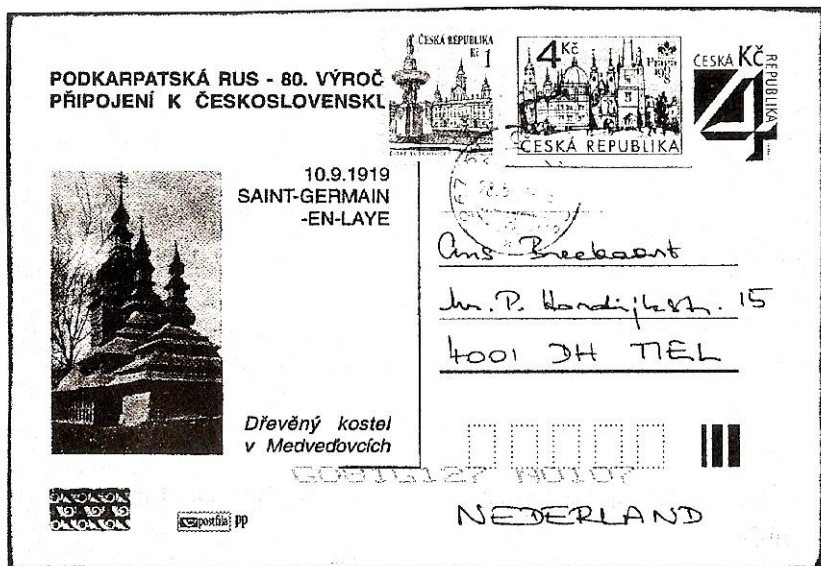


CALGARY PHILATELIST

Issue 70

February 2005



In this issue: Alexander Malycky concludes his series on thematic Ukrainian postal stationery. Shown above is a 1999 Czech Republic commemorative postal card for the 80th anniversary of the annexation of Carpatho-Ukraine to Czechoslovakia.

Also in this issue, Penny Borrowman goes shopping in Edmonton!

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Membership dues for the season are \$15, plus an initiation fee of \$10 for new members. Send to the CPS, Box 1478, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2L6. Notice of address changes or enquiries about missing copies should be sent to the Membership Chairman, not the Editor.

The CPS mailing address is Box 1478, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2L6. The Web site is: <http://members.shaw.ca/calphilso> All articles as hard copy only, mailed to Box 6830, Calgary, T2P 2E7, or handed to Dale Speirs at meetings.

The CPS was founded in April 1922 by Dr. Edward George Mason. It is Chapter 66 of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, Chapter 1360 of the American Philatelic Society, and Chapter 91 of the American Topical Association.

A cumulative subject index from issue #1 to date for the CALGARY PHILATELIST exists but because of its length is too long to be published in this bulletin. A copy can be had for free from the editorial address at Box 6830.

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HOW TO GET YOUR MONEY’S WORTH, AND MORE!

by Penny Borrowman

I recently accepted an offer to travel to Edmonton with my husband, who had a business meeting to attend. Once there, he took the car to the meeting, which was actually in Bruderheim, and I got a bus map and started to find my way around to various stamp shops. It was a cold, drizzly day, but I was having too much fun to suffer much.

My first stop was Garvey’s new premises, situated in the front room of their lovely house, on a pretty street west of downtown. There I found friendly hospitality, some modern Chinese stamps, and the company of other stamp collectors. The next stop was two busses away, further north. I visited Northgate Stamp Shop, a narrow, very full shop run by a charming Chinese couple. They confessed to having no Chinese stamps! But I did buy a commemorative cover in the Folk Houses series; how did that get there?

