

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Newsletter of the BNAPS

First Day Cover Study Group

Issue No. 36 July-September, 2018

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Editor's Notes

This issue is coming to you a bit earlier than usual so that you may plan to attend the meeting noted in the next paragraph.

The First Day Cover Study Group of the BNAPS will host a seminar at Royal 2018 Royale in St. Catharines, Ontario on Saturday June 23 of this year at 3:30 p.m. The program will be a "Show and Tell of Unusual Canadian First Day Covers". Bob Vogel, the chairman of the study group, is the moderator.

The first and last articles in this issue foretell some gloomy endings for first day cover collectors and postage stamps. I would appreciate receiving comments on the "extinct species" piece and will use some, either anonymous or attributed as you would prefer, in the next issue. I'd also appreciate your thoughts on the "collect and store" item.

In between, John van der Ven has done his usual masterful job of unearthing yet another FDC maker who did some remarkable work, and Ken Thibault forwarded an introspective story by Kasimir Bileski about the work required to prepare and distribute FDCs for the first Winnipeg tagged stamps. It's an interesting tale from a participant observer.

Submitting Articles to First Impressions

Articles may be submitted in writing or MS Word, and scans should be in JPEG format at 300 dpi. E-mail submissions should be sent to Gary Dickinson at gandbdickinson@shaw.ca or mailed to Gary at 648 San Michelle Road, Kelowna, B.C., Canada, V1W 2J1.

ARE WE BECOMING AN EXTINCT SPECIES?

by Gary Dickinson

In a *First Days* article published in 2001, Bruce Perkins (1) traced the evolution of cachet production by private makers for Canadian stamp issues, noting their gradual disappearance coupled with the emergence of the Canada Post Office as the dominant force in the field. This article was reprinted in the winter 2013 issue of *First Impressions* (2), together with some of Bruce's further thoughts on the topic.

Although we know something about the producers of FDCs, we know virtually nothing about the consumers (collectors) of their products. There is no direct measure of how many people collect FDCs, but one indirect measure might be the number of covers that are produced or serviced. It isn't likely that the numbers would be too far removed from the number of collectors as few people would see a need for more than one cover, apart from those collectors who might seek different postmarks or different frankings (single, pair, block, inscription block). Dealers who purchase multiple covers would likely do so in order to resell them to their customers.

For purposes of this analysis, then, the number of FDCs serviced or produced is considered to be a proxy for the number of collectors, bearing in mind that those numbers overstate the true number of collectors because of multiple purchases by individuals.

Sources of information about the number of FDCs produced or serviced are scanty and inconsistent. Marcel Cool (3) reported the number of covers serviced by the Postmaster in Ottawa for the period 1949 to 1971. The time series was interrupted from 1972 to 1977 as no records were apparently kept, or if they were, they have not been made available. This is a significant disruption as it occurred at a time when the post office introduced its own FDC program and the private producers were disappearing from the field. From 1978 until the present, the Canada Post Office has provided information about the number of covers produced for each new stamp issue, and these are reported by Chung and Narbonne (4).

For each year under study, one commemorative single stamp issue was selected to represent all such issues for the year with the aim of using one that was approximately at the median. The total of the five selected issues was then averaged and is reported in Table I. Although this methodology could hardly be considered scientific, it does suggest a clear and concerning trend.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s there was a gradual increase in the number of FDCs per stamp issue serviced at Ottawa from approximately 34 thousand in 1950-54 to 89 thousand in 1965-69. The annual number peaked at 104 thousand for the last two years of available date in 1970-71.

Despite the changeover in reporting from FDCs serviced to FDCs produced, the numbers apparently remained high during the early 1970s as the transition from private cachet makers to the "official" covers occurred, and the first two years (1978-79) saw an average of 102 thousand. It remained relatively high during the 1980s, then dipped to the 50 thousand range between 1990 and 2004, but then dropped precipitously to 29 thousand in 2005-09 and 15 thousand in 2010-14.

