

# The 1932 King George V Medallion issue

▼ CHARLES J.G. VERGE

Canada's King George V Medallion stamps, Scott 195-200, appeared in six denominations on Dec. 1, 1932. The six stamps are illustrated together in Figure 1.

The set had its origins in that year's earlier commemorative issue for the Ottawa Economic Conference. The object of the conference was to study and set up Imperial preferential tariffs between the Commonwealth countries. This was the first conference held after the 1931 Statute of Westminster that gave Commonwealth dominions full control of their foreign affairs.

The 3¢ value of the commemorative series (Scott 192, shown in Figure 2) is inscribed "OTTAWA CONFERENCE 1932" near the bottom and was issued July 12. The definitive

Figure 2. The earlier Ottawa Conference 3¢ commemorative (Scott 192), on which the 1932 six-value Medallion definitive issue is based.

Figure 3. The Mackennal head used for many years on British coins was long thought to have been the basis for Canada's Medallion stamp design of 1932.

stamps are very similar in design, but do not bear the commemorative inscription.

Both issues show a medallion portrait of King George V commonly thought to have been taken from the obverse of British coins then current (Figure 3). On close observation, however, the Medallion stamp portrait shows a much older king than the coin, which features the coinage head prepared by the sculptor to the king, Sir Bertram Mackennal. As Figure 4 illustrates, this same younger image was pictured as early as 1912 on British stamps. The later head of the older king featured on the Medallion stamps has also been attributed to Mackennal.

The 1931 commemorative's design proved so popular with the public that the Post Office Department quickly decided to retain it when it came time to replace the lower value Arch defin-

itives, Scott 162-172, first issued in 1930 (Figure 5). The essay for the new 3¢ definitive value was approved Sept. 14, 1932 by the deputy postmaster general. The original engraved plate was prepared and the Post Office was charged, as per the contract, \$475 plus 3 percent tax for it.

The British American Bank Note Co. printed the six values. Each denomination was printed in sheets of 400 stamps, which were divided into panes of 100 and perforated 11. The quantities printed ranged from 4.5 million of the 8¢ stamps to more than one billion 3¢ stamps. The first three values (1¢, 2¢ and 3¢) were printed on a Stickney rotary press while the three higher values (4¢, 5¢ and 8¢) were printed on a flatbed press.

There are many gum shades on the mint stamps, from almost white to dark yellow-brown, but these are of no major philatelic importance and result from the amount of dextrose put in the gum by the printer. Plate numbers are found on all four corners of the 1¢, 2¢ and 3¢ sheets, while on the 4¢ and 5¢ sheets they are found only in the upper-left corner. The 8¢ plate numbers are located in the upper-right corner only. The accompanying table shows the number of plates for each denomination.

Sometimes, albino or phantom plate numbers can



Figure 4. The coinage head was used on a number of British stamps, including the 1912-13 definitive series (2-penny Scott 162, left, and 10-shilling Scott 175, center) and the British Empire Exhibition issue of 1924 (Scott 185, right).

be found anywhere on the sheet margins. Albino markings could be explained by poor inking or improper wiping of the wiper used on the Stickney press. The phantom numbers — usually numbers other than the plate number being used — are more difficult to explain. M.W. Cryderman in his "The Medallion Issue of 1932" (*Popular Stamps*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, October 1950) explains it by writing that they are perhaps "some type of offset from a previous use of the press."

There was some experimentation with the gum breakers on the 1¢ Medallion issue. Gum

PLATE NUMBERS FOR EACH VALUE OF THE 1932 MEDALLION SERIES

1¢ green	so-called "flat" press printing	Plates 1-3
1¢ green	rotary press printing	Plates 1-6
2¢ brown		Plates 1-3
3¢ red	Die I	Plates 1-2
3¢ red	Die II	Plates 3-12
4¢ yellow ochre		Plates 1-2
5¢ blue		Plates 1-2
8¢ orange		Plates 1-2



Figure 1. Canada's King George V medallion design was issued in six denominations on Dec. 1, 1932 (Canada Scott 195-200).

