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O CANADA CHARLES J.G. VERGE

## Royal Wedding stamps signaling a policy shift?

Stamps issued for the April 29 Royal Wedding are the first Canadian Royal Wedding stamps since 1948.

In making the announcement for its April 29 Royal Wedding issue, Canada Post remarked, "Except for the reigning monarchs, their consorts and their direct heirs, it is very unusual for the Canadian Post Office to issue stamps for other members of the royal family."

The nondenominated domestic letter rate permanent stamp and the \$1.75 stamp paying the international letter rate are shown in Figure 1.

The stamps, issued in a variety of formats to celebrate the wedding of Prince William of Wales and Catherine "Kate" Middleton,



Figure 1. Canada Post's unexpected Royal Wedding stamps issued April 29 to commemorate the wedding of Prince William of Wales and Catherine "Kate" Middleton.

were unexpected, even more so because Canada Post had previously announced that it would not produce a Royal Wedding issue.

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Figure 2. Canada Post issued this 95¢ stamp (Scott 1856) in 2000 to celebrate the 100th birthday of Queen Elizabeth, the queen mother.

only two occasions where a member of the royal family other than the queen was shown on a Canadian stamp. In 1957 Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, joined the queen on a stamp (Scott 374) issued for the royal visit of that year. The portraits used are based on a photograph taken by Yousuf Karsh.

In 2000, an international rate stamp (Scott 1856) was issued for the 100th birthday of Queen Elizabeth, the queen mother. This

stamp was not originally part of the stamp program for that year, but it was added to the program after very strong lobbying from the public.

In fact, since 1967, there has been a marked change in the approach of the Canada Post towards the queen and her appearance on stamps. After 1967, the queen appears only on the domestic letter rate stamps in definitive series. Prior to that, she and her forbearers appeared on all low-value definitives. Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V also appeared on high-value stamps during their reigns.

Queen Elizabeth II has officially visited Canada 22 times. Stamps with her portrait were issued only for the first five visits: in 1951 (Scott 315), 1957 (374), 1959 (386), 1964 (433), and 1967 (471); and once in 1973 when her visit coincided with the meeting of the Commonwealth heads of government (620-21). No other visit has

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Continued from page 11  
been commemorated since.

Significant anniversaries of her reign have been honored, however. The queen is shown on stamps marking anniversaries of her accession to the throne: for the 25th in 1977 (Scott 704) and the 50th in 2002 (1932). She also appears on stamps for the 50th anniversary of her coronation in 2003 (1987) and her 80th birthday in 2006 (2142 and 2150).

By 2002, Canada Post had become leery of proliferating royal stamps, so Scott 1932, 1987 and 2142 were all issued as commemorative-definitives at the domestic letter rate. All three stamps



**Figure 3. Commemorative-definitive Queen Elizabeth II stamps issued for the 50th anniversary of her reign (Scott 1932), the 50th anniversary of her coronation (1987), and her 80th birthday (2142).**

are shown in Figure 3. Although the stamps each commemorated

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an event, they were available throughout the year and were reprinted as needed, like definitives. Canadian commemoratives are never reprinted and are issued in a quantity estimated to last for 60 days. For those three years, Canada Post did not issue the regular Queen Elizabeth II definitive stamps.



Figure 4. An essay for the design of Canada's 1948 Royal Wedding issue. The essay is based on a photograph by Dorothy Wilding.

Only once previously has Canada issued a stamp for a royal wedding. This was on Feb. 16, 1948, when a single 4¢ commemorative showed Princess Elizabeth (now Queen Elizabeth II) based on a photograph taken by Dorothy Wilding. An essay for the design of this stamp is shown in Figure 4.

The issued stamp (Scott 276), shown in Figure 5, celebrated her marriage to Lt. Philip Mountbatten, Royal Navy, which took place on Nov. 20, 1947.

Issuance of the stamp was delayed by production difficulties. The stamp was designed by Herman H. Schwartz and engraved by William F. Ford. Two plates were used by the Canadian Bank Note Co. to print the 50.01 million stamps issued.

The 2011 Royal Wedding stamps were issued in two separate booklets of 10, set in panes of 16, as a souvenir sheet of two, and as a souvenir sheet of two with Prince William's coat of arms overprinted in gold foil.

Do these Royal Wedding stamps indicate a change of policy for Canada Post on the appearance of royalty on Canadian stamps? Or does this issue simply mean



Figure 5. A 1948 4¢ Princess Elizabeth II stamp (Scott 276) issued to commemorate her Royal Wedding to Lt. Philip Mountbatten, Royal Navy.

that Canada Post has joined the commercial bandwagon surrounding this kind of event in the stamp collecting world?

It is also interesting to note that neither Prince William's father, Prince Charles, nor his mother, the iconic Diana, Princess of Wales, have appeared on Canadian stamps. ■

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