

# Dots and Scratches

## Re-entries and Constant Plate Varieties

Study Group of the BNAPS  
Edited by Michael D. Smith



Unitrade #19iii "Burr Over Shoulder" Plate Position 7

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### FROM YOUR EDITOR

I hope this issue generates some interest and excitement for all of you.

Scott Robinson starts this newsletter off with a very unusual 3d Beaver Stamp. The stamp shows some very interesting doubling on the entire left side of the stamp as well as a few marks on the right side. He would like to hear from other collectors as to whether this might be a re-entry, a kiss print, or some other printing anomaly.

I just recently acquired a stamp that I would have liked having for the BNAPEX 2015 study group presentation on the 1-cent Decimal flaws. It shows the E-flaw and the upper right frame line extension on the same stamp. Whitworth mentioned the flaws could be present on the same stamp and I present a copy here. Jim Jung has also submitted two other related pieces. It appears I inspired him to look for varieties on this stamp and he has found two interesting pieces. One is a strip of three with the left stamp having the extended upper right frame line and the third stamp showing a re-entry. The other is the first copy I have seen of Whitworth's Flaw 9, the un-erased guide line at the top of the stamp. Both are interesting to see.

John A. Hillson sent an article and additional emails expressing his point of view on the use of plates for the 6-cent SQ. This is a very interesting article with two addenda attached that gives his point of view on the plates used for this denomination. John is a long time collector of the issue and well known author.

The final article concerns a flaw found on the Queen Victoria "Numeral" Issue. The 2-cent purple has an interesting plate flaw known as "C-flaw" that occurs on Plate 2, Left Pane, No. 14. I picture four examples from my collection in the article.

I hope to see many of you at ORAPEX 2016. I look forward to hearing from people in the study group so feel free to email any information and stamps you would like to share. I am looking forward to another fun year as your editor. If anyone wishes to write an article or share a new discovery with the group, I would welcome an article or two from the membership.

Best regards, Mike

# Chairman's Notes

By Bill Radcliffe

I would like to start this newsletter by hoping that everyone had a happy and healthy New Year. This newsletter is a little late getting out because of a shortage of articles so if anyone has something for us please send it so we can get the next newsletter out on time.

The study group will be meeting at 6:00 PM April 30<sup>th</sup> Saturday night during ORAPEX at Guillaume Vadeboncoeur's house in Ottawa. Here is his email address [guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca](mailto:guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca) to confirm and get directions. Or you may contact me.

So far your chairman has had a good year stamping. My sharp eye paid off. Pictured below is a 10 cent Prince Consort from position 61 mint original gum which I believe is the finest one known. If anyone has one as nice, or nicer one, please send me or our editor a scan. It just goes to prove there are still major undiscovered finds out there happy hunting. If any one has any inquiries I can be contacted by phone (609-617-0644) or email [bsbvp88@hotmail.com](mailto:bsbvp88@hotmail.com).





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# An Interesting 3d Beaver

By Scott Robinson (scott@flyspecker.com)



I am always looking for interesting re-entries and other varieties to add to my collection or to obtain as scans for use on my FlySpecker.com website. The stamp pictured here is an interesting one that I am not sure how to classify. I missed this one when it was sold in the Sparks Auctions September 2015 auction along with another damaged copy of the 3d for \$65. This stamp was described as a #4xi (scarlet vermilion on thin paper) with a "noticeable re-entry". I later acquired it for about the same price on eBay with some other lots from Johns Philatelics, where it was described as a #4iv (orange red on thin oily paper) without any mention of a re-entry. The stamp shows very clear signs of doubling throughout the left side of the design. Notice extensive doubling of the outer left frame line in the margin, sharp leftward doubling in each of the white ovals, extensive marks in "CANADA" and "THREE", plus marks in both left-side "3" values. The foliage to the left of the beaver is blurred from extensive doubling and there appears to be a rightward doubling of the arc on the left side of the crown plus some distortion of the crown's circular ornaments in the same area.