In recent years the standard print run reported for all issues including commemoratives has tended to be in the 10 to 15 thousand range with occasional surges to more than 50 thousand for the Lunar New Year issues.

The trend line does not bode well for the future of FDC collecting as a viable hobby, however it is clearly in the threatened species zone but not yet extinct. With virtually no variety of products and almost total domination of the dwindling market by a monopoly producer, there is little challenge remaining for an erstwhile collector to accumulate the only FDC available.

Those who currently consider the hobby to be a viable one tend to view FDCs as a branch of Canadian postal history. It has been some three decades or more since there has been a wide range of covers for each new stamp issue which moves FDC collecting into the historical range.

Perhaps it is time for Canada Post to consider strategies to motivate new cachet makers to enter the FDC field. By offering incentives to cachet makers to produce multiple varieties of FDCs for stamp issues, it would increase its servicing income, stimulate the cachet art form, and attract a whole new corps of collectors to participate.

TABLE I

THOUSANDS OF FDCs SERVICED OR PRODUCED BY CANADA POST OFFICE

Period	Serviced	Period	Produced
1950-54	34	1978-79	102
1955-59	44	1980-84	95
1960-64	80	1985-89	88
1965-69	89	1990-94	57
1970-71	104	1995-99	56
		2000-04	54
		2005-09	29
		2010-14	15

References

1. Bruce Perkins. "The Demise of Private Cachet Making in Canada." *First Days*, July 2001, pp. 382-389.
2. Bruce Perkins. "Canadian FDC Collecting in the Modern Era." *First Impressions*, Issue 14 (January 2014), pp. 10-14.
3. Marcel Cool. "Official First Day Covers Serviced by Postmaster in Ottawa." *Canada First Day Cover Specialist*. Vol. 1, No. 4 (October, 1984), pp. 27-32.
4. Andrew Chung and R.F. Narbonne. *The New Specialized Catalogue of Canada Post Official First Day Covers*. Toronto: Unitrade Press, 2015 (Fourth Edition).

FIRST DAYS OF WINNIPEG TAGGED STAMPS

Study Group member Ken Thibault sent along the following story of the first day covers his firm prepared for the first issued of Winnipeg tagged stamps. It is an insightful and first-hand account of how his company worked with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce to produce a very large order of covers on relatively short notice.

THE WINNIPEG "TAGGED" STAMPS.

A report.

Winnipeg has the most modern and up to date Post Office building in all of Canada and what with the Winnipeg central position not only for Canada but for the entire North American continent it was a foregone conclusion that Canadian postal officials would select the Winnipeg Post Office for the first installation on this continent of an electronic machine (called SEFACAN) devised to sort, face up and cancel envelopes in one continuous operation.

For this purpose special activated stamps were required and the Winnipeg area has to be saturated with them long before the actual operation of SEFACAN. Current 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 4¢, 5¢ stamps were overprinted with vertical lines, one for the 4¢ value, 2 for the other four. These lines are invisible in ordinary daylight and even under violet light lamps but show up strongly under fluorescent lights, the type to be found in practically all office buildings.

As publicity for the use of Tagged stamps was quite useful it was suggested by postal officials to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, that they should sponsor a special cacheted envelope to be used for the first day of sale of the Tagged stamps January 13, 1962. The Chamber of Commerce of course agreed to this as it would in turn be an excellent way to promote Winnipeg in general. Publicity was prepared and sent out to all the major newspapers and magazines on this continent as well as the philatelic press in North America, England, Europe and Australia. It was specified that the press release was not to appear before Nov. 28, 1961 and between that date and Dec. 7, hundreds of news media carried the story of the Winnipeg Tagged stamps, in most cases in rather condensed form.

From here on the story is our own. We are a firm of postage stamp dealers under the name of K. BILESKI LTD. comprising some 10 full and part time employees. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce officials in charge of publicity felt we would be of useful service to them and an arrangement was made. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce was to attend to all the necessary work in the production of the special envelopes, to open letters from collectors and dealers from all over the world requesting service in connection with the cacheted envelopes, to keep records and prepare lists of all moines received and to bank same. We had to carry out only two operations:

1. Address the envelopes
2. Put stamps on them January 13 and mail them.

To all this we agreed promptly. After all it was easy to get help to address envelopes at 1¢ each. Less than 1¢ could pay for the work of putting on the stamps. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce received 10¢ per envelope plus postage from collectors to pay for all the necessary clerical and envelope costs. Our share was 2¢ per envelope.



