

Dots and Scratches

Re-entries and Constant Plate Varieties

Study Group of the BNAPS

Edited by Michael D. Smith



“Swollen Breast” Variety, Plate 2, Upper Right Pane, Position 4
Unitrade C3i

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

This issue of Dots and Scratches was an interesting and fun issue to put together.

Scott Robinson has done a great deal of research and detective work on the re-entry on the 12.5c, Unitrade #18vii, position 61. He takes us through the process of getting an image changed on Ralph Trimble's www.re-entries.com and Unitrade Catalogue in the future. The new image is more characteristic of the re-entry than the previous one used. Well done Scott.

The next article discusses some nice plate scratches found on #35, 1-cent Small Queen. It would be interesting if any readers know of a reference for these or if they have other examples of them.

Ron Smith and Bill Burden have reported a neck flaw on the 2-cents Small Queen it appears to be similar to the "Vampire Bite" found on the 3-cents Small Queen.

Jim Jung visits a new flaw on the 5-cents Small Queen with a number of pictures of the interesting flaw.

The last article deals with a mysterious blotch of ink on two 6-cents Small Queens. Does any one have others like these they can share?

On page three I will be posting Up Coming Events. If you have a short ad to submit for a stamp show or meeting, they can be posted here.

I will welcome more articles as it really helps keep an interesting variety of material in the newsletter.

I have had a request for addresses from a fellow member of the study group. I do not have a data base of addresses but if the group wants an address list to share I will work one up. This would be strictly voluntary. If you decide to include your address it will be shared by everyone who wishes to participate. If you don't want your address shared don't send it. I am not fond of this idea. I respect your privacy and security so it is entirely up to you as individuals to use or not use this idea. I am not a computer programmer so I can not be sure of security issues that may be involved.

On another note I have several emails that no longer work. I have marked these members as inactive. If you change your email address please be sure to let me know as it is in most cases the only way I can contact you.

All the best,

Mike

Up Coming Events

ORAPEX 2018
May 5-6, 2018
RA Centre
2451 Riverside Dr.
Ottawa, Ontario



Saturday 10-6, Sunday 10-4
Free Admission and Parking



BNAPEX 2018 Ville de Québec - Quebec City
BNAPS convention, exhibition, and bourse
21-23 September 2018
Friday (10:00-18:00) Saturday (10:00-17:00) Sunday (10:00-15:00)

CANPEX 2018
October 13 – 14
Hellenic Community Centre
133 Southdale Road West,
London, Ontario.
Free Admission, Free Parking, Lunch Counter
Youth Table
We qualify as a WSP show
General inquiries info@canpex.com
Web site: www.canpex.ca



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Musings on the Position 61 Re-entry of the 12½¢ Victoria

By Scott Robinson, FlySpecker.com

For several years, I have been looking to find a copy of the re-entry from position 61 of the 12½¢ Victoria of the First Cents issue. This variety has been listed for more than a decade in the *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps* as #18vii and identified along with position 62 as being a major re-entry. The catalogue has also shown an image of the bottom left corner of the stamp at position 61 to illustrate what it describes as "lines in the N of PENCE". That image, shown below, was photographed by noted re-entry expert Ralph Trimble back in 1993 from a proof sheet supplied to him by John Jamieson of Saskatoon Stamp Centre.



Figure 1: Re-entry from position 61 of the John Jamieson late state plate proof, courtesy of Ralph E. Trimble.

This subtler re-entry from position 61 and the major from position 94, have been documented for many years and are believed to be initial (or fresh) re-entries that existed on the original state of the plate. Geoffrey Whitworth describes and illustrates these initial re-entries in his 1966 publication, *The First Decimal Issue of Canada 1859-68*. Whitworth also describes another initial re-entry consisting of a doubled frame line from position 71, which I believe is actually an un-erased guideline.

Using the John Jamieson plate proof, Ralph Trimble was the first to provide high quality photographic documentation of the re-entries from positions 94, 61, and others including an additional undocumented re-entry he observed at position 62. His images have appeared in the newsletter of the BNAPS Canadian Re-entry Study Group, on his website at re-entries.com, and eventually in the Unitrade catalogue where his image of position 61 with the marks in the N of PENCE has become the standard for identifying this re-entry for most collectors.

My own lack of success in finding a copy for sale of the re-entry from position 61 lead me to research this position in more detail. I have a scan of an early state plate proof, also from John Jamieson, that reveals the original state of the re-entry before any additional reparations to the plate. This proof includes the re-entries at positions 94, 61, and the traces of what I believe are a guideline at position 71. Re-entries mentioned by Whitworth as originating from the repaired plate at positions 51, 71, 72, and 80 are not seen on this proof. Neither is the re-entry identified by Trimble at position 62. The early state proof image of position 61 is shown below with the key elements of the re-entry highlighted.



