

EDMONTON STAMP CLUB

BULLETIN

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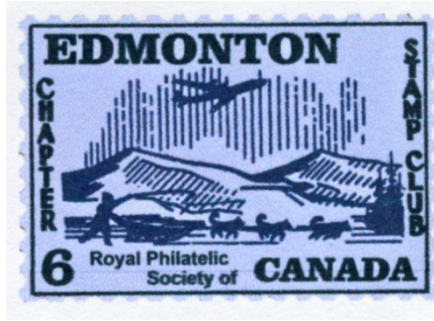
Website: <http://www.edmontonstampclub.ca>



Regular meetings

St. Joseph High School Cafeteria, 10830 - 109 Street, 6:00 pm

Check Page 20 for meeting dates



The Edmonton Stamp Club dates back to 1912. The Club is Life Chapter #6 of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada and Chapter #680 of the American Philatelic Society. **The editor welcomes communications of all kinds – letters, comments, and articles.**

These may be forwarded to John-

Paul Himka, Edmonton Stamp Club, Box 399, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2J6, or click “contact” on our website (edmontonstampclub.ca) or email to jhimka@ualberta.ca.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



How does our club keep current in meeting members' stamp collecting interests?

Send money? Well, not quite. But we do need to look at revenues and costs.

At the annual general meeting we heard that memberships continue to decline. This decline is a national if not global trend in stamp collecting.

The executive and directors will be reviewing the financials of the club. We have lots of value for our membership in the \$30 (individual) or \$40 (family) we pay each year: auctions in three formats, informative presentations, access to online materials through the club website, the Spring National Stamp Show, and much more.

What else can we offer to enhance stamp collecting for club members? We'd like to know your thoughts.

On a separate topic I've been looking at exhibiting my interest in World War II Canadian naval postal history. In a recent conversation, Steven Friedenthal reignited my interest. Food for thought.

If you share my interest in exhibiting, read *Let's Talk Exhibiting* by our late club member David Piercey.

"All of science can be divided into physics and stamp collecting." Lord Kelvin, 1899.

– David V. Pattison

**The Wiselys: A Family with Influential Connections
(Number 8 in the Series "The Unexpected and Intriguing")**

John Woollard

John.woollard(at)concordia.ab.ca



Illustration 1

I bought this postcard [Illustration 1] in a moment of utter muddle-headedness, thinking that it was a nice piece of postal stationery sent from southern Africa to an unusual destination; certainly, post to Malta was far less common than mail to Britain or Germany. As is obvious to all (except to me at the time), it was NOT sent to Malta, but redirected there from England. And it is not even an item of postal stationery in the strict sense, being only a picture postcard.

All the same, having gotten it, I found it intriguing, and it has led me in unexpected directions. The postcard bears a Natal KEVII 1d stamp (probably Sc 82 or possibly Sc 102, depending on the watermark, undeciphered), being the correct rate for overseas postcard mail to Europe. It was addressed to Capt. & Mrs Wisely, 3 & 4 Fenchurch Street, London E.C., England, then redirected to: c/o Rev. Dr Wisely, Valetta, Malta. Along with the dispatch postmark: Durban | 9:45 AM / DE 10 / E4, it has an incomplete hooded receiver

cancel: London ___ | DEC 31 / 3:30 PM, and finally a receiver cancel: Valletta / Malta | 6- AM 5 JA05. It thus looks as if the card was delivered to Fenchurch Street in the morning of 31 December, then immediately readdressed and promptly returned to the mail stream. The reverse of the card [Illustration 2] has a view entitled “The Vaal Bridge - Vereeniging” with the printed greeting “With Every Good Wish,” whilst the sender has limited himself to writing “from C. & A. Hitchins.”



There aren't many Reverend Doctors out there, and even fewer in Malta, so I thought I could probably track down who was hosting the addressee, then perhaps the addressees themselves, and maybe find out a little about them all. I was happy to achieve success on all counts, and in the process learn something of nineteenth-century Malta.

It turns out that the Rev. Dr George Wisely was a prominent figure in Malta for over half a century. George Wisely (died 24 May 1917, Orpington, Kent) was born 21 January 1826 to a wealthy merchant family of Aberdeen.¹ He graduated from Marischal

¹ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/82808973/george-wisely>.

