

# Fancy Cancel & Miscellaneous Markings Study Group Newsletter

December 2025  
No. 99

## Message from your Editor – Ron’s Ramblings

### Inside this issue

Message from your editor - Ron’s Ramblings - A new look for the Newsletter	1
Message from the Chairman – Mike’s Musings	2
BNAPS Virtual Exhibition and Conference	
What have you found lately? New listings, ERD LRD etc.	3
Moving Forward; a Fourth edition of the Fancy Cancel Handbook?	4
What is a Fancy Cancel?	
Miscellaneous Markings	
You were asking?	5-6
Fredericton ‘F’ L409 – Ron Smith	7-9
Every cover tells a story	10

Welcome to the new look for the Fancy Cancel Study Group Newsletter, the first under “new management”. Dave Lacelle, our past chair and newsletter editor, has retired after more than three decades. Mike Halhed has taken over the reigns as chairman and I have agreed to serve as editor, at least for the interim. We will try our best to continue the great work Dave did for so many years in carrying this study group.

You will see that this newsletter has a different look from previous editions. We want to encourage more members to contribute articles, long or short. Please continue to send in any fancy cancels you have found to . We will respond to requests for information on fancies as best we can.

Do you have any suggestions for regular articles or sections for future newsletters? Let us know!

Please send contributions to [fancy.cancels@gmail.com](mailto:fancy.cancels@gmail.com) or to Mike and Ron c/o Fancy Cancel Study Group

Mike Halhed, Chairman  
[mikehalhed@gmail.com](mailto:mikehalhed@gmail.com)

Ron Smith, Editor  
[varfor@gmail.com](mailto:varfor@gmail.com)

## Newsletter 100

The next newsletter, the first of 2026, will be the 100<sup>th</sup> newsletter for the Study Group. We would like for the next issue to be the largest and most diverse one yet! However, this can only happen with your help.

Please dig through your collections and find your ‘fancy cancel gem(s)’ and take a few moments to describe it(them) and share it with your fellow fancy cancel enthusiasts. We all have at least one that has a special meaning to us and that special meaning will be interesting!

We want to include both long and short articles and single items. Good colour images of covers and stamps are informative and interesting to all of us. EVERY cover has a story to tell,

## Message from your chairman – Mike’s Musings

Since 1988, Dave Lacelle has served as Chairman and primary Editor of the BNAPS Fancy Cancel and Miscellaneous Markings Study Group. Unfortunately, due to declining health, Dave has decided to step down from these roles.

As fellow fancy cancel collectors and philatelists, we all owe Dave a heartfelt thank-you for his tremendous contributions to the hobby. Over the years, he has produced no fewer than 98 newsletters—amounting to some 250,000 words! His book, *Fancy Cancels on Canadian Stamps 1855–1950*, has long been considered the definitive reference for Canadian Fancy collectors. The third edition, released in August 2018, included over 350 additions and revisions. It now lists more than 1,700 identified fancy cancels and 750 miscellaneous items, along with several valuable reference appendices. This handbook builds on the foundational work of Fred Jarrett (1929) and of Day & Smythies, whose second edition in 1981 documented about 1,000 items.

Dave began collecting stamps as a youngster, like many of us, and his passion for fancy cancels began when a few were discovered in a tin of Small Queens given to him as a gift. That modest beginning grew into a substantial collection, which was later auctioned as Dave turned his focus toward research and writing. We all owe him deep gratitude for his lifelong dedication to philately and scholarship.

Looking ahead, I will be stepping up from Associate Editor to Chairman, and Ron Smith has kindly agreed to serve as Interim Editor of the Study Group. Together, we are committed to carrying forward the fine work Dave has built, with the goal of publishing the 99th Newsletter by the new year. As always, member contributions will be the key to keeping our Study Group vibrant.

If you know Dave personally, he can be reached by phone or by email at [lacelle1@telus.net](mailto:lacelle1@telus.net).

## BNAPS Virtual Exhibition and Conference

Mark January 31, 2026 down in your calendar!

BNAPS is holding its second on-line exhibition and conference on **Saturday, January 31, 2026**. There are exhibits as well as a series of Study Group sessions. You can find the full schedule of events on the BNAPS website under VEC 2026. Or see: <https://bnaps.org/bnapex/vec2026/seminars.htm>. The VEC 2026 is open to all, not just BNAPS members. **Attendance is free but registration is required.**

The Fancy Cancel and Miscellaneous Markings Study Group will be holding our session at 15:30. We are still putting together presentations so if have something you would like to discuss, please contact Mike Halhed.

