

Essays add excitement to Canada's 1964 Jet at Ottawa Airport stamps

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In just over an eight-month period in 1964, the Canada Post Office issued three definitive stamps featuring the same Jet at Ottawa Airport design in two different denominations (Figure 1).

Although not specifically airmail stamps, the three stamps were primarily used to send letters to the United States by air. The 7¢ airmail rate to the United States was in effect when the first stamp to use the design, a 7¢ denomination (Scott 414), was issued March 11, 1964.

Shortly thereafter, Canada's postmaster general, Colonel John R. Nicholson (1901-83, postmaster gen-

eral February 1964-February 1965), announced that the airmail rate to the United States would be increased to 8¢, effective July 15. The remaining stock of the 7¢ stamp was surcharged with the numeral "8" (Scott 430). The Post Office overprinted 15,510,000 of the original 26,420,000 stamps.

At the same time that the rate was increased and the overprint was announced, Postmaster General Nicholson said the 7¢ stamp would be reworked to become an 8¢ stamp. He also said the new stamp would be "released when stocks of the overprinted stamp have been exhausted." The 8¢ stamp (Scott 436) was issued November 18; 41,920,000 stamps were printed.

The 1964 7¢ stamp replaced the Canada Goose design in use since November 3, 1952 (Scott 320). About 13 million of these stamps were used annually between 1952 and 1964. The 1964 8¢ stamp remained in use until a new 8¢ stamp (Scott 461) was issued as part of the Centennial definitive series, which made its debut February 8, 1967.

Harvey Thomas Prosser designed the Jet at Ottawa Airport stamp,

with the engraving by Yves Baril and the lettering by Gordon Mash. Mash was born May 31, 1933, in Ottawa, Ontario, and attended high school and art college in that city. His apprenticeship with the Canadian Bank Note Co. (CBN) began in March 1952, where he studied under his father, John F. Mash. He furthered his engraving studies by working with William Bedingfield of the United States Bank Note Co. During his 35-year career with CBN, he engraved 37 Canadian stamps between 1958 and 1968. He is currently living in retirement in Ottawa.

Work on the new 7¢ stamp started sometime before April 1963. The Canadian Postal Archives (CPA) has a number of undated watercolor essays showing drawings of a plane in the sky. All illustrations of essays and proofs accompanying this article are courtesy of the CPA.



Figure 1. The Canada Post Office issued three stamps in 1964 to pay the airmail rate to the United States. Each stamp features the same design, a jet flying over the Ottawa airport.



Figure 2. Watercolor essays for the 1964 7¢ stamp. The drawing at left is painted with watercolor and gouache on commercial board, and shows a plane in steep ascent. The top right design is a gouache painting on commercial board. The design at lower right is an essay that pictures a jet over a bank of clouds, and is a watercolor and gouache drawing on paper.



Figure 3. The design on the left is a gouache and colored-pencil drawing on card of a stylized symbol of flight. The design on the right is a stylized bird created on mat board using a colored pencil. Both designs for the 7c Jet at Ottawa Airport stamp are dated April 1963.

The drawing at left in Figure 2 features a plane in steep ascent, and is painted with watercolor and gouache on commercial board; the drawing at top right shows a jet tail and is a gouache painting on commercial board; and the essay at lower right pictures a jet over a bank of clouds, and is a watercolor and gouache drawing on paper. It is believed that artists at the CBN produced all rejected essays in the CPA's holdings.

Several essays for this issue are dated April 1963. Among these are a gouache and colored-pencil drawing on card of a stylized symbol of flight that is illustrat-

ed on the left in Figure 3. The design on the right in Figure 3 is a stylized bird produced by colored pencil on mat board.

Figure 4 shows several colored-pencil drawings on card of a combination of items, including planes, birds, envelopes and globes. The drawings include one that might have been a proposal for a se-ten-

ant block of four. Four essays were produced in April 1963, but this time they were done in colored pencil on commercial board (Figure 5).

On August 28, 1963, another set of colored-pencil drawings (Figure 6) was made, all on card. Three drawings approach the final design concept by showing a jet and an airport. Prosser followed this design concept when he submitted a gouache-on-card model for approval September 24, 1963 (Figure 7). It was approved for engraving two days later, with minor changes: the numeral "7" was to be reduced in size to be "almost as small as [the



Figure 4. These colored-pencil drawings on card feature various designs for Canada's 1964 7c stamp, including planes, birds, envelopes and globes. The drawings include one that might have been a proposal for a se-tenant block of four stamps.



