



# Presenting - En Primeur Cards: Are They Collectible?

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**O**n February 12, 1991 Canada Post issued a press release introducing the *Presenting - En primeur* cards which it said - in addition to the quarterly publication, *Canada's Stamp Details* - would replace the familiar *Presenting - En primeur* brochures which had themselves replaced the *P.S. 14s* of fond memory.

As collected as were the *P.S. 14s*, their replacements were never as popular. However, the *Presenting - En primeur* cards may become very popular. Why collect them? Who would be interested? What challenge is there to doing so? The answers to these questions will form the basis of this article. From the answers you will see that, if you are interested, it might be wise to start searching for the different cards now.

As mentioned in the press release, the new cards were to be "postcard-style announcements of upcoming stamp issues" and "will carry the name and date of the issue and will feature a colour reproduction of the stamp(s)" and will "be mailed to philatelic customers and provided at postal counters in advance of stamp issue dates." What the media relations people at Canada Post did not know when they issued the press release was that it was not going to be that simple.

To start off with, mailing in advance of stamp issue dates did not happen until the second commemorative issue of the year, the *Prehistoric Life in Canada - II* set, issued on April 5, 1991. An unannounced separate card was issued and mailed out to members of Canada Post's Stamp Travellers' Club. Finally the first cards were inadvertently printed with a Lettermail permit indicia and made available at Philatelic counters, and were consequently used by some people as prepaid postcards.

## SOMMAIRE

L'article ci-contre présente une étude détaillée des Cartes *En Primeur* émises depuis le début de 1991 par Postes Canada en remplacement des feuillets *En Primeur*. L'auteur nous explique qu'il existe plusieurs variétés de chacune des cartes. La plus importante étant que deux cartes sont généralement émises pour chaque émissions. Une représentant le logotype de Postes Canada et une celui du Club des Aventuriers du timbre. De plus, il y a des cartes qui existent avec ou sans l'indicatif de LETTERMAIL/POSTE-LETTRE 6515754. L'auteur informe les lecteurs sur le système de codage utilisé par Postes Canada pour identifier les cartes et sur le nombre de cartes émises. L'article se termine par un tableau énumérant toutes les variétés disponibles jusqu'au 29 août 1991.

Who collects these cards? There are many reasons to do so and for each there are interested people. Here are some examples.

- Post card collectors;
- Collectors of a stamp(s) on postcard thematic;
- 'Maximum Card' collectors;
- First Day of Issue collectors;
- Canada Post paraphernalia collectors;
- Permit mail collectors; and possibly,
- Postal stationery collectors.

The most interesting aspect of these cards, however, is the number of varieties that already exist and therefore the challenge that comes from finding them. Some may be quite elusive. What follows is what I believe to be, at time of writing, a fairly complete identification of all the varieties available. At the end of



the article the reader will find a checklist (Table 1) for you to compare your holdings and to help identify new findings.



Fig. 1. The first card (91D01) to announce the 1991 rate change issues.

The first four cards (Fig. 1), introducing the many new definitives issued in late December 1990 and mid-January 1991, were sent out with a letter to the National Philatelic Centre's list of subscribers dated Spring 1991. They were issued on recycled coated card stock and were numbered 91D01 to 91D04. They were the only cards issued on this type of card stock as collectors and staff quickly informed Canada Post that this coated stock did not allow for a

clean cancellation for the production of maximum cards. A more porous matte recycled card stock has been used for all cards since then.