## What have you found lately?

The success of any Study Group newsletter hinges on members contributions. Contributions can take a variety of forms so we have created this section to make it simple! Send us scans of your latest ‘gems’ or a stamp you had tucked away for the last 10 years that you were going to ‘get around to checking’. We also have created a section on “You were Asking”.

### Earliest and Latest Recorded Dates (ERD/LRD) – Mike Halhed

Since Fred Jarrett released the first fancy cancel handbook, as a section within his Standard British North American Catalogue (1926), the year of use has been assigned to different Canadian Fancy Cancels. Dave Lacelle took this a step further and included both the month and year of use for ERD and LRDs. Here’s an example:

<u>No.</u>	<u>D&amp;S</u>	<u>Post Office</u>	<u>Dates Used</u>
1300	237	Eardley, QC	FE70-MR70

For L1300 shown above, is the ERD Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> or is it Feb. 28? Is the LRD Mar. 1<sup>st</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup>?

Finding a true ERD or LRD adds a bit of excitement and interest (and perhaps value) to our fancy cancel collections. Therefore, can you please send us scans to fancy.cancels@gmail.com of covers which might be an actual ERD or LRD? I’ll start to record the actual dates for each fancy with a view to eventually creating an addendum.

This example of L1523 below, is recorded with an ERD of “JU71”. Perhaps this Canada Post Card is the actual ERD, showing a more accurate date of JU 15 1871? Does anyone have an earlier example?



## **Moving Forward; a Fourth edition of the Fancy Cancel Handbook?**

Moving forward, the ‘fourth’ edition of the Fancy Cancel Handbook is most likely going to be digital. In the third edition, there are many listings of cancels where you can find the phrase: “Similar cancels were used in ..... (post offices)”. It was not practicable to show examples of ALL of the similar cancels in a printed handbook. However, with the current technology (and your help), we hope to compile scans of covers with as many of these ‘similar’ cancels as possible. This should, over the long term, make the job of identifying the post office for some of the thousands of cancels on stamps more of a possibility.

### **What is a fancy cancel?**

Jarrett listed hundreds of cancels as they were used in some of the larger post offices of the time e.g. Toronto, Saint John, etc. The cancels included both corks and many of the metal ring or bullseye killers.

For fancy cancel purists, many of these do not ‘qualify’ as true fancy cancels. However, for a student of postal history, the use of different cancels over time are an important part of the story. This brings us to the topic of studying the postal history of specific towns. We will have a feature article on this subject in Newsletter 100.

### **Miscellaneous Markings**

A number of years ago, the Miscellaneous Markings Study Group was merged with the Fancy Cancel Study Group. As a result, there has been a number of often more contemporary markings included in the newsletter. We will endeavor to provide a section on these markings but since neither Mike nor I collect them, this will only happen if YOU provide us articles or examples.

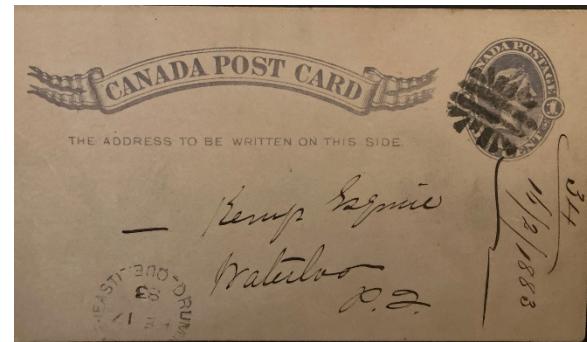
## You were asking?

One practice that Dave had put in place and ran with for many years, was identifying (when possible) cancels that readers sent in. We want to continue this and so encourage you to send in copies of cancels you are having a hard time identifying. We will do our best to identify them for you. We also want to draw on the knowledge of your cancel collecting compatriots.

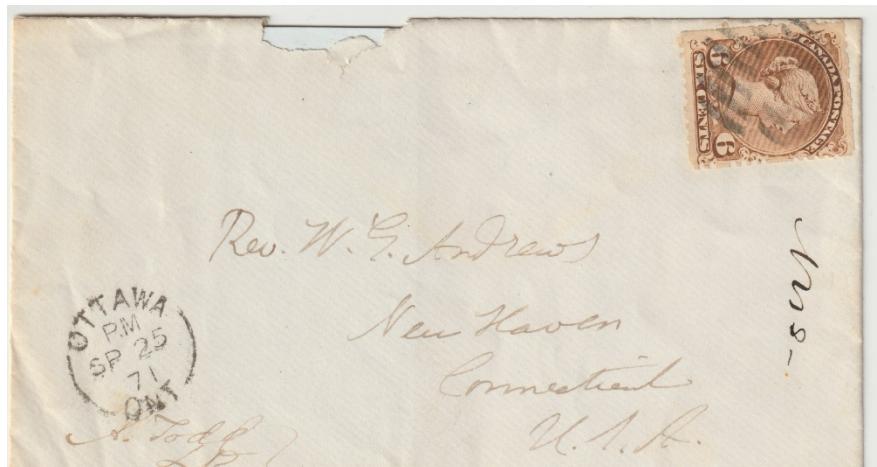
Randy Evans sent in scans of five cork cancels on small queens. The scans he sent represent the perfect starting point to renew an old Study Group practice.



