

# THE NEWFIE NEWSLETTER



NEWSLETTER OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND STUDY GROUP OF BNAPS

Number 138

January/March 2010

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## MEMBER NOTE

Dear Bob, I was quite disappointed when I received the hardcopy *Newfie Newsletter* by mail only to find that one of my articles ["Pile of Cods"] had been printed in black and white. However, I was then sent the link to the high resolution pdf, where everything is in beautiful colour! I immediately changed to receiving my newsletter in the electronic format. Thanks for this initiative that improves quality and reduces costs. However, for those that still receive the hardcopies, then I suspect they would rather pay more and receive it ALL in colour! Best wishes, Tony Thompson

This time, Anthony's article is in color in all versions (Pages 11-12). Editor

## NEW CONCEPT?

Starting in the next issue I am providing a series (two pages per issue) using the first part of my exhibit *Postal Shortages, and Surcharged Issues of Newfoundland*, as it was seen at Washington 2006 - with a new twist. On a left page you will see an exhibit page, and on the right notes relating to that page, including additional information (philatelic as well as historical), research, alternative items that could have been used or are still being sought, expanded provenance, and comments on senders or recipients of postal history items. Literary references will also be included, when applicable. The 18 pages are on the 1897 postal shortage – my first love in Newfoundland philately.

## PLEASE PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION

To C.A. Stillions piece on the Robert Pratt slides. This suggests great things to be made available in the near future to all lovers of Newfoundland philately.

## NEED ARTICLES

Please send me material!!!

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## **Pre 1900 Incoming Mail – Colin Lewis**

In my view a key facet of the study of postal history is ignored by many postal historians, and that is incoming mail. Finding pre 1900 incoming mail, to a country like Newfoundland, is quite difficult for a number of reasons. Firstly, a collector is competing for material with those who collect the postal history of the country of origin. The second difficulty, and this especially with Newfoundland, is the small amount of incoming material that has survived the disastrous fires that ravaged St. John's during the 19th century. There was also the fact that many vessels perished on their perilous voyages to Newfoundland and many of these would have been carrying mail. Although, not all incoming mail would have been addressed to St. John's, by far the greatest proportion would have been. It was not only St. John's that suffered from fires but many of the outports had their own disasters, which would have destroyed mail. Notwithstanding these difficulties, mail has survived and some of this makes a very interesting area of study, as there is little or no Newfoundland outgoing mail known to many of the places of origin.

Illustrated on the next page is an 1860 letter from the Ionian Islands. These are, as one would expect, in the Ionian Sea and today form part of Greece. They include Corfu, Kefalonia, Ithaca and a few smaller islands as well as the island of Zante (also known today as Zakynthos) where this letter originated.

Zakynthos was inhabited from the Neolithic Age whilst the Greek poet Homer mentioned it in his poems "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey". From 1815 to 1864 the Ionian Islands were a Protectorate of Great Britain before being annexed by Greece in 1864.

The letter is from Barff & Co of Zante to Punton and Munn the Merchants and Ship Owners at Harbour Grace. The first part, written on November 12 1860, refers to the vessel "Restless" and states: "its arrival was unfavourable as we had not the alternative of sending her to Ancona (Italy on the Adriatic Sea), because that place was blockaded and bombarded". Ancona, at this time, was under the control of the Papal States being led by a Frenchman, and it was being attacked by the Italians. The second part of the letter is written on November 25 and is a plea to send further vessels as there is an extreme shortage of salted cod.

The origin postmark in blue is in Greek and translated reads: Zakynthos 27 November 1860. The letter is endorsed Via Trieste and was carried there by sea. It would have crossed Europe by train to the major exchange office at Aachen (Prussia) and reached London December 7 (backstamp) via the French port of Calais. It would then have been forwarded in a closed bag to Liverpool, to probably connect with the sailing of the Cunard vessel "Persia" on December 8. That vessel arrived at New York on December 20. The mail bag would then have been forwarded to Halifax, Nova Scotia to connect with the Cunard feeder vessel, probably the "Merlin", for St. John's where it arrived on December 31 (backstamp). It was received at Harbour Grace on January 1 1861 (front receiver).

There are a number of rates marked on the front and those in red signify that the letter was prepaid to UK. The rate was 1s2d Sterling per ¼ ounce of which 4d was the accountancy fee for transitting Prussia, whilst the deleted 8 (decimes) is the accountancy fee claimed by France. The 1s in black, signifying collect, is the ½ ounce Trans Atlantic Sterling rate for mail sent via the Liverpool Packet. [See next Page]

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**Pre 1900 Incoming Mail – Colin Lewis**



**1860 letter to Newfoundland from the Ionian Islands**

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**BNAPEX 2009 NOTES**

**TOP AWARDS**

David Bartlett won a gold and the Meyerson Award for his one-frame exhibit:

***Ration Booklets of Newfoundland***

C.R. McGuire won the Vincent G. Greene Award for his series in BNATopics:

***Communications Across the Atlantic***

MEMBERSHIP -- 1198 (as of 9-09) compared with 1210 a year earlier.