The right side of the design is sharp without any significant signs of doubling, although there is an ink mark in the top ball of the lower right "3" value that effectively covers half of it. Initially, this stamp appeared to me as an unreported major re-entry. The consistent sharp doubling, especially the lines visible in the white ovals and many of the marks in the letters, are typical of re-entries. However, the doubling to the arc next to the crown seems to be in the opposite direction. The mark in the right "3" is also inconsistent with the rest of the stamp. My major concern is that the stamp appears lighter on the left side than on the right. This is suggestive of a slip print or other printing anomaly, although these rarely show such sharp doubling and usually have a blurrier appearance to them. So I am left with a stamp that I really cannot explain. Since it is unlikely that such a major re-entry would not be reported until now, I am leaning towards calling this a slip print. I would appreciate any thoughts or feedback from specialists in this era who are familiar with the issue.

# Another Look At 1/2d Proofs and the Left Side Imprints

By Michael D. Smith

In Dots and Scratches #7, I pictured position 73 as having a missing bottom frame line. Pictured here is a strip of three proofs (Fig. 1) positions 73, 85, and 97 with adjacent lower left imprint from the sheet of 120. Upon examining this strip two flaws are found present. The first the “missing” frame line is actually a very weak line (Fig. 2) that may not even show on a printed stamp. The second flaw occurs in the imprint as the “o” of “York” is re-entered/doubled as there are two small marks pointing upward from the “o” (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3

Fig. 1



Fig. 2

One of the more interesting things found during comparison of the two imprints from the left margin sheet is the fact that the six stamps associated with the two imprints can be plated using imprints and a few other details. See the next page for a description of these differences.



Fig. 4

Upper left imprint running beside positions 37, 25, and 13 (left to right).

In Figures 4 and 5 lines and arrows indicate areas in the left margin that help differentiate the six positions on the plate of 120 positions associated with the two left imprints.

In position 37 a line drawn up from top frame line bisects the “a” of Rawdon near its center, and a similar line used at position 98 goes through the “a” almost at the very back. So this can be used to plate singles showing this part of the imprint.

At positions 25 and 85 the central part of the imprint is present. The “g” of Wright can be used to distinguish which imprint and position one has. Note that the “g” is far away from the stamp’s frame line at position 25 and is very close to frame line at position 85.

At Positions 13 and 73 the task becomes easier. If the bottom frame line is present and “ork.” of the imprint is in the margin it is position 13. Position 73 either does not have a bottom frame line or it is extremely weak. If these features are not present there is a dot in the left margin opposite the “O” of ONE. This dot is lower than the period at the end of the imprint on position 13, and is higher than the imprint period on position 73. The dot opposite “O” of ONE is also marginally further away from the frame line at position 73 by about .25 mm.



Fig. 5

Lower left imprint running beside positions 98, 85, and 73 (left to right).

Ralph Trimble had the following comments:

“I do agree that it appears the ‘o’ of “York” does indeed seem to be doubled in the upper portion. It also got me looking at the position dots opposite the ‘O’s of ONE of the stamp above. In the upper imprint on the plate, the position dot appears to be even with the period after the imprint, whereas on the lower imprint with the doubled ‘o’, the position dot is higher than the period at the end of the imprint. This makes me wonder if the imprint on the lower position was perhaps partially rocked-in, when the rocking was stopped, the partial imprint erased (leaving a bit of the ‘o’) and entered lower (i.e. closer to the stamps), resulting in the apparent doubling of the final ‘o’ of York?”

Of course, the entire lower imprint is closer to the stamp designs than the upper position, but this is fairly common in the earliest stamps of Canada. They still were not as careful and accurate about such things.”

# One Cent Decimal with Whitworth's Flaws 2 and 6

By Michael D. Smith

At BNAPEX 2015 in Niagara Falls, Ontario, I presented a review of Geoffrey Whitworth's Plate Flaws based on copies from my collection. During that presentation I presented both Flaw 2, the E-flaw, and Flaw 6, an extended frame line in the upper right corner. I mentioned that the frame line extension came from position 54 and that the E-flaw could also occur at position 54. Neither of my examples demonstrated both flaws occurring together. Since my presentation, I have acquired the stamp illustrated below which clearly demonstrates both flaws can occur at the same time (Fig. 1). The stamp is perforation 12.