The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce publicity stressed one point rather strongly:

"ORDERS FOR PROPER PROCESSING SHOULD BE RECEIVED WELL IN ADVANCE OF JANUARY 13, 1962".

* * * * *

In the more than one month between Nov. 28, and January 1, 1962 the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce received about 100 orders. Nobody bothered to bring them down to us as after all we could have processed them in one day. We never saw even one letter until January 3rd, 1962.

Soon after the first of January the letters came in. This included a backlog of mails held up by the holidays. On the third we were brought more than one thousand letters! The very first one we looked at hammered home some awful facts, the main one, that these were not going to be ordinary letters, handed over to anyone to write out the necessary addresses and then later on to put on the needed stamps! This and the following letters were exactly the type that we with our regular staff could process in the usual eight hour working day at the rate of but one hundred a day, provided there was nothing else to interrupt the work.

Now there are five different tagged stamps.

Most collectors would want these in three forms.

1. All five stamps each on five separate envelopes, singles.
2. All five stamps each on separate envelopes in blocks of four.
3. All five stamps, singles, on one envelope.

(Happily a 4th variation; all five stamps in blocks of four all on one envelope was not possible as the envelope was too small).

This however was just the start. There are local, out of town, and foreign rates. There are airmail, special delivery and registered rates. All of these can be arranged for by using the five stamps in numerous possible combinations. We gave up the struggle when we logged our 300th possible combination. One collector asked for 120 combinations. Numerous others hit the 40, 50 to 100. The average was 16 per letter.

It was apallingly clear this was not a simple operation of addressing and stamping. One first had to analyse the request, decipher in many cases illegible instructions and none too clearly written addresses. One had to ride herd on hundreds of variations at all times right to the moment they were stamped. Envelopes landing in the wrong box would produce quite different results to those requested.



Faced on the 3rd of January with over one thousand letters, each requiring considerable interpretation, it was clear a crash program was necessary. Forthwith all our regular work was dropped, an additional staff was hired and twenty of us by putting in 12 to 15 hours daily, between January 3rd and January 10 processed (for us) the incredible number of 330 complicated letters daily.

The original 100 or so letters we received from the Chamber of Commerce on the 3rd was augmented every other day by 300 to 500 new arrivals, each containing anywhere from three to one hundred addresses. At the close of work on the 10th everyone was completely exhausted and on that day we ceased processing any further letters. We added up what was on hand estimated what might yet come on the 11th, 12th, and even 13th (D Day!) and advised the Chamber of Commerce the best way to handle the late arrivals would be to process enough envelopes in the three basic versions but in unaddressed form, have them cancelled on the 13th and then fill all orders as near as possible as per request, by mailing such envelopes under covers to the persons ordering same. They in turn could readdress same and forward them, also under cover, to whoever they were meant to be sent. This way there would be no disappointed collectors. To all this the Chamber of Commerce agreed and we spent a rather strenuous 11th and 12th preparing some 25,000 additional envelopes. Since the Canadian post office will not accept completely unaddressed envelopes we wrote in our address in abbreviated form lightly in pencil on the entire 25,000.

As anticipated, the greatest avalanche of collector and even dealer requests piled into the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce offices, the 11th, 12th and 13th. As this is being written it is not known what the 15th and subsequent days will bring, but we feel quite confident the total number of additional orders will surpass all previous orders. All received after the 13th of Jan. can only be returned unfilled, otherwise there will be sufficient "first days" to take care of the orders received right up to and including January 13 though there will be considerable delay in sending out the late orders.

So much for the request to send in orders "well in advance of January 13, 1962". Collectors would do well to comply with such requests particularly if an offer to address envelopes is made.