Figure 2: Re-entry from position 61 of an early state plate proof, courtesy of John Jamieson.

Notice that the re-entry is subtle but has numerous doubling marks throughout most of the lettering, the corner values and the frames at top left. These are highlighted in red above. Other features of this position including the guide dots at middle left, the short entry at the top corner, and a constant mark in the white oval frame at top right are highlighted in blue. Notice that there is no obvious line at the bottom of the N in PENCE. For stamps from the earlier printings from this plate, the re-entry is easily recognised by the extension of the shadow from the "1" of the bottom left value into the left frame lines. The doubling of the hook at the centre of the "2" is also distinct to this position. Unfortunately, these many marks are not as apparent on stamps as they are on this proof image.

The later repair of this plate removes or significantly lessens many of these re-entry features at position 61 and introduces other minor re-entries at other positions that have a very similar appearance. In fact, the re-entry at position 62 becomes very similar to the original state of position 61 and is actually stronger in the later state of the plate after it has been repaired. The mark in the N of PENCE that was photographed by Trimble does not seem to appear on stamps in either state of the plate. I have never found an example in years of searching and this mark is not identified by the major publications on this stamp including Whitworth or the newer book by Kenneth A. Kershaw (*Plating the Twelve and a Half Cents Yellow Green Scott #18*) which was published in 2009 and features scans of both states. It seems likely that this is only the result of an ink smudge on that proof rather than a constant variety associated with the re-entry. Notice that the original image showing this mark also exhibits other smudgy marks, such as the mark in the white oval frame below the N, that are also not found on stamps. In my correspondence with Ralph Trimble about this issue, he mentioned other smudgy marks or ink pulls that appear in other areas of the plate. He agreed with me that the mark in the N of PENCE is almost certainly not constant and will be advising the Unitrade editor of this new information.

I know that several of my collector friends who specialise in varieties have one or more copies of the major re-entry from position 94 but do not have an identifiable example of the re-entry from position 61. I suspect that a significant reason for this is the listing in the Unitrade catalogue that emphasises the mark in the N as the defining feature. Of course, the relative subtlety of the position 61 re-entry, especially after the plate repair, also makes it harder to spot.

For those looking to acquire a copy, the key is to look for the extension of the shadow from the "1" of the bottom left value into the left frame lines. Position 61 is the only stamp from the early printings before the plate repair to feature this. These stamps should resemble the plate proof on the previous page. Probably the easiest way to confirm the identity is to look for the doubling mark in the bottom left 2 and the short entry at top left. Unfortunately, both of these features and most of the other marks are barely distinguishable after the plate repair. These later printings show a similar extension of the shadow from the "1" of the bottom left value at positions 61, 62, 71, and 72. Position 61 is most easily identified by the guide dots that appear in the left margin and in the top of the C in CANADA.

On the next page is an example of an actual stamp from the early printings. Although this stamp is a somewhat dry printing with some missing ink, it clearly shows most of the characteristics seen on the proof image on previous page. I spotted this stamp from a low resolution image on eBay and alerted your editor, Michael D. Smith, to its availability. It now occupies a spot in his collection. Interestingly, when Mike shared a scan of this stamp in our email group, the first comment was "I don't see the mark in the N of PENCE"!



Figure 3: Position 61 from an early printing before plate repair, courtesy of Michael D. Smith.

Addendum:

I felt a few high resolutions images of some of the detail from the stamp on the previous page might show the details more clearly. I will present these on the next three pages. They will represent some of the key features mentioned by Scott but by no means all of the re-entry.



In this image one can see evidence of the dry printing as a group of vertical lines between E and S. These are not constant flaws just lack of ink adherence on this stamp.

Key features of the re-entry in this image include doubling in “ENC”, and the “c” below the N.



The key features shown in this image include all of “12 1/2c”, and “PEN”, note the light rectangle with line in it is another example of the dry printing and is not constant. Note: The vertical line in base of P is not part of the re-entry.



The key features of the re-entry illustrated here are in the doubling in the upper left corner frame lines. The one showing the doubling of the upper left corner is shortened by the perforation. The top inner frame line is doubled and shows as a series of horizontal lines between the top outer and inner frame lines. There are also some small marks in 12 1/2c. The light area with lines in it between the A and P is another area of dry printing and is not constant.

Hope these details will help you find a copy of this nice re-entry.

