

Outstanding Canadian stamps sold at the Sir Gawaine Baillie auction

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The editors of specialized stamp catalogs for Canada will have to recheck their values for classic mint and unused material following the Sir Gawaine Baillie sale held May 10-12 at Sotheby's in New York City.

Pre-auction estimates for the sale of Sir Gawaine's British North America material ranged between \$2.8 million and \$3.5 million, but when the hammer fell on the last lot, the sale had re-

alized \$4.6 million. The sale was one in a continuing series of sales of the extraordinary Baillie collection, which spans much of the British Commonwealth.

Unless otherwise noted, the prices quoted here are in U.S. dollars and do not include the buyer's premium.

It is about time that quality BNA items realize prices more in line with their rarity factor, and the Baillie sale is a good step in the right direction. Many of Canada's earliest stamps do not exist in large mint or unused multiples. In some cases, pairs, triplets or blocks of four are all there is, and some of these are unique as a large multiple.

For example, there are only two blocks for Canada Scott 1, two pairs for Scott 2, five pairs of Scott 3 (with two in public institutions), and Scott 7 and 9 have only one block of four recorded for each. These are all the largest mint or unused multiples for their respective values, and therefore, superb Canadian singles should be selling for much more than they have been. Perhaps one reason for the low prices is the lack of material at recent auctions.

Sir Gawaine George Hope Baillie of Polkemmet (Figure 1), 7th Baronet Baillie of Polkemmet, Linlithgowshire (U.K., 1823), was born March 8, 1934,

and died December 21, 2003. On December 28, 1966, he married Canadian Lucille Margot Beaubien, the daughter of Senator Louis Philippe Beaubien, who served in the Canadian Senate from 1960 to 1985.

Sir Gawaine was educated at Eton College and studied engineering at Cambridge University. He also qualified as an accountant. In addition to stamp collecting, Sir Gawaine was a famous racecar driver in the mid-1960s.

Sir Gawaine and Lady Baillie had two children: Liza Katharine Baillie, and Adrian Louis Baillie, who succeeded his father as 8th Baronet. Sir Adrian attended most of the BNA sale in New York and told me he was amazed at the interest his father's collections raised in Canada's nonphilatelic press, and hoped that this would help the hobby.

Sir Gawaine came from a privileged world in his own right, and was also closely related to the great American collecting and philanthropic Whitney family, with whom he lived during the Second World War. He was an enthusiastic collector of stamps as a youth and continued to collect all of his life. He only dealt with a few trusted British dealers and therefore was not known in philatelic circles.

When he died, and Sotheby's an-



Figure 1. Sir Gawaine Baillie (1934-2003) was a prominent collector of mint and unused stamps from Great Britain and the Commonwealth.

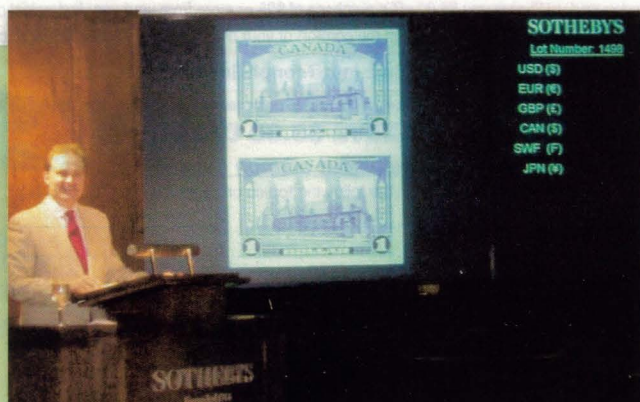


Figure 2. Sotheby's auctioneer Lord Dalmeny and the auction board at the fifth session of the May 10-12 Baillie sale.



Figure 3. The 1851 12-penny black Queen Victoria attracted the highest bid at the sale.

nounced the sale of his collections, it became quickly apparent that Sir Gawaine could be classed among the world's greatest stamp collectors. Completeness was not his object if it meant purchasing used stamps. He sought out the best quality mint or unused stamp possible, as well as stamp multiples, proofs and essays.