College¹ in 1846, then studied theology at Christ's College, Aberdeen, prior to being ordained as a congregational assistant within the Free Church of Scotland in 1852. Then in 1854 he was assigned to be Presbyterian minister to Malta, which in the mid-nineteenth century had become an important military base for the British empire, being the home for its Mediterranean fleet. Thus Wisely was also appointed as chaplain to the forces stationed there, and this connection formed an important aspect of his career for the rest of his life. Indeed, Malta became his home for the next six decades, and although he retired from his ecclesiastical role in 1896, he remained there until 1914, when he returned to Britain.



Illustration 3

As soon as he arrived at his post, Rev. Wisely [Illustration 3]² recognized that the existing Presbyterian church was far too small for the number of people it was serving. At the time, Scottish regiments such as the Black Watch might be stationed there, and most of those soldiers would have been Presbyterians. Thus he undertook vigorous fundraising, both locally

in Malta, and in Scotland while on sick leave in early 1856, and raised enough funds to cover all costs for a new church building.³ He even decided upon the general style, but engaged a local architect, Giuseppe Bonavia, to design the structure,⁴ which was ready for use by mid-1857. The finished building, St Andrew's Scots Church, is a handsome neo-Gothic structure, akin to what might be seen in many

¹ N.D. Denny, "British Temperance Reformers and the Island of Malta, 1815-1914," *Melita Historica* 9 (1987), no. 4: 335.

² Image from <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Portrait-of-Reverend-George-Wisely-of-Bo/442CC1B943C594D5>.

³ <https://www.lifeandwork.org/features/looking-back-church-of-scotland-in-malta>.

⁴ [https://dbpedia.org/page/St. Andrew%27s Scots Church, Malta](https://dbpedia.org/page/St._Andrew%27s_Scots_Church,_Malta).

parts of Britain or Scotland, with a square tower solidly at the West end [Illustration 4].¹ One must wonder if this caused a stir at the time, for, stylistically, it was a great contrast to most of the other buildings in Malta, which tended to be of classical, neoclassical, or baroque styles.



Building from his role as forces' chaplain, Rev. Wisely was solicitous in his care for servicemen, a task which came with much responsibility during the Crimean War, a conflict that was raging at the start of his career, as well as during subsequent epidemics which hit the island.² He campaigned for a hospital for merchant seamen, a project that in due course became the King George V Hospital, later renamed the Sir Paul Boffa Hospital; plus he was a leading member of the managing committee of the first interdenominational cemetery, Ta'Braxia, from its formation in 1856.

Rev. Wisely was a staunch prohibitionist and supporter of the Scottish Temperance League and its aims, so besides his regular duties connected with the church, he immersed himself in projects that would facilitate what the prohibitionists viewed as a vice-free life (somewhat counter to the local culture that benefitted from trade in liquor, nor something to which all servicemen would have necessarily been drawn, of course). Thus he helped start a Soldiers and Sailors Home, and then a Soldiers Institute and a Temperance Hall. Equally, he was involved in founding several schools for poor children. On top of that, during his final years in Malta, he urged on a fresh, Protestant translation of the Bible into Maltese.³ According to a local newspaper "he became very influential in later life and it was said that even the British Governors trod softly around Wisely

¹ Image from TripAdvisor.

² H.S. Wood, *Black and White*, vol. 11 (1896), 164.

³ Denny, "British Temperance Reformers," 329-45.

because he was so well connected in London.”¹ The University of Aberdeen awarded him a DD degree in 1894² in recognition of his ceaseless work for the people and church of Malta. Not bad going, eh?

Shortly before Rev. Wisely left for Malta at the start of his career, he married Jessie Tod Miller (born 13 January 1827, Petershead, Aberdeenshire; died 28 January 1910, Malta), and they had at least three children, George Alexander Keith (born 20 January 1856; died 27 July 1946); William Miller (born ~1857; died 20 September 1939, Orpington, Kent), and Robert Henderson (born 10 January 1865, Malta; died 1 March 1945, South Africa, buried Orpington, Kent).³

Their first born son, George, was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers in January 1875,⁴ then promoted to captain in January 1886, before retiring⁵ on 24 September 1890. On 19 July 1883, he married Maria Currie (born 2 January 1859; died 10 November 1924), the youngest daughter of Sir Donald Currie. As was common at the time, the marriage was not performed in a church, but took place at Garth House, the grand home of her parents in Perthshire [Illustration 5].⁶

But, hey, did you recognize that name? This gentleman was a highly significant figure at that time, being both a remarkable and

¹ <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/150th-anniversary-of-st-andrews-scots-church.4234>.

² George Ernest Philip, *Free St. Matthew's Church, Glasgow: A Record of Fifty-five Years* (Glasgow University Press, 1898), 212.

³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/30647513/robert-henderson-wisely>.