BUDGET -- The Board cut about \$20,000 from current budget because of a reduction of investment earnings.

After a debate it was decided *not* to cut payments to Study Groups. PortraitsS is being eliminated to save postage and publication costs.

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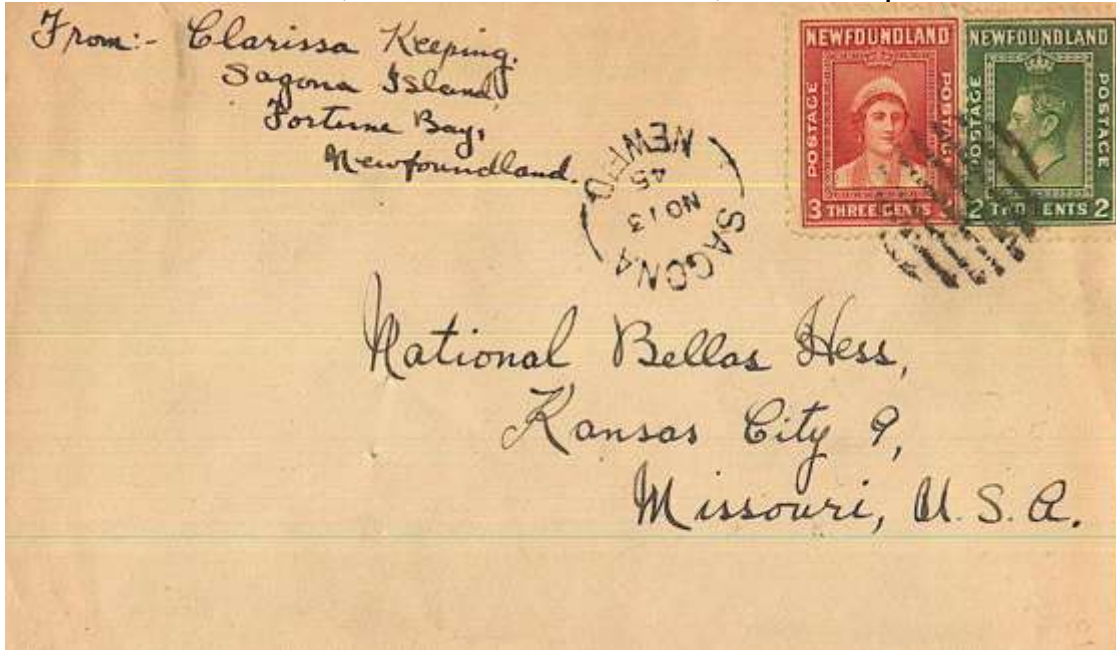
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Page 29

**GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN – CARL MUNDEN**

**FORTUNE BAY – SAGONA/SAGONA ISLAND**

Opened as a way office in 1881. Became a post office in 1891. Office was renamed SAGONA ISLAND on Feb. 23, 1956. Closed Oct. 16, 1968. Population 223.



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## Revisiting the C1 « Hawker »

*Jean-Claude Vasseur*

It is usually assumed that everything has been written about the “Hawker” and can be found in the authoritative book of C. H. C. Harmer “Newfoundland Air Mails”. Recently, Bob Dyer provided me with an important article written in the Collectors Club Philatelist (VOL XXX N°11) by Henry M. Goodkind, in 1951, thus 2 years before Cyril Harmer.

Both wrote the same story with few slight differences, regretting the absence of archival documentation at the SJ GPO, and eventually leaving blanks after a number of questions: the number of stamps/covers in the mail, a stamp unsigned on the back, one signed “W.C.”, one signed “J.A.R. 87” and the setting of the surcharge

I have found it instructive to add some logic and a few new findings to the story. The following is somewhat speculative and critics may respond but I even encourage it!

### THE SETTING OF THE OVERPRINT

200 Caribou 3c. were overprinted. Page 9 C.H.C. Harmer refers to an official notice stating “... Before being sold, the stamp will first be authenticated by the P.M.G. by initialing ‘J.A.R.’ on the gum side...” This was done in a hurry.

Stamps were ready only two days after that an agreement had been made with Captain Fenn, chief of the Sopwith team.