My third visit was by far the most interesting. The shop is near Northgate and is called MRCS Canada. It turns out stamps is the least of their business. They mostly deal in coins, jewellery, and precious metals. There are two doors into this shop. The first leads from the street to a small vestibule. You wait there until the proprietor sees you and pushes a button, which sounds a buzzer and releases the door lock. You have to be buzzed out too. On the inside you are immediately greeted by the biggest German shepherd dog I have ever met. With nails clicking on the bare floor, he follows you closely as you wander the store, examining items on wall displays and in showcases. It turned out the only stamps they had were in a big box of off-paper worldwide selection, or in a few albums. You could buy them for 10 cents each, so I sat down and started sifting. Other customers had come in by now, and puppy left me for more interesting strangers.

By the time my neck and back were too sore to continue I had chosen ten stamps. Yep! I spent a whole buck. But what an interesting dollar’s worth of stamps I bought. Figure 1 shows the only two Chinese stamps I chose. They are the \$100 and \$200 values of the first issue of Southwest China Liberation Area, Scott #8L5 and 8L6. They are the first two used stamps of this issue I have seen. Both are worth slightly more used than mint.

I also found Great Britain King George V 2p orange, Scott #162, perfinated with a great big D (Figure 2, left side). I collect British perfins but don’t have many going back that far. I am not sure whose D that is, so this will be further research for a rainy day. Figure 2 (right) shows a pair of German stamps with a swastika design. The swastika symbol goes back thousands of years and used to represent long life and prosperity. What a shame that our generation sees it as a symbol of

evil. These two stamps were a little hard to identify until I looked under Official Stamps. The two stamps shown in Figure 2 are from different issues, as one is watermarked and the other isn't.



Figure 1: Southwest China Liberation Area stamps



Figure 2: GB KGV at left, and two German official stamps at right.

I chose three stamps from Egypt, as I hope my daughter will soon start sending me letters from there. They are shown in Figure 3. The stamp at left is their first official stamp, issued in 1893. Across the top is printed "Postes Egyptiennes" and in the centre it says "Service de L'etat", presumably in two languages. There is no value inscribed on this stamp, and it is the only official stamp issued until 1922; the rest are regular stamps overprinted. How tempting to look for one on cover! The sphinx stamp is part of a 10-design set, the last issued under Turkish domination, before Britain declared Egypt a protectorate in late 1914. The soldier stamp is part of the first set issued by Egypt as a republic, in 1953. The stamp is inscribed "Defense"; Egypt must have still been feeling pretty vulnerable. What a lot of history in three little stamps!



Figure 3: Egyptian stamps

Figure 4 (left side) shows the stamp that most intrigued me. It does bear some clues. In the top ribbon is printed "Postage", and in the left margin it says "4 pies". So it must be Indian? Pakistani? Somewhere in there? I had to flip through SCOTT'S to "Native Feudatory States", one of which is Hyderabad. And there it is: design A8, with the Seal of Nizam as the central feature. This is part of a set of stamps issued 1931 to 1948.

The other stamp shown in Figure 4 (right side) is the only overprint I chose. The overprint has the hammer and sickle of the USSR, so I started there. And sure enough it's Russia #216, the 5 rubles on 20 kopecks of 1922-23. No reason stated in Scott for that huge denomination hike, but wasn't that just after the Soviet takeover?



Figure 4: Hyderabad stamp (left) and Soviet overprint (right)

The 2003 Scott value of my dollar's worth of stamps is roughly 5 ½ dollars. The pleasure of discovery and the lure of new collecting paths are priceless. So the next time you have a day to kill, don't hesitate. Whether in your own city or an unfamiliar one, grab a phone book for addresses, a bus map for directions, your tongs and magnifier, and go on an adventure. The unknown awaits!

by Alexander Malucky

Carpatho-Ukraine: The local postal administration at Yasinya issued, on March 14, 1939, two postal cards that were surcharges on the Czechoslovak ones. They were in circulation for a few days only, prior to the subsequent Hungarian occupation.