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breakers are ridges impressed into stamp paper to counteract the natural curl of gummed paper. The trials with the 1¢ stamp sought to determine the extent of gum breaking application necessary to make the rotary press sheets lay flat.

As a result, some of the 1¢ stamps have the appearance of having been printed on a flatbed press and are so listed in the *Scott Classic Specialized Catalogue of Stamps & Covers* and the Canadian Unitrade and Darnell specialized stamp catalogs. These are not real flatbed press printings. The reason they give the flatbed appearance is simply that the stamps do not show the broad parallel lines on the gum that are normally associated with rotary press printings. The so-called 1¢ flatbed printing is found in a paler shade of green than the standard rotary press printing.

The 3¢ was issued in the same red shade as the earlier commemorative but is easily distinguished because it does not include the commemorative legend, "OTTAWA CONFERENCE 1932" above the word "CENTS." Two different dies (Scott 197 and 197c) are recorded for the 3¢ stamp. When first studying the issue, philatelists were of differing opinions on why two dies had been made, with some even opining that only one die had been created and that differences between stamps were attributable to other causes. By the 1970s everyone seemed to agree with Robson Lowe and others that the first die had been damaged and a second die was produced and put into use on Nov. 29, 1932. Confirmation of this is found on a large die proof in the Brigham Collection (Figure 6).

The difference between the two dies, as illustrated in the Unitrade catalog, is shown in Figure 7. In Die I the upper bar of the "3" in the right value tablet ends evenly with the white line above the word "CENTS." In Die II, the same upper bar ends above the white line.

Many minor varieties are recorded on this issue, particularly by Hans Reiche in his *Canada Steel Engraved Constant Plate Varieties*, but as Douglas M. Casey points out

Continued on page 14



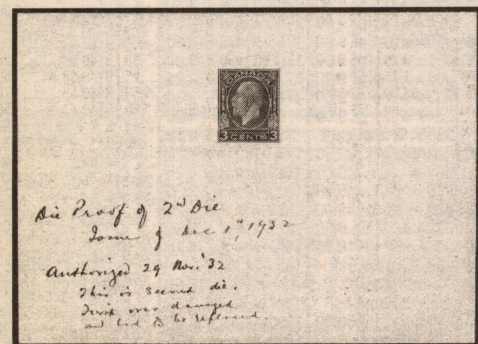
Continued from page 10



**Figure 5. The King George V medallion stamps replaced Canada's Arch definitive issue of 1930. Shown is the 1¢ stamp, Scott 162, from the earlier Arch set.**

("The Medallion Issue King George V 1932" in *Canadian Stamp Handbooks* edited by Michael Milos), only four of these, "all found on the five-cent blue, have a rarity factor high enough to be considered major in nature. Of these, two are major re-entries and readily identified, while the other two are retouched re-entries."

Casey then goes on to illustrate and explain each. They are: a major re-entry on Plate 1 in position 10 of the upper-left pane (doubling of the lines above and below "CANADA" and the king's head, listed as Scott 199i in the *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*), a retouched major re-entry in an unknown position (doubling of the top frame line and the lines above and below "CANADA"), a re-entry on Plate 2 in position 79 of the upper-left pane commonly called the "blue nose variety"



**Figure 6. The large die proof confirming the second die of the 3¢ Medallion. Courtesy of the Brigham Collection.**

(re-entry shading of the king's nose, Scott 199ii), and a retouched re-entry of the same "blue nose variety."

