

## “The Bulletin” May, 1998

### President’s Message

There’s some very important news and chat in this column this month. Please don’t let its length discourage you from reading it through.

One matter to be dealt with quickly and clearly are our meeting dates over the next three months. The Edithvale summer schedule forces us to depart from our normal forth Tuesday, so watch those old habits! For June it will be the third Tuesday, so **June 16** is the date for sure. Ted Boxall is still arranging other dates for us, but if we follow the same approach as last year you had better hold the third Wednesday for each of July and August. That would put our meetings on **July 15** and **August 19**, at least that’s the plan.

As President, I have been lax in maintaining some of the rules connected with our On Time Attendance Draw. The original intention of the draw was to encourage members to be signed in, wearing their badge and be in their seat for the start of the meeting. I must admit that we have let it come down to simply being in the door by the time your name is drawn—but no more! So, the bad news is that in the future, winners must be signed in and wearing their badge as well as being seated in order to be eligible for the pot. The good news is that there’s still no skill testing question to answer.

## A Visit from An Old Friend

The next meeting of the North York Coin Club will be held on **Tuesday, May 26, 1998**, at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Drive.

For this meeting we have invited Mr. Jim Charlton, a long-time member of this Club and a cornerstone of modern Canadian numismatics, to reminisce with us on the collecting scene as it has changed over the last 50 years. That would take us back to the earliest issues of his “Catalogue of Canadian Coins, Tokens & Fractional Currency” as published by the Canada Coin Exchange and the many events and good people who have come and gone since then. Let’s have an excellent turn out for this special member.

Following our Executive meeting we are organized with a draft ONA 2000 convention committee and are underway in locating a venue and setting a budget. A North York proposal will be going to the ONA President for the end of the month in time for an ONA Executive meeting in mid-June.

It was a wonderful surprise to learn that this Bulletin has won the honour of being the top ONA club bulletin for 1997. As I said at the April meeting, much credit must go to Dr. Marvin Kay for setting the challenge and contributing some very fine articles. Thanks in this vein also goes to Ted Boxall, Rick Craig, Al Bliman, Chris Boyer, Paul

Johnson, Andrew Tumber, Harvey Farrow and others for their contributions. We’re always looking for articles and would really like to hear from anyone with anything to contribute. This issue is a celebration of the **Best Club Bulletin** award, so our masthead is decorated to commemorate the event.

As I final word, I must add how impressed I was, as as one of the Mint instructors, with the spirit of the new evolving team at the Royal Canadian Mint. There are strong signals that they can operate as a profitable business and show good taste in their products at the same time.

Need to reach the President? Phone calls are welcome at **416-745-3067** (leave a voice mail message if you can’t get through in person) and e-mail may be sent to [petchp@ican.net](mailto:petchp@ican.net).

*Next Meeting:*  
**May 26**

## Meeting News from the April 28 Meeting

The 428th meeting of the North York Coin Club was held on April 28, 1998, at the Edithvale Community Centre, 7 Edithvale Dr., Willowdale, Ont.

The President, Paul Petch, opened the meeting at 8:10 and welcomed 27 members and 2 guests. For the On Time Attendance Draw, Glen Williams' name was drawn but he was not present to receive the \$4 pot so we go to \$6 for May.

After thanking Bob Porter for taking last month's minutes, the Secretary read the minutes for March 24, 1998, and they were moved accepted by Norman G. Gordon.

The Chair advised the members that, as a major coin show event has been scheduled for October 3, our show will be cancelled. This will be further discussed at the Executive meeting on May 13th.

As club delegate to the ONA Convention in Ottawa, Harvey Farrow gave a comprehensive report. All in all, it was a very busy time. As a closing surprise, Harvey presented a Certificate of Award for putting out the best bulletin for 1997 and a \$50. cash award to the club and also presented a similar certificate to Paul Petch for being the Best Club Bulletin Editor for 1997. Paul thanked other members who have contributed articles and for making it the success it is. John Regitko reviewed the high value of the contents of the registration kit and entered some books as donations to the auction.