The setting of the surcharge is not known and the two pieces of essays – a block of 12 (3x4) and a strip of 3 – do not help in this respect. C.H.C. Harmer, when mentioning a possible setting of 25, refers to similar settings for the Atlantic Crossing and the Halifax issues, which were overprinted later at the “Royal Gazette” on a press which required the removal of the margins on horizontal stamps (25.4x19.8mm) – of Sc 70 and Sc 73 -. The overprint of the Hawker was made at the “Daily News” – owned by the P.M.G. J. Alex. Robinson! - which would do the same in 1927 for the “De Pinedo” in a setting of 50 for vertical stamps. The stamp, here at right, merits attention: it is a lower marginal stamp showing part of the registration piece at right – thus the sixth stamp on the lower margin - the margin being torn down. Assuming that the overprint was made on blocks of 25, would you expect the printer to separate the sheet that way? This argument is very speculative, as is the following one:



Below is a list of the stamps of Newfoundland overprinted in large blocks:

Year SC	<b>1897</b> <b>75/77</b>	<b>1919</b> <b>C1</b>	1919 C2	1921 C3	1920 127	1920 128/130	<b>1927</b> <b>C4</b>	1929 160
Orientation	<u><b>Vert</b></u>	<u><b>Vert</b></u>	Hor	Hor	<b>Vert</b>	Hor	<u><b>Vert</b></u>	Hor
Setting	<u><b>50</b></u> <u><b>(10x5)</b></u>	?	25 (5x5)	25(5x5)	25(5x5)	25(5x5)	<u><b>50</b></u> <u><b>(10x5)</b></u>	25(5x5)
Margins	<u><b>YES</b></u>	<u><b>YES</b></u>	NO	NO	NO	NO	<u><b>YES</b></u>	NO
Printer	<b>Royal</b> <b>Gazette</b>	<u><b>Daily</b></u> <u><b>News</b></u>	Royal Gazette	Royal Gazette	Royal Gazette	Royal Gazette	<u><b>Daily</b></u> <u><b>News</b></u>	(1)Nfld Gazette

(1) Earlier Royal Gazette, Newfoundland Gazette from 1924. David R. Thistle printer

If you see what I see, it's possible that **the Hawker may have been in blocks of 50!** However there is a question mark as, of the three stamps overprinted with margins, the first one – the 1897 provisional – was printed at a different place, the Royal Gazette.

### THE RECOGNIZED ESSAYS

1. They show the surcharge 22¼ mm high such that it is overlapping the value tablets, which must have been found unsatisfactory. Thus, while the wording and its disposition was not changed, the final height of the surcharge was reduced by 3 mm.

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2. There are “traces” of signature “J.A.R.” on the back of the strip and on one stamp of the upper row of the block of 12.  
The strip is reported to have been found stuck on paper.

This is an interesting point. The P.M.G. may have discovered later that signing on the gum side was somewhat of a challenge and needed to make essays of the signature to test for adequate ink including resistance to wetting and sticking.

**THE ISSUED OVERPRINT**

Examination of about 60 stamps, mint or on covers, shows that all stamps have an identical vertical position of the definitive overprint, 19¼ mm high, with the top within POSTAGE – few touching NEWFOUNDLAND – and the value unaffected at the bottom. The examination of the vertical strips (2 or 3 stamps) shows very little variations in the vertical positioning. Thus, all stamps have the same pattern, clearing NEWFOUNDLAND at the top and the value at the bottom.

**THE SIGNATURE ON ISSUED STAMPS**

The ink shade “deep brilliant black” looks like the ink of the overprint. It is noticeable that the overprints and signatures on stamps which were in the mail – thus exposed to extreme moisture - survived the same way. On the attached cover the stamp is intact and is in place – the cancellation fits the wavy lines on the stamps contrary to the majority of covers known to me- but has lost majority of its gum such that it can be partially lifted showing the “J.A.R.” signature as on the stamp and an offset on the cover.



NOTE: The cover was sent to Mr Halford in Littleover by Derby. The framed “Hawker”<sup>1</sup>, with the signatures of the competitors and Lord NorthCliff all around, was sold at auction by Fred Melville – dealer and President of the Junior Philatelic Club - and purchased by the Lt-Col Halford of the Air Ministry, likely the same person. The funds went to the Newfoundland Marine Disaster Fund. Also the cover has a receiving c.d.s. on front. It is the only example known to the author. Other covers don’t have any receiving mark other than the “Find Open” sticker on back.



This example, together with the Captain Fenn cover missing stamp but showing the reverse signature on the cover, prove, if necessary, that the stamps of the mail were signed, as well as the 76 mint stamps sold for the profit of the Newfoundland Marine Disaster Found.