On Nov. 15, 1932, permission was granted for 60,000 stamps of each value to be distributed early to 20 post offices around the country for advance preparation of first-day covers. This permission was accompanied by a warning from the deputy postmaster general that "these postage stamps are to be used only for the purpose designated and under no con-



**Figure 7. The two die types of the 3¢ Medallion issue, as illustrated in Canada's Unitrade catalog.**

ditions are they to be sold or given to anyone prior to the official date of issue." The 20 cities were Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Saint John, New Brunswick; Quebec and Montreal, Quebec; Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, London and Windsor, Ontario; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Regina, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan; Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta; and Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia.

Prior to the release, Post Office officials were concerned that the brown color of the 2¢ was too dark and would not take the cancel well. Twelve 2¢ stamps were placed on covers and turned over to the chief post office inspector to be taken to the Ottawa post office to be put through the canceling machine. These tests seemed to have been successful; however, tests by light hand cancels were not. This resulted in a recommendation to the printers in mid-December that further printings be made in a lighter shade of brown.

The same design and colors were used to print the stamps in coil rolls of 500 and pane formats for booklet assembly. The coils, perforated 8½ vertically, were produced in 1¢, 2¢ and 3¢ values by the Stickney rotary process (Scott 205-207).

Ink collecting in the small gap where the edges of the curved rotary plates met would print a vertical line between every 24th and 25th stamp, creating joint line pairs in those positions.

The coils were not issued at the same time as the sheet stamps. The 1¢ coil was released Nov. 3, 1933; the 2¢ on Aug. 15, 1933; and the 3¢ on the next day, Aug. 16, 1933. Only Die II was used to make the 3¢ coil stamps.

Four different booklets were issued selling for 25¢ but containing only 24¢ worth of stamps. These were placed on sale between Aug. 22, 1933 and March 26, 1934. The rarest of these is the booklet with French language inscriptions containing two panes of six of the 2¢ stamps. Only 10,284 full booklets were issued Sept. 7, 1933.

All the booklets are constructed from a combination of panes of four or six stamps now listed in the catalogs as Scott 195a, 195b, 196a and 196b. Some panes come with the inscriptions "PLATE" or "NO. 1" or "NO. 2" on the selvage.

Imperfate versions of these stamps were not regularly issued but have become collectible. Three hundred of each value are known except for the 8¢, where only 200 have been recorded. The 5¢ blue also exists imperfate vertically with 50 pairs recorded (Figure 8).

As was the norm for the time, each of the values was perforated with the five-hole



**Figure 8. The unique upper-left and upper-right blocks of the 5¢ stamps, imperfate vertically. The right block also shows the major re-entry in position 10. Courtesy of the Brigham Collection.**

"OHMS" perfin by Canada's Department of Finance for use on mail originating from government offices (Figure 9). These varieties are listed as perforated Official stamps in the 2002 *Scott Classic Specialized Catalogue of Stamps & Covers* and the *Unitrade* catalog with the prefix OA, followed by the standard Scott catalog number for the stamp.

Finally all values, except the 4¢ and 8¢ but including the two 3¢ varieties (Die I and Die II) and the 1¢ coil, are known precanceled with a variety of different precanceling devices. Readers are referred to *The Standard Canada Precancel Catalogue* for further information on the fascinating world of Canadian precancels.