Although the information found on the cards is virtually the same, with the 800 Watts telephone line number for the Stamp Travellers' Club being the exception, there are two logos in use on the cards: the familiar Canada Post corporate identification and the Stamp Travellers' Club symbol (Fig. 2). Canada Post uses at least three numbering systems for the cards (Fig. 3): one for the definitives, one for the commemoratives and one for the Stamp Travellers' Club. Each number

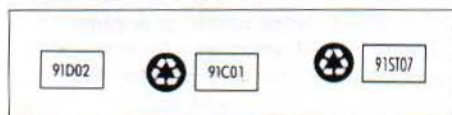


Fig. 3. The numbering system. At left for the card showing definitives. In the centre for those depicting commemoratives. At right, the Stamp Travellers' Club numbering system.

is composed of three elements: the last two digits of the year (91); a letter identification (D) for definitives, (C) for commemoratives and (ST) for the Stamp Travellers' Club; and a consecutive numbering system to identify each issue. Although the D and C cards start at 01 in their numbering system, there seems to be no provision for separating the definitives and the commemoratives in the ST cards. The first four cards, all definitives, were not issued in the Stamp Travellers' series. The cards were therefore numbered 91ST05 on. The question still remains to be answered of how and if Canada Post will differentiate the definitive series from the com-



Fig. 2. The two symbols on the front of the cards. The top is the Canada Post corporate logo and the bottom is that of its Stamp Travellers' Club.

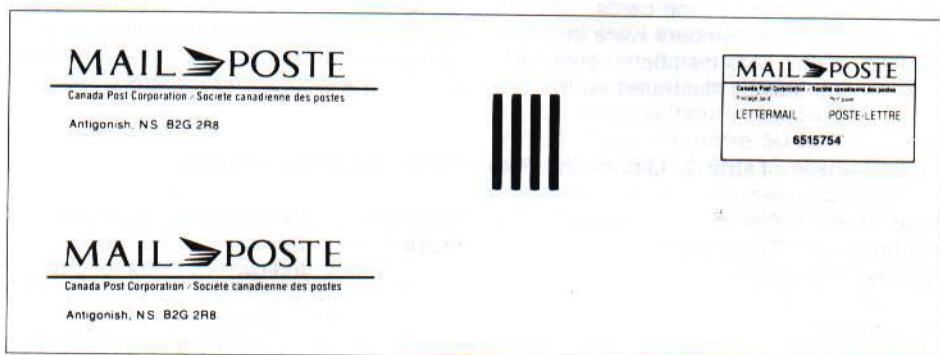


Fig. 4. Card 91C04/91ST07 showing Emily Carr's *Forest, British Columbia* with and without Lettermail indicia.

memoratives in the ST card series or if it will ignore definitives altogether for the Club cards.

The cards were to be printed with and without a Lettermail permit indicia (LETTERMAIL/POSTE-LETTRE 6515754) so that those cards which were to be available at philatelic counters would not be used for free mailing purposes (Fig. 4). For whatever reason, all cards were printed with the indicia until the Emily Carr painting in the *Masterpieces of Canadian Art* series (91C04) and even at that some philatelic counters, such as the one at the National Postal Museum in Ottawa, are still receiving cards (91C04, 91C05 and 91C06) with the Lettermail indicia imprint for distribution. The Stamp Travellers' Club cards — the ST series, on the other hand, do not exist without a Lettermail indicia as they are only to be mailed to Club members.

Card 91C05/91ST08, issued to publicize the *Public Gardens* booklet was printed with an additional slogan marking on the back identifying Canada's Green Plan (Environment Canada) as the official sponsor of this issue (Fig. 5). Future cards, for sponsored issues, will or may bear the sponsor's slogan or logo. However when an issue is not sponsored, Canada Post will include the logo of CANADA 92 (Fig. 6), the World Philatelic Youth Exhibition to be held in Montreal from March 25 to 29, 1992 until the exhibition is over. This has already been done on cards announcing the



Fig. 5. The reverse of the *Public Gardens* booklet card (91C05/91ST08) showing Canada's Green Plan slogan.



Fig. 6. The reverse of the *Arrival of the Ukrainians* card (91C09/91ST14) showing the CANADA 92 logo.

*Canadian Heritage Rivers - I* (91C08/91ST13) and *Arrival of the Ukrainians* (91C09/91ST14) issues.