At that everyone concerned was rather fortunate. Most of the publicity came through in mixed up form. A great many were under the impression only a 5¢ value was being released. Some 70,000 envelopes were processed with the Winnipeg cancellation which divided by five gives 14,000 average which is far below normal first day envelope figures. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce could easily have received five times more orders than it did. As a result the commonest variation of the tagged stamps first days are far scarcer than the usual 5¢ commemorative first day and collectors who have received or will be receiving whatever groups due them, will be quite pleased with the results.



Our work did not end on the 12th. At one minute past midnight of the 13th we were at the Winnipeg Post Office to purchase the needed supply of new stamps. Fifteen minutes later a staff of 50 were busy applying the tagged stamps to the envelopes on hand. By 9 a.m. of the 13th it was apparent the 50 workers who had by then put in a solid 9 hours could never manage to complete the job. Phone calls went out and the staff went up to 90. The newcomers and nearly all of the original group then kept up the pace. After 20 hours with but a few minutes break every three hours the job was finally completed.

In that period we had applied some 300,000 stamps to envelopes and easily broken every "first day" record considering the stamps as one unit though of course we were helped by the fact there were five stamps not the usual one. Still they went out in one day.

It was quite an adventure, but once is enough. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce officials and clerical staff responsible for the work did a magnificent job under great pressure and deserve the thanks of all collectors. As for ourselves we would hesitate to do this again even if offered 25¢ per envelope, not because the sum is too small but we have the fearful certainty it would be all piled up on not over months but a week or so before issue. It is fascinating to note how approaching deadlines build up interest.

Winnipeg may have other Tagged stamps in various forms and collectors will want "first days" of everything that develops. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce having once started the ball rolling should continue to sponsor the special envelopes selling them at cost plus handling and shipping charges as they did with the January 13th envelopes. Collectors and dealers should buy their supplies long in advance ADDRESS them and then send them in to some Winnipeg group to process on the day of issue. This is quite a task, most complicated if it involves more than one stamp. A very large staff is required but a fee of say 5¢ per envelope would be a useful stimulus to some organized community club of similar organization to undertake the task to everyone's benefit. Having now some experience we will be pleased to help organize something of this nature.

However they are secured, in the future K. BILESKI LTD, shall certainly have first days of all new Tagged stamps for sale. They are going to be a most interesting Canadian philatelic group.

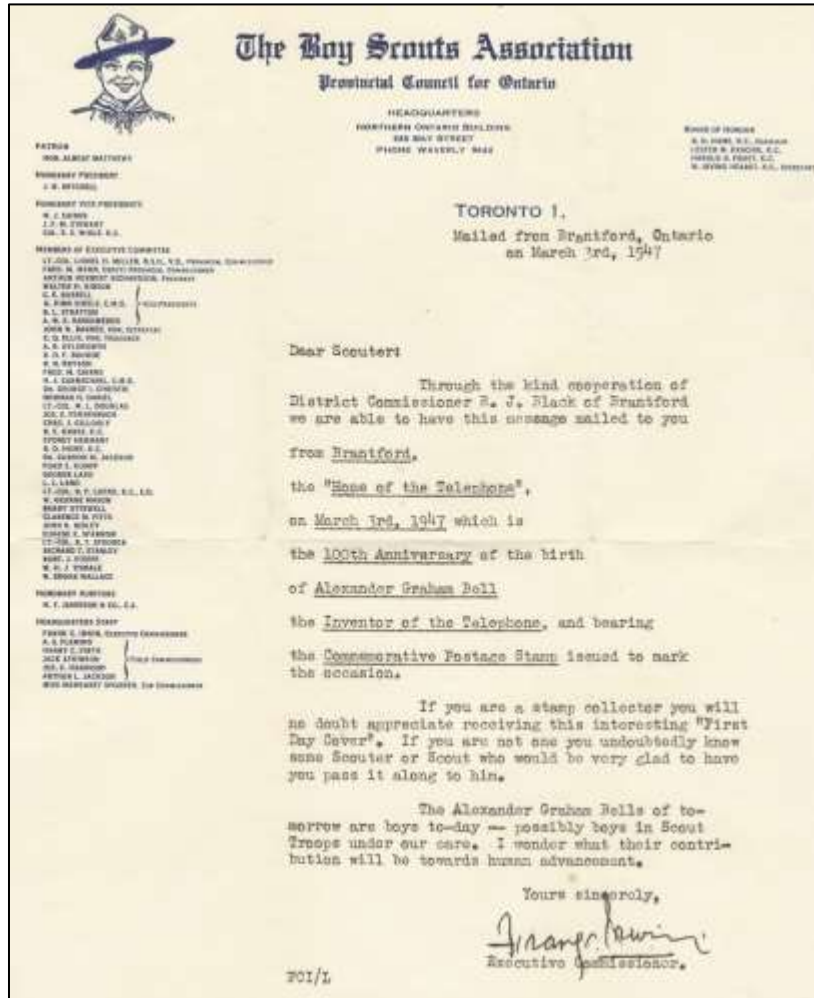
Lastly this report on Winnipeg Tagged Stamps can only close with a vote of thanks to Winnipeg's Postmaster Mr. George Toal and his most efficient staff who saw to it all the "first days" received careful handling. Collectors will concur when they see the fine neat clear cancellations on their envelopes.

