

Canada and Newfoundland design anomalies

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Design errors, omissions and oddities have crept into the stamps of Canada and Newfoundland since almost the very beginning. Sometimes the design anomalies were for convenience; other times they were the result of poor research or poor quality control.

In some cases, artistic license may account for some of these inaccurate designs, but in others it could be a lack of judgment on the part of the artist or the approving authority.

Having spent seven years on Canada Post's Stamp Advisory Committee from 2000 to 2007, I can say that many anomalies make their way to the committee when stamp designs are submitted for consideration. They are usually caught by committee members.

An example of an error of convenience is one that depicts an individual on a stamp when there are no known contemporary images of the person. Three famous examples of this occur in Canadian and Newfoundland philately, and one shows how the problem can be resolved.

The designers of Canada Scott 7, 19,

97 and 1011, as well as France Scott 1923, all used a picture of Jacques Cartier (1491-1577) taken from a circa 1844 painting by Théophile Hamel (Figure 1).

In 1897, Newfoundland issued a set of stamps to commemorate the discovery of the island by John Cabot. No painting of Cabot exists, so the designer used a picture of the son to represent the father. The 2¢ stamp shows Hans Holbein's portrait of Sebastian Cabot (Newfoundland Scott 62, Figure 2).

Which of three portraits was the inspiration for Samuel de Champlain on Scott 97 is left to conjecture. What is known is that two paintings of unknown dates are based on the first, a 1654 engraved portrait of Michel Particelli d'Émery, comptroller general of Finance under Louis XIV, by Balthazar Moncornet. One of the paintings based on this portrait is by Louis-César-Joseph Ducornet (1806-56), and the other is by Théophile Hamel (1817-70). If the designer's inspiration came from Hamel's portrait, the designer flipped the image (Figure 3).

To solve this problem of attribution,

in recent years Canada Post's Stamp Advisory Committee has chosen designs that do not show the person. For this year's Captain George Vancouver stamp, the design shows what the committee considers to be his "best" profile, showing him from the back (Figure 4).

Flipping images, resulting in a portrait that faces the opposite direction of the original design, is a common artistic license taken by stamp designers. Designers who used the Chalon portrait of Queen Victoria in their stamp designs frequently flipped the portrait. One of the most notable examples is the reverse Chalon portrait on Canada's 1897 Jubilee issue (Scott 50-65). The correct Chalon profile is shown on Scott 3.

Another example is the reverse Queen Victoria on the Newfoundland 24¢ stamp, Scott 31, based on a photograph of the queen taken by Messrs. Hughes and Mullins in 1869. Queen Victoria was also reversed on Newfoundland Scott 61. The original photograph by John Thomson shows the queen looking right.

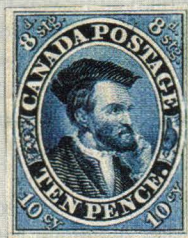


Figure 2. Sebastian Cabot, not John Cabot, is shown on this 2¢ stamp from Newfoundland.

Figure 1. Jacques Cartier stamps from Canada and France with the portrait they are taken from. The portrait is from a painting by Théophile Hamel.

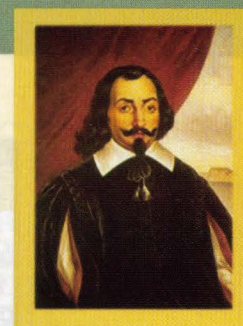


Figure 3. Where does Samuel de Champlain's picture come from on Canada's 1¢ Quebec Tercentenary stamp? From left to right are the stamp (Scott 97), the Balthazar Moncornet engraving and the Louis-César-Joseph Ducornet and Théophile Hamel paintings.

King James I did not fare much better when his likeness was taken from an engraving by Bernard Picart (Picard), after a painting by Sir Anthony Van Dyck. The portrait of the king found on Newfoundland Scott 87 (Figure 5) is a mirror image of the engraving. If, however, the designer used the engraving prepared by John Smith, based on the same Van Dyck painting, the king is facing the same way. The answer lies in determining which way Van Dyck painted the king. I have not been able to find a copy of the painting, so I don't know. Perhaps a reader can help.

Stamps showing maps can create problems for stamp-issuing entities, and errors in the placement of a country's borders on stamps can result in political tension.

For example, during the 1932-35 Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia, Paraguay added to the tension between the two countries by issuing several stamps with maps showing the

Chaco region as part of Paraguay.

Canada's map errors never reached that extreme. Scott 85-86 and 977 were issued to celebrate Canada's membership in the British Empire and the British Commonwealth, respectively. The maps on these stamps omitted some of the members, or included countries or colonies that were not members of the Commonwealth or the British Empire (Figure 6).

On the 1898 stamps (Scott 85-86) the following areas should not have appeared in red, the color that indicated membership in the British Empire: the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, Portuguese Gaza in Mozambique, and the Dutch two-thirds of the island of Borneo.

