unitrade”) provides a very handy summary of the issue. Factor into that also different plates, papers, AND die cutting, and you are literally into several thousand different stamps. OK, I acknowledge that not everyone will want to plate each of the diecut mats that were used during this period, but you get the picture (more on this later). The plating does make excellent jigsaw puzzles, for those who enjoy that sort of challenge ... that said, the series provides an opportunity for several different “levels” of specialization, with some very interesting production twists that have led to very collectible, and in some cases very scarce, varieties. The first installment of the

series came out on December 20, 2004, with values of 50¢ - \$1.45, and ended on January 11, 2010 with values of “P” to \$1.70.

Set #1 - \$1.45 (overseas) rate period:

The initial release of the Orchid definitives in December 2004 included the 50¢, 85¢ and \$1.45 values, using diecut mat pattern #2 (7.75 to 8.9 gauge), with the rate period being valid for one year. Two booklet panes of 6 stamps were also issued – one for the US rate (85¢) and one for the international rate (\$1.45).

Set #1: Coils:

Within a few months of the initial release, a second plate setting was discovered on all three values. It is not known what caused the change, but it's possible that the original plate was discarded after an initial production run of all three values, and a new plate prepared when additional quantities were requested by Canada Post. Figure 4 shows both plate settings on the coils – they differ by the position of letter “F”, designating the paper used for the stamps (Fasson), over the name of one of the designers. The “F over R” setting is on the original plate, while an “F over O” position was found on the second plate due to a shift of this letter, and the ink “traffic light” dots, to the left. This new plate setting was never announced by Canada Post as a change, and the stamps were simply put into general circulation as old stocks ran out.



Figure 4

A constant flaw on the die-cutting mat, mentioned earlier, was found shortly after the first set was released on mat #2. Dubbed the “ski-slope” variety, it consists of one unusually wide and deep peak/valley combination in one location on the die cut mat. Illustrated in Figure 5 on all three values, it is present, therefore, on only one of every ten rolls produced - later found to be from column 1 (left-most) on the web. The flaw was most likely created by a lack of preciseness during the manufacture of one of the diecut mat blades, and went undetected by Lowe-Martin throughout the period of use of that particular die cut mat. It exists on both plate versions used to produce each value, and is listed and valued in the Unitrade catalogue. Look for these in strips – they do not occur within the gutter strip of four, as they are found between the third and fourth stamp above the gutter. They are best saved in strips of six – two stamps below the gutter and four above – as this way both plate types can also be shown.



Figure 5

Interestingly, the quarterly pre-pack of new issues offered by Canada Post (2005/1) contained this set of coils as single stamps die cut to shape. These singles were produced with much coarser horizontal die cuts than ever found on the actual rolls (6.45 – 7.05; mat #5). As best that can be determined from the individual stamps found, this mat did not produce a full 10 x 10 stamp matrix, and only a 6 x 6 stamp matrix of stamps seems to have been used. The specific layout of these 36 stamps out of a “pane” of 100 is not known, but assumed to be a box of 6 x 6 stamps from center of the web. No explanation for this layout has been found, unless it was too difficult for Lowe-Martin to cut individual stamps from a larger matrix (were the rest of the stamps from the web “wasted”?). This mat was never used on actual coil rolls, but does contain individual “nibs” similar to the regular coil stamps, but placed this time on the slitters used to separate the web into individual coil strips. As a result, they are at the vertical edges of the stamps, presumably to support the strips together before further handling.

Around March 2005, a new, coarser, diecut mat (mat #3) was placed into use on the 50¢ and 85¢ values replacing the #2 mat, with gauge measurements of 6.85 to 7.5. The “ski-slope” variety was no longer present on the mat. Later in the year, the 50¢ value (again) and the \$1.45 values were produced with a yet different mat (#4), this time even more coarse than mat #3 (6.3 – 7.4; only some of the 10 columns have been plated to date due to a lack of available full or partial rolls). For clarity, as described above, the die cut measurements refer to spacing of peaks across the full width of the coil stamp, but the value is based on the number of peaks over only 2 centimeters. The \$1.45 stamp with the coarse diecuts was not available in post office stocks until late in the year, and in fact many post offices never received stock of this version. Hence it is much scarcer than the other two values. Lastly, the 85¢ value has been seen with an inverted version of mat #4, but so far only a small part of one roll has been found. Used copies are out there, but very elusive. However it came to be, the production run must have been of a very short duration.