Fig. 1

This is the first copy I have seen of this stamp with the two flaws present; although, Whitworth had stated that the flaws can appear simultaneously. According to Whitworth, the E-flaw can be found on stamps with weak outer frame lines and perforated 12 X 11.75 or 12 . It can also be found with strong outer frame lines and the extended frame line on stamps perforated 12. So apparently the E-flaw first appeared during the middle printings of this stamp with the combination perforations and weak frame lines. Later, at some point during the perforation 12 printings, the frames were strengthened and the extended frame line begun appearing with the E-flaw at position 54. At some point the E-flaw was repaired leaving only the extended frame line at this position. This chain of events provides collectors with an opportunity to acquire position 54 copies with no varieties (Early Proof, Fig. 2), with e-flaw only (Fig. 3), with both E-flaw and extended frame line (Fig. 1), or with the extended frame line only (Fig. 4). Figures 2 through 4 are on the following pages.

## References:

*The First Decimal Issue Of Canada 1859-68*, Geoffrey Whitworth, The Royal Philatelic Society, London, White Crescent Press Ltd., Luton, Bedfordshire, 1966.

*Whitworth's Plate Flaws on the One Cent Decimal Issue*, BNAPEX 2015 presentation, Michael D. Smith, 2015.





Fig. 2

Proof single of position 54 (cropped from an early proof sheet image) showing no flaws.



Fig. 3  
Position 54 perforated 12 X 11.75 showing the E-flaw only.



Fig. 4  
Position 54 perforated 12 with just the extended frame line upper right corner.

# An Interesting Strip of the 1-cent Decimal

By Michael D. Smith



Fig. 1

Used strip of three positions 54, 55, and 56.

Jim Jung apparently found my presentation on Whitworth's Plate Flaws at ORAPEX 2015 quite interesting and has been looking for the flaws to add to his collection. This strip of three above is an example of one of his discoveries. There are two very nice stamps in this strip of three perforated 12 making them a later printing of this stamp. Position 54 (left stamp in Fig. 1) shows the extended frame line upper right. There is no E-flaw present on this stamp so it is printed after the E-flaw repair. The second stamp appears to be a normal copy. The stamp at right, position 56, appears to be re-entered as the frame lines upper left side and right side appear to be doubled. See figures 2 and 3 for close up detail. These are minor re-entries and are examples of Whitworth's re-entries #5 and #7 on the same stamp. Whitworth's numbers refer to minor re-entry types and are not specific to a single stamp or position on the plate.



Fig. 2

Short area of doubling of outer frame line upper left (in blue oval). An example of Whitworth's #5 re-entry type.

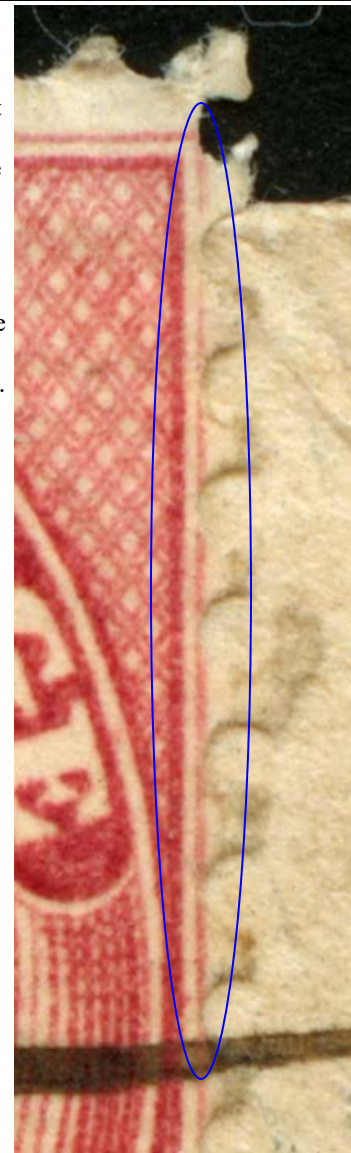


Fig. 3

Outer right frame line doubled about half way down the right side. Most pronounced in upper right corner (in blue oval). An example of Whitworth's #7 re-entry type.

References:

*THE FIRST DECIMAL ISSUE OF CANADA 1859-68*, Geoffrey Whitworth, Royal Philatelic Society, London, 1966, pg. 20.