The President announced the Club has submitted an offer to the ONA to host the year 2000 convention. It will be dealt with at their June meeting.

Paul Johnson gave an interesting recap of his and his wife's recent and incredible trip to China. The real highlight was their adoption of a one year old little girl. Congratulations to a courageous couple.

The Chair indicated a few events have come together, all relating to the Royal Canadian Mint. First, he stated that Paul Johnson arranged for Marvin Kay, John Regitko and himself to meet and present to 60-70 members of the Mint sales staff in Ottawa. The staff are interested in being "in tune" with the collector point of view. The visitors had a wonderful time and their consensus was that they had enriched the staff with their knowledge. He passed along 1998 Proof Sets to Paul and Marvin presented in their absence in Ottawa.

The Question of the month also was on the topic of the Mint. It asked members to name three significant events in the history of our Canadian Mint prior to 1908. The very lengthy answers read by Paul Petch will appear in the next bulletin.

Paul brought along a 90th anniversary set he purchased at the Mint and indicated he was fortunate he was able to buy in person since the quality varied from set to set because of the added antiquing effect. Rick Craig reported he had returned a set sent to him because of unacceptable quality.

Rick Craig announced the Mint is opening a contest to design the twelve quarters for 1999 and for 2000 as well. The 1999 theme is to show important events from the past and the 2000 will show Canada going forward.

Many thanks to Roger Fox for preparing the refreshments and Paul Petch for the donuts.

The 51 lot auction was very ably run by Bob Porter with the assistance of Paul Petch and Basil Latham. Despite the pressure of time, Bob was still able to inject some humour. The sale brought a commission of \$12.45 and donations amounting to \$55.50. Many thanks to Jean Orr, Brian See, Marvin Kay, Norman G. Gordon, Paul Petch and John

Regitko/Bill Cross at Charlton for their donations.

Lucky Draw winners were: Avram Zak(3), Albert Kasman, Ron Zelk, Dion VanLaetham (2), Dick Dunn, Lucille Colson, Vince Chiappino, Russ Brown, Brian See(2), and Del Murchison. The draw conducted by Roger Fox brought in proceeds of \$23.00 There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:10 p.m.

## Coming Events

**Simcoe Coin Show** May 24, 10am-4pm at the fairgrounds, Junior Farmers Building, 172 South Dr. Admission \$2, Over 40 tables. Contact Ian Ward (519) 426-8875.

**Scarborough Coin Club 2nd Annual Coin Show** June 6, 9am-3pm at the Cedarbrook Community Centre, 91 Eastpark Blvd. Free admission; over 30 dealers, draws, free parking. Contact Rick Craig (416) 977-0663, e-mail: rrcraig@total.net

**Brantford Numismatic Society 40th Annual Show** June 14, 8am-4pm at Woodman Community Centre, 491 Grey St. Contact club at PO Box 28015, North Park Plaza, Brantford, N3R 7X5.

**Torex** at the Primrose Hotel, **June 27** 10am-5pm, **June 28** 10am-3pm Pearson Ballroom, 111 Carlton St. Daily admission \$5. Information: Ingrid K Smith (416) 260-9070.

**Hamilton Coin and Collectable Show** July 11 at the Royal Canadian Legion, 1180 Barton St. E., (opposite Centre Mall). 45 Tables, free parking, door prizes. Family admission \$2, seniors \$1 Contact George Smith, (905) 385-6945.

**1998 CNA Convention** July 29-August 1, Edmonton, Alberta at the Convention Inn.

## O.N.A. Annual Convention Club Delegate's Report by Harvey Farrow

I arrived at the Citadel Hotel in Ottawa around 4:00 P.M., along with Albert Kasman, Basil Latham and Ron Zelk for the O.N.A. Annual Convention which was held from Friday, April 17 to Sunday, April 19, 1998. You would have had to have arrived really early on the first day if you wanted to take in the Royal Canadian Mint tour, which was between 2:00 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. I understand from the ones that got there early and went on the tour that they had a chance to go on the working floor of the mint to see how the coins are made, which you don't have the chance to do on the regular public tour of the mint.