**DISSEMINATION OF STAMPS**

At this stage we must come back on one of the statements by the P.M.G. about the number of stamps. The 200 stamps where disseminated as follows:

- 11 complimentary examples;
- 18 defective and destroyed;
- 95 sold for the mail; and,
- 76 sold for the Newfoundland Marine Disaster Fund

The 11 complimentary stamps – which must not be confused with the 10 “Official Mail” covers - were given to:  
- The Governor (2 including 1 for the King);

<sup>1</sup> Now in the Royal Philatelic Collection. See below

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- The Governor (2 including 1 for the King);
  - Mr Partridge as Official Starter (2 including 1 for the Royal Aeroclub London);
  - The Curator of the St John's Museum (2);
  - The Captain Fenn (4 for himself, Mrs Sopwith, Hawker & Mckenzie-Grieve, and 1 to be sold in London for the Newfoundland Marine Disaster Fund mentioned earlier in this article).
- Of these, 8 were likely used and 3 remained unused (2 in the Museum and 1 sold in London)

### THE 18 DEFECTIVE STAMPS

It is strange that nobody (Harmer or Goodkind) talks about these defective/destroyed stamps. First of all, they did not get out of the 'Daily News' premises in such condition; otherwise they would have been replaced. Secondly, "defective" does not refer to small defects. There are stamps with significant blobs which were not destroyed: in addition to the one shown above; here are three others –including two in the only surviving strip of three (British Library)

It should be also noticed that on a number of stamps the signature overlaps the perforations (see stamps above and at right). This must have been a concern for the P.M.G. who sometimes "missed" with his beautiful initials. Thus the signature must have been made while the stamps were in blocks, even though, signing the stamps with a pen – as used at that time - without damaging them must have been a challenge.

The two shown stamps survived the treatment, but it may be argued that occasionally the pen went "in" the perforation with major damage to stamps which then must have been discarded. If this is not a sound theory, find a good reason for the P.M.G. to sign, few days later, the so-called "Manuscript" overprinted stamp for the mail of the Martinsyde on the *front* of the stamp... with his *usual violet ink!*

Finally, due to the nature of the ink and the necessarily long time for a signature to dry on the gum side, it is unthinkable that the P.M.G. may have signed the stamp on demand. He likely did the work at once or by blocks.

### THE "J.A.R. 87"

As explained above the 18 defective stamps probably resulted from the signature by the P.M.G. In this vein, I am proposing a new explanation for the stamp "JAR 87" - 87 was likely the number of remaining stamps at one point of the signatures, after signing a number of blocks. For example, he may have signed 100 stamps and added "87" on the last one as a remainder of the number of "good" stamps.

In my opinion, this makes sense. The fact that 87 is the addition of the complimentary (11) and unsold stamps (76) is sheer coincidence.

### THE UNSIGNED STAMP

This stamp was recently (2005) sold by Cherrystone of New-York. It is the only corner stamp known and it has a "3" pencil written in the margin. The description was as follows:

"Unsigned...few marks remaining at top". Actually the back of this stamp is shown in the article of Henry Goodkind. It shows no trace of a signature but indefinable diagonal traces.

**THIS STAMP IS AN ESSAY. It has the overprint with the correct dimension (19¼mm), but still positioned too low, overlapping the value.** It is obviously an intermediate stage between the "large" 22¼ mm overprint and the issued stamps.



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Consequently, there is no more reason to think that the P.M.G. may not have signed all the stamps...

**THE “W.C.” STAMP**

... Except this one!

This stamp, with the initials of William Campbell – the Secretary of the P.M.G. - is in the Fitzgerald Collection at the British Library in London. Frankly, waiting for images from the BL, I was expecting to find another obvious essay with the same surcharge pattern as the unsigned stamp. It is not. Also, I doubt the PMG would have authorized his Secretary, William Campbell, to sign the official issue. Also, the slanting signature suggests a non-official signature. It could be an essay of signature with the adopted ink or a souvenir by and for the Secretary.

In my opinion, all issued stamps were signed by the P.M.G.



(Courtesy of the British Library, London)

**NUMBER OF UNUSED STAMPS**

While the P.M.G. mentioned 95 stamps sold for the mail, there were only 80 covers with the overprinted stamp in the mail bag plus the stamp on the Letter Bill – assuming this figure is correct -. In addition there is also a “Hawker” known on the Martinsyde mail and one on the letter cancelled May 2 1919 to the Ambassador of France in London.

Thus **99 stamps remained unused** and found their way to the collections and market... including the two stamps in the Saint John’s Museum which “disappeared” in 1930!

**A SPECIFIC STAMP?**

At the end of 1919, J. Alex Robinson resigned from his position of P.M.G. His political party lost the election and a new organization of the Post Office went into effect with W. W. Halfyard as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. When the later reported the activity of the Post Office for 1919, the two first airmail stamps – the Hawker and the Martinsyde – were not mentioned. As said by H. Goodkind, this only happened on one more occasion, eight years later, with the “De Pinedo”. There is a good reason for that: in the three cases – and only on these cases - the values of the stamps were not changed. **The overprints were just commemorative and did not correspond to a specific payment listed at the Post Office.** Thus the Post Office ignored them. Nevertheless the Hawker remains one of the most desirable stamps of the philatelic world and the mysteries add to its attractiveness.