# One Cent Decimal Issue Un-erased Guide Line

By Michael D. Smith

Jim Jung just sent an image of a one cent Decimal Issue stamp showing an un-erased guide line at the top of the stamp. This appears to be Whitworth's printing flaw number 9 on this issue. This is the first one I have seen. This is a faint line running upward from right to left across the top of the stamp. The position on the plate according to Whitworth is position 9. He states the line is on the early color, and he has seen a dated copy, Dec. 29, 1860. This stamp does not show any signs of the imprint that could be present if printed after state 4 of the plate. This stamp is from the earlier states of the plate and possibly state 1, although it could be as late as state 4. No record is available on when the guideline was removed from the plate. A nice example of a very early plate flaw.



Fig. 1

This stamp is perforated 11.75 and is an early printing.



Fig. 2

Note the line is fairly strong at right and becomes fainter as it goes left across the stamp.

## References:

*THE FIRST DECIMAL ISSUE OF CANADA 1859-68*, Geoffrey Whitworth, The Royal Philatelic Society, London, 1966, Pgs. 17 to 23.

# The Small Queens Six Cents – The Enduring Myth

By John A. Hillson FRPSL FCPS

It must be forty years or more since I first presented evidence that the 1871 6c plate and the 'A' plate were separate plates, and yet here in 2016 some students are still trying to square the circle with ever more bizarre theories to prove that the Printers just used one 6c plate between 1872 and 1888, with a short interlude when a defective plate, which seemingly appeared out of the blue, was used for a short time.

Let us therefore assume that this is in fact correct. We have to accept that the printers behaved totally rationally with all the other postage stamp values they were entrusted with; in other words sufficient plates were made to meet the POD orders, as they wore they were repaired, and eventually replaced when worn out. All in accordance with the contract they had with the Post Office which stated when a repair could be charged for or a new plate invoiced. In this case however, although it was known two 6c plates would be needed from the outset, it was decided to make only one and soldier on with just that one for 16 years. In fact a second one was not made until 1887 and even that was not used till 1890. Also for some reason they did something that was done with no other value where only a single 100 impression plate was in use, they added the check letter 'A' to it, although normally such check letters were only used to distinguish one plate of a given denomination from another. So good was the plate they managed to print 25 million stamps from it, with only two repairs (each one adding a single dot), something that has never been done before or since, with the possible exception of the 5c beaver where 30 million stamps were taken from it, but it was repaired 10 times during its life.

I do wish someone would explain why on earth the printers would behave so irrationally with this one value. So far all we get is silence.

Now what did really happen? The printers knew from the experience with the Large Queen they would need two 6c plates in 1871, and they would also need two 2c plates as usage at the time was roughly the same. The 2c plates were duly made, initially without check letters, but the top imprint of one was noticeably slanted; it was soon after given the check letter 'A', not centrally, but over to the left of the printed sheet, and the other was stamped 'B' at the same time. In Victorian times one did not usually get a rapid turnover of senior craftsmen, so we can be pretty certain that the gentleman who made the Large Queen 6c plates, also made the first two Small Queen plates and to distinguish one from the other he repeated the gimmick he used with the lower left position dots, which you will remember on the first Large Queen the dot is in the lower left corner, while on the second it is under the 'S' of 'Six....'. In the case of the Small Queens the 1<sup>st</sup>, referred to as the 1871 plate, the dot is in the lower left corner; the second it is under the left numeral '6'. But something went wrong in making it; it was never finished off properly, never cleaned of its visible guidelines and the bits of metal that are forced up during entering and which are normally cleaned off with a hand tool called a burnisher. It was never expected to be used, but used it was for a short period toward the end of 1873 – you know it as the 'Ghostly Head' plate (See Addendum 1 at end of this article for an image of a stamp from this plate showing the dot under the '6').

So the printers now have one good plate and one duff one. What to do? They made a third and to this, to distinguish it from the 1871 plate, an 'A' was added above the central imprint. However, whatever caused the 'Ghostly Head' plate to be so troublesome resulted in the 'A' plate in its original state to be adorned with a secondary, and very occasionally a third dot, lower left, very similar to what happened when the 1859 12 ½ Cents plate was made. This 'A' plate was probably in operation before the end of 1872, and certainly by the beginning of 1873. Between 1868 & 1871 BABNC invoiced the Post Office for four 6c plates. Two were Large Queens and both were repaired before mid 1871 which indicates how quickly these plates wore in use. The other two were Small Queens and they couldn't invoice for the duff 'Ghostly Head' plate as it was defective. So the plates invoiced were the 1871 plate and 'A' plate. The record lies in Duckworth. Illustrations (1 and 2) show a single from the 1<sup>st</sup> Ottawa printing from the 1871 plate and a strip of 3 from the 'A' plate, respectively, both are perforated 11.85 all round which is unique to 1<sup>st</sup> Ottawa printings. Both are the deep shade that is found in early 1873. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the 'Dot in P' varieties from identical early Montreal printings from the two plates in use before either was re-entered. (This dot for anyone not aware is the guide dot for the counter).