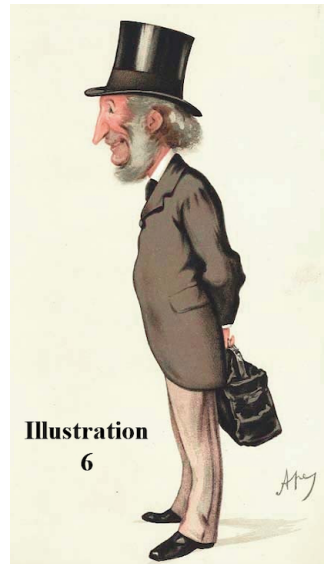
⁴ *London Gazette*, 15 January 1878: 218; temporary commission made permanent.

⁵ *Official Army List for the Quarter Ending 31st December 1894* (London: HMSO, 1895), 1212-13.

⁶ Illustration from: <https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/homes-and-gardens/highland-mansion-with-69-rooms-on-the-market-for-just-aps550k-1466086>.



Illustration 5

Illustration
6

influential businessman as well as a generous philanthropist.¹ Sir Donald Currie [Illustration 6]² was not only the owner of the Castle Mail Packets Company, an extremely successful enterprise carrying mail between Cape Town and Britain, but also an informal diplomat between the governments of Britain and the Boer South African Republic.³ Given the family's exalted status, I wonder how the alliance between the couple arose; although I have not yet found any details, one can note that Currie was also a Scot and, as well, a strong supporter of the temperance movement, so probably the families had closer connections than one might initially suspect. Be that as it may, by 1896 Captain Wisely was a partner in his father-in-law's company,⁴ and frequently represented or spoke for the company in public, particularly in southern Africa.⁵

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Currie.

² Cartoon published in *Vanity Fair*, 21 June 1884.

³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Donald-Currie>.

⁴ <https://www.bandcstaffregister.com/page2805.html>.

⁵ *Journal of the Society of Arts* 40, no. 2049 (26 February 1892): 310. *African Review*, 12 (1897), 13-15; an extensive account of a Jubilee event, in which Capt Wisely represented Sir Donald Currie.

Back to my postcard: although no initials were given on it for the addressee, the likelihood of this being the aforementioned George Wisely is high, and I think made certain by the address itself. For that address in Fenchurch Street is precisely the postal address of the business trading as The Castle Mail Packets Company (Donald Currie & Co)! It seems that George and Maria had decided to spend their Christmas season of 1904 with his father in Malta.

What about the sender, C. & A. Hitchins? Given the date, this was surely a Christmas/New-Year card, and since the writer is sparse with sentiments, it looks more like a business courtesy rather than a message from a good friend, who would have added something personal or at least extended warm seasonal greetings.

Here my identification is more tentative, but I fancy that the writer was Senator Charles T. Hitchins, JP, who was married to an Annie Athalie James.¹ You will note that her name neatly accounts for the "C. & A." signature. According to *Natal Who's Who*, Charles "came to Natal in 1874, and joined his brother in a Shipping business, at Point, Durban. In course of time this developed into the African Boating Co., Ltd. , of which he is now Manager. Town Councillor, 1882-1884; elected to the Legislative Assembly for Alfred Co. in 1893, which constituency he has represented ever since. Strong advocate of Shipping and Port interests. Largely interested in the Natal Coal Industry, and is on Boards of several Companies. Res., Bellair. Clubs: Thatched House, 1. St. James' Sq., London; and Durban Club."²

It is certainly plausible that Charles Hitchins, being engaged in a busy shipping company himself, would send a number of seasonal greeting cards to business associates, such as representatives of the Donald Currie company, as a way of staying in touch and greasing the wheels of the relationship, even as happens nowadays: we get almost as many greeting cards from charities whom we have supported as we do from our real friends, many of whom now stay in

¹ <https://www.geni.com/people/Senator-Charles-Hitchins/6000000007234124269>.

² *The Natal Who's Who (An Illustrated Biographical Sketch Book of Natalians)* (Durban, 1906), 93.

touch by email. But the connection was probably stronger than that, for in December of 1887 Sir Donald Currie, with Maria and his other daughter Betsy, had spent several nights at the home of a Charles Hitchins in Durban.¹ Even if Charles had never met Captain George Wisely (given the business connections, not very likely) he had certainly met and entertained his wife! Well worth staying in touch, wouldn't you think?