**References:**

C.H.C. Harmers “Newfoundland Air Mails”

“The Hawker” Henry M. Goodkind

Cherrystone Auctions

The British Library, London



The framed Hawker (Newfoundland Air Mail)

Cover sent to himself by J. Alex. Robinson the Postmaster General



**Acknowledgement: Many Thanks to Bob Dyer for editorial assistance.**



**NEWFOUNDLAND INTAGLIO CANCELS**

**David Piercey**

The illustrated intaglio cancellations are occasionally found on Newfoundland stamps issued in the late 1870's to the late 1880's. I am attempting to do a survey of what may be in collectors' hands, particularly on cover, in order to determine under what circumstances they were used and how they may be attributed.

**(Illustrations of cancels are on next page)**

- Cancel 1, the "N", is well-known, and exists in reasonable numbers on loose stamps, and is can also be found, though much less commonly, on cover. There are several varieties, including wider or thicker bars that make up the "N", and with or without an outer ring encircling the entire cancel. It is found on the roulette issue of the American printings of the late 1870's, and on the first Canadian issue of 1880. Pratt (1985) attributes this cancel to the Labrador mail boat, but he is most certainly mistaken, as extant covers seem all to have a St. John's connection. Consequently, it has been attributed by others (e.g., Stalker, 2004) to the Coastal North mail boat, or otherwise as a routing mark applied in St. John's. Because of the several known varieties and its relative availability, it is speculated that it was used over a period of at least a few years. (It is also possible, though less likely, that several "N's" were independently produced at different times for different purposes.)
- Cancel 2 is either a "W" or an "M". Pratt believes this is a "W" and attributes this, somewhat speculatively, to the Coastal West mail boat, and thus in complementary fashion to the "N". This cancel is only very rarely seen, and has not been reported on cover. Because of its scarcity, it may be unreasonable to assume it is a Coastal West marking, as Coastal West was a well-established mail route. The one copy I have is on the 1880 CBNC issue.
- Cancel 3 is apparently a "NFL", perhaps standing for Newfoundland. All cancels I have seen are only on loose stamp, and the "N" of "NFL" is only vaguely present at best. No one, other than myself, appears to have reported this cancel in the past, and its attribution remains a mystery. Probably it was used only in a very short period during the early 1880's.
- Cancel 4 is a "VOL", and Pratt attributes this to the mail boat *Volunteer*, which operated between 1888 and 1891, before its sinking. He relates that it was not known to him on cover. Both my loose copies are on the 1887 CBNC printing.

Because all are intaglio markings and stylistically similar, it would be nice to speculate that all these cancels are forerunners of the steel TPO hammers, and that each could be attributed to a coastal mail run (i.e., Coastal North, Coastal West, and the Western mail boats), but this would only be speculation. Similarly, it would be nice to think they were the product of one or just a few mail clerks, who decided to create his/their own distinctive cancellations, depending on the route. But all this too would be speculation because we just do not yet know much at all about these markings.

Collectors who may have these markings in their collection are invited to report them to me, at [dpiercey@telus.net](mailto:dpiercey@telus.net). Scans would be appreciated, particularly if on cover.

**NEWFOUNDLAND INTAGLIO CANCELS –David Piercey**

Illustrations:



1



2



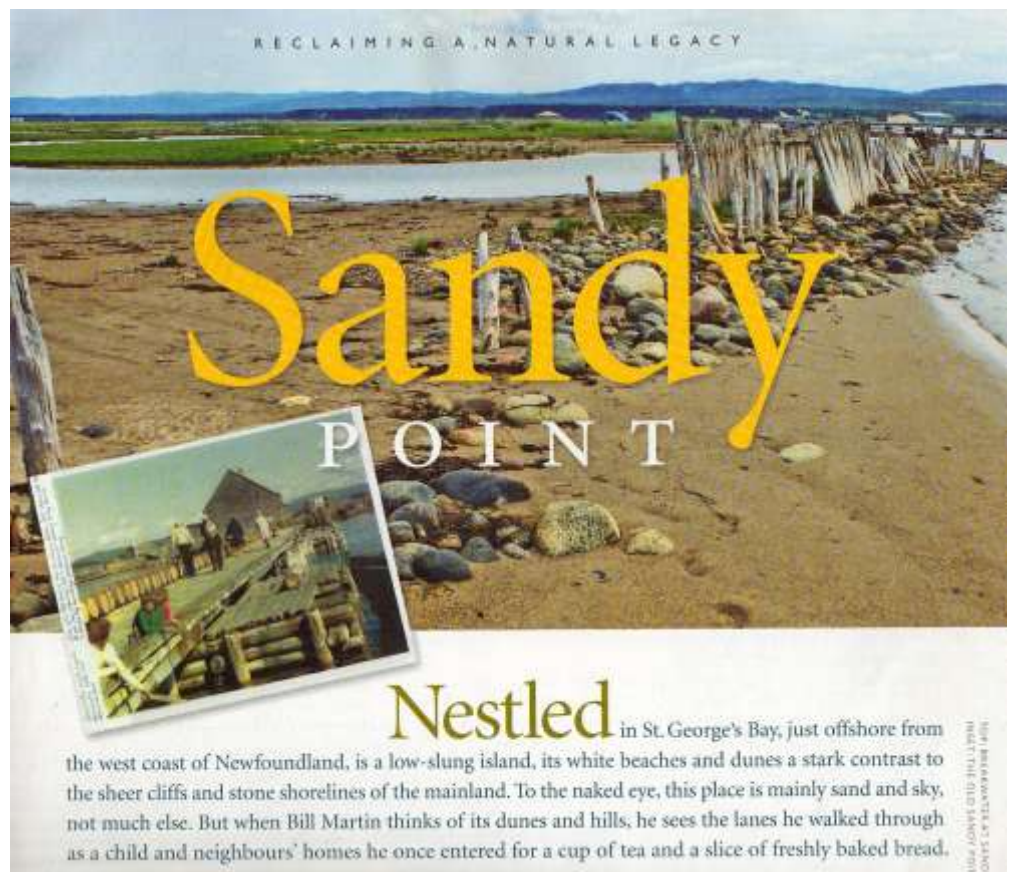
3



4

**SANDY POINT – 2009**

Sandy Point was Rev. E. A. Butler's home. Mike Street recently provided me a copy of **THE ARK**, published by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The article points out that there may no longer be people on the island but Sandy Point's beaches provide refuge for more than 100 shorebird and waterfowl species. NCC has now been able to acquire 54 acres of properties at Sandy Point. It is protecting the island's natural heritage and relieving concerns of many that the land might be reclaimed as a summer camp area. The article speaks of the town's past, as "the largest settlement on the west coast of Newfoundland." (19<sup>th</sup> century). It also states that during its occupancy there was no electricity. **THE EDITOR**



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**SEALS ON NEWFOUNDLAND STAMPS**

A.B. Thompson



The first Newfoundland stamps to depict a seal were the perforated 1865 5c brown, 1868 5c black, and the rouletted 1876 5c blue (top left) printed by the American Bank Note Co., New York. The design was the same and the seal was engraved by Charles Henry Jeens for Perkins Bacon, London. It is known that the die was sent from Perkins Bacon to the American Bank Note Co. in 1865 (de Worms, P., 1953. *Perkins Bacon Records*. Page 189). A photographic essay, presumably a later copy of the original essay made from the die, shows the seal within its machined vignette (top right).



The same engraving was used on the £1 Union Bank of Newfoundland note printed by the American Bank Note Co. from 1865 to 1880 (left) and on the \$2, £1, £5 and £10 Commercial Bank of Newfoundland notes printed by Perkins Bacon from 1867 to 1884 (right).

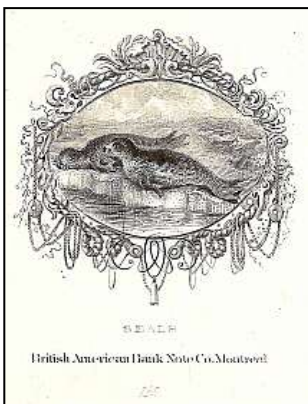


The seal in all these four images can clearly be identified as a “beater” harp seal with a speckled coat that is typical at 1-12 months of age (see photograph on next page).

There are six species of seal around Newfoundland and all belong to the “true” seal group. The true seals, and especially the harp seal, have well developed fore-flippers with claws that they use to pull themselves over the ice with a motioned sometimes referred to as galumphing<sup>1</sup>. The harp seal has been commercially exploited since the 1700s for its pelt and oil and would be expected to be the one shown on the Newfoundland “resource issue” stamps. The seal on the 1865-1876 stamps is a good likeness to a ‘beater’ harp seal. The seal on the 1880 stamp, that replaced the criticized earlier image, is rather non-descript and probably conforms more to what people thought seals looked like. The change of seals on both the stamp and bank note in the 1880s was likely for the same reason - the earlier seal was thought too dog-like because of the claws on the fore-flippers! The last stamps to illustrate a seal were issued between 1932 and 1942 (see next page), were clearly drawn and correctly show the claws on the fore-flipper.

<sup>1</sup> To move along heavily or clumsily. Derived from gallop and triumph; phonesthemic invention in Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*.

A new 5c seal stamp (centre) was printed in 1880 by the British American Bank Note Co.,



Montreal, and shows a seal without visible claws on the fore-flipper. The seal bears a strong likeness to the front seal on the essay by the same printer (left), though the seal is slimmer, the head shape differs, and the markings on the coat lack detail. The pair of seals and the decorative vignette in the essay was reproduced exactly in the 1888 \$5 Commercial Bank of



Newfoundland note also printed by the British American Bank Note Co.