The sale was held in Sotheby's auction rooms in New York. Although attendance on the auction floor was sparse, the 10-or-so dealers or agents present carried bids for many clients, as did some of the five or six collectors who were also there. Sotheby's had several dozen book bidders and at least a dozen bidders on the telephone throughout the auction.

Lord Dalmeny, the affable director of the company who is heir to the Earldoms of Rosebery and Midlothian, called the auction almost in its entirety (Figure 2).

The main attraction in the sale was an astonishing copy of the famous 1851 12-penny black Queen Victoria, Canada Scott 3 with most of its original gum (Lot 763, Figure 3), which sold for \$195,000. Once the buyer's premium, commissions and Canada's Goods and Services Tax are added, the Canadian buyer faces a total bill of around \$250,000 (Canadian). As far as I know,



Figure 4. A marginal block of 25 6c Large Queen stamps sold for the second highest amount.



Figure 5. The 1857 7½p issue in a marginal strip of three sold for \$75,000.



Figure 6. These Seaway Invert errors did not sell, but are expected to be offered again in a later auction.



Figure 10. Nova Scotia Scott 7 is the 1-shilling issue of 1851.

The prices realized for most of the lots of Prince Edward Island were at estimate or slightly above.

Session two of the Baillie sale covered the issues of Newfoundland. Sir Gawaine's holding of mint and unused Newfoundland can only be described as breathtaking. Early Newfoundland proofs sold for triple their estimates, but their issued stamp counterparts sold at below or slightly above estimate, with some exceptions where double or triple estimates were realized.

The two gems of early Newfoundland were the 1-shilling stamp, Scott 9, and the laid paper proof of the 1-shilling (Lots 308 and 309, Figure 11),



Figure 11. The stamp (top) and laid-paper proof (bottom) of the Newfoundland's 1-shilling stamp of 1857, Scott 9.

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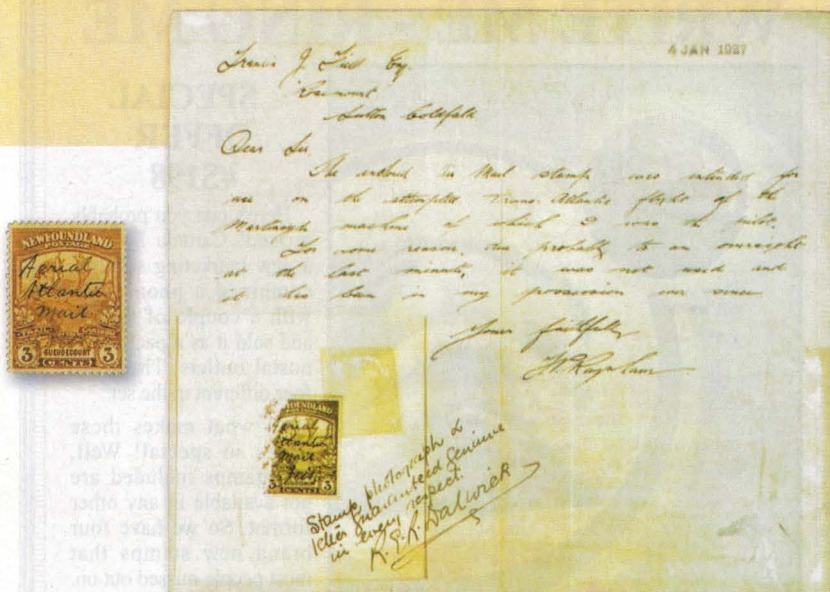


Figure 12. Newfoundland Scott C1 sold as Lot 610 with a 1927 letter of authenticity for \$70,000.

realizing \$42,000 and \$26,000, respectively. But it was the Newfoundland airmails that really stole the show with realizations well above estimates, for the most part.

Key items were the 1919 overprinted airmail, Scott C1, with manuscript inscription, which sold for \$70,000 (Lot 610, Figure 12); the 1927 airmail, Scott C4 at \$30,000 (Lot 627, Figure 13); the 1932 airmail with inverted surcharge, Scott C12a at \$16,000 (Lot 662, Figure 14); and a Gen. Balbo Flight inverted surcharge, Scott C18a, "reconstructed using elements from a block of 4 which had been officially torn into pieces," which fetched \$26,000 on an \$8,000 estimate (Lot 678, Figure 15).