Fig. 1  
 Single from the 1<sup>st</sup> Ottawa printing from the 1871 plate showing single guide dot.  
 Image courtesy of John A. Hillson



Fig. 2  
 A strip of three stamps from 'A' plate in its original state adorned with a secondary, and very occasionally a third dot, lower left corner.



Fig. 3

Note "Dot in P" variety. The dot is weak and low in the "P". There is only one dot in lower left corner. This is the 1871 plate Perforated 11.85 Row 1 /2.

Image: courtesy of John A. Hillson



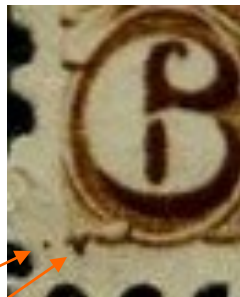


Fig. 4

Note the "Dot in P" is centrally located and larger than the previous stamp. There are also two dots at lower left. This is 'A' Plate Perforated 11.5 X 12 Row 1 /2.

Image courtesy of John A. Hillson



Fig. 5

Single dot on the second stamp shows the stamps originate from a single dot plate. The other stamps have two dots. This is the late state of the 1871 Plate.

Image courtesy of John A. Hillson

It is probably shortly after this that the 1871 plate was withdrawn for repair, a repair that resulted in it receiving a secondary dot (Fig. 5), and the temporary shortage of capacity necessitated the 'Ghostly Head' plate being used as a short-time measure. When the 'A' plate had its first repair, it acquired a third and occasionally a fourth dot. These were repairs as the plates were never burnished off leaving guide dots from previous use. See Addendum 2 which looks at burnishing and what would be involved.

Referring to the imprints illustrated in 'Dots and Scratches No. 7', it is worth noting that the 'A' plate imprint is clearly further from the stamp impressions than that of the 1871 plate, a difference that can not be accounted for by minuscule shifts in position that occasionally can occur in re-entering the plate, and even more cogently, the 1871 plate imprint has a slight tilt left to right, a little reminiscent of the tilt on the 1871 2c plate mentioned previously, while that of the 'A' plate is parallel to the stamp impressions. Imprints did not right themselves.

There was a transfer roller made for every counter and every imprint, though one of each would be made or needed. So the Type IV imprint roller was used for all plates that had that imprint, Large and Small Queens. So of course there are similarities between all of any particular type.

Still not convinced? OK, in 1956 Harmer sold the only recorded block of Rows 1 & 2 stamps 6-10, still extant for the princely sum of £80, and no I did not bid for it as at that time that amount represented about a fifth of my salary. It surfaced again in the Simpson sale in 1980. I have a notion where it is now, but no matter, it is illustrated on page 155 of Ted Nixon and my book. You will note both stamps at the ends of the rows are immediately above one another. Now if you will kindly turn to page 160 it will be noted that the 10<sup>th</sup> stamp on the second row is shifted markedly to the right of the stamp above it, in fact if you turn back a page an illustration of a whole 'A' plate sheet shows a similar aberration in rows through to about 7 or 8. One may get a slight shift in position through repair, but not to that extent.

Now how about the major re-entry on the 1871 plate? Over-excited students who have 'identified' its position have noticed a similar shift as occurs on the variety – the largest block in existence unfortunately is not positional (also illustrated in the aforementioned book) occurs on the 'A' plate at Row 7/7 – for some reason such shifts are not uncommon on the 6c plates. But is there any sign of what is a major re-entry on the 'A' plate at that or any other position. There is not. It is as clean as a whistle. 'Removed by re-entering do I hear? Popycock. I no longer collect the 5c beaver where there are examples of re-entries that survived repair, but I can cite an example from the very first postage stamp plate ever made, the Penny Black plate 1, more familiarly known as plate 1a. There were four re-entries on it (technically 'fresh entries as is the 1871 6c major re-entry). The plate, initially unhardened like all the early Canadian plates, wore so rapidly it had to be completely re-entered. All four re-entries survived intact when the plate was then hardened.