If you had the time sometime on the Saturday or the Sunday you could also tour the Bank of Canada Currency Collection. By simply showing your registration badge you would be eligible for free admission. The collection wasn't far away from the convention hotel. How many attended I don't know, because I didn't have enough time to go myself, and I believe most of the convention attendees didn't either.

The spousal "Mystery Tour" which was suppose to have been between 1:00 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. on the Saturday, was cancelled because not enough people signed up.

There was the usual *get acquainted* reception at 9:00 P.M. on the Friday evening for dealers and registrants in the Hospitality suite in the hotel.

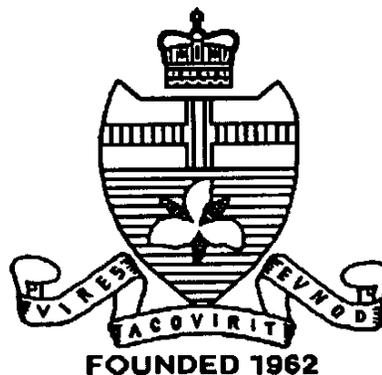
Pierre Morin was in attendance from the Royal Canadian Mint and he bought along a layer cake to promote the celebration of the mint's 90th anniversary. This accompanied the wine, beer, and potato chips and dips set out by the O.N.A. This event had the usual large attendance as in the past.

The official opening was at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, the same time as the start of the Canadian Tire Coupon Collector's Club meeting. This meeting had about 25 members and guests in atten-

dance and was followed by a 100 lot auction at the conclusion of the business portion of the meeting.

The only meeting which I didn't attend was The Canadian Association of Token Collectors which was held early in the afternoon, when I was having my lunch.

After lunch was the first time I went into the large bourse and exhibit room. This year the bourse was larger than most O.N.A. conventions with a total of 47 tables and a massive display space. There were 55 normal display cases plus over 100 frames of displays in



which each set of 6 frames were equal to about 2 display cases--and they still had more room for displays. Even though there so many displays it was surprising that most displays didn't have any descriptions or write-ups on what the display was about. There was one display case with only two coins in it and it won an award because it had information describing the display. Some of the frame displays had a lot of coins, medals and paper money, but no information describing what the display was about.

The next meeting I attended was from 3:00 P.M. to almost 4:30 P.M. for the Canadian Association of Wooden Money Collectors. Once again, attendance was about usual for this group. They had a short business meeting along with a small auction to concluded the meeting.

I then went on to the auction room. The auction was conducted by Charles Moore and had started at 2:00 P.M. with over 1000 lots and an additional 600 lots in a mail bids only section. There was mixed demand, with some items going below their estimated value some above. The auction finished just before 6:00 P.M., leaving just enough time to get to the banquet.

Saturday evening was the annual banquet of the O.N.A., which had an attendance of over 50 people, which is higher than usual for recent years. It featured Graham Esler, Chief Curator and Head of the Museum for the Bank of Canada National Currency Collection speaking on the collection itself. While he as served as Chief Curator since 1981, he reminded attendees that it has been two months since the death of the first Chief Curator, Major Sheldon Carroll, and Mr. Esler took the opportunity to pay tribute to Major Carroll for the energy and guidance he brought in starting the Collection for the Bank of Canada.

The O.N.A. "Award of Merit", went to Frank Fesco, of Ottawa, for all of the research and articles he has produced over the last 30 years, which have been published in books and O.N.A. and C.N.A. Bulletins and Journals.

The Fellowship Award, which was to only one person this year, went to Ray Desjardins, of Ottawa, the local area director of the O.N.A. and a former area director of the C.N.A. This award was started by the O.N.A. in 1994, when the convention was hosted by our club. The 1994 winners where Jerry Remick, George Fraser and myself. The 1995 winners where Tom Kennedy, and Tom Kostaluk. In 1996 the winners where Chris Boyer and Dick Dunn and in 1997 the winner was Norm Belsten. As you can see from the list, our Club is very well represented in the roster of recipients.