Two 1-cent Small Queens Exhibiting Plate Scratches

By Michael D. Smith



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

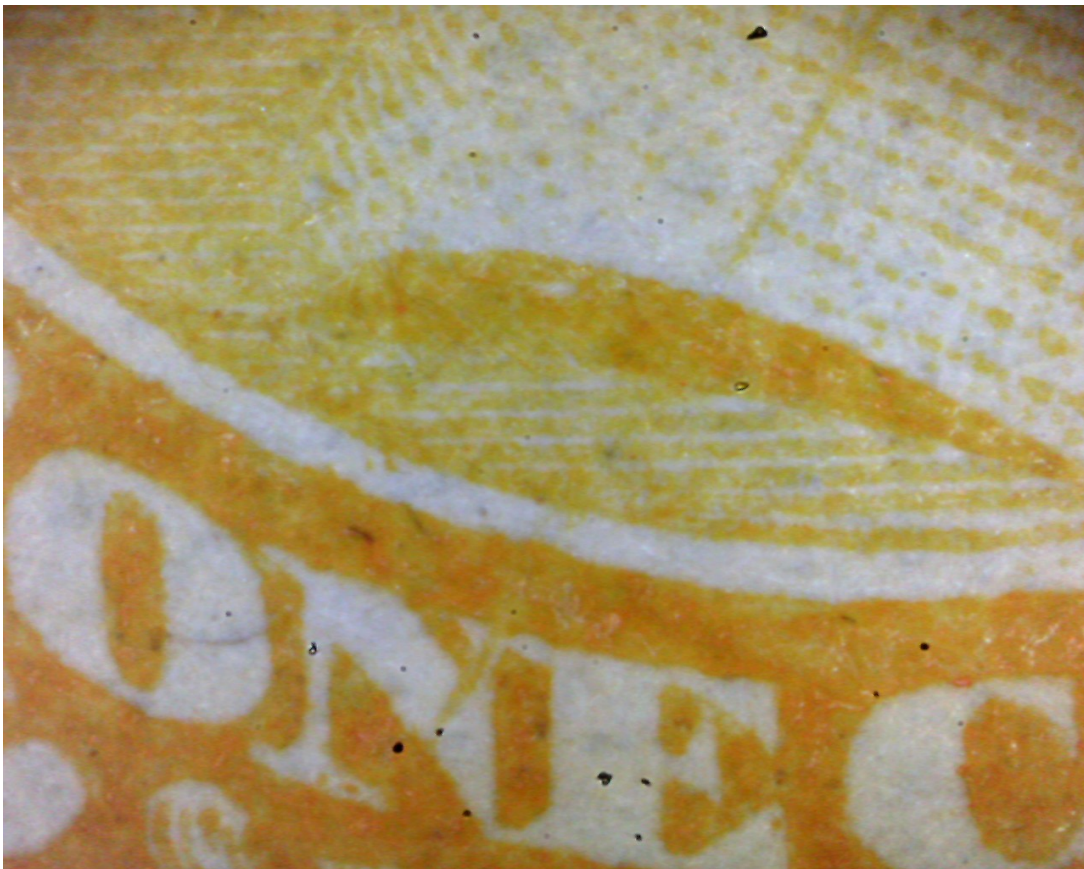
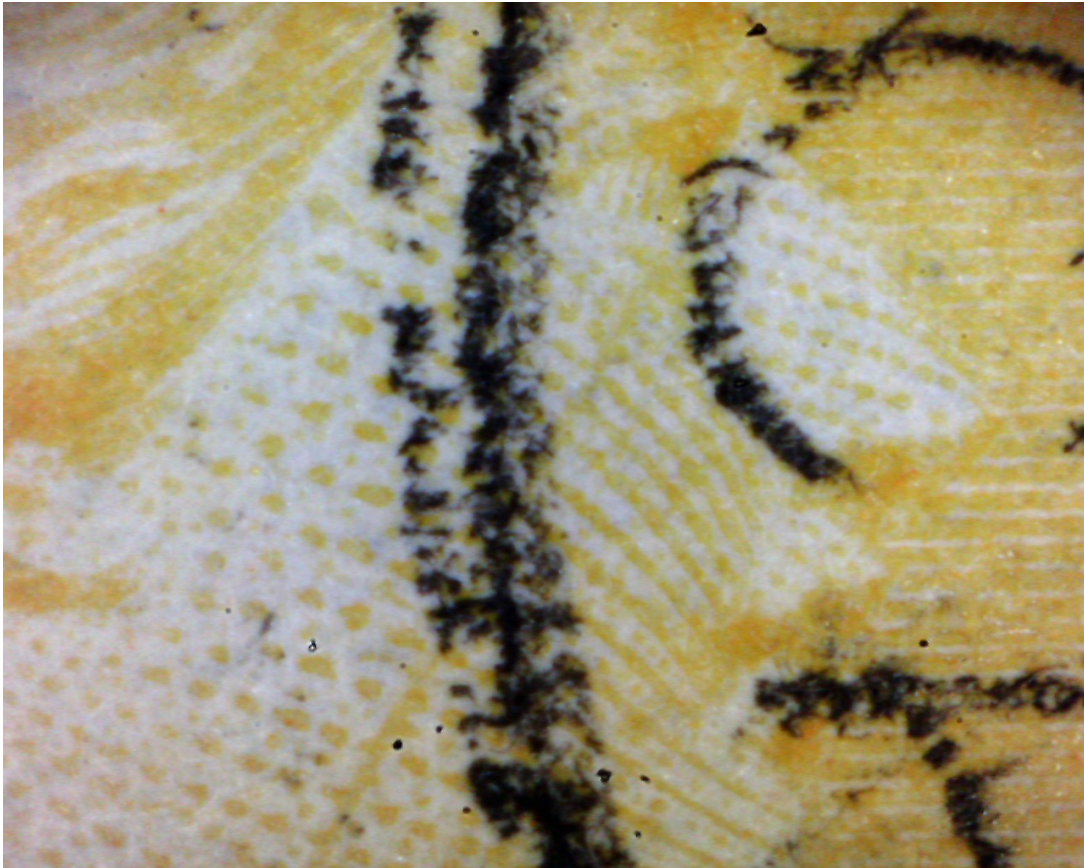
At first glance neither of the stamps appears to be very spectacular or particularly interesting. I bought a lot of 100 1-cent Small Queens in hopes of finding the odd re-entry or a few of the “strand of hair” varieties. After looking through most of the stamps I stumbled onto two I haven’t seen before. These were so bold I felt for sure they could be found either in my reference books or on one of the web sites showing flaws. None of these references showed either of these stamps. I still feel they have probably been reported somewhere. I just haven’t found them referenced.