Mentioned before is the presence of two different plates being used on this set. Table 1 summarizes the combinations known:

One cannot leave this first Orchid coil issue without mentioning a fascinating error that occurred on one of the plates used to print the \$1.45 coil. When stamps from the “F over O” plate were found with the original diecut mat #2, the first

Table 1

Diecut Mat #	Gauge:	Plate: "F over R"		"F over O"		"F over R"		"F over O"	
		50¢ value		85¢ value		\$1.45 value			
2	7.75–8.9	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes ¹	
3	6.85–7.5		yes		yes				
4	6.3–7.4		yes					yes ¹	
4i (inverted)	as above		?		yes ²			?	
5 ³	6.45–7.05		?		?			?	

Note: 1) Column 1 has correct "LOWE-MARTIN" inscription in the gutter, while columns 2–10 show "0LOWE-MARTIN". Columns 2 and 9 from this mat from this mat remain to be plated.

2) a partial roll from one column has been found to date.

3) only singles exist from this mat, used only for quarterly pre-packs.

column contained the normal LOWE-MARTIN name in the gutter, while the remaining nine gutter positions had a zero inserted in front of it displaying: "0LOWE-MARTIN". This proved that a different "F over O" plate was used on this value than the 50¢ and 85¢ values, as they were normal in all columns. And which column did the normal spelling occur on? The first column that contained the ski-slope flaw!!! When the diecut mat was eventually changed to #4, the same ink plate was used, so again one column gutter showed the current printer name, while the other columns showed the extra "0" (Unitrade #2074vii, and 2074aii). The "ski slope" variety was gone though! The ski-slope variety in gutter strips of 6 from the "F over O" plate, and the correct LOWE-MARTIN gutter inscription on the coarser diecut mat #4, are both very tough to find, as there was limited recognition of the former variety at the time among collectors, and the available stock was later replaced with the coarse diecut mat #4 (which itself was very difficult to find at post offices).

Copies exist of the 50¢ value with shifted diecuts as shown in Figure 6. This would have been a production quality issue, arisen from mis-alignment of the diecut mat with the printed web. This type of error always gives rise to several different versions of mis-cutting on the stamps due to the presence of the gutter and the shift that produces with the cutter.

All three values in this set have also been reported with various degrees of light (weak) die cuts that only score the paper surface, but do not fully penetrate it. This is likely due to fluctuations in the die cutter pressure applied to the printed web. Where found, the weakness of the score line can vary within a roll, and can result in stamp multiples that will stay together even after soaking, which is normally not possible, while other parts of the same roll are normally, fully, diecut. A particularly light score line is known on the 50¢ value from the "F over O" plate printing (#2072vii), where it is visible on the surface of the stamps when viewed at an angle, but just barely. It includes the "ski slope" variety in column 1! The light scoreline variety is noted in the Unitrade catalogue and is an interesting and collectible item.



Figure 6

There is one major error identified on this set, where the diecuts are entirely omitted on the 50¢ stamp (Scott #2072b). The error comes from the original issue with fine die cuts (mat #2). The missing die cut error may have arisen when the die cutting pressure was so light to not even score the web, or possibly through a short period of time when the die cutter was not operating at all. Only a few fully imperforate copies of the 50¢ value have been reported.

There was one other production error found on the 50¢ coil that may have gone completely unnoticed by Canada Post. The timing of release is not known, as used copies were found a number of years after the issue was replaced (just with jet-spray cancellations, so no dates). The paper web that L-M uses on these issues has no phosphor applied to it, as 4-sided tagging is added as a separate step during production. For some reason someone at L-M grabbed a paper roll (or part of one?) that had the surface pre-phosphorized – but of the type used by Avery Dennison in the US (Figure 7). Their tagging reacts to short-wave UV light only, and is not picked up by Canada Post's automatic cancellation devices (which react only to long-wave UV ink used by Canadian stamp printers). The pre-phosphorized paper is not easy to detect, as even under the appropriate UV it is weak in intensity, but still present in a light-green fluorescent glow. There is no afterglow once the UV source is turned off. A range of intensity of glow was seen on some of the used copies. For Canada Post, this would have gone undetected through their equipment, but for collectors it creates an interesting and, so far, unique variety. Overall, VERY few used copies have been found so far (estimate <20), and no mint copies have been reported to date!