This concluded the events for Saturday.

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Sunday began with the 8:30 A.M. annual Club Delegate breakfast meeting, with 14 different clubs represented by the 23 people in attendance. President Ken Wilmot, opened the meeting followed by comments from the treasurer, Bruce Raszmann, stating that the O.N.A. has 42 clubs and 31 of them are taking advantage of the club insurance programme. Ken Wilmot then announced the best bulletin award winner for 1997. This award was started in 1990. One of the rules is that a club can only win it one year out of three, to give other clubs a chance of winning the award. The Ingersol Coin Club won in 1990, followed by the London Numismatic Society, Nickel Belt Coin Club (in Sudbury), Timmins Coin Club, Thunder Bay Coin Club, Ingersol Coin Club, and last year it went to the Waterloo Coin Society. The winner for 1997 is the North York Coin Club. Ken presented me with a Club plaque plus a \$50.00 cheque and a separate plaque for the club's editor, which in our case is Paul Petch. North York's next chance to win will be for Bulletins produced during the year 2000.

Ken Wilmot then turned over the balance of the meeting to our own member John Regitko who is the O.N.A. Club Liaison Director. He presided over various draws for books and for subscriptions to various publications put out by Trajan Publishing including Canadian Coin News, Canadian Stamp News, and various sports publications. The club received the following books, either for their library or for door draw prizes at their monthly meetings: three 1997 Charlton coin guide catalogues, a Canadian Communion Tokens, a 1997 Canadian Catalogue of coins, a copy of the misprint collation of the 1998 Charlton Catalogue of coins, 2 copies of Exploring Canadian Colonial Tokens by Ted Banning, 2 copies of the Charlton Colonial token workbook and from the Ferguson Foundation a copy of The Currency and Medals of Prince Edward Island. I also received a 1997 Charlton Standard Catalogue of coins, a misprint collation of the 1998 Charlton

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## THOMAS CHURCH AND THE DESIGN OF THE 1998 O.N.A. MEDAL by Chris Faulkner

The design chosen by the City of Ottawa Coin Club for its 1998 ONA Convention medal combines two related themes. The forest scene with the lumberman's cabin has been adapted from a token made by the nineteenth century Ottawa numismatist Thomas Church. From the early 1880s up to the First World War, Ottawa had a lively numismatic community that included people like Church, F.X. Paquet, F.R.E. Campeau, L.J. Casault, Mrs. E.D. Gibson, and Louis Laurin. These were some of the people who in 1891 formed the first numismatic organisation in Ottawa and the second in all of Canada, the Société Numismatique d'Ottawa. But Thomas Church was not only an Ottawa collector who made his own tokens, he was also employed in the Ottawa timber trade throughout his working life. The history of Ottawa and the valley resonates with the names of great lumber barons and timber merchants like Philemon Wright, J.R. Booth, Thomas MacKay, Bronson, Weston, MacLaren, W.C. Edwards, and others. So, on the one hand, the medal celebrates over 100 years of numismatics in Ottawa, and on the other, it acknowledges the major contribution of the lumber industry to the formation of the City of Ottawa and its surroundings.

Thomas Church, who was born in Ireland in 1844, was an active Ottawa numismatist from about 1880 to the year 1900. Sometime in the late 1880s Church began to cut dies and manufacture his own tokens. His workshop at his home on Victoria Island in the Ottawa River, where he was em-

ployed by the lumber company of Bronson's and Weston, was destroyed in the great fire which swept much of Ottawa and Hull in April 1900. Thereafter Church ceased collecting and manufacturing tokens. He died at his home in Ottawa in 1917.

Throughout the 1890s Church made his own personal numismatist's card or check in many varieties and metals which he traded with fellow collectors.