Figure 1 has a long diagonal line starting near the right side of the eye and running South West through the N of ONE and through the bottom margin.

Figure 2 has numerous diagonal scratches in the Queen’s hair.

On the next three pages I will present some high resolution detail of the flaws present on these two stamps.

Figure 1 Detail



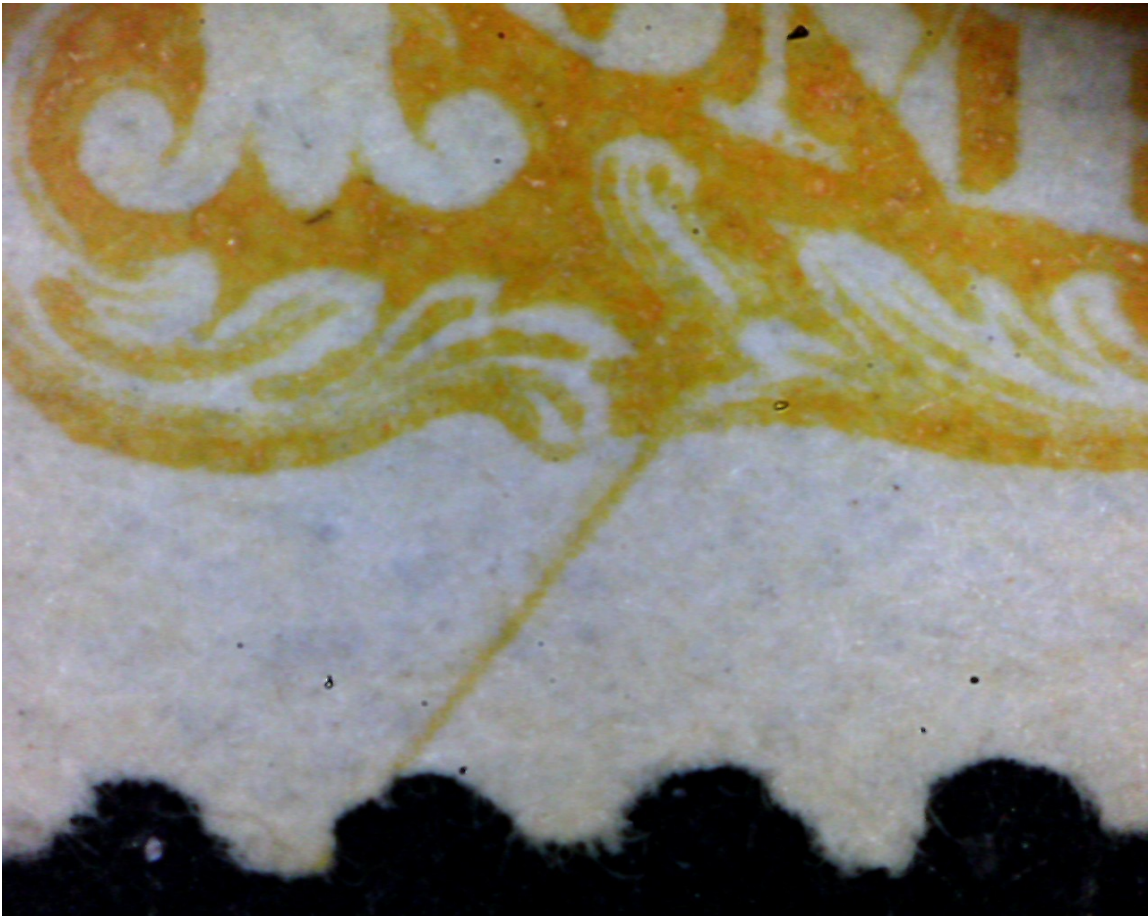
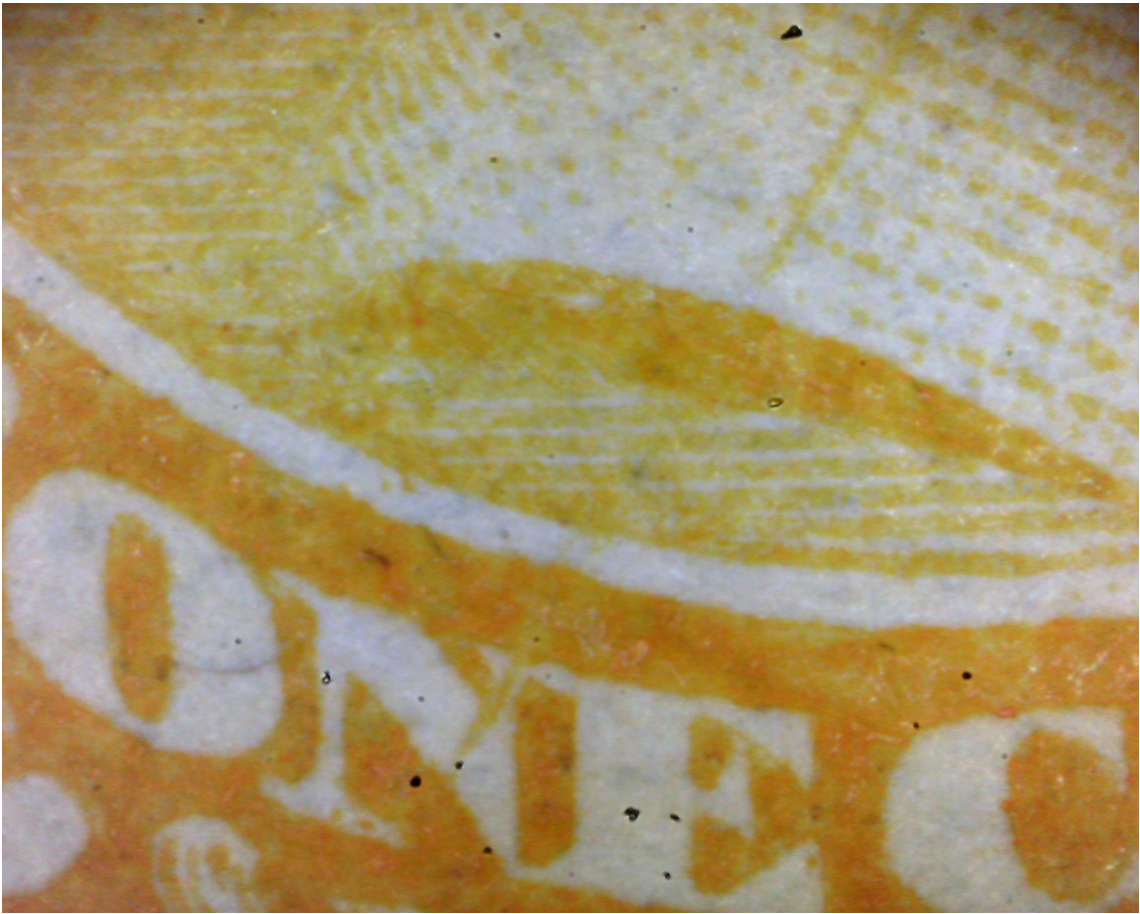
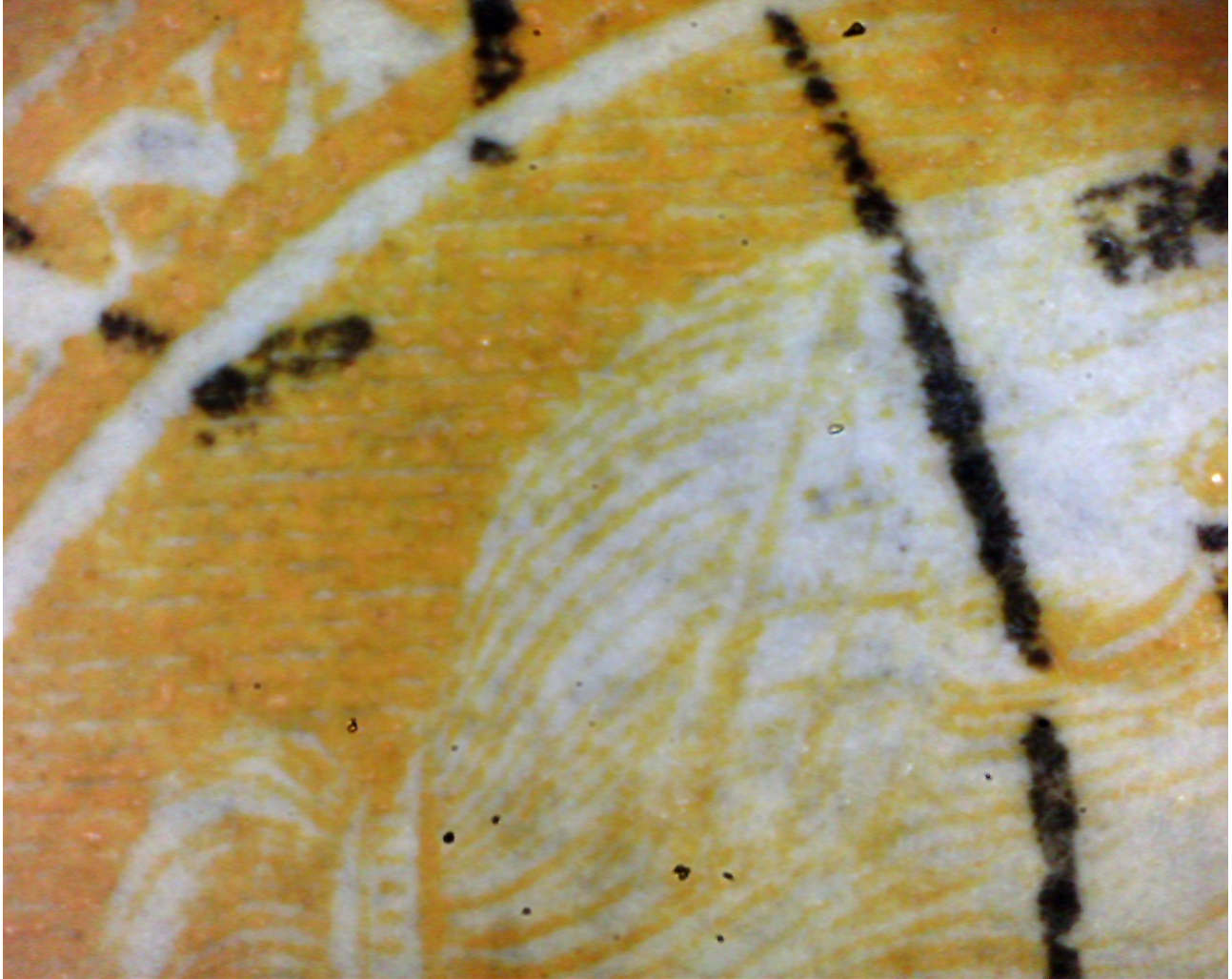