These last two cards in the ST series (91ST13 and 91ST14) also showed a





change to the front of the cards. Previously, phone numbers were indicated so that Club members could call to order the stamps illustrated on the

cards. However, Canada Post discovered that young collectors were calling to place orders for small quantities (even as low as one stamp) and therefore this

**Table 1. List of the Presenting - *En primeur* cards**

Mail/ Poste Number	Stamp Travellers' Club	Issue <sup>1</sup>	Card Stock	Lettermail Permit Indicia	Sponsor Slogan or Logo
<u>Definitives</u>					
91D01	n/a <sup>2</sup>	90.12.28	Coated	With	No
91D02	n/a	90.12.28	Coated	With	No
91D03	n/a	90.12.28	Coated	With	No
		91.01.11			
91D04	n/a	90.12.28	Coated	With	No
<u>Commemoratives</u>					
91C01	91ST05	91.03.15	Porous	With	No
91C02	91ST06	91.04.05	Porous	With	No
91C04 <sup>3</sup>	91ST07	91.05.07	Porous	With & Without	No
91C05	91ST08	91.05.22	Porous	With & Without	Yes
91C06	91ST09	91.06.28	Porous	With & Without	No
91C07	91ST12 <sup>4</sup>	91.07.18	Porous	With & Without	No
91C08	91ST13	91.08.20	Porous	With <sup>5</sup>	Yes
91C09	91ST14	91.08.29	Porous	With	Yes

1. Issue date of the philatelic material depicted on the cards and not of the cards themselves. As well, the cards can show more than one philatelic item and can contain more than one issue date. When this happens all dates are indicated in this table.
2. Cards 91D01 to 91D04 were not issued in the Stamp Travellers' Club series.
3. For some unknown reason number 91C03 was skipped over. I believe this was simply an error since the Stamp Travellers' card number continues its sequential numbering. Therefore, this should not be construed as an indication of a non-issued stamp.
4. The same comment applies here as in footnote 3 for the skipped numbers 91ST10 and 91ST11.
5. At the time of writing (August 1, 1991), the last two cards 91C08 and 91C09 had yet to be delivered to philatelic counters. Therefore, the existence of cards without the Lettermail indicia has yet to be proved.



really was not a cost effective method. Now the ST cards just indicate the quantity printed and the pane layout information with the following catch phrase: "The newest issue from Canada Post ... watch for it!"

Just as with stamps and other philatelic products we, as collectors, are always looking for the esoteric, the error. So far, I have only been able to find one and that has a double printing of the black colour on the card issued for the Emily Carr painting in the *Masterpieces of Canadian Art* series (91C04). It is quite striking and is illustrated in Fig. 7.



Fig. 7. The doubling of the black colour on the Emily Carr, *Forest, British Columbia* card (91C04).

The print run of each of the cards is not exactly known. Canada Post informs me that some 300,000 cards are printed for their mailing list at Antigonish and an additional 80,000 for Philatelic counters. An additional unknown number is also mailed out to teachers and schools on Canada Post's *Heritage Post* mailing list. As we have seen, for issues 91C04, 91C05 and

91C06, some philatelic counters still are receiving the Lettermail indicia cards. Therefore, for those three cards at least, it is difficult to know if the total run of 80,000 cards without indicia were printed. There are some 50,000 members of the Stamp Travellers' Club. Therefore at least that many cards are printed and as membership in the Club grows, it is certain the print run will increase. The print run for the mailing list cards, mentioned above, may decrease as Canada Post cleans out its mailing list.

It is evident, from the above, that the *Presenting - En primeur* cards are highly collectible and could serve to open up a new field in Canadian philately. The more difficult ones to obtain will probably be mint examples of the ST series as they are not available at philatelic counters. As well, used versions of the Stamp Travellers' Club might be elusive since all were addressed to members of the Club and, because members are mostly youth, the cards may not have survived. Should you wish to collect them, I would recommend that you find a young person and encourage him or her to be part of our hobby. What better way to do so but to sponsor this young collector as a member of the Stamp Travellers' Club? Information on the Club can be obtained by writing to: Stamp Travellers' Club, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, B2G 2R8.

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