

# Dots and Scratches

## Re-entries and Constant Plate Varieties

Study Group of the BNAPS

Edited by Michael D. Smith



Unitrade 199i Major Re-entry  
Plate 1, Upper Left Pane, Position 10  
Upper Right Stamp in Block of Four  
Re-entry in CAN of CANADA

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### FROM YOUR EDITOR

I am overwhelmed by the response I had in regards to asking for articles to put in Dots and Scratches. I got three very nice articles that I have included in this newsletter and others have been offered for later issues. The response was so good I am not including a personal contribution to this newsletter other than using editorial license in publishing the presented material.

Brian Hargreaves has more Large Queen one of a kinds that he is hoping to get help proving them constant and possibly plating them. Have a look and see if you have found any he presents here. He is still hoping to hear about the stamps presented in Dots and Scratches #10.

Jim McCormick is working toward trying to reconstruct the plate of the 6-cent Small Queen "Ghostly Head" plate. He presents some of his findings in this fine article. He would welcome hearing from others who have material to contribute that would help in this endeavor.

Robert Coulson has found a variety on the Newfoundland Dog Stamp, Unitrade 56, 56a, 57, and 58. There is a scratch on at least two printings of this stamp 56a, and 58. I do not have any information on this variety and the plate or plates used to print them, If anyone can help with information on this scratch variety it would be welcome. As far as I know this is a new variety.

I would appreciate more submissions for the next newsletter or any other future newsletter. They are always welcome.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and every one has a successful year collecting stamps.

Best regards, Mike



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### Table Of Contents

From Your Editor	Page 2
More Solitary Varieties Seek Matching Partners for a Constant Relationship	Page 4
Small Queen 6 Cent “Ghostly Head” Plate	Page 8
Newfoundland “Dog Scratch” Variety	Page 15

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# More Solitary Varieties Seek Matching Partners for a Constant Relationship

By: Brian Hargreaves

This is part two of a regular 'Lonely Hearts' column – written in the hope of discovering new Constant Plate Varieties on Large Queens.

Just over a year ago, in Dots and Scratches #10, I sent in scans of a group of Large Queens, each showing interesting, but 'one of a kind' varieties. I had hoped that readers of Dots and Scratches would have been the ideal audience to assist in providing matches. Sadly I was disappointed. Not one reply!

I'm nothing if not persistent. So I attach a further set of illustrated varieties which will perhaps this time have more success.

## HALF CENT

Possibly an engraver's slip in the left hand margin. A little lower than the PP 4 variety on the 2 Cent now listed in Unitrade, but very similar.



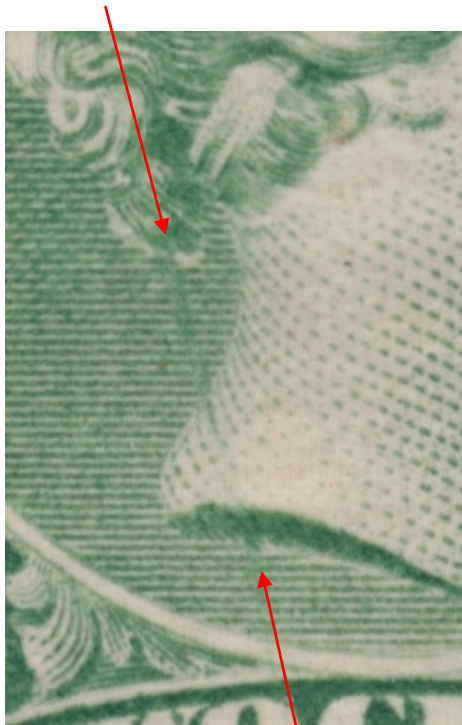
**ONE CENT YELLOW**

A vertical scratch under the Queen's right ear. Very close in position to the variety featured in the last issue, but definitely different.