**Figure 9. The 3¢ King George V Medallion design of 1932 with OHMS perfins, Scott OA197.**

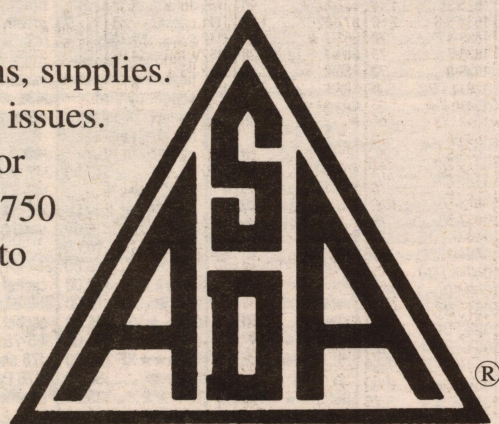
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10	—	30.00		100	—	\$210	191	—	\$675	50.00	257	—	82.00	4.50		319	—	2.00	415	16.95	—	—	
16	—	\$480		112	—	\$140	30.00	205	—	50.00	240	—	258	—	50.00		320a	15.00	—	422	—	4.95	
17	—	\$97.50		113	—	\$95.00	12.00	206	—	16.00	—	259	—	\$173		323	—	—	427	10.95	—		
24	—	8.00		114	—	\$60.00	5.00	207	—	\$16.00	—	260	—	\$145	33.00	323-41	86	—	428	17.00	—		
26	9.00	1.00		115	—	\$750	42.00	208	—	—	25.00	264	—	2.50	—	324	8.00	—	429	27.00	—		
28	—	\$195		116	—	\$280	28.00	209	—	32.00	1.00	265	—	9.00	—	325	32.00	—	433	14.50	—		
29	—	\$105		117	—	30.00	210	—	10.00	—	267	—	1.00	—	—	326	22.00	7.00	434	13.95	—		
31	—	\$255		118	—	\$120	211	—	75.00	3.00	268	—	12.00	—	—	327	36.00	—	435	14.00	—		
32	—	\$25.50		119	—	45.00	212	—	22.00	—	269	—	12.00	—	—	328	6.00	1.00	439	127.50	—		
33	—	\$2.50		120	—	\$225	213	—	10.00	—	272	—	13.00	—	—	329	9.00	—	440	—	4.95		
35	—	\$25.00		121	—	95.00	214	—	16.00	11.00	273	—	19.00	—	—	330	27.00	8.00	442	14.00	—		
36	—	\$30.00		123a	72.00	—	215	67.50	5.00	274	—	67.00	3.00	331	2.50	—	331	2.50	—	443	7.95	1.00	
36b	—	\$63.00		134	\$380	—	216	48.00	3.50	275	—	75.00	—	332	2.00	—	332	2.00	—	450	—	—	
37	—	\$105		135	\$330	—	217	125	20.00	276	—	57.00	—	333	19.00	—	335	16.00	—	466	22.50	2.25	
38	—	\$135		136	\$100	—	218	—	72.00	279	—	3.00	—	336	19.00	—	336	19.00	—	468	—	1.00	
39	—	\$750		145	\$135	—	219	6.00	—	280	—	17.00	—	337	15.00	—	337	15.00	—	470	19.00	—	
63	98.00	10.00		146	28.00	—	219d	45.00	—	281	—	20.00	—	338	38.00	—	338	38.00	—	479	12.95	—	
64	—	\$210		147	\$60.00	5.00	220	6.00	—	282	—	13.50	—	339	13.00	—	339	13.00	—	490	1.00	—	
65	26.00	—		148	\$205	—	221	28.00	2.00	283	—	22.00	—	342	—	27.00	342	—	27.00	492	5.00	—	
68	\$225	12.00		149	\$60.00	18.00	222	15.00	—	284	—	82.00	—	344	2.00	—	344	2.00	—	493	—	—	
69	\$330	18.00		150	\$140	—	223	15.00	—	284	—	82.00	—	344	2.00	—	344	2.00	—	493	—	—	
70b	—	\$210		151	\$150	30.00	224	15.00	6.00	285	—	5.00	1.25	344	—	—	344	—	—	498	1.25	—	
70c	—	\$330		152	\$465	30.00	225	22.00	—	286	—	5.50	—	Scher	4.50	—	349	44.00	—	499	1.95	—	
71	—	\$30.00		153	—	35.00	226	60.00	1.00	287	—	27.00	4.50	367	3.00	—	367	3.00	—	507	15.00	—	
72	—	\$120		154	—	75.00	227	80.00	4.00	288	—	25.00	4.00	370	3.00	—	370	3.00	—	510	3.50	—	
73	70.00	10.00		155	—	35.00	228	95.00	6.00	289	—	36.00	—	371	12.00	—	371	12.00	—	512	3.00	—	