While his tokens are not plentiful, there are many varieties and sub-varieties of Church's tokens, since he married his dies in various combinations in different metals. He also made merchant's tokens for Louis Laurin



of Pointe Gatineau, Quebec, milk tokens for G. W. Barrett of Leitrim, Ontario, souvenir pieces for the Ottawa Winter Carnival in 1895 and the Central Canada Exhibition in 1896, numerous dies that refer to the lumber industry, and others in imitation of various Canadian token types. The shanty in the forest setting that has been adapted for this year's O.N.A. medal is intended as a tribute to Thomas Church, as a reminder of the long history of numismatics in Ottawa, and as a recognition of the importance of lumbering to Ottawa and the valley.

*This important article appeared in the 1998 ONA Convention Programme and was written by Mr. Faulkner who was responsible for the medal's production.*

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Standard Catalogue, a catalogue of Wade Whimsical Collectibles and 100 free business cards from John Regitko for my own use for representing the club.

This meeting finished around 10:15 A.M.

The next meeting of the morning was the General Annual Meeting of the O.N.A. starting at 10:40 A.M. and conducted by the President, Ken Wilmot. The membership of the O.N.A. consist of the following: 184 regular members, 74 life members, 42 clubs, 7 junior members and 21 husband and wife membership for a total of 328 members which is down only by 4 members since last year's meeting. The only change coming out of the general meeting was to the clubs comprising area #7. The Oshawa & District Coin Club has been moved from area #8 and put into area #7 along with the Mississauga Coin Club, Thistletown Coin Club, Toronto, Coin Club, North York Coin Club and Scarborough Coin Club.

It was the hope of the O.N.A. to have the convention in 1999 in St. Catharines hosted by the St. Catharines Coin Club, but the members felt they where not up to putting on the convention, so next year it is going back to Guelph, at the College Inn Hotel, at Stone and Gordon Streets. This convention will be put on by the O.N.A. with the assistance of various members of the South Wellington County Coin Club and by the member of the Waterloo Coin Society, which is hosting the CNA 1999 convention. The convention in the year 2000 is being bid for by our club. We have had some discussions with the O.N.A. Executive and we will put in a formal bid for the convention. The O.N.A. Executive will make their decision on this matter at their next Executive meeting in Brantford, on Sunday, June 14th. The attendance at this meeting was lower than usual and, as stated in their financial report for 1997, the O.N.A. had a loss of \$894.74 for the year ending December 31, 1997. This meeting finished at 11:25 A.M.

The last meeting of the day was the Executive Meeting of the O.N.A., which started at 12:25 P.M., and for which we had just enough time to check out of our hotel room after the General Meeting. Not much business of note came up at the Executive meeting, and it closed at 1:20 P.M.

Since two of the four people who left Toronto on Friday had to back to work on Monday, we left the hotel at 1:40 P.M. The draw of the dream vacation wasn't until 4:00 P.M., but word comes to me that first prize went to Bill Jarema of Stratford and that in a great turn of good luck he had sold the winning ticket to himself, meaning that he collected the \$100 bonus for its sale as well. A second prize of a 1998 \$100 gold went to Joyce Armstrong of Owen Sound and five consolation prizes of 1998 Oh! Canada! sets went to Kay Ayres, Barrie, Jessie Boutilier, Shakespeare, George White, Woodstock, Lorne Proctor, Oakville, and Gladys Burt, Ottawa. We were back in Toronto by 8:30 P.M., and had stopped for supper in Belleville on the way back. It is a good four hour drive to Ottawa from here. As mentioned earlier, the next two years we won't have to travel so far for the O.N.A. convention.

The attendance at the convention on Saturday was normal for a Saturday for any convention or show. The room was very large and you had no trouble getting around in the room visiting the dealer's tables or exhibit area, not like it is at the Torex shows in Toronto.

It was a first time for a while that I was able to take in so many of the meetings and the auction at the convention, since I didn't have a working part in the convention. I counted 16 North York members in attendance, which is very good.

The total registration was down from previous conventions. The committee had set the standard registration fee at \$45.00 with a discounted rate of \$40.00 for those who registered before March 31, 1998. They had also increased the number of avail-

able registrations from 50 to 75, but were unable to sell them all.