Session three covered Canada from the first stamps in 1851 to the Large

Queen issues of 1868-70. Proofs sold very well and above estimate, but in most cases below catalog value. Most pence issues sold near or slightly above estimate with some exceptions. A spectacular copy of Scott 10, estimated at \$14,000 to \$16,000, sold for \$35,000 (Lot 797, Figure 16). The Large Queens were, a few years ago, the refuge of those who felt that the Pence and Cents issues of 1851-59 were beyond their means. It has now become evident that this issue, in mint and unused condition, is also being priced out of the range of many collectors.

Essays and proofs were sold for double to quadruple their estimates, as were the issued stamps. In addition to the large block of 6¢ stamps mentioned previously, a 15¢ gray-lilac single, with



Figure 13. Newfoundland's 1927 60¢ airmail, Scott C4, bears a red overprint.

large part original gum and having a portion of the script (Alex. Pirie) watermark (Scott 30d), sold for \$32,000 on a \$10,000-to-\$12,000 estimate (Lot 1002, Figure 17).

Session four included the remainder of the 19th-century material and the first issues of the 20th century, including a large portion of the Admiral issue.

Essays and proofs of the Small Queen issue were sold at very high prices, demonstrating vast interest in this issue, particularly the 3¢, where Lots 1033, 1035, 1036 and 1042, all estimated at \$800, were hammered down for \$7,000, \$5,500, \$4,800 and \$6,500 respectively. Large multiples and plate material strip or blocks sold for well above estimate.

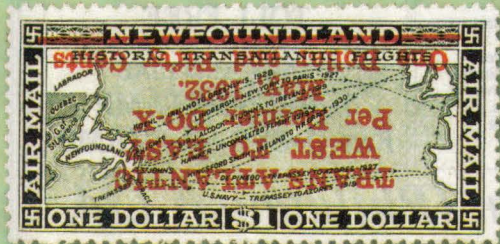


Figure 14. The inverted surcharge airmail error of 1932, Newfoundland Scott C12a.



Figure 15. A "reconstructed" \$4.50-on-75¢ Gen. Balbo Flight stamp of 1933 with inverted surcharge.



Figure 16. The 6d Canada Scott 10 on thick soft wove paper is known as the rarest Canadian stamp in unused condition.



Figure 17. Canada's 1876 15¢ gray-lilac with script watermark, Scott 30d, sold for \$32,000.



Figure 18. A block of the 10¢ pale lilac magenta on medium paper.



Figure 19. One bidder purchased two tête-bêche booklet panes during the fourth session of the sale.



Figure 20. The 1992 Delicious Apple imperforate stamp with incorrect 86¢ denomination initially drew no bids, though it did sell eventually.

The prized piece in this session was without doubt the lovely block of 15 of the pale lilac magenta 10¢ on medium paper (Scott 40) estimated at \$9,000, which sold for \$16,000 (Lot 1100, Figure 18).

One bidder told me that he was so concerned that this block was to be broken up that he forced the price up to ensure that if he didn't buy it, somebody else would who would keep it intact.

The remainder of the 19th-century material did well, with the key item being the inverted imperforate tête-bêche booklet pane, Scott 77b (Lot 1267), which sold for \$12,500. Its King Edward VII counterpart, Scott 90b (Lot 1291, Figure 19), sold for \$13,500 to the same bidder.

In the Admirals section, a specialized collection of the issue Scott 104-134 (Lot 1348), estimated at \$3,500, sold for \$15,000. The dealer from Nova Scotia who bought this lot must have seen something in it that others didn't.

The last session was given to the remainder of Canada, with an emphasis on Queen Elizabeth II era errors and varieties. Much material went unsold or sold just at the reserve or slightly below.

A study of the die proofs of the George VI era was sold at \$22,000 on an \$18,000 estimate (Lot 1489). This proves to me, once again, that although many collectors dislike essays and proofs, there are others for whom

Canada Post names 2007 stamp subjects



Figure 21. A die proof in black on card for the 1954 Northern Gannett stamp.

they are an intrinsic part of philately. An eight-album collection of Queen Elizabeth II issues was sold for \$11,000 on a \$5,000 estimate (Lot 1503). Normally this kind of collection would hardly realize face value, but Sir Gawaine had included in it much imperforate, part-perforate and printed-on-gum-side material that made it appealing to the dealer who purchased it.