K. BILESKI,
January 15th, 1962.



BELL AND THE BOY SCOUTS

Peter McCarthy sent along this uncommon FDC of the Bell stamp (Scott #274) with an enclosed letter noting that “the Alexander Graham Bells of tomorrow are the boys of today.” The addition of #O15 appears to be gratuitous.



A.J. PEAKE: AN AUSTRALIAN MAKER OF CANADIAN FIRST DAY COVERS

by Jan Pieter (John) van der Ven

George Basher first introduced readers of *First Impressions* to the Canadian FDCs made by Australian A.J. Peake in Issue 5 in 2010. This is a follow-up to Basher's article and provides more information about Peake and his Canadian products.

Archibald Jack Peake was born on January 15, 1917 in Pemola, a small township in South Australia. He lived most of his life in the Adelaide area. According to the recorded obituary from the Centennial Park Cemetery in Adelaide, Jack passed away on September 8, 2006. He received his education from the Adelaide Teachers College which was affiliated with the University of Adelaide and South Australian School of Art.

Upon graduation Peake was appointed to the South Australia Education Department as a manual training instructor. He became a Senior Lecturer in Technical Arts at the Western Teachers College, which became the University of South Australia. That he taught in various parts of South Australia is important to know because the places where his covers were cancelled indicate the towns of his postings. They included Karoonda (1948-1952), Gladstone (1953-1954), and Nailsworth (1955-1956).

Jack had collected stamps from an early age, but in 1948, while he was teaching in Karoonda, a small railroad town about 150 km. east of Adelaide, he became very interested in producing his own covers. FDC's were not readily available there, so Jack started to produce his own covers which he did for more than 40 years. Commercial envelopes did not lend themselves to his different art media which led him to produce his own envelopes from

drawing paper which was better suited for media such as water colours. These envelopes were not all the same size as some were size 10 or larger to accommodate his creative work and to tie into the theme of the stamps. He produced FDCs using art media such as pen drawings, water colours, and wood block cuts. His wood-block printed covers were usually individually numbered to 30 although a few were produced at the 60 level. Most of his covers were neither signed nor numbered.

Each one of his FDCs was unique and he generally produced only one for each stamp issued. The most he would usually make is four different cachets for a stamp issue, although he did make more for some of the later Canadian issues. Almost all of his covers were self-addressed, and very few were addressed to others such as philatelic acquaintances. His covers are easily recognizable because of their constant style of distinctive lettering he used for the addresses. Jack Peake's FDCs are most definitely very scarce and very hard to find and obtain. The early works were not numbered: they are unique and he would only produce one cachet or he would make four different scenes for the same stamp. Most of his covers do not have an addressee and most are not initialed or signed.