(right). The seal on the essay and note can be identified as a ‘bedlamer’ or ‘spotted saddle-back’ harp seal of around 2-4 years old, whereas the seal in the stamp is much more generic and could almost be any species.

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**SEALS ON NEWFOUNDLAND STAMPS (CONT'D)**

**Quote 1**

“... these stamps illustrate amusing errors on the part of the engraver ... . The five-cent portrays a seal with two forepaws instead of “flippers:” and “The seal shown on the five-cents stamp is not the fur seal as generally supposed, but the hair seal.” *Perlin, A. B. 1937. The Stamps of Newfoundland, page 211.*

**Quote 2**

“In the “1880-1896 British American Bank Note Co. (Montreal Printing) ... most of the new designs were modified, versions of previous issues (e.g., the seal on the 5c stamp) are more correctly drawn, ... “. *Nemec, T.F. 2006. Newfoundland Postage Stamps, 1857-1949: A Brief History and Iconographic Study. Page xix In: NSSC, 2006.*

**Quote 3**

“The artist responsible for the design could not have had a very extensive knowledge of natural history, for he has given the animal regular forelegs with pronounced claws!” *Poole, B.W.H. 1975 [1922] The Stamps of Newfoundland. Page 11.*

**Quote 4**

On the first cents issue. "5c brown, with the well known seal with front feet. This has been much critized, but as a matter of fact the Harp Seal has well developed front feet and claws." *Boggs, W.S. 1975. The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Newfoundland. Page 51.*

Above are four quotes from the philatelic literature. Boggs was the only author to note that harp seals do have clawed fore-flippers. Few people seemed to realise that “true” seals have claws on their flippers, and hence the outcry at the dog-like paws on the first seal stamp. Poole’s comment backfires somewhat, in that the engraving by Jeens was in fact reasonably good, and that it is Poole (and others it seems) who are ignorant of the harp seal’s appearance. Why Perlin thought that it was generally supposed that a fur seal was depicted on the stamp is unclear as fur seals do not occur in the north Atlantic.



The last Newfoundland stamps to illustrate a seal were issued in 1932 (left), 1937 and 1942; all with the same image and identified on the stamps as a NORTHERN SEAL ”BABY WHITECOAT”.



Whitecoats were legal to commercially hunt until 1987 in Canada and have been an important component of Newfoundland's economy since the 1700s. Money from the early spring hunt allowed fishermen to gear up for the coming fishing season. In Newfoundland, the name ”seal” typically refers to the harp seal, and so the use of ”northern seal” here is unusual, especially as there is no Atlantic seal species with this common name. It may just refer to a seal from the north. The pink colour of the stamp certainly enhances the “cuteness factor”! Photograph of a “beater” harp seal (above) and shows the spotted coat and the well developed fore-flippers showing the claws.

I thank the "National Currency Collection, Currency Museum, Bank of Canada” for permission to reproduce part images from three notes held in their collection. I also thank Bob Dyer for the scan of the first 5c seal stamp. I am also grateful to Garry Stenson, an expert on marine mammals, for his comments on the manuscript and for the photograph of the “beater” harp seal taken on a DFO Canada survey last year.

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**The perfin corner by Barry Senior**

All values of the Caribou Issue of 1919 are known with the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company perfin *except* for the 6 cent issue. Shown are all known values with the AN/D perfin. Some issues are known with the perfin in more than one position such as the 10 cent which is recorded in positions 1 through 5. The second scan is of a block of 6 of Scott #166 with the AYRE pattern A8.



## **MINING THE PRATT ARCHIVES FOR PHILATELIC GOLD** ***C.A. Stillions***

Some of you may have heard rumblings of a BNAPS project concerning Robert H. Pratt's Newfoundland Collection and wondered what it was. At this year's BNAPS meeting in Kingston, the BNAPS Board authorized me to take the Robert H. Pratt slide collection and have it converted into digital format. When Robert Pratt past away he left to the Collectors Club of Chicago money for a prize to be awarded for Newfoundland publications and he left them his photographic slides of his Newfoundland Collection.

Very early when Bob was starting to collect seriously, his home was broken into and his collection was stolen. None of that material was ever recovered. In order to protect himself in the future, Bob had his philatelic holdings photographed, in color and on 35 mm slides. So all of the rare Newfoundland proofs and covers that he had are on film and in the possession of the Collectors Club of Chicago. If not maintained, 35 mm slides will deteriorate and means of viewing them has already become obsolete. So, a couple of years ago when asked what would be a suitable project for BNAPS to invest some of their Harrison funds into, I suggested converting the Pratt slides into digital format. Low and behold, the BNAPS Board accepted the suggestion and I had a project.