Figure 5. These essays were produced with colored pencil on commercial board.

word] Canada” and the tarmac was to be lightened to a gray tone.

On October 22, Postmaster General Azellus Denis (1907-91, PMG, April 1963-February 1964) approved the progressive die proof for engraving only.

A week later, on October 30, he approved a die proof for color and design. On November 7, he approved another die proof for color and printing.

Sometime in the approval process,

someone realized that the words “Postage” and “Postes” were not included in the design. Postmaster General Denis had to repeat the approval process.

On November 25, approval was granted for the design with the added words, and on December 3, the design received the OK for printing.

Another approval process took place in January and February 1964, when Deputy Postmaster General William H. Wilson (DPMG 1961-68) reapproved the die proofs after the design was lightened. The plane in the final design is a composite of many aircraft; the airport is modeled on the Ottawa Airport in Canada’s capital.

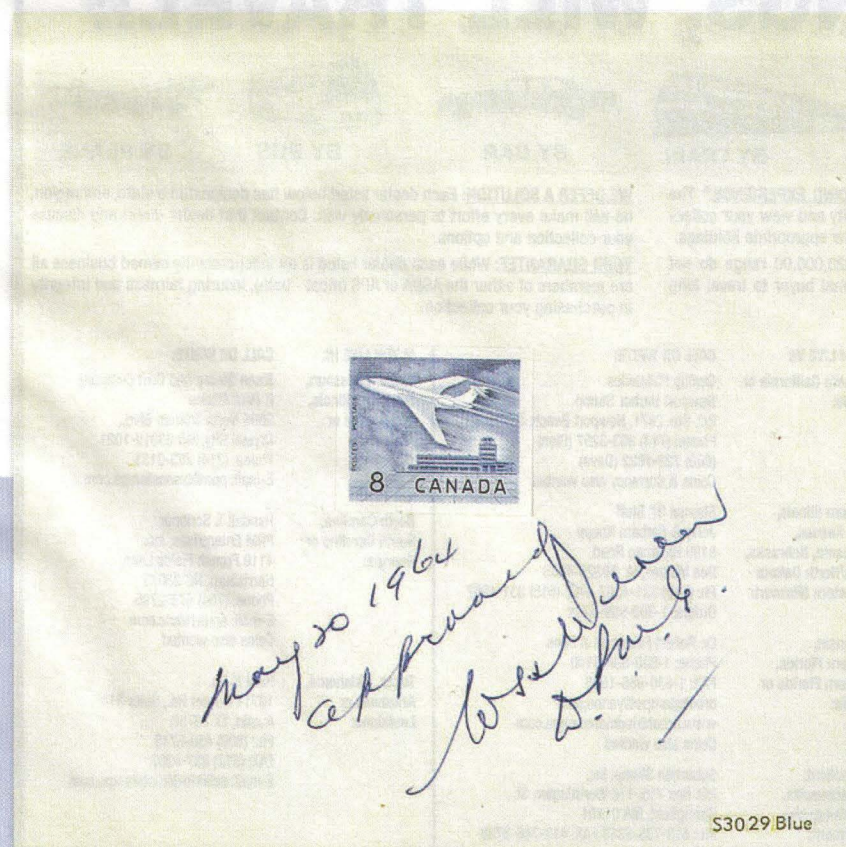
The CPA has no archival material of note for the surcharge. A model was prepared for the 8c redrawn stamp that was approved by Deputy Postmaster General Wilson May 13, 1964. He also approved the final die



Figure 6. A set of colored-pencil drawings, all on card, are dated August 28, 1963. Three drawings are close to the final design selected for the stamp. Prosser followed this design concept when he submitted a gouache-on-card model for approval September 24, 1963.



Figure 7. The approved gouache-on-card model designed by Harvey Prosser.



proof May 20 (Figure 8).

The CBN printed the 7¢ and 8¢ stamps in plates of 400 subjects that were then cut into four post-office panes of 100 stamps. The 8¢ surcharges were applied directly to the pane of 100 stamps. All three stamps were perforated 12.

No known varieties exist for the 7¢ stamp and the 8¢ stamp. Two major varieties are recorded for the surcharge (Figure 9). Both varieties are believed to be unique. The first (Scott 430a) is listed as a pair, one without surcharge. The non-surcharged stamp is attached to a block of four surcharged stamps. The second variety (Scott 430b) is a single stamp with the surcharge inverted and printed on the gum side.