Peake produced many Australian FDCs from 1949-1996. During the same period he also produced some FDCs for Papua New Guinea, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australian Antarctic, and ANPEX 1955. He also produced FDCs for Scouting as he was an active member in the Australian Scouting Association.

In addition to his FDCs, Peake also contributed as an artist to many book publications with his pen sketches and drawings according to the Adelaide newspaper *The Advertiser*. These include Anne Hazell's *A Slice of History: Blackwood Golf Club 1930-1980* and Nelson Eustis's *Samoa Sketchbook*.

The field of Canadian FDCs is fortunate that Jack Peake had a philatelic acquaintance in Windsor, ON. One might surmise that this Canadian person may have served overseas during World War II and hence the connection, or he might have had contact with Peake through the international scouting movement, but the origin of the relationship is indeterminate. Jack made many Canadian FDCs, all hand-drawn and hand-painted, and the principal medium he used was water colours. He produced covers over a period originally thought to be from 1951 to 1956, but more recently extended to 1965. No Peake FDCs are known from after that time. Moore indicated that the collaboration with Jack's Canadian philatelic friend was cut short when that person suffered a serious accident around 1954.

The Windsor connection is thought to have been a Mr. Wilfred Spinks who lived at 491 Elm Avenue. Around 1955 he moved to 1615 Westminister Avenue in Windsor. All of Peake's Canadian covers were cancelled at one of three postal stations in Windsor including Walkerville Post Station, Sandwich Postal Station, and the Main Post Office. It appears that Spinks had date of issue cancellations applied to the unaddressed and uncacheted first day covers which were then mailed to Jack Peake for the hand-drawn and painted cachets to be applied. Some covers probably stayed in Australia while others were apparently sent back to Spinks in Windsor.

The correspondence with Spinks is confirmed by the Australian cover shown in

Figure 1, and the address is written in the same style as Peake used on his addressed covers. The wood-cut cachet, however, is relatively rare as most of his FDCs were made with water colours.

Jack Peake's water colour application style changed from precise graphic art work in early 1951 to a more free-hand style in the 1953 to 1956 period. Nevertheless, every one of his covers is a small piece of art work along the same lines as those produced by Dorothy Knapp and Ralph Dyer, FDC cachet makers from the USA. A list of recorded Peake Canadian FDCs is shown at the end of this article.

From 1951 until 1955 there were 23 individual stamps or sets of stamps issued by the Canada Post Office, but Peake FDCs have only been reported for five of them. These are shown below, and they are dated from October 26, 1951 (Scott #315) until June 1, 1953 (Scott #330). It is possible that he may have made one or more cachets for the other issues in that five year period, but none has been reported to this point.

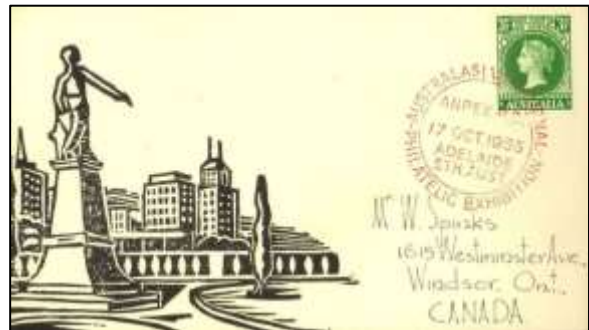


Figure 1. Australian cover to Spinks



Figure 2. #315.1



Figure 3. #315.2



Figure 8. #318.2



Figure 4. #317.1



Figure 9. #319.1



Figure 5. #317.2



Figure 10. #319.2



Figure 6. #317.3



Figure 11. #320

Figure 7. #318.1



Figure 12. #325-329



Figure 13. #330

I thought it would be prudent to check the member albums posted on the BNAPS FDC Study Group web site to see if there were any other reported Jack Peake covers. What I found was incredible. It has also thrown out some of my observations and thoughts about the last date for Canadian Jack Peake covers. One member of the study group had displayed a collection of 98 Jack Peake covers for 27 single Canadian stamps or sets. In my conversation with this member, he told me that he had obtained all these covers in one lot from an auction house in Ontario many years ago. There are several characteristics that point to them as being A.J. Peake covers:

1. They are not addressed.
2. They are all cancelled at one of the three above-mentioned post offices, most often at the Sandwich Postal Station in Windsor.
3. The work of these covers is certainly varied when compared with his earlier cachets. Some have just a single subject or object but several have much more elaborate scenes.