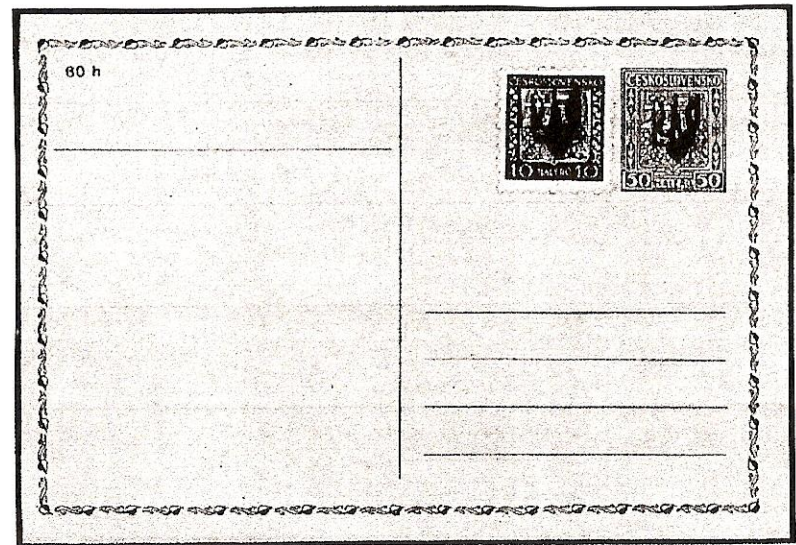


Figure 27: Ukrainian tridents overprinted on Czechoslovakian postal card.

CALGARY SPRING STAMP SHOW

The last weekend in April will be here before you know it, and with it the annual Spring Show of the CPS. It will be held in the Kerby Centre on the main floor in the gym. Details from Jan Brookes at 251-1769. Be sure to mark your calendar now for April 23 and 24!

by Dale Speirs

The Default Standard.

From the beginning, post offices of the world preferred that postage stamps be applied on the upper right of the envelope. In the 1867 CANADIAN POSTAL GUIDE, it was stated explicitly how to position a postage stamp [2]: “*Stamps should be placed on the front or address side of the letter, and on the right hand upper corner.*”

This raises a point I don’t recall seeing discussed in philatelic literature, namely how was it that mail standardized in the form of stamps and postmarks in the upper part of the envelope, the address tending to the lower right, and the return address to upper left. The vast majority of letters sent, both before and after the advent of postage stamps, follow this template. Yes, there have been lots of letters that violated the principle and still made it through, but that only demonstrates the error tolerance of a human-operated postal system. British practice, as an exception, commonly puts the return address on the back of the envelope, but anyone looking for it can easily flip the envelope by twisting one’s wrist.

It seems to me that the standard format of addressing arose because the majority of humans are right-handed. Whether addressing an envelope or sorting it, the cover will be held with the left hand. Further, it will be instinctive for most people to hold it by the bottom or the side of the left. Therefore the address will flow to the right from the middle of the envelope.

A mail sorter will find it easier and faster to add the postmark by moving in the canceller from the right, and therefore the majority of handstamps would be in the right half of the cover. If only a few covers are being postmarked, then it is no extra labour as to where the handstamp is placed, thus the many covers with postmarks on the left side. If a large volume of covers must be got through in a hurry, then sorters will instinctively or per instructions take a handful of letters, fan them out, and quickly postmark them in the exposed corner. A fan of letters would commonly be held in the left hand, so therefore the upper right corner would be exposed for cancelling.

Although the vast majority of letters are properly franked, there are always enough non-standard covers that postal administrations must, from time to time, remind people where the stamp should go. The Italian Post Office used a machine slogan in 1955 to encourage the public in this regard [5]. Post offices were plagued over the years in particular by people using stamp positions to send a message, known commonly as “the language of stamps”, mostly for romantic purposes.

Tilting or inverting a stamp was not a problem if the stamp was in the correct position, but many languages of stamps required placing stamps in odd corners or edges, something the posties object to because of the difficulty in postmarking the stamps [6].