This was my 6th visit to Ottawa, but due to the close scheduling of the events, I didn't even get to see the Parliament Buildings which were only 3-4 blocks away. Some of the people did take time out from the convention and went over to Hull, Quebec, to take in the casino which was an easy trip because you could take a bus which stopped not far from the convention hotel we where staying in. I believe some people broke even and some made money at he casino. It seemed like we had only arrived and it was time to leave again.

This wraps up my report on the 36th Annual O.N.A. Convention held at the Citadel Hotel, on April 17th-19th. 1998, for which I was the North York Coin Club's representative.

*Thanks for this comprehensive report, Harvey. I'm sure those who were not able to attend now regret it all the more knowing just what they have missed.*

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## Question of the Month

For our May question we are giving the nod to those who may collect municipal trade tokens, but any collector "in the know" on current events could get this one as well: "What newly-issued municipal token has a new and unique design feature, completely unlike any other token issued up to this time?" The answer is coming at the next meeting, but see if you can get it before then.

Our April question: "can you name three significant events in the history of our Canadian Mint prior to 1908" is answered in the article on page 7.

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## Royal Canadian Mint Invites Canadians to "Create a Centsation!"

**Montréal, April 27, 1998** - The Honourable Martin Cauchon, Secretary of State, responsible for Canada Economic Development, on behalf of The Honourable Alfonso Gagliano, Minister responsible for the Royal Canadian Mint, announced the Mint's Coin Design Contest today. To celebrate the Millennium, the Mint will produce 24 new 25-cent circulation coins. Canadians of all ages are invited to submit designs. Twelve coins will be issued in 1999 to commemorate the past 1000 years, and twelve will be issued in the year 2000 to record Canada's hopes and dreams for the future.

"These coins, designed by and for Canadians, will be treasured mementos of the Millennium," said Mr. Cauchon. "The coins will be lasting reminders that the Millennium is a special time to savour and celebrate our shared successes and to build on that progress to fulfill the promise of our future."

Mrs. Danielle Wetherup, President of the Mint, also announced the details of the "Create a Centsation!" Coin Design Contest. The Mint welcomes designs for the 1999 series until August 31, 1998. The contest continues until June 30, 1999 for the year 2000 series. "This is a unique contest. And it's meant to be fun! Canadians from every corner of the country are encouraged to participate," said Mrs. Wetherup.

One of the highlights of the launch of the contest was the introduction of the "Time Traveller", an adventurer who has journeyed through time collecting treasured coins. In 1999 and year 2000, the Time Traveller will unveil the new designs and take us on a journey, as we explore the past and imagine the future, on a path of Millennium coins designed by Canadians.

### "Create a Centsation!"

The Royal Canadian Mint has been marking Canadian events or event anniversaries on commemorative coins for over 60 years. As we approach the new Millennium, the Mint is in a unique position to record this important world event for present and future generations.

The Royal Canadian Mint will produce a series of 25-cent circulation coins. Canadians of all ages are invited to participate in the "Create a Centsation!" Coin Design Contest.

### The Millennium Coins

There will be 24 coins in total. Twelve coins will be issued in 1999 and twelve will be issued in the year 2000.

### The 1999 Series

The 12 designs chosen for the 1999 series will focus on specific events, milestones, discoveries, inventions, or achievements in the past 1000 years that have helped to shape Canada. Deadline

for submissions is midnight August 31, 1998. The first coin will be unveiled on December 31, 1998 in Newfoundland as we begin a countdown to the year 2000. Throughout 1999, a new coin will be unveiled monthly as the Time Traveler takes us across Canada.

### The Year 2000 Series

The 12 designs chosen for the year 2000 series will reflect how Canadians see the future in culture, exploration, science, technology, etc. Deadline for submissions is midnight June 30, 1999. All 12 coins will be unveiled on December 31, 1999 as part of the Millennium celebrations in the Nation's Capital.