There was a problem; no one knew how many slides there were. First order of business was to count the slides. So I arranged to go to Chicago and meet with the CCC Librarian and count the slides. To our surprise there were over seven thousand slides with many label "dup". Also, the slides were stored in polyethylene plastic sleeves in three-ring binders. Thus, the next order of business was to sort out the original slides from the duplicates and to get the slides out of the plastic sleeves and into archival boxes. In order to keep the slides in the Chicago area a call went out to Newfoundland Study Group members living in the Chicago area who would be willing to help. Ron Dewey stepped forward and volunteered. It took Ron six months but he was able to do a preliminary sort and narrow the number of slides down to almost 4400. This was a lot of work and Ron deserves a very big THANK YOU for all his effort. The next step will be get them digitized and into an image management system. The final step will be to make the images available to researchers. The target to complete the project is the next BNAPEX in 2010.

### **Editor's Note:**

Even in these fiscally-challenging times for BNAPS, the Board of Directors approved \$3,500 for this project. The main cost is to digitize the slides. Thanks for their efforts to-date are due C.A. Stillions and Ron Dewey. There will be a progress report in our next issue.

**THE NEWFIE NEWSLETTER**  
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*January/March 2010*

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**RESEARCH ON EARLIEST USE OF 1897 CABOT STAMPS**

*Gregory Pope*

In follow up to an article by the Editor re the Earliest Cabot Use on Cover in Newfie Newsletter #135, p.12, I took advantage of recently having some time in St. John's to further research this topic and hopefully resolve the question.

As previously noted, the Evening Telegram reported on June 17, 1897 that the stamps would be issued on Tuesday, June 22 (p.4). The Daily News ran a similar article on the same day but did not mention a release date. A subsequent article in The Evening Telegram on the 18<sup>th</sup> (p.4) states that "the stamps were executed and sent out from the Colonial Secretary's Office yesterday".

Given the attention the stamps, and anything to do with the 400<sup>th</sup> Discovery Day anniversary and Victoria's Jubilee, were receiving, I expected to see a follow-up article in the newspapers from the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Provincial Archives, however, did not have either The Evening Telegram or the Daily News from that date. I am unclear as to whether or not the newspapers simply did not publish that day, or if they were missing from the Archives. There were no papers from the following Tuesday either, but they were present for July 6, being two weeks later. No further mention of the stamps appeared in the news over the following week.

Despite the June 17 Telegram article, it seems unlikely that the stamps could have been sent out from the Colonial Secretary's office on the 17<sup>th</sup> and been available in all or even most post offices across the country by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. The 24<sup>th</sup> is the official day of the Jubilee and Discovery Day, so issuing the stamps that mark the occasion on that day seems logical. There were also no newspapers on June 24<sup>th</sup>, however. With that, I would suggest that June 24, 1897 was a holiday in St. John's and likely a national holiday as well. Post offices would have been closed. While June 24<sup>th</sup> would be the official release date, the first day the stamps would have been available to the public would not be until the 25<sup>th</sup>.

With no travel distance to get the stamps to the post offices, the first covers would be expected to have St. John's cancellations. The three earliest covers seen to date, from June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, are all postmarked in St. John's.

My hypothesis is speculative and could be quickly proven wrong if anyone has a cover (Cabot or otherwise) postmarked on June 24, 1897, particularly one from St. John's. I would enjoy seeing one to further move along the research if any reader has one.

I look forward to any input from others. I can be reached at [gregpope@telus.net](mailto:gregpope@telus.net).

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**Financial Statement as of December 31, 2009**

	Item	Debit	Credit
Aug. 15, 2008	Balance Forward from Previous Year		\$920.21
	BNAPS Stipend and Membership Credits		383.00
	74 Membership dues <sup>(8 memberships were paid in advance in 2007/2008)</sup>		987.87
	10 Membership dues paid in advance		115.54
	Newsletter reimbursement		348.95
	Donations		80.95
	Service Charges (Cheques, etc.)	17.90	
	Newsletter Postage (5 issues)	620.22	
	Paper and Copying	1,082.79	
	Misc. Stationary and Postage	9.11	
	Totals	\$1,730.02	\$1,916.31
Dec. 31, 2009	Balance on hand		\$1,106.50

Note: the fiscal year was extended 4½ months to December 31, 2009.

----- ✂ ----- **Membership Application / Change of Information Form** ----- ✂ -----

**BNAPS Newfoundland Study Group**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** (Home): \_\_\_\_\_ (Office): \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues: Canadian Dollars \$13.00 \$5.00 (email only)  
US Dollars \$13.00 \$5.00 (email only)  
British Pound £8.00 £3.00 (email only)

Please make your cheque or money order payable to:  
**BNAPS Newfoundland Study Group**  
Care of the Treasurer  
Martin Goebel, 13 O'Mara Place, St. John's NL A1A 5B7, Canada  
**Goebel@nf.sympatico.ca**

*All new members are requested to kindly remit a copy of this form for accounting and mailing.  
Thank you!*