Figure 7

As with many other issues, a number of shades have been noted in this set, particularly on the 50¢ value. While too numerous to list, they range from a deep-red to a carmine shade on the Calla Lily, and a deep olive green to a very light olive shade on the stems. I am also suspicious that a second, different, “F over O” plate may have been brought into temporary use on the 50¢ value. Why, you ask? The flower design contains several areas where there is lighter shading within the flower giving it much more contrast. In the “normal” version, these areas are only slightly lighter (i.e. the contrast is weaker). This higher contrast version was relatively common during the summer of 2006 in western Canada, but I do not recall it being reported out east. Later on, the original design with the lower contrast again came into general circulation. Figure 8 shows the two versions side-by-side – what is interesting is that the rest of the design looks identical in each case, so it’s not a case of weak inking.



Figure 8

Set #1: Booklets:

Illustrations of each booklet pane were included in the January–March 2005 issue of *Details* magazine produced by Canada Post to introduce the new issues and booklet format. Interestingly, each pane showed the printer, paper, and designer / photographer information, along with colour “traffic” lights, all starting at the LEFT edge on the bottom margin. As issued; however, the 85¢ booklet had the traffic lights moved to the center of the margin on all printings. An initial, small, quantity of the \$1.45 booklet was released as shown in the *Details* magazine, but a new plate was quickly produced that now had the traffic lights at the RIGHT edge of the bottom margin. All subsequent reprints of the \$1.45 booklet used the revised plate format. There is no information why the booklet plates were laid out this way (on either value), or why the \$1.45 plate had to be changed so quickly after first issue. Perhaps an explanation will be found in the Postal Archives in future.

The booklet issue, for the first time produced by Lowe-Martin, underwent a number of printings and changes over the one year of use. The initial issue had 3mm tagging bars, with small cutouts in the bars to prevent overlapping with the flower image. This was quickly replaced with straight 4mm bars that no longer took the flower design into account. Later in the year even wider bars were found on the booklets, measuring up to 5mm on the 85¢ booklet. The tagging also varied from very shiny, to mat and nearly invisible. Lastly, all booklets had a marking in the margin showing they were printed on Fasson paper (“F”), produced by Avery Dennison Co. — one of the suppliers of self-adhesive stamp paper to Lowe-Martin. At least one printing of each booklet was produced on TRC (“Coated”) Paper, though not identified as such on the booklet plate (surface of Coated paper differs from Fasson paper - see page 291 in the Unitrade catalogue). Some of these printings are quite scarce, as, again, there was little attention paid to them and the paper differences can be difficult to spot.

A major variety and error was found on the 85¢ booklet just at the time of first issue. One version showed the booklet with no black print and shifted tagging, while on the second version the black is properly printed but the tagging is still significantly shifted down the pane (Figure 9). The errors must have come from the start of production when the web press was not fully synchronized including two of the ink cylinders. Typically, this type of material is removed as part of quality control but in this case, it escaped into a few finished bundles of booklets. No other errors of this type were found in this set.

One interesting variety found on the \$1.45 booklet is edge print on the back cover as shown in Figure 10. For some reason the back marking was placed very close to the printed stamp image on the front side, and in a slightly miscut booklet was partially present on the pane. The same has not been found on the 85¢ booklet.

In closing, I see this first set as an excellent introduction “for what was to come next”! It is clear that L-M went through some production process changes as they figured out how to meet the contract and the technical specifications provided by Canada Post. It would not be a surprise if more discoveries are made on this set in future, perhaps with the help of information in the Postal Archives.

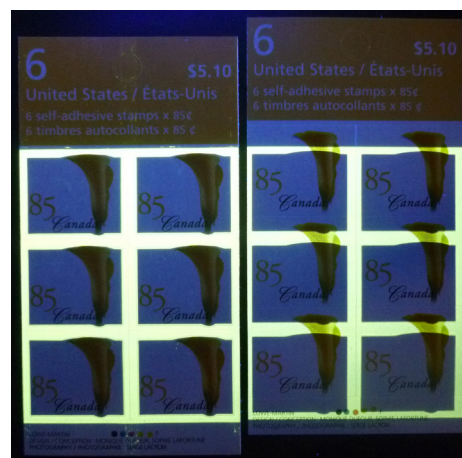


Figure 9

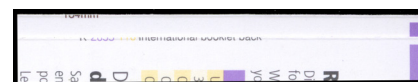


Figure 10

Recognition needs to be made here, and acknowledged, of Mr. Harris’ detailed study of this issue and the diecutting / production process. Without this data it would have been much more difficult to match up my own observations and purchases with how each came to be, and when.

To be continued with the next Orchid Flower set in the next issue...