### How to enter the contest

Contest entry forms will be mailed to all Canadian households across the country courtesy of Canada Post and are available on the Web at [www.centsation.com](http://www.centsation.com). The Royal Canadian Mint will also accept drawings in either black ink or black pencil drawn inside a 20 cm diameter circle on an 8½ by 11 inch sheet of white paper. A brief explanation of the design, as well as the participant's name, address and telephone number should be included and mailed to: Royal Canadian Mint "Create a Centsation!" Coin Design Contest, P.O. Box 9060, Station T, Ottawa, K1G 3T8.

### Prizes

The winners' initials will be struck onto the coins. As well, each winner will receive a personalised gift.

### Selection Process

The winning designs for the 1999 series will be selected by a panel of post-secondary art and design students from across Canada. A similar panel will be formed for the year 2000 series.



## A Royal Canadian Mint Chronology by Paul R. Petch

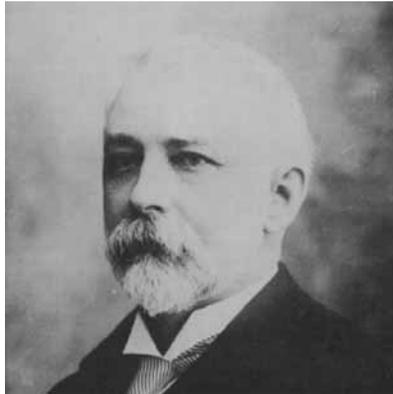
While researching background material for a talk on Canadian decimal coins, I got to wondering about the events that finally resulted in the creation and opening of the Royal Canadian Mint. This curiosity was piqued by the recent release of the the Mint's 90th anniversary set marking the first coin strikes at the official opening in 1908. What I found was that, as with any story where politics is even remotely involved, there are many ups and downs.

That 1908 date is, of course, 31 years after Confederation, and it comes 28 years after the first Dominion of Canada coinage was struck and is almost 18 years after the first suggestion that Canada should have her own mint.



It was on March 4, 1890, that British Columbia Senator T.R. McInnes spoke in the upper house for both a domestic gold coinage and a Canadian Mint. His motion is not taken very seriously and failed. In 1891, a second Senate motion by McInnes was dismissed and in 1897 his third Senate motion was defeated, even though the processing of minerals had considerable public attention, especially with the Klondike gold rush which had just begun.

Then, in 1899, a motion in the House of Commons by W.W.B. McInnes, the son of the Senator, was much more seriously debated, but still went down to defeat. During the debate the Minister of Finance, William Stevens Fielding, proposed that Canadian gold be refined and struck up as British sovereigns in a



*William S. Fielding*

Canadian facility which was a branch of the British Royal Mint. It was this vision which eventually became a reality, 9 years later!

During 1900, the Liberal government of the day under Laurier switched to publicly supporting a Canadian mint during the election campaign of that year, but privately dragged its heels. The public was in favour of the initiative and there was a feeling the facility could be operational within a couple of years.

In May, 1901, the Ottawa Mint Act was passed providing for \$75,000. in funding in advance each year for the development of the mint. Nepean Point was selected as the building site.

But, in 1902, poor planning and revision of initial Canadian plans during review by the Royal Mint delayed the letting of tenders until the summer. In reconsidering the site, it was decided that Nepean Point was not appropriate.

It was not until 1904 that the Government, occupied with other issues and once again facing an election, turned its attention once again to Canadian mint initiatives. Late in the year, \$21,000. was paid for the Sussex Drive site, building contracts were actually let and completion was scheduled for 1907. Debate on the allocation of \$200,000. for construction began. By June, 1905, the necessary funds were actually allocated.

Early in 1906 the Government realized that it had not kept the Royal Mint apprised of events and in the process of bringing them up to date found that the Royal Mint did not agree with all decisions taken by Canada. Nevertheless, on September 1, Mr. Arthur H. W. Cleave, a Royal Mint employee, was appointed Superintendent of the Royal Mint's Ottawa branch.