Figure 2 Detail



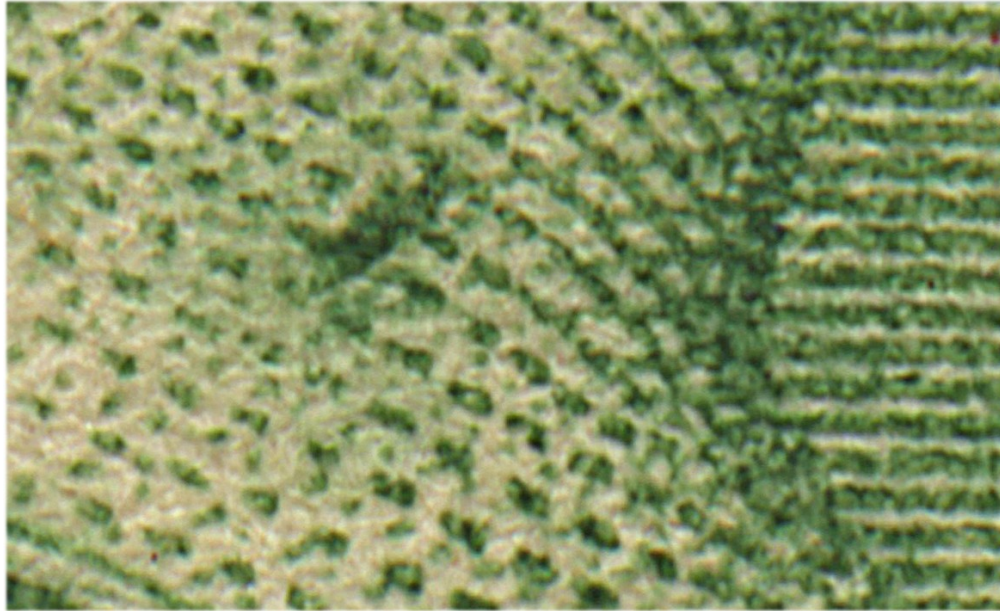
Conclusions:

Both of these stamps are quite spectacular which is why I suspect they have probably been seen before. I would welcome hearing from others who may have either or both of them. The stamps are perforation 12.