75	\$625	\$135		156	67.50	—	229	\$100	38.00	290	—	—	5.00	372	4.50	—	372	4.50	—	513	2.25	—	
76	\$330	20.00		157	51.00	—	230	6.00	—	291	—	—	54.00	373	15.00	—	373	15.00	—	515	14.95	—	
76a	\$200	48.00		158	26.00	—	231	7.00	—	293	—	\$425	—	378	10.00	—	378	10.00	—	516	12.00	—	
78a	\$160	30.00		158P1	80.00	—	232	12.00	3.00	294	—	5.00	—	379	22.00	—	379	22.00	—	517	20.00	—	
78b	—	30.00		159	55.00	5.00	233	18.00	—	295	—	3.00	—	381	54.00	—	381	54.00	—	526	13.00	—	
85	—	\$300		160	—	24.00	234	25.00	2.50	296	—	25.00	3.00	385	20.00	—	385	20.00	—	527	11.00	—	
86	—	\$135		161	—	5.00	235	21.00	6.50	297	—	19.00	—	386	—	7.00	386	—	7.00	528	5.00	—	
87	\$435	—		163	\$570	20.00	236	18.00	3.00	298	—	44.00	—	387	72.00	—	387	72.00	—	528A	16.00	—	
88	70.00	—		165	\$675	30.00	237	23.00	2.00	299	—	34.00	—	397	9.00	—	397	9.00	—	535	2.95	—	
89	—	60.00		166	—	50.00	239	48.00	—	300	—	3.00	—	398	4.00	—	398	4.00	—	537	2.00	—	
90	—	97.50		178	50.00	2.00	239	48.00	—	301	—	9.00	—	399	15.00	3.00	399	15.00	3.00	546	60.00	—	
91	—	\$187.50		179	105.00	4.00	240	95.00	54.00	302	—	10.00	—	400	70.00	7.00	400	70.00	7.00	547	—	12.95	
93	—	\$105		182	40.00	—	241	\$420	—	303	—	12.00	—	400A	65.00	5.00	400A	65.00	5.00	548	2.50	1.00	
94	70.00	2.50		183	25.00	11.00	242	\$450	—	304	—	11.00	—	402	39.00	—	402	39.00	—	548-50	—	4.95	
95	—	\$210		184	20.00	—	246	10.00	—	305	—	15.00	—	403	95.00	—	403	95.00	—	549	2.00	—	
95a	—	\$165		184P	50.00	—	247	20.00	—	306	—	15.00	—	405b	18.00	—	405b	18.00	—	550	8.50	—	
96	—	\$40.00		185	—	2.50	248	15.00	1.00	307	—	38.00	—	406	4.00	—	406	4.00	—	555	9.00	—	
				186	—	6.00	249	54.00	—	308	—	10.00	—	410	Pr 8.95	—	410	Pr 8.95	—	556	9.00	—	
				187	—	5.00	253	20.00	—	309	—	—	1.50										

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564	2.00	—	662	6.00	—
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567	11.00	—	673	7.00	—
569	10.00	—	678	13.00	—
572	—	2.00	679	41.00	—
579	45.00	—	680	PB. 85	—
585	5.00	—	685	PA.84.50	—
586	9.95	—	688	PB. \$12	—
599	14.95	—	695	PB. 59	—
591	22.00	—	699	PB. 13.95	—
600	—	—	701	6.95	—
617	12.00	—	701	15.95	—
612	8.00	—	715	4.00	—
618	2.50	—	723	3.95	—
619	6.00	—	748	PB. 56	—
622	4.50	—	751	3.95	—
623	5.00	—	832	2.00	—
628	2.00	1.00	833	6.00	—
630	SS \$165	—	1053	—	2.00
637	1.00	—			
638	PB \$6	—			
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642	PB \$9	—			
644	PB \$9	—			
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