*A. H. W. Cleave*

In April, 1907, with the building completed, arrangements were made by Cleave for the shipping of machinery. In June, Dr. James Bonar was appointed the first Deputy Master. The official opening had been postponed from January and rescheduled to November 9, 1907, but it had to be postponed again when the new Deputy Master discovered there was no fence around the facility and security was almost non-existent.



*Dr. J. Bonar*

In November, 1907, a pair of 50¢ size dies reading "OTTAWA MINT TRIAL RUN/NOVEMBER 1907" were used to strike a small number of bronze test pieces so equipment could be set up without striking actual coins. (Specimens of these pieces are now valued at \$1500-\$2000.)

Then, on January 2, 1908, Governor-General Earl Grey struck a 50¢ piece, the first Canadian coin minted, followed by a first bronze cent by the Countess of

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*Trial strike specimen*

Grey. Some sources state that the Governor-General struck a gold sovereign, but I doubt that this is accurate. British gold sovereigns with a “C” mint mark were not finally struck until just prior to year end (quantity, 636). In 1908 the Mint also issued a specimen coin set commemorating its inaugural year. Coins in the original 1908 set had a matte finish and came in a maroon display case with a hinged lid and purple interior inscribed with a legend stating that the contents was Canada’s first coinage. In 1908, the original set retailed for \$2.

On December 1, 1931, the Discontinuance Proclamation went into effect and all mint buildings, land and business control passed into Canadian hands and the facility was transformed from the Ottawa Branch of the Royal Mint into the Royal Canadian Mint.

Now, 90 years later, the Royal Canadian Mint marks the event with the production of its Anniversary set. Unfortunately, the overall quality of these sets varies based on the antiquing effect which has been added. I have learned that antiquing can be categorized as light, medium or dark and that some effort has been put forth to ensure that all the coins in a single set fit into one of

these categories. As to the reason for the Mint deciding to antique at all, it seems that actual 1908 specimen sets, including those in the Mint’s own vault, exhibit very dark toning. It would seem the Mint was attempting to duplicate the appearance of surviving sets in its Anniversary product.

Another aberration brought about by the matching of the 1908 large cent “circle of maple leaves” design with the current effigy of Queen Elizabeth is the absence of “Canada” anywhere on the

coin. The original 1908 Edward VII large cent did include “Canada”, but as a part of the obverse design. It would seem that the use of a current obverse which does include “Canada”, such as on the 1996 \$100 Klondike Gold Rush coin, was not considered. It certainly creates a unique Canadian specimen!

**90th ANNIVERSARY COIN SET DESIGN**

The 90th Anniversary Silver Coin Set features coins with the same denominations and designs as the original 1908 circulation coins, but inscribed with the dates 1908-1998. The obverse features an effigy of the reigning monarch, Her Majesty The Queen whereas the 1908 coins featured the contemporary monarch, Edward VII.

**Obverse**

Effigy of Her Majesty The Queen by artist Dora de Pédery-Hunt.

**Reverse**

The one cent coin design features a circle of maple leaves attached to a vine around the circumference of the coin, enclosed within borders of beads and rim denticles. The centre of the coin bears an inscription with the denomination in capital letters on two lines, with the year of issue below. All other coins feature a wreath of maple leaves around the circumference of the coin with a crown at the top. In the centre is an inscription with the denomination written in numerals with the word CENT(S) in capitals followed by the year of issue on subsequent lines underneath. The coins have an antique finish.

**Coin Specifications:**

	<b>Composition:</b>	<b>Weight: (gm)</b>	<b>Diameter: (mm)</b>
<b>1 cent</b>	Copper-plated on .925 silver .075 copper	5.67	25.4
<b>5 cents</b>	.925 silver .075 copper	1.167	15.494
<b>10 cents</b>	.925 silver .075 copper	2.32	18.034
<b>25 cents</b>	.925 silver .075 copper	5.81	23.62
<b>50 cents</b>	.925 silver .075 copper	11.62	29.72