On the 1983 Map stamp (Scott 977), the islands of New Britain and New Ireland (both part of Papua New Guinea), Nauru, Western Samoa and Gambia are all in green rather than the yellow used for

other members of the Commonwealth.

Stamps based on paintings and photographs can sometimes be altered by the designer to create interesting impossibilities. The stamps commemorating the 50th and 60th anniversaries of Canadian Confederation (Scott 135, 142) and the 2¢ War Memorial stamp from the 1939 Royal Visit set (Scott 247) are cases in point.

To start, the grouping of the Fathers of Confederation and the view were fictitious, and this can be excused by acknowledging artistic license by painter Robert Harris. The conference room in Quebec City, where the meetings were held, did not have arched windows like the ones shown on the stamps. Since the light from the windows is coming from behind, the faces of the Fathers could be expected to be dark; instead, they are seen clearly.

The War Memorial on the 2¢ stamp



Figure 4. Captain George Vancouver's 250th birth anniversary stamp was issued June 22, 2007.



Figure 5. The reverse images on these stamps from Canada and Newfoundland are examples of artistic license. Designers frequently flip images to suit the design.

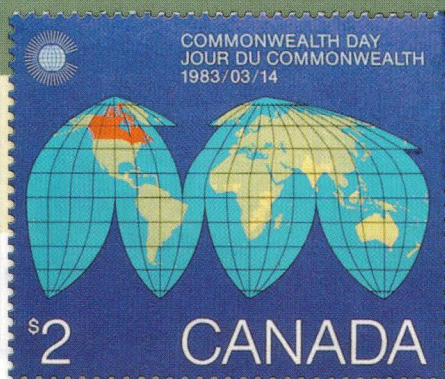
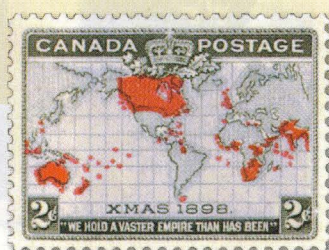


Figure 6. Misidentified countries and colonies. The maps on the 1898 Imperial Penny Postage issue and 1983 Commonwealth Day stamp omitted some members or included countries or colonies that were not members of the British Commonwealth or the British Empire.

faces south. In the design, the shadow inside the arch is inconsistent, with the front of the memorial being in shadow and the west side without shade. The Confederation stamps and the War Memorial stamp are shown in Figure 7.

In 1947, to celebrate Canadian citizenship and to commemorate the 80th anniversary of confederation, a 4¢ stamp was issued (Scott 275, Figure 8). The man in the design has only three fingers on his right hand.

John Cabot's ship, the *Mathewe*, should be spelled with one "t" with or without the last "e." The "Matthew"

spelling on Scott 282 and on Newfoundland Scott 68 and 270 is not contemporary to the written documentation from the late 16th and early 17th centuries (Figure 9).

Science also causes problems for stamp designers. The 1961 5¢ Resources for Tomorrow stamp (Scott 395) may show a dogfish shark that is certainly more of a destructive nuisance than an economic resource. The 5¢ Education stamp that follows it (Scott 396) also has its problems. There are two cogwheels in the upper left background. Should one attempt to use them, they would seize up. Their design is rectangular, and they are of different widths and depths.

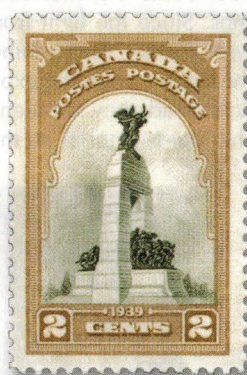


Figure 7. There are problems with the lighting on this 2¢ War Memorial stamp (Scott 247) and the Canadian Confederation stamps (Scott 135 and 142).

Newfoundland has had some problems depicting codfish, as Figure 10 shows. The tails and fins on the fish shown on Newfoundland's 19th-century Cod stamps (Scott 24, 38 and 46-48) are inaccurate. A more accurate representation is shown on the 1¢ Cod stamp issued in 1937 (Scott 233).

Flying would be difficult for the two winged figures on Canada's 1928 5¢ Allegory of Flight airmail stamp (Scott C1) and the 6¢-on-5¢ surcharged stamp issued in 1930 (Scott C3). The figures only have one wing each.

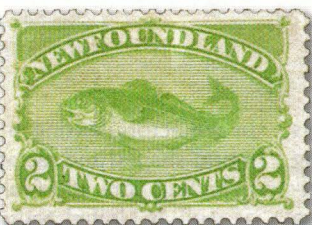
Now for the one that escaped the



Figure 8. Missing fingers. The man in the design on Scott 275 has only three fingers on his right hand.