So there we have it: a business contact was sending in 1904 a polite end-of-year greeting to Captain George Wisely and his wife, who happened to be holidaying with his parents at their home in Malta. Not a big deal, for sure, but nice to discover who these people were. And I bet you never knew there was a fine, neo-Gothic Presbyterian church in Malta, nor what influence Rev. Wisely had at the time. At any rate, I am glad to have discovered something about Malta. Maybe that should be our next holiday destination: come to think of it, I haven't heard many people talking about that island recently!

Stamp Collecting: A Memoir

Irene Gagné
igagne1950(at)gmail.com

I've been a stamp collector all my life. As for so many philatelists, it all began with an older relative or neighbor who no longer wanted their meager attempt at collecting; and, who knows, maybe they had received it from an ancestor too.

I used to visit Garvey's Stamp Shop every second or third Saturday, mostly during the winter. Mr Garvey Sr. helped me learn a lot about stamps, so when I mentioned I was a grade-six teacher (Vital Grandin School) and would like to start up a stamp club at my

¹ Described in the transcript of a diary written by Maria, "Sir Donald Currie's Tour of South Africa 1887-88," from <https://www.moltenofamily.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Sir-Donald-Curries-Tour-of-South-1887-88-Diary-of-Maria-Wisely-pdf.pdf>.



Mr Garvey showing the grade 6 club how to assess stamps, set up small frames etc...

school, he said he would help me in any way he could. Well, that was an understatement: he helped every step of the way to bring another generation up to speed on stamp collecting in the modern age (= the early 80s).

Our first meeting had maybe twenty-five boys and girls, just to see if they might like it. They all knew I was an avid collector of Canadian stamps (my country of choice) and butterflies (my topic of choice).

When we settled down to business, I had from eight to twelve regulars, and a lot of world collectors. Again there were a lot of hand-me-downs from older relatives who had had an interest in the hobby, which the students continued wholeheartedly. They became interested in each other's collections and at least half of them narrowed their tastes to a certain country or topic. The worldwide search was too cumbersome for most twelve-year-olds.

By the mid 80s we were putting on exhibits, with Mr Garvey judging and giving out stamp-related gifts. On show days, other students and parents came to see what we were doing. I will always



be grateful to Mr. Garvey for taking the time to help us out – way out in St. Albert.

When the hockey card craze swept the land, we soon became one of its many casualties. There was money to be made in “them there cards.”

Letter from the Edmonton Food Bank

August 9, 2024

Dear Friends,

We are deeply grateful for your generous donation of 20 kilograms of food throughout July. Our community is facing unprecedented levels of need and your support is crucial to helping us meet this growing demand. Your contribution directly enables us to provide essential services and food to our community partners and individuals in need. With your help, we're able to support people like Patricia, whose story we'd like to share with you.

Patricia, a single mother of three young school-aged children, recently reached out to Edmonton's Food Bank for help. She has struggled to provide meals for her family, often going without food herself, and the expenses of school are just around the corner. Her food hamper included packaged staples, along with fresh fruits and vegetable to help her kids stay healthy and focused. Patricia knows that she can reach out again if she needs help and was reassured that once school starts, school snacks will also be included in the hamper.

Your generosity makes a real difference for people like Patricia. Because of you, Patricia and her children don't have to face these challenging times alone. Your donation helps us continue our vital work, offering both immediate relief and ongoing support to those who need it most. Thank you for being a crucial part of our mission to nourish our community.

In friendship,
Marjorie Bencz, *CM*
Executive Director

Be Kilowary

Jeff Pacey
jpacey(at)telus.net



I bought an auction lot of kiloware at the club. I've sorted out a lot of nice material but also this pile. It's all modern. None of it is rare or error material. All of these stamps have pen/marker cancels or are damaged. Yet someone has soaked them off paper and included it in a lot for sale. Why, on so many levels, would anyone do this? I do my preferred recycling with this crap. Straight into the fire pit.

Letters By Mail

by Tony Doughty

Letters by Mail



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Letters by Mail

Each of the stamps in the table above can be assigned any of the three values shown in its column in the chart below. Assign one of the three letters to the appropriate stamps shown above, to create a crossword puzzle consisting of common five letter words.

Words may read vertically, horizontally or diagonally

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	-

From the *Bulletin* Editor

John-Paul Himka
jhimka(at)ualberta.ca

I hope members are enjoying these *Bulletins*. Can they be better? Absolutely. If I get some help.

Lately, there have been two authors providing the more serious philatelic studies that generally open each issue.