LONDON-TO-LONDON PLATE PROOF

In the O Canada article in the August 2006 issue of *Scott Stamp Monthly*, I wrote about the famous London-to-London flight and the discovery of a new example of the semiofficial stamp that was printed for this flight. In December 2008, a plate proof of the stamp (Scott CLP6, Figure 10) was offered for sale at John Talman, a Toronto auction house. This recently discovered proof came from the lower left corner of a sheet of four. In the left selvage is the notation, "Original proof from which stamp was ok'd by cutting off upper right and returning to Lawson

Figure 8. The final die proof for the redrawn 8¢ blue stamp (Scott 436) was approved by Canada's Deputy Postmaster General William H. Wilson May 20, 1964.

& Jones Lithographers."

The proof had been stored in an envelope in 1927 by its original owner. It remained there until 2008. The corner card on the envelope is that of Carty News Service, owned by Arthur C. Carty, the publicist for the flight. Carty lived and worked in London, Ontario, and was a good friend of Dr. L. Seale Holmes, a philatelist. Carty's acquaintanceship with Holmes is mentioned in the Holmes 1968 *Specialized Philatelic Catalogue of Canada and British North America* (11th Edition).

Carty wrote in four lines on the envelope, "Carling Flight Airmail Matter Seale Holmes says Stamps worth \$2,000.00 Sept. 52." Inside a box, he wrote, "This is Original Press proof."

The emergence of the proof con-



Figure 9. The only known varieties of the 8c surcharge: a block of five containing a pair with the surcharge omitted on one stamp (Scott 430a), and a single stamp with the surcharge inverted and printed on the gum side of the stamp (Scott 430b).

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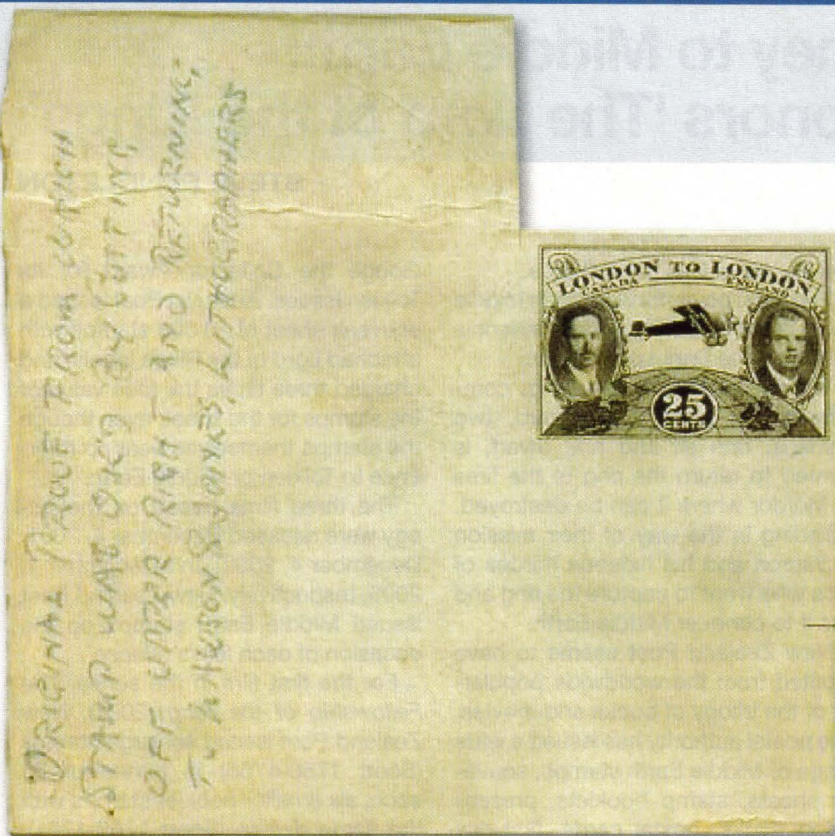


Figure 10. The recently discovered and only recorded proof of the 1927 25¢ London-to-London Flight stamp. The stamp is the rarest of the Canadian semi-official air post stamps. It was issued for the disastrous London, Ontario, to London, England, flight of 1927. The proof sold for U.S. \$41,300, which includes an 18 percent buyer's premium, at the April 23-25 auction conducted by Charles G. Firby Auctions, Waterford, Michigan.

firms that the stamps were printed in sheets of four. The proof was sold by the Talman firm for \$10,000 in Canadian funds and shortly thereafter received a certificate of authenticity from the experts at the Vincent Graves Greene Foundation.

The proof was sold in the April 23-25, 2009, auction conducted by Charles G. Firby Auctions. It realized U.S. \$41,300, inclusive of an 18 percent buyer's premium.

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