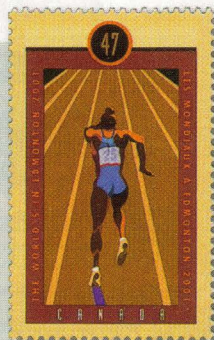


Figure 9. Misspelled *Mathewe*. The ship's name is misspelled "Mathew" on Canada Scott 282 and Newfoundland Scott 68 and 270.



Stamp Advisory Committee while I was a member. In 2001, Canada issued two 47¢ stamps for the International Amateur Athletic Federation's World Championships held in Edmonton, Alberta. One stamp shows a pole-vaulter and the other a runner (Scott 1907-1908, Figure 11). The committee, in selecting these two designs, was impressed with the 1930s poster look submitted by the designer. Can you guess what design flaw we missed?

Engravings and paintings used in this article are courtesy of the Library and Archives Canada. ■



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AUSTRALIA	Life Saving (2007) Prestige Booklet w/3D Action Stamps	16.80
AUSTRIA	Mail from a Different World, souvenir sheet - Circle Stamp, Comet, etc	7.50
CAYMAN ISLANDS	Bird Definitions (972-83)	89.58
CHRISTMAS ISLAND	Lunar New Year Sheet (Circle Shaped -w/gold foil - 12 values)	9.25
FINLAND	Faberge Winter Egg, souvenir sheet - w/ Gold & Silver Embossing (1244)	17.21
FRANCE	Stamp Festival - Harry Potter, booklet	12.91
	Antiquities Booklet of 10 values - Sculptures & Artifacts (3288a)	14.11
FRENCH ANTARCTIC	Salon d'Automne 2006, Albatross Sheet (penguins in margin)	2.11
FRENCH POLYNESIA	Fish (893-6)	9.26
	Aviation in Polynesia - Planes (897-900)	6.88
GAMBIA	Pope John Paul II, gold foil stamps (6)	41.00
GREAT BRITAIN	The Beatles (Music)-self-adhesives (2421-6)	13.79
GREECE	Basketball 2006 s.s.-Silver Medal (2276)	15.54
GUERNSEY	Battle for the Falkland Islands - ships, helicopter, flag, planes	9.28
	Falkland Islands - ships, helicopter, flag, planes	9.28
HONG KONG	Year of the Rooster & Dog, Presentation Pack (gold & silver)	44.69
IRELAND	Ryder Cup Golf Tournament Sheet & souvenir sheet- 3D Action Stamps	7.30
ISLE OF MAN	Harry Potter & Goblet of Fire (1121-6)	10.35
ITALY	Torino 2006 Winter Olympics - Skiing, etc. (2716-24)	22.81
IVORY COAST	Lighthouses, Dolphins & Whales	9.85
	WWF Otter	11.70
JAPAN	50th Anniversary of Antarctic Research Expedition - Penguins, Dogs, Aircraft, Ship, etc. (self-adhesive sheet of 10 circle stamps)	14.70
LIBYA	Communications and Information Technologies 2007 (stamps & souvenir sheet)	9.45
LIECHTENSTEIN	Famous Musical Works Cartoon Sheet of 8	10.10
MONACO	Accobams 1966-2006 Dolphin & Whale Conservation Sheet of 6	15.50
MONTSERRAT	World Aids Day Sheet of 4 (1109)	8.91
NAURU	Dinosaurs (556-63)	11.46
NETHERLANDS	Endangered Species Sheet of 12 - giraffe, frog, gorilla (1256)	13.23
PERU	Lighthouses, souvenir sheet (1519)	6.81
	Dogs	14.29
QATAR	Civil Defense International Day 2006 Sheet of 8 - Firemen	6.56
SALVADOR	Flora and Fauna- Birds, Butterflies, Plants, Flowers (10)	4.26
SAN MARINO	500th Anniversary of Christopher Columbus - Sails-ship, etc. (1671-2)	7.05
	Famous Wine Labels Sheet of 10 (1659)	11.76
SINGAPORE	World Bank-gold & silver coins (circle stamps) (1220-4)	14.28
SOUTH AFRICA	SAPOA Birds Sheet of 8 - Eagle, Crane, etc. (1342)	35.83
SPAIN	Extreme Sports 2006- Sheet of 6- Mountain Bike, Kayak, etc.	9.64
ST. THOMAS	Dolphins & Lighthouses - Sheetlet of 4 and souvenir sheet	20.90
SURINAM	Orchids 2006 (1337)	34.76
SWEDEN	Sea Rescue Sheetlet w/Lighthouse in Margin-ship & map	9.76
TADZIKISTAN	Dogs - windmill, etc. (295-300)	9.86
TRISTAN DA CUNH	Islands, s.s. - Fish, Shrimp, Seal, Sailboat, Bird, Flag (796)	10.25
TUNISIA	Medicinal Plants (4)	4.80
VANUATU	Coral Gardens Sheet of 12 self adhesive stamps (874)	7.39

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