I have had the 'OA' re-entry on plate 1a since before I got interested in Small Queens, the plate 1b took a little longer to find, both are illustrated (Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9). Tiny affairs compared with the 6c re-entry, and yet there they are.



Fig. 6

1a Re-entry marks bottom of 'AGE', vertical line upper right corner and small diagonal line.



Fig. 7

1b Re-entry much reduced but present in bottom of 'A' and diagonal line present in upper right corner.



Fig. 8

1a Re-entry marks in and above 'O' at left corner, marks in bottom of 'ON', and a line below 'ONE'.



Fig. 9

1b Re-entry reduced but still showing well in and above 'O' in left corner.

**References:**

*Canada's Postage Stamps of the Small Queen Era, 1870=1897*, John Hillson and J. Edward Nixon. Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, 2013.

*The Large Queen Stamps of Canada and Their Use*, 2nd Ed., H. E. & H. W. Duckworth, Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, 2008. Pages 101-104.

*More on Plating the Six Cent Small Queen*, Jim McCormick, Dots and Scratches Newsletter Re-entry and Constant Plate Variety Study Group of the BNAPS, Whole #7, Michael D. Smith, Jan. 9, 2016.

# Addendum 1

This is an image of a stamp from the 'Ghostly Head' plate. John A. Hillson mentions this plate as the second 1871 plate that shows the guide dot under the left '6'. This was done to distinguish it from the first 1871 plate with guide dot in lower left corner.



Note guide dot was almost removed from this stamp when it was perforated.

## Addendum 2

### Burnished Off

By John Hillson FRPSL FCPS

The last thing that was done to an intaglio printing plate in Victorian times, before it was proofed was to clean it up all unnecessary guidelines as far as possible, bits of metal that had been squeezed up during the transfer process and so on. This was known as burnishing the plate.

This lead some stamp collectors, ignorant of the processes involved, to blithely talk about burnishing off the images from the plate, or ‘knocking it through’ and burnishing before re-entering an impression. I can well remember discussions of that sort 60 years or more ago.

It had been assumed either that stamp plates were made of malleable copper, as used by artists, or that mild steel was as malleable as copper; both fallacies.

Unfortunately the notion that the stamp impressions on plates could be burnished off seems to have persisted. True, they could be, but to what point?

In the case of the BABNC, plates were paid for by the Post Office and held in trust for that government body by the printers. If they had wanted to clean off a plate, they would have to have gotten permission from the beneficial owners, giving a good reason for so doing, and it would be made clear that not only would the printers have to bear the costs involved – the Post Office could hardly be expected to pay extra for a plate already paid for – but only a repair could be charged.

The Printers would then have to find a suitable engineering firm to do the work, basically a lathe and a grinder/polishing machine would be needed, and the plate would have to be accompanied at all times, probably by a post office official to ensure the engineers did not knock off a few sheets while they had the plate.

The cleaned up plate, now back in the hands of the printers would next be re-entered afresh. All the work needed to make a new plate would have to be repeated – and finally they would get paid – for a repaired plate. Makes a lot of commercial sense, doesn't it. Or does anybody suppose either that the work could be done by hand, or that the printers would invest in the necessary engineering equipment, plus an engineer. If so maybe they should take up a less demanding intellectual exercise. Like postal history.

# Queen Victoria Numeral Issue 2-cent “C-flaw”

By Michael D. Smith



Fig. 1

“C-flaw” A strong mark extending from C into bottom margin.

Unitrade Catalogue lists this variety as 76iv. It is from Plate 2, Left Pane, Position 14. The stamp #76 comes in several shades: purple, violet and reddish purple, are listed in the catalogue. Pictured below (Fig. 2) are the four copies I have and you should be able to see some shade differences.



Fig. 2

I am not going to try and name these shades as everyone sees colors differently. This is just to show various shades are available.

Another interesting thing mentioned in Unitrade is a thicker paper. The paper thickness on the first three stamps above measures between 0.0031” to 0.0033” in thickness, and the fourth stamp measures 0.0033” to 0.0035” in thickness. Unitrade does not give a paper thickness with their listing so we don’t know if the last stamp is actually the thicker paper mentioned there.

References:

2016 *The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*, The Unitrade Press, Ed. D. Robin Harris, pg. 64.