When Lot 1595 was announced there was total silence in the room with no bidding. This pleased me, as I believe, like most experts do, that this imperforate pair of the 1992 Delicious Apple stamp with the wrong value is printer's waste and should not be on the market (Figure 20). It is not listed in *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* or the *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*. The Scott catalog includes a note that explains such items "may be essays or printer's waste." Although it eventually did sell below estimate, it is not returning to Canada.

The last major item sold was Lot 1631. A British agent paid \$38,000 on a \$20,000-to-\$25,000 estimate for a representative range of Canada's semi-official airmail issues. It was housed in two albums and a folder and was definitely of "award-winning scope and quality."

Richard Ashton, Sotheby's philatelic expert, informed me during the sale that the unsold lots from all 10 Baillie sales will form an 11th sale where reserves will be much lower.

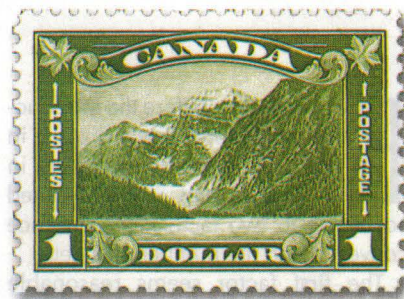
On a parting note, I even purchased an ex-Baillie piece (Lot 1509, Scott 343, Figure 21) for which I paid just slightly above estimate. It will be a key item in my one-frame exhibit of the 1954 15¢ Gannet.

Scouting, sports, wildlife and educational institutions are among the subjects that will appear on Canadian stamps in 2007. Two national parks will be celebrated, as well as the 150th anniversary of the selection of Ottawa as Canada's capital.

Four stamps picturing endangered species will be issued in the spring, and a new definitive series featuring beneficial insects is planned to begin in October 2007 as part of national Stamp Collecting Month celebrations.

The annual Arts Canada issue for 2007 will honor the works of Mary Pratt, a Newfoundland artist whose paintings are often associated with that region. The ongoing five-stamp annual series commemorating the French settlement of what would later become Canada will continue with the fourth stamp, honoring Chief Membertou.

The first stamps of the year will be issued January 5 to celebrate the year of the pig, which actually begins February 18 on the lunar year calendar. The end of the year will bring new Christmas is-



Canada Scott 177, issued in 1930, is a \$1 stamp showing Mount Edith Cavell, part of the Canadian Rockies in Jasper National Park. Canada Post will issue a new commemorative marking the park's centennial in 2007.

sues, including a single stamp featuring reindeer and a set symbolizing peace, joy and hope.

Canada Post has not released design details for its 2007 issues, but further information will be revealed as the individual issue dates draw near. The announced stamp subjects and issue dates provided in the program schedule on this page are tentative and subject to change.

CANADA 2007 STAMP PROGRAM (PRELIMINARY)

January 5: **Year of the Pig**

Mid-January: **Celebration stamp**

February: **First International Polar Year** (125th anniversary)

March 1: **Lilacs**

Spring: **Arts Canada** set for Mary Pratt

Spring: **University of Saskatchewan** (100th anniversary)

Spring: **Endangered species** (four stamps)

May 3: **Selection of Ottawa** as Canadian capital city (150th anniversary)

June: **Terra Nova National Park** (50th anniversary)

June: **Captain George Vancouver** (250th birth anniversary)

July: **Jasper National Park** (100th anniversary)

July: **Chief Membertou** (French Settlement series)

July: **FIFA Youth World Championships**

August: **Scouting in Canada** (100th anniversary)

Fall: **Law Societies of Saskatchewan and Alberta** (100th anniversary)

Fall: **HEC Montréal Business School** (100th anniversary)

October: **Beneficial Insects** (low-value definitive series)

October: **Royal Architectural Institute of Canada** (100th anniversary)

October: **Reindeer** (Christmas issue)

October: **Peace, Joy, Hope** (Christmas issue)