While there are many geometric cancels like the one on the left, the post office where they were used have not been identified. This cancel is similar to L1619 from Drummondville East QC, (see scan at right) but clearly they are not the same. A new listing?



Two of the scans Randy sent in are very similar to the cancel used in Ottawa in 1871 (cover scan at right from Mike H).



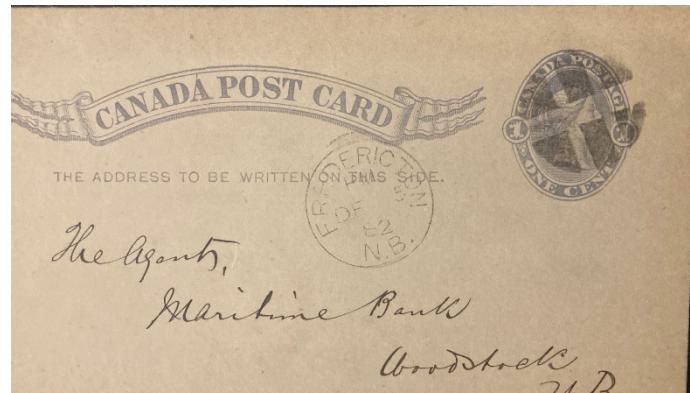
I will use the last two scans from Randy to open-up the topic of cross-hatched cork cancels.



Randy's stamp at the left is likely best described as a triangular hatched cork with a 7 X 3 grid. Given that part of the cancel is not on the stamp, using the 'numbers of segments' as a descriptor may be inaccurate in this case. It's unlisted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.



Oval cork, with 1 X 2 grid or 6 segments (2 X 3). One of the segments in this cancel has likely deteriorated producing a secondary pattern.



For comparison purposes I have inserted a Fredericton post card with the same number of segments/cuts. I have 13 covers and cards with this Fredericton cancel on them. It is not the same as what Randy sent in. but I will use this cancel to introduce the subject of cross-hatched cork cancels and where do they fit?

Mike and I have had lengthy discussions on this topic. Mike has developed a classification system he is using for his town cancel study. These can be described by either the number of segments or the number of cuts in the device. The reason for mentioning that I have 13 covers/cards from Fredericton. This information feeds into a database for the period of use for this specific cancel. It is valuable when used to show when specific cancels were used and when cancelling devices were changed at a PO. This obviously feeds into the ERD/LRD database for ANY town. This IS very valuable information for postal historians. However, for the fancy cancel purists, do these cancels fit?

Many would argue not. We would welcome your thoughts on this subject.

Last but not least, here is a little space filler:

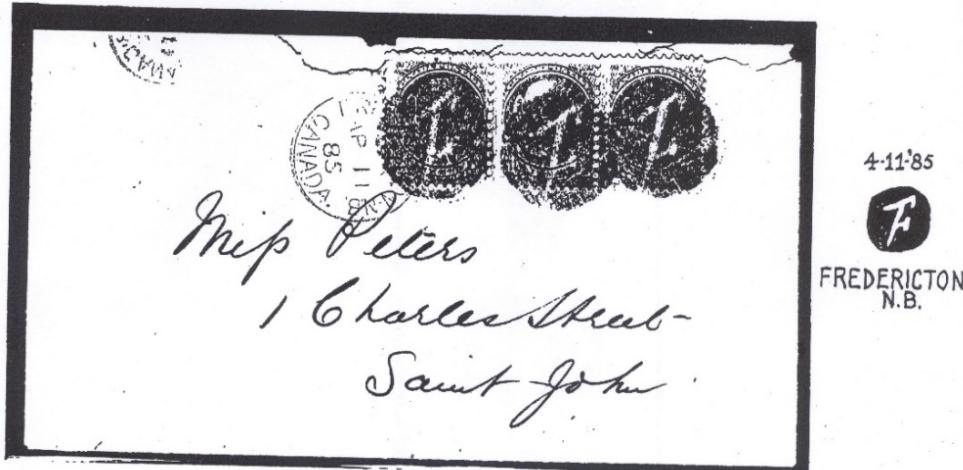
The following cancels are also not listed in Lacelle's 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. These were sitting on one of my many pages of '**cancels to be identified**'. No doubt you also have similar pages. The two on the left (same cancel) and the one on the right are sufficiently different from listed cancels to warrant Lacelle numbers of their own. It is nice to find two or more copies but it is even better if you find a cover!