It wasn't just posties who objected to non-standard stamp positions. The New York Society of Self-Culture, a group of wealthy socialites with entirely too much time on their hands, decreed in their 1906 book on etiquette that stamps should only be upright in the upper right corner [9]. The full text is worth quoting: *"By the exceeding neatness of its appointments, and by the careful distinctness of the address it bears, an envelope signifies at a glance whether the author of a letter within is a well-bred and well-educated person. A stamp pasted on askew, or upside-down, or in the wrong corner, a blot, a smudge where the fingers pressed the gummed flap, and a direction in indecipherable hieroglyphics are the strong but silent indications of an untidy or uneducated individual. It is an important detail to place the stamp exactly and squarely in its own proper corner ..."*

Decades later, in 1952, another etiquette book stated emphatically: *"Place the stamp neatly (never upside down) in the upper right-hand corner of the envelope with a narrow edge of the envelope showing at the top and the right side."* [8].

Origins Of Stamp Position Codes.

The use of stamp position as a code obviously dates no earlier than 1840 or whatever subsequent date that postage stamps were introduced into a country. As an aside, sealing wax codes were sometimes used on stampless covers, where the colour of the wax had some meaning [7]. Collecting covers with stamp position codes is difficult primarily because it is impossible to tell if the stamp is tilted or inverted because a code was being used or because the sender was sloppy in affixing it.

The type of position code most familiar to philatelists is the "language of stamps" code used for romantic purposes. There is no consistency in these codes, partly because there was no central authority promulgating the code, and partly because codes had to be changed from time to time as they became known to the wider public. Illustrations of stamp position codes are found on postcards, which sender and receiver could agree to use as their secret code. Often lovers would make up their own codes.

A code could involve not only the position of a stamp (tilted, upside down, etcetera) but also where it was located on the envelope (upper left, bottom centre, and so forth). As an example, a Victorian-era code varied the meaning of an upside down stamp from "stop correspondence" if on the upper right corner of

the envelope to "affection and love" if at upper left to "I belong to another" if level with the addressee name [22].

One German code from the early 1950s used pairs of stamps to increase the possibilities, such as both stamps inverted, or one stamp upright and the other tilted right [21]. This is rare though, since most people just use one stamp to pay the postage. A Canadian code from 1917 also used multiple stamps, an example being two 1-cent stamps in the upper right corner meaning "My love for you has doubled" or, if in the upper left corner, "You have a rival" [25]. This would be impossible to differentiate from a cover which was paid by two stamps only because that's what the sender had on hand.

The aforementioned Canadian code, which appears to have been compiled by someone naive about postal regulations, also used torn stamps. A stamp torn in half, then placed in the upper right corner with a slight gap between the two halves, meant "Our friendship is at an end". Placed likewise in the upper left corner of the cover meant "You have broken my heart". This code would certainly be easier to recognize, especially if part of a correspondence. One wonders, though, about how many of these covers were discarded by stamp collectors as not worth saving. Did the posties intercept such covers as fraudulent use of two uncanceled halves of used stamps? If anyone has such a cover, with two halves of a torn stamp used for franking, it would well re-pay further examination to see if this was a love letter.

Romance And Position Codes.

There were numerous codes published. Table 1 shows the meanings of some of the more common stamp positions.

[to be continued]

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26] Todd, Tim (2002 August) Family stories. AMERICAN PHILATELIST 116:682

27] Creighton, Douglas (1991-09-10) Stamp translations interesting. CANADIAN STAMP NEWS 16(8):4

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Table 1: Stamp position codes.				
Stamp position	Meaning	Country	Time period	Reference
tilted left on upper right of cover	I love you	Austria	late 1800s	7
	Do you love me, dearest?	England	early 1900s	24
	I love you	France	early 1900s	7
	A kiss	England	early 1900s	26
	I am faithful to you	England	1911	28
	I am provoked at your long silence	Canada	1917	25
	My heart belongs to another	Switzerland	1927	27