**TWO CENTS**

A diagonal scratch starting at the bottom of the back of the Queen's hair, and carrying on down to her neck and possibly emerging at the base. Similar in appearance to the 'Needle Nose'.



**THREE CENTS**

A missing frame line at the upper right. Exactly like the well-known variety on the 12.5 cents.



**THREE CENTS**

A horizontal line starting near the base of the right hand margin, and showing continuity through the 'ENTS' of CENTS.



## SIX CENTS

Two diagonal scratches in the upper margin. One coming out of the upper left scroll, and the other positioned above and between the T and A of POSTAGE.



As usual I can be contacted at [bhargrea@email.com](mailto:bhargrea@email.com). If you prefer you can also contact Brian through e-mail to Mike Smith at Dots and Scratches.

# Small Queen 6 Cents “Ghostly Head” Plate

By Jim McCormick

Little has been written about a printing of the 6 cent issue using the so called “ghostly head” or “rejected” plate. The first reference I could find on the subject was in John Hillson's “Small Queens Re-appraised” from 1999, and there is also a section in Ted Nixon / John Hillson's Small Queen book from 2008.

90 examples were scanned and analyzed from different collections in attempt to bring new information to light. There are several distinguishing features which are useful for identify this scarce printing:

- Shallow impression around the Queen's hair giving it a “ghostly” look to it.
- Guide dot directly below the middle of the left “6”.
- A faint horizontal guide line is sometimes visible through the guide dot.
- Printing is clear and crisp showing fine detail, as one may expect from a new plate.
- Some examples have a second guide dot below the lower left corner.
- Dated examples are found between November 1873 and early 1874.
- Perforations measure 11.5x12.
- Shade is always yellow brown.
- Paper is always high quality with a horizontal weave.

Figures 1 and 2 highlight the most prominent distinguishing features



Figure 1: Weak impression in hair, dot under 6, guide line





Figure 2: Example with a strong horizontal guide line

From the analysis of about 50 dated 6 cents between 1872 and end of 1874, stamps dated prior to use of the ghostly head show a single guide dot in the lower left corner, and stamps dated after show two guide dots in the lower left corner. The left most column of the sheet is the exception showing no guide dots. This is strong evidence that the poor quality “ghostly head” plate was put into service temporarily while the preferred plate was out for repair.



Figure 3: Ghostly head in middle for comparison against earlier / later printings

To discover more about the make-up of the plate, multiples and position pieces are necessary. But these are very scarce. So far, the multiples known to exist are:

- Mint block/20, illustrated in BNA Topics Vol 4 No 9 from October 1947. It was believed to be the largest known block of the 6 cent yellow brown, perforated 11.5 x 12. It has since been broken into smaller pieces, two of which are illustrated in figure 4.
  - Block/4 from LL corner of the block, illustrated in the Nixon / Hillson book
  - Block/6 from UR corner of the block, see the Simpson sale (Maresch sale 307, lot 201)
- Used block/8, dated JA 26 74, illustrated in figure 5.
- Block/4 on cover from Niagara to London England, dated JU 25 74.
- A couple of used pairs.



Figure 4: The big block/20, and the known pieces of it

The used block/8 (figure 5) is very important for several reasons. For one, it demonstrates how column #4 most strongly exhibits the “ghostly” look. Column 3 a little less so, and so on until the first column looks pretty much like the normal (non-ghostly) stamp. This demonstrates how stamps printed from the plate may not be easily identified. One may say this disqualifies a stamp as a ghostly head, but we have other tools to identify stamps from this plate.



Figure 5: The used block/8, courtesy of Ted Nixon

The third column of the used block is interesting in that both stamps show a second guide dot in the lower left corner. The mint block/4 from figure 4 also shows this on the left two stamps. From examining 67 other single stamps, four show the second dot. Orientation of the dots are slightly different suggesting that several plate positions have this feature. It is reasonable to conclude that most or all stamps in the third column of a sheet will show two guide dots. Have a close-up look at figure 6.