**Anyone out there have any of these on cover?**



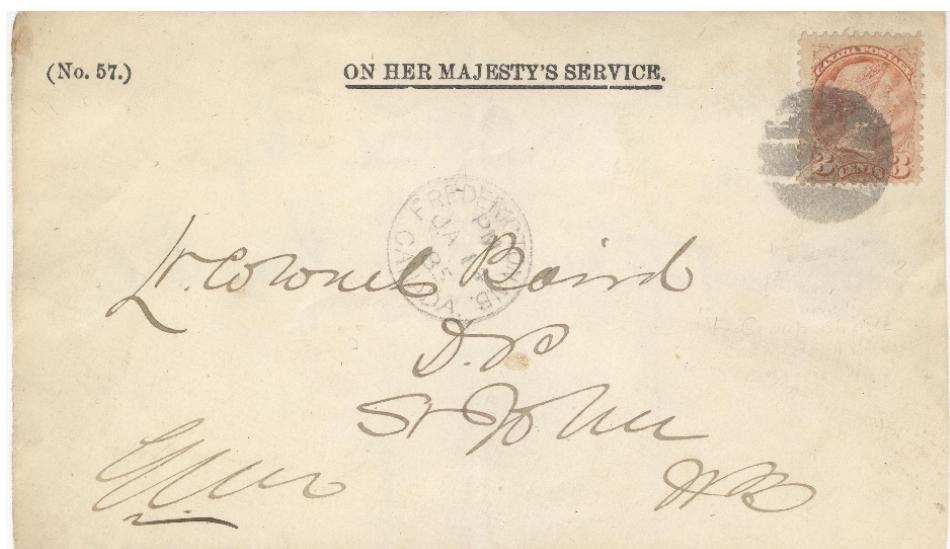
## The Fredericton 'F' Lacelle L409 – Spurious or not? – Ron Smith

Building a story to question whether or not a specific 'single' example of a cancel is spurious or not can be a fun, if not frustrating exercise. I have been collecting New Brunswick fancy cancels for some 30+ years now and have continually been on the search for Lacelle number 409, a Fredericton 'F'. This cancel was listed in Day & Smythies, (481f) and a cover with three nice strikes was part of the Smythies collection (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Photocopy of a partial page from the Smythies collection. Dated April 11, 1885, the cover has three nice strikes of what has become to be known as a Fredericton 'F'

Over the years I have managed to accumulate some 20 covers cancelled in Fredericton in 1884 and 1885 as well as examined many others. However I have never seen this elusive 'F' on cover or stamp. As I understand it, the original Smythies cover is the only reported example. Much to my pleasant surprise, five years ago, I came across a front that was in the possession of a friend. This front was dated January 1885. It appeared to be a solid cork with a few random lines reflecting deterioration of the cork. However, my imagination started to catch up to me (wishful thinking?) and I began looking to see how these lines closely resembled those for L409. (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Cover front dated January 24, 1885 with a Fredericton cork cancel.

We all know that so much of the fun in our hobby is the thrill of the hunt and one should never give up! In October this year, I found a post card in a dealers 'dollar box' dated March 7, 1885 that at first glance was also a basic cork with some 'cracks' (Figure 3).

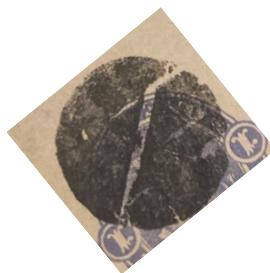


**Figure 3.** Bold strike of a Fredericton cork dated March 7, 1885.

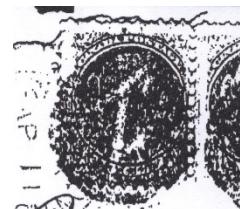
The three cancels do not necessarily jump out at you as being the same until you take a closer examination. Specifically, when the cancels are rotated to have the intaglio lines in the same orientation, they start to definitely look alike (Figure 4).