One is Tony Doughty. In one sense, he's a very innovative collector and writer. He goes where relatively few have ventured: into the nanodetails of modern Canadian issues. I found his series on Queen Elizabeth II stamps absolutely fascinating. He takes modern issues that are cheap as borscht and demonstrates that the observant collector can notice all kinds of patterns, distinctions, and variations. But he also reminds me of the philatelists of a bygone era who pursued the plating of early stamp issues. Doughty concentrates on modern Canada, but he riffs on details in the perforations and selvage. He often closes with a plea for other collectors to replicate his findings. I wonder if any of our members have done so.

The second writer I've been featuring is John Woollard. He likes to purchase covers and postcards relating to British possessions in southern Africa. Then somehow, perhaps magically, he unravels all the secrets of the chosen piece of postal history: where it came from and went, who sent it, who received it, and so on. And he usually adds interesting tales about the sender's and recipient's education, work, family, and home. One of these wonderful articles opens this issue. He always finds copious illustrative material.

With authors like these, who needs more? I do. We do. A multiplicity of voices and themes makes for a more appealing publication. Would you frequent an ice cream store that only sold chocolate and vanilla? So please send me material.

I also want to make a plea for feedback. What do you like the best: the club-centered news, the more serious studies, current philatelic news? Do you ever do the puzzles? (They are also provided by Tony Doughty.)

Something I'd really like to do, and something I am absolutely certain everyone would like, is to profile in each issue one club member and his or her collecting interests. Would you be willing for me to interview *you* and look at *your* philatelic treasures? Just think. If you collect, for example, the stamps and postal history of Lower Slobovia and imagine that you are the only one in our club who does so, then announcing this interest in the *Bulletin* might lure other such collectors out of the woodwork. Or it may get people thinking: maybe I should look more closely at Lower Slobovian philately.

Anyway, you have my email. Give me a shout.

Philatelic News and Notes

Canada Post has honored BC-based singer Sarah McLachlan with a postage stamp and booklet. The stamp was issued on 17 September. The unveiling, at which Ms McLachlan was present, took place on the day of issue at the Sarah McLachlan School of Music in Vancouver.



The British North America Philatelic Society (BNAPS) has an Alberta Regional Group (it includes Saskatchewan as well). The regional group holds a Zoom meeting the second Wednesday of every month from September through June. The next such meeting will be held on 9 October.

<https://bnaps.org/regional/alberta/RG-Alberta.php>

There's a new player in the philatelic auction business: Garden City Philatelic Auctions based in Victoria, BC. It is holding its first auction on 27-28 September. If you rely on the printed copy, you'll get this

issue of the *Bulletin* too late to participate, but it's good to be aware of this new venture. Here are some pictures of items offered in Garden City's first ever auction:



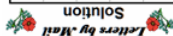
Lot 627 features a mint, never-hinged upper-left corner plate block of six dark blue Bluenoses, with a Plate A-3 inscription. Fresh and impeccable, this block has a catalogue value of \$6,000.

(The image directly above was taken from *Linn's Stamp News*.)

<https://gcpauctions.com/>

Letters By Mail - Solution
by Tony Doughty

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Recent Winners



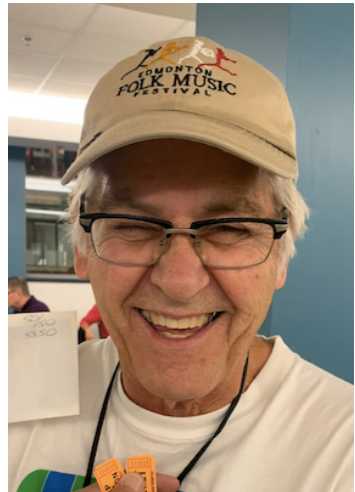
Bud Cutler won the door prize on 9 September. A Bluenose tie and stock book.



Jim Miller won the 50/50, also on 9 September. Amount not recorded.



Norm Selman holding his winning door prize tickets (23 September)



Peter Kuester won \$33.50 on the 50/50 on 23 September.

Meeting Dates

The Edmonton Stamp Club meets Mondays at 6:00 p.m. in the cafeteria of St. Joseph High School, 10830-109 Street. Park to the north of the school and use the main entrance at the southeast corner of the school. For information about the club call 780-467-4825 or 780-437-1787.

2024-25

21 October

4 and 18 November
6 and 20 January
10 and 31 March
12 and 26 May

2 and 16 December
3 and 24 February
14 and 28 April
9 and 23 June

I was doing a sort and purge on donations to the club. Rufus came to check things out and pulled off a Dr. Seuss: he became a cat in a box with a box and a bag in a box in a box.

– Jeff Pacey