Figure 6: Three examples showing two guide dots with different orientation

Another great find from the block/8 is that the stamps in the left column both show a single guide dot in the lower left corner. This breaks the rules! Figure 7 shows a close-up. Note that for earlier (non- ghostly) printings, the single guide dot is always to the right of the LL corner, making this one distinguishable.



Figure 7: The first column shows a dot below the LL. corner

The left column stamps from the sheet are easily confused with a “normal” 6 cent. Figure 8 demonstrates how normal it looks. The impression is strong around the Queen's hair. There's no dot under the left 6, and no visible guide line. The JA 30 74 date may be a slightly late usage for an earlier printing. But the pattern on this stamp follows the two margin stamps from the block/8, and the single dot on the earlier printings are always further to the right than on this stamp.



Figure 8: Not so ghostly looking 6c from the ghostly plate

There are no known re-entries or significant flaws on this plate. This should hardly be surprising as the plate was barely used and there was no need for re-entry. There are several very minor plate flaws that appear as small flecks of ink, possibly from burrs or pitting. Duplicates would be necessary to prove that these are constant of course.

To summarize new information on the “ghostly head” plate:

- Most or all stamps in the first column show a single guide dot below the LL corner
- Most or all stamps in the third column have a second guide dot by the LL corner
- Not all plate positions exhibit the “ghostly” look, especially the first column on the sheet
- No known re-entries or plate flaws of significance

It is useful to make a comparison to the 6 cent Large Queen issue. As described in Duckworth's book, there were two plates for this issue. Printings from plate 1 show a single guide dot in the LL corner of each stamp, and from plate 2 show the guide dot directly below the left "6". Plate 1 has a number of positions showing re-entries, while plate 2 has none. The plate 2 printings appeared about a year after the first plate 1 printings. Also it is worth noting that plate 1 had imprint type A (Boggs Type IV), and plate 2 had type B (Boggs Type III). It seems clear that two different siderographers were responsible for the Large Queen plates each using their own technique, and the same two techniques were used for the initial Small Queen 6 cent plates. No imprint copies are known for the ghostly Small Queen for comparison. Have a look at figure 9, noting the location of the guide dots and the different imprints.



Figure 9: Large Queen imprint stamps for plates 1 and 2

### **Conclusion:**

With some 20+ years remaining in the life of the 6 cent issue, why was this plate not cleaned up and put back into service? The original plate was re-entered several times, so why not this one too? We can only speculate.

What are we missing? Imprint pieces! More multiples! Who will be the first to determine which imprint was applied to the plate? Can we pull together enough multiples to identify some plate positions? Please check your collections.

Special thanks to Ted Nixon and Guillaume Vadeboncoeur for their contributions!

## References:

BNA Topics Vol. 4 No. 9, October 1947, article by Ed Richardson

Canada Small Queens Re-Appraised by John Hillson, FCPS

Canada's Postage Stamps of the Small Queen Era, 1870-1897 by John Hillson and Ted Nixon


The Large Queen Stamps of Canada and Their Use, second edition, by H.E. & H.W. Duckworth

R. Maresch & Son Auction Sale 307, May 14, 1996

## Addendum:

Here is the BNA Topics article from 1947 giving the background on the block of 20.

**AND SO--A BILL WAS PAID IN FULL**  
BY ED RICHARDSON



Some seventy years ago a local man (Ithaca, N. Y.) sent his bill to a client located in Canada for some work he had done in looking up some facts for that Canadian's geneology. The bill came to the staggering sum of \$1.25.

No doubt the Canadian was tired, or more likely dusting off the family albums one rainy day, and not wanting to go out in the rain to get a certified check at the local bank (or maybe there wasn't one in his neck of the woods,) he went to his writing desk and took out twenty-one nice, fresh 6c stamps, tucked them in an envelope and sent it off to the States, never giving it a thought that he had overpaid his bill by 1c, nor, what was

more important, worrying about what anyone in the small town of Ithaca, N. Y. was going to do to use or cash the stamps.