**January 24, 1885**



**March 7, 1885**

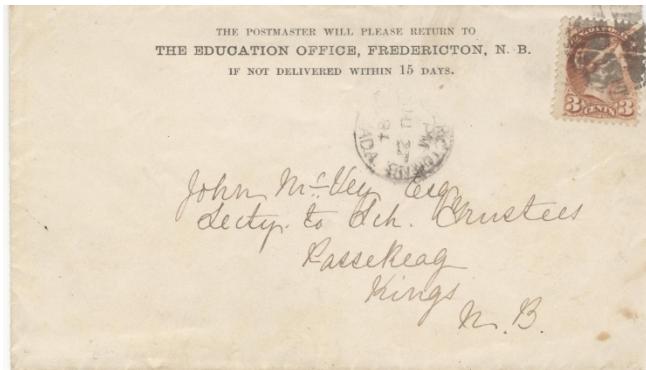


**April 11, 1885**

**Figure 4.** Close up scans of the three cancels. with the intaglio lines oriented in the same direction. Are these all the same cork?

Part of any CSI case involves trying to determine the period of use for a given cancel. In this case, examining covers with Fredericton cancels before and after the period of January to April 1885, provides some additional insights.

Two different 'simple' quartered corks were used in Fredericton in 1884 (Figure 5). Fredericton covers from 1884 are not scarce but the latest dated cover I have seen with a cork killer is August 1884. Covers with a quartered cork dated in May 1885 can be found (Figure 6). I own a total of four from 1885, and have noted three others from various sales, all in 1885. Admittedly there is a four month gap, September 1884 to December 1884, in which I have not seen quartered corks.



**Figure 5.** Examples of cork cancels used in Fredericton in 1884. June 1884 (left) and August 1884 (right).



**Figure 6.** Examples of a cork cancel dated May 1885.

The question warrants asking, what cork(s) were used between January and April 1885? Was it ONLY the Fredericton "F" ? A new "F" cancel could have been introduced and used. However, but if one had, I would have expected to have seen one on stamp of cover. Therefore, my vote lies with the conclusion that a basic solid cork was used in Fredericton starting around January 1885. This cork started to deteriorate with use as most did, with one or more cancels producing an 'F'.

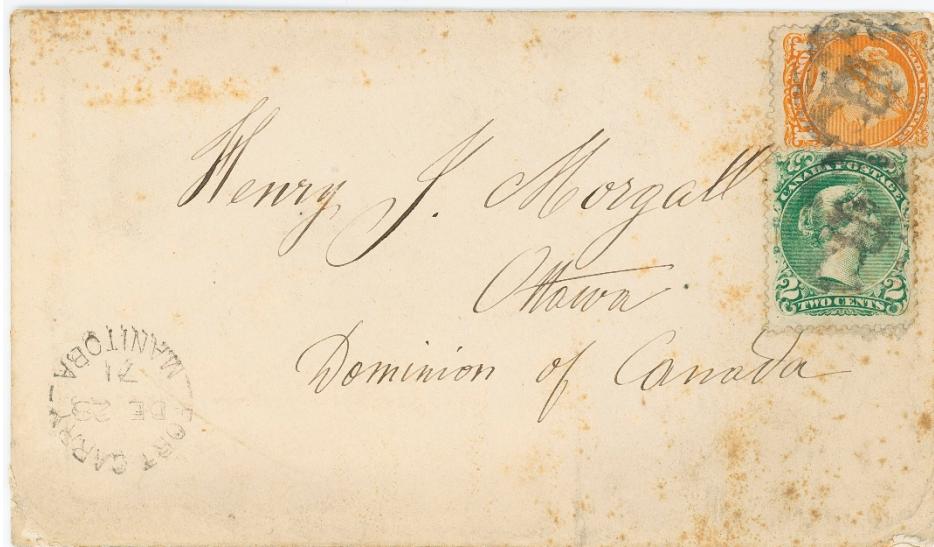
This is far from iron-clad but it's a start.

If anyone reading this article has any covers that could contribute to this mini-study, I would love to hear from you.

Ron Smith: Email: varfor@gmail.com.

## Every cover tells a Story

This cover scan was sent in by Brian Copeland. Thanks also to Bill Radcliffe for the connection. It is a lovely cover even if it is a little oxidized. It has two late-state CROWN strikes. While not definitive, this may be the first cover reporting the true origin of L1290 as Fort Garry.



Cover dated December 28, 1871 showing two weak strikes of L1290. Since the post office of origin for L1290 was not known, this is a find indeed.

The argument that they are L1290 is compelling.



Two examples of L1290 owned by the author.

For the record, some examples of L1289, the 'other' better known Fort Garry Crown are shown below.

Enlarged image of the cancels.