4. They all have the same appearance as Jack Peake's work and his consistent colour usage over the years.

A question could be posed as to whether it was A.J. Peake or W. Spinks who produced all the covers after 1956. It is highly unlikely that two artists in totally different parts of the world would have an identical art style to depict items the same way and also to use the same pallet of colours. Documentation and correspondence with Australian collectors verified that A.J. Peake produced many Canadian FDCs. There are too many factors that point in the direction that these are all Jack Peake covers. The only mystery is why these have never been reported before, and I wonder if they were unaware in Australia of these Canadian cachets he produced after 1955. It is too bad that almost all of the covers by Jack Peake were not signed with his initials or his name for better identification and attribution.

The collection noted earlier containing 99 different Peake FDCs covered the period from 1956 until 1965. There were 44 single stamps or sets of stamps issued during that time, and the collection includes representation from 26 of them. The largest number of covers is the ten for the 1957 sports and recreation issue (Scott #365-368) followed by eight for the oil industry stamp (#381) of 1958 and seven each for the first elected assembly (#382) and NATO (#384) issues. Only four stamps were represented by a single Peake FDC.

Following are seven representative covers from the collection. The cover for the Grenfell issue shown in Figure 20 is the last documented Peake cachet for a Canadian stamp and its first day was June 9, 1965.

Author's Note:

I would like to thank Michael (Mick) Moore, author of the 2009 publication

Australian First Day Covers, for allowing me to use some of the information on Jack Peake in Chapter 16 of his book for this article on Jack Peake's Canadian FDCs. I would also like to thank Ralph Sanders, Newspaper and Family Historian Librarian, at the National Library of Australia for information he provided, and Kathy Hartley, Reference Librarian at the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation for verifying some dates and other information. Last but not least, I would like to thank study group member Maurice Malenfant for permitting this display of a sample of Peake FDCs from his collection.



Figure 17. #391



Figure 14. #382



Figure 18. #394



Figure 15. #383



Figure 19. #412



Figure 16. #387



Figure 20. #438

LIST OF RECORDED CANADIAN FDCS BY A.J. PEAKE

Scott # Cachets	No. of	Scott #	No. of Cachets
315	2	386	6
317	3	387	2
318-319	4	388	2
320	1	389	5
325-329	3	390	6
330	3	391	2
364	3	392	4
365-368	10	393	4
369	2	394	2
371-372	2	395	2
375	1	397	2
381	8	398	2
382	7	401-409	6
383	5	410	1
384	7	412	1
385	5	438	1

HOW DO YOU COLLECT AND STORE YOUR FIRST DAY COVERS?

I received the following e-mail message from one of our members a couple of months ago:

“I have collected since 1972 faithfully and I had a lot of material before that. I have numerous albums that I purchased years ago from Canada Post, the Unitrade FDC albums. They are now falling apart, in terrible shape. I have started buying my own binders and using Vario sheets for what I need. What are other collectors doing in this regard? Any suggestions would be appreciated. I want to preserve my collection but as a senior my costs are mounting.”

I suspect that it’s a problem that we all have encountered, and there may be as many solutions as there are members. Some of us may just throw everything into a big box; some may file them by cachet maker, date of issue, or Scott number; while others may collect systematically and write them up on album pages and mount them with photo corners.

If you could let me know (gandbdickinson@shaw.ca) your approach, I’ll include your suggestions or solutions in the next issue of *First Impressions*. With your information please indicate whether you’d like to keep it anonymous for security reasons.

A METER COVER FROM GEORGE BASHER: THE END OF POSTAGE STAMPS PREDICTED IN 1937