Well luckily that man had several sons, one of whom had taken up the dreadful mania of stamp collecting, and having nothing better to do with them, he turned them over to him. That son lived to be over ninety years of age, and was an active stamp collector for nearly eighty of those years. For some reason he never broke a block, never took a stamp off cover, and never parted with a duplicate.

At long last that original block of twenty 6c stamps is now in the collection of another stamp nut. The first time it has changed hands in over 70 years. It is as fresh as the day it was printed. Full original gum, and as can be noted in the illustration, it is excellently centered.

But the real beauty of this piece is that it is not the common red brown, but the much more scarce *yellow-brown*,—and to make matters even better, it is not the perf. 12 variety,—but the perf.  $11\frac{1}{2}$  x 12! Blocks of four of this stamp are exceedingly scarce, and it is believed that this may be the largest block known. Does anyone have one larger?

So you see you don't have to search in out-of-the-way postoffices in Canada, they were cleaned out by collectors long ago,—all you need is to find someone who had a client in Canada who paid his bills in Canadian stamps. That should make your stamp hunting comparatively easy!

# Newfoundland “Dog Scratch” Variety

By: Robert Coulson



A few months ago I was at the local stamp club near where I live. I do collect the Provinces as well as Canadian and some American stamps. There was a junk box on the auction table containing a small bag of Newfoundland used stamps. I bid on it because there were quite a few perforation varieties associated with Newfoundland stamps according to the N.S.S.C. (Newfoundland Specialized Stamp Catalogue).

I got home and opened up the bag and started testing for perforation varieties and came across a few Unitrade 56a (rose-red) and 58 (black) stamps. I looked a little closer and noticed a scratch on the top left hand side of the Unitrade 56a Newfoundland dog stamp. I measured it to approx. 16-17 mm in length. I immediately searched for another variety and found a Unitrade 58 dog stamp with the same variety.

After measuring the length of the scratch at approx. 16-17 mm, I measured the angle of the scratch to be 64.4 degrees as Unitrade 56a (figure 1) and Unitrade 58 (figure 2).



Figure 1



Figure 2

I put it on the stamp forum and one more gentleman came back and said he had a Unitrade 58 like mine but no Unitrade 56a. No one else had another copy of the variety. Robin Harris from Unitrade catalogue read the post and asked me if I would not mind sending him pictures of this variety. I am hoping it appears in the next (2019) catalogue.

The “Dog scratch” variety, which I nick named it, appears on the Unitrade 56a deep rose red (printed in 1888), and on the next printing which is the Scott 58 black (printed in 1894). Unitrade 57 orange red was reprinted in 1896. So far the dog scratch variety has not been found on any Unitrade 56 or 57 stamps.

Not having, or having access to, a full plate makes it hard for a collector to plate a variety. I was hoping before I wrote this article that I would gain access to information that is needed to plate this “Dog scratch” variety. Unfortunately I did not.

If there is anyone out there with positive information on the plate position, please contact me at Stampcommunity.com and leave a message for WERT to contact you. You may also contact your editor and the information will be forwarded.

## References:

*2018 UNITRADE SPECIALIZED CATALOGUE OF CANADIAN STAMPS*, Ed. D. Robin Harris, The Unitrade Press, pg. 703.



## Addendum:

Your editor just received this unused block of four. The lower left stamp has the “Dog Scratch” variety. Also note other small marks in the same general area. The upper two stamps appear to have a horizontal guide line running across the top of the stamps about on a par with the fourth horizontal line in the background and through the UN of NEWFOUNDLAND on both stamps. Would the guide line be useful in getting this variety a plate position? There may also be some guide dots present around the stamps. I also note traces of a guide line in similar position but less pronounced on the bottom two stamps.



The red arrows and dots indicate where to look for guide lines, possible position dots, and of course the “Dog Scratch” with the detail of scratch shown at left.