Table 1 (continued): Stamp position codes.				
Stamp position	Meaning	Country	Time period	Reference
upside down stamp on upper right of cover	Stop correspondence	USA	1800s	22
	Remember me	Austria	late 1800s	7
	Kiss to receiver	England	1890s	20
	My heart is given to another. Write to me no more.	England	early 1900s	24
	You are very cruel.	Canada	1917	25
	Do you remember me?	England	early 1900s	26
	Do you remember me?	England	1911	28
	Eternally yours	Germany	early 1950s	21
	Never come back	Switzerland	1927	27
sideways on upper right of cover	Do you love me?	USA	1800s	22
	Write soon	France	early 1900s	7
	Thinking of you	England	early 1900s	26
	In thoughts with you	England	1911	28
	I'll wait for you	Switzerland	1927	27

by Leanteri Polvikoski

Letterwriting In Renaissance England by Alan Stewart and Heather Wolfe is an exhibition catalogue of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. (2004, large format, 214 pages. US\$54.95 from Folger Library, 201 East Capitol Street SE, Washington, D.C. 20003-1094. Visa and Mastercard accepted.). Since it accompanies an exhibit, it naturally emphasizes the artefacts of letter-writing, as opposed to theoretical studies.

The catalogue starts off with a look at the tools needed for writing a letter in the Renaissance era. One couldn't just pick up a pen and start scribbling. Quills had to be cut from goose feathers, and ink had to be ground and mixed. Every cookbook of that era included a recipe for ink. Paper was very expensive and had to be treated first with alum so it wouldn't blot. Candles were necessary in that time of poorly lit houses, even during the day.

Handwriting styles were different as well, which makes letters from that age unreadable to most modern eyes because our handwriting methods came from a later time. Different letters required different styles, although in actual practice people often ignored the rules except in very refined social circles. It was amusing to read in this catalogue that British legal clerks wrote in large letters not to be clear but because they were paid by the number of pages they wrote.

Social signals of letters are the exterior signs of a letter such as the form of address, type of wax seal, and such. We still use these today in such things as return addresses and whether a letter is franked with a postage stamp, a meter mark, or a bulk mail indicia. Then and now, these social signals tell us before we open the letter about the sender. Back in Renaissance times, the style of title used on the address showed the social distance between sender and receiver. A commoner addressing a peer would use an extravagant title ("My most noble and honoured Lord") while His Lordship's sibling would write "Lord So-and-so". The further to the bottom the signature on the letter was, the more subservient the sender was. This was not necessarily due to the class system. The catalogue discusses a popular category of letters in those days, that of a wayward son apologizing to his father for his latest sins or trying to hit up the old man for a few pounds sterling.

Trident Visnyk #168 (Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society, Box 303, Southfields, New York 10975-0303) Regular newsletter for Ukrainian philatelists, with news and notes about UPNS doings, checklists of new issues of stamp and postal stationery from Ukraine, and Ukrainian-related philately from other countries such as Canada.

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

December 1 was the Christmas social, held at the Kerby Centre in the dining lounge. Lynda Rive gave a thematic talk on Christmas stamps that emphasized the artists who painted nativity scenes and the coded visual language they used. She finished up with a Power Point display of stamps synchronized to music. Unique! The attendees then enjoyed good food and drink, and a humorous quiz. In short, a good time was had by all.

EDMONTON SPRING SHOW

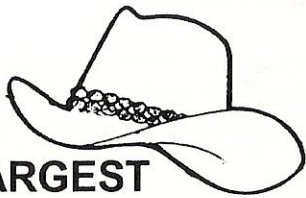
Edmonton will host its annual Spring National Stamp Show on April 1 to 3, 2005, in the Europa Centre of the West Edmonton Mall. There will be the exhibits, dealer bourse, seminars, and other events. Details from the Show Chairman, Box 399, Edmonton, T5J 2J6. If you are interested in going, ask around at the club meetings, and you should be able to find someone willing to car-pool.