Two Cent Neck Flaw Constant Plate Variety

By Ron Smith and Bill Burden

The Vampire Bite is a well-known plate flaw on the three cent Small Queen. It is listed in “Unitrade” as “41vi” and as such is quite popular with ‘catalogue collectors’ as well as fans of several philatelic specialties. A cousin on the two cent value is less well known, but also likely worthy of a catalogue listing.



We are able to provide some information which may help start that process - or at least make readers aware of another interesting variety for which to be watching. It *may* have been reported in Ron Waldston’s “Plate Varieties of the Canada 2 Cents Small Queen” as PF 841 and is pictured on Bill’s website (http://wgburden.com/two_pages/2F16.1.html).

The variety occurs on values from the second Ottawa printing and appears to be of a diminishing nature. It is likely the result of plate damage which was probably quite shallow and thus did not last very long.

We have a total of nine single copies - one mint- of this variety between the two of us, none are dated.



Recently however, a nice copy on a page was found. Stamped at the Toronto Enquiry office, this is a page from a book used in the post office to note the payment of bulk items for which it was not practical to cancel individually... junk mail to each mail box etc. The page was used on both sides, on August 26 and 27 respectively. A nice item unto itself, the single on the backside has a copy of the two cent neck flaw – the first dated copy either one of us has seen.

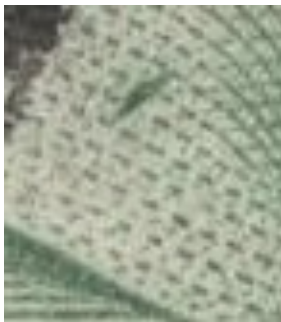


Upon finding this page we decided to pool resources and examine the range of shades of the copies we own to see if we could glean any additional information on its period of use as this page is now both the earliest and latest date of use as far as we know.



Subsequent to the beginning of this discussion, Earl Noss has reported a mint block of four with the variety as the UL stamp. The stamp to the right shows a strong, central Guide Dot in the right margin.

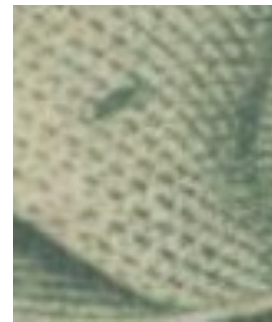
The mark varies somewhat in shape from a broad triangle on copies with a sharp flaw – early use (?) to more oval – dated copy August 27, 1896.



Early ?



Late ?



Dated copy from Figure 1

This is a start. We would welcome input from anyone who has copies of this plate flaw, especially dated copies that can help determine how long this flaw lasted.

Ron Smith: Pigotsmith@gmail.com

5c Small Queen Discovery

By Jim Jung

This stamp was found in a 5c Small Queen collection purchased at the Bill Longley Auction Sale in January 2018. The stamp shows a large blob of ink in the lower left “5” (Figure 1). At first, I discounted this as a Constant Plate variety because it looks more like extra ink on the stamp. The shape is irregular with no noticeable sharp edges. And that’s quite a large mark to have been missed by the large number of Small Queen collectors. I tried to look this up in a couple of books but found no reference to this rather pronounced blotch.



Figure 1 – this is the stamp I originally found in the Bill Longley Auction Lot

Since I am not an expert on the Small Queen issue, the next step was to show this to collectors who are experts in the Small Queen world. The stamp was scanned and then emailed out to my “Go To” variety collector group of friends which included Jim McCormick, Mike Smith, Earl Noss and Scott Robinson. To my surprise Earl sent back scans of two stamps (Figure 2) he just found and purchased on eBay from a Small Queen collector named Larry FitzGibbon. Here is Larry’s Lot Description of these two stamps:

“Canada Small Queen Victoria 5 Cents Stamps - Cracked Plate variety - Fine/Very Fine. The Scott/Unitrade 2014 value is not listed for this variety.

Major Cracked Plate at the bottom left "5" Value Tablet numeral. Unlisted nor documented by Hans Reiche in 1981 from his published book entitled "Plate Varieties Of The Canada Small Queens".

Extreme examples that reveal the complete Cracked Plate variety . This Cracked Plate variety can be difficult to detect because many examples only reveal a very faint/partial Cracked Plate printing impression transfer.

Extremely pronounced Cracked Plate at the bottom left "5" Value Tablet numeral. Outstanding examples of this very rare variety.”

From Larry’s description of these two stamps, it appears that he has known about this Plate Flaw all along. His Lot description also confirms that even Hans Reiche has not published this Flaw. Not only that but he just sold two copies of the flaw to Earl Noss and Earl says that he has more. So I sent an email to Larry FitzGibbon to see what was up with this flaw.



Figure 2 – these are the two stamps purchased by Earl Noss on eBay from Larry



Figure 3 – Close up comparison of the three stamps.