2004 AUTHOR OF THE YEAR TO ALEXANDER MALYCKY

This award is presented at the January meeting for the best article(s) published in the club bulletin during the preceding calendar year. The winner is chosen by the bulletin Editor. The 2004 award goes to Alexander Malycky for his series on Ukrainian thematic postal cards.

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NOTE TO INTERNET VIEWERS: Unless stated otherwise, telephone numbers are area code 403. Alberta is on Mountain Time. Any advertiser can be reached through the CPS e-mail at calphilso@shaw.ca, but please allow time for forwarding to offline members.

FOR SALE: Canadian plate blocks and mint stamps at face value. Call Henning at 271-2596.

WANTED: Collector of stamps, books, and history. Special interest in submarine material. Contact Wayne at 295-3275 or kingwi@shaw.ca

WANTED: Canadian military covers and postcards with hospital ships (white with red crosses). Contact Jon Johnson at 253-8411 or jcjperfin@hotmail.com

WANTED: Tanna Tuva, especially covers. I used to have a few and now starting over. Phone Keith at (780)437-1787 (Edmonton)

COLLECT Christmas or owls? I have just completed updated checklists for both topics. Willing to share for just the cost of photocopying and postage. Contact Pat at 238-3435.

WANTED: Owl stamps worldwide. Cash or trade. Call Pat at 238-3435.

WANTED: Stamp show catalogues, Canadian and international shows. The older the better. Please contact Ed at 274-0021 or harrise@shaw.ca

WANTED: Advanced collector of World Wildlife Fund (anything with the panda logo) stamps, postally-used covers, FDCs, postcards, maximum cards, even cookie cans. Top dollar paid! Phone Jan at 251-1769.

WANTED: Private collector pays cash for larger stamp collections. Phone Willi at 239-2273.

TRADE: Need automotive work done on your car? Let's trade my labour for your stamps that I need. I am a licenced mechanic with 20+ years experience. Phone Doug Kollar at 547-3838.

FOR SALE: Ukrainian and Russian stamps new and used. Also Ukrainian FDCs and special cancels from 1991 to date. Call Andy at 236-2037.

WANTED: Stamps and covers from China to 1949. Special interest in overprints. Prefer bulk lots. Call Penny at 686-2662.

WANTED: Calgary Stampede philatelic memorabilia. I collect all phases of this fascinating field. You may have just the cover or cancel I need. Cash or generous exchange. Call Ed at 274-0021 or harrise@shaw.ca

TRADE: Asia: Japan, Singapore ... British: GB, Ascension to New Zealand, and South Africa ... Europe: Scandinavia, Germany, France, Switzerland ... to trade based on Scott catalogue. Call Joe at 277-7006

MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS 2005

January	19	Auction
February	2	General meeting
	6	Sunday bourse
	16	Auction
March	2	General meeting
	2	Deadline for April bulletin
	6	Sunday bourse
	16	Auction
April	3	Sunday bourse
	6	General meeting
	20	Auction
	23 and 24	Spring Stamp Show
May	1	Sunday bourse
	4	General meeting
	4	Deadline for June bulletin
	18	Auction
June	1	Election meeting
	5	Sunday bourse
	15	Auction

MEETINGS and AUCTIONS are at the Kerby Centre, 2nd floor, 1133 - 7 Avenue SW, at 19h30. Auction lots should be in before 19h30 to allow bidder viewing

SPRING STAMP SHOW and CALTAPEX are held at the Kerby Centre, main floor, 1133 - 7 Avenue SW. Details from Janice Brookes at 251-1769.

SUNDAY BOURSE is at Palliser Community Centre, 2323 Palliser Drive SW, from 10h00 to 16h00. Details and table rentals from Bill Szaroz at 337-3260.

CALGARY REGIONAL GROUP OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY meets second Wednesdays. For details about meeting places and times, contact Ed Harris at 274-0021.

CALGARY ASSOCIATION OF PHILATELIC EXHIBITORS meets fourth Wednesdays. For details, contact Jim Taylor at 292-8049.