Larry responded to my email happily describing his discoveries of this Flaw which he calls the **Cracked Plate (Pitted Plate)** variety with some details of his research into the Small Queen plates: *“I actually have 5 dated Overseas Postal Covers that confirm the 1881/82 printing period of this 5 Cents Small Queen “Cracked Plate” (Pitted Plate) variety.*

Two of these Postal Covers have a pair (attached) of the 5 Cents Small Queen with the Cracked Plate (Pitted Plate) variety and the other three Postal Covers have one single 5 Cents Small Queen stamp tied to the cover with the Cracked Plate (Pitted Plate) variety.

I have 2 or 3 other Postal Covers with a lesser (progressive) printing impression of this Cracked Plate (Pitted Plate) variety from the printing period of 1884 to 1886.”

Larry also sent this wonderful cover with a strip of three 5c Small Queens, the right stamp having this Plate Flaw and some further examples of this Flaw he has dubbed the Cracked Plate variety (Figure 5). The cover has a MOUNT FOREST DE 3 81 dispatch paying the 18c sextuple Domestic rate to Guelph.



Figure 4 – Larry FitzGibbon Cover showing the variety on the right stamp in a strip of three.



Figure 5 – three further examples of the Cracked Plate variety from the collection of Larry FitzGibbon

Conclusion:

This discovery has garnered a lot of interest within our stamp collecting group and it was fantastic that we found so many examples of the discovery after having not known anything about it beforehand. We have Larry FitzGibbon to thank for that. This large flaw remained hidden from view for all these years yet Larry seemed to know about this flaw. This means that the Small Queen collecting world is just starting to see some startling discoveries.

A Mysterious Blotch of Color On Two 6-cents Small Queens

By Michael D, Smith

Several years ago I bought two 6-cents Small Queens that were touted to be a constant plate flaw. The flaw was a blotch of color in the right 6 on the stamps (Fig. 1). They were sold as one lot probably as a way to imply they were a constant variety.



Fig. 1

After being able to examine the stamps first hand, I discovered one was a lesser 5c on 6c as there are traces of an arc through the tiara and bottom margin marks below S and 6 making it Plate C, Position 26. This position, however, does not have such a mark in the 6 as a constant mark. The other stamp seems to mimic all the marks in the lower right corner but does not have the arc through the tiara.

I contacted Ralph Trimble and asked what he thought of the markings. He said he felt the Plate C, Position 26 was legitimate but with an extra spot of ink in the 6 (Fig. 2). He felt the other stamp had ink added to the 6 and the bottom margin marks added to mimic the other copy (Fig. 3).

I still wonder if both marks in the 6's have been added to the stamps.

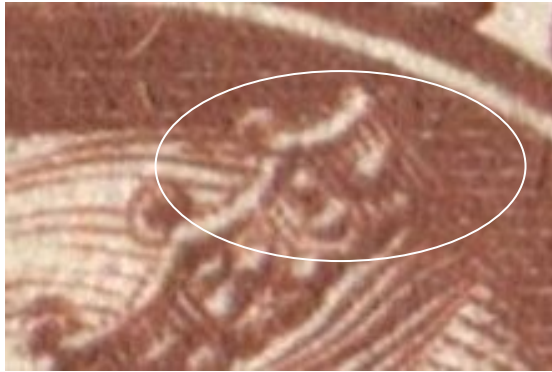


Fig. 2
Arc through tiara just under upper ball, marks in lower margin right;
Plate C, Position 26.
Odd extra mark of ink in right 6.



Fig. 3
Position and Plate unknown.
Odd mark in 6 and marks in lower margin probably added.
No arc through the tiara.

Presented here are side by side enlargements so one can compare the differences in the two stamps easily.



Inside the black oval is the arc through the tiara as it appears on Plate C, Position 26.



On the other stamp there is no evidence of an arc.



The mark in the 6 is evident, but I have about 5 copies of this stamp that don't show this mark. The circles indicate where the sharp diagonal lines in the margin that are always present on Pane C, Position 26



The mark in the 6 is a different shape and in slightly different position. The marks circled in bottom margin are blurry when compared to the ones on the stamp from Pane C, Position 26. This is not the same position.

Conclusion:

In finding and buying varieties one needs to be well versed on the stamps one buys. I am now more skeptical and leery of strong obvious flaws that suddenly appear on stamps that have a history of being well studied. I admit it could happen, but I think that less bold flaws that have not been reported would be a more likely new find. After this experience with these two stamps, I have become very skeptical in accepting new flaws that suddenly show up out of the blue. As I pointed out in the article It may be possible that both these stamps have been altered. These were sold in the same lot which made me think they were constant. I have never bought from this seller again. Buyer beware.

A fellow collector has recently told me he may have a copy or copies of the 6c flaw but I have not examined them. If they prove the same as one of mine I may be obliged to rethink my stance on this flaw. I hope to be proven wrong but I remain skeptical.

Reference:

Ralph Trimble's web site, www.re-entries.com