

# The Bulletin

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## The Mermaid of the Strudengau

By Ralph Wyndham

The third stamp in the series, 'Tales and Legends of Austria', from Austria Post is the 14 schilling Die Donaunixe vom Strudengau, issued September 19, 1997.

The Strudengau is a deep valley cut through the Alps of Austria by the Danube River. Today, thanks to the Wallsee-Mitterkirchen power plant, the river has been tamed and the valley has become part of a 34 kilometre-long reservoir. In centuries past, however, the river was full of whirlpools and rocky reefs where it flowed through the valley making it one of the most dangerous stretches along the whole of the Danube's 2850 km course down to the Black Sea.

Long before the river was tamed, Danube sailors referred to the Strudengau as the "Herberge des Todes" -- the Hostel of Death. Nevertheless, a few brave men made their livings ferrying people across its dangerous waters. On a sunny summer day, one such ferryman undertook a river crossing with a group of boisterous, possibly even a little drunk, young men. The skipper put up with their antics as he guided his boat across the treacherous river -- jostling one another, shouting lewd jokes and laughing at their wit, rocking the boat and hanging over the sides.

Just as the boat was passing by an island, a beautiful mermaid emerged from the water to bathe in the warm sun. Well! As soon as the young lads saw her, they got even louder directing waves of raucous laughter, hoots and catcalls, rude jokes and gestures towards the lovely maid of the river. Seeing her obvious fear and humiliation was more than the ferryman could bear. His anger boiled over and, as the shaken maiden slipped back into the water, he shouted at the young men to shut up or he would toss them over the side till the icy waters cleared their heads. Knowing full well that the skipper could make good on his threats, the merrymakers quickly fell silent.

A few nights later, as a fierce storm shook the little hut where he lived with his mother, he heard a knock at his door. There, illuminated by the lightning flashes, stood a well-dressed woman and her young children. At this time, the Turks were invading the country and bands of soldiers roamed the land burning huts and killing everyone they found. Even though he doubted the Turks would ever find his remote little hut, he felt he should help this family. Lantern in hand, he helped his passengers into his boat and set out for the distant shore.

Not long after setting out, a gust of wind blew the lantern over and extinguished the flame. The light from the lantern provided little more than comfort against darkness of the night anyway so the ferryman pressed on. Despite his heroic efforts and knowledge of the river, the boatman became disoriented in the darkness, rain and din of the roaring wind and water. Just then, above it all, he heard a little voice, "Here. This way!" Steering his boat toward the voice, he soon reached the opposite shore and led the family to a boatman's hut where they could safely wait out the storm.

Cont. on page 4

## Upcoming Meetings

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Saugeen Stamp Club  
Tues April 5

Kincardine Stamp Club

Owen Sound Stamp Club  
Zoom Auction  
First Wed

Zoom Meeting  
Third Wed

Guelph Stamp Club

KW Philatelic Society

Check with the club  
before going to its meeting.  
It may be cancelled.

## ONE PAGE EXHIBITS

### UPCOMING TOPICS

#### APRIL -

Design a Covid Stamp

#### MAY -

Airmail

#### JUNE -

Flowers

#### JULY -

My Favourite Stamp

## Message from the President.....

Greetings to all!!

It has been a long 24 months since we have been able to hold an in-person meeting and we certainly hope the time is near when we can gather again. In the meantime, Bill & Phil have done an excellent job of keeping friends together with the scheduled zoom / auction meetings on-line. Thanks to both for keeping the connection, and to all members who are participating in these activities.

Also, I must apologize to some members who were not notified of the December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting cancellation. I had been in contact with the ROYAL PHILATELIC office to get the insurance certificate required by our meeting venue — and there was indication we would get it in time for the meeting. However, there was a bit of a hic-up and the certificate was not emailed to me until 1:26 on December 7<sup>th</sup>. In the mid-morning, I began sending blind copy messages to all members on the membership list hoping everyone would check their email and be advised of the cancellation. Obviously, that did not happen as some members did go to the venue. The Church does require a certificate of insurance for any organization renting space in the Church. My apologies — but I encourage all members to check their email for cancellation of a meeting especially during the winter months.

The Covid restrictions are being lifted as the cases of infection drops — **I believe we should attempt to have a meeting in April at the Church prior to our annual show scheduled for May 7<sup>th</sup> in the Walkerton Legion.** Please keep alert for an update on this scheduled meeting. Once again, I will make an effort to ensure we have both the insurance certificate from the ROYAL and the rental agreement from the Church.

During the break in meetings, I am sure many of the members have mulled over their accumulation of collectibles — thus at the planned meeting in April members may submit a maximum of five items for the in house auction. We must discuss plans for the show, frames required, set up at the legion and the lunch counter.

**Keep well & safe** – we have made it through the past 24 months and look forward to meeting again.

### Fun Fact.....

A Brilliant Businessman was led by a series of adventures to the Kingdom of Bhutan. Burt Todd fell in love with that exotic land and two years later, returned back with his bride. Todd was the ultimate Scientist-Maverick, and when he realized that Bhutan had financial difficulties, he offered to help. His unorthodox contribution was unusual stamps. He created eye-catching designs to generate revenue. The most outlandish of them all was the 'Talking Stamp'. It was a mini-vinyl record that you could play on a regular turntable. That was in 1972.



Bhutan is a small country just north of Bangladesh and east of India

## Another Measured Moment.....

### Remembrance Day Poppy

Have you taken a close look at the Canadian Stamp issued to honour the 100th Anniversary of the poppy being adopted as the official symbol of remembrance in Canada? It is interesting for several reasons:

First, it was designed by a local graphic designer, Blair Thomson, living near Orangeville. According to the *Orangeville Citizen*, Thomson took up graphic design after seeing the 1970s stamp designs. As he grew up they motivated him to go into his current field. He wanted to make the stamp "simple and straight forward", with "the poppy out front and centre". I believe that he has succeeded and as the newspaper goes on to say, "It makes the mail appear to be wearing one".

From a philatelic viewpoint "2021" appears twice. It is the policy of the Post Office to have hidden dates on the design. This stamp does and also a hidden date, placed above the poppy in black, or grey, on a white background. This is certainly unusual and will only be noticed by philatelists as something out of the ordinary.

Here is an idea for a small exhibit - "Hidden dates on stamps". Canada has been doing this since 1935, but several other countries have picked up the idea and it has become a common practice; this is an interesting area for some study; who will take it on?



point, I find it interesting that the has long been the policy of the Post stamps that don't have the date in have the date "2021" in the design in a rather obvious position above the white background. This is certainly noticed by philatelists as something out

small exhibit - "Hidden dates on stamps". Canada has been doing this since 1935, but several other countries have picked up the idea and it has become a common practice; this is an interesting area for some study; who will take it on?

**Saturday May 7, 2022**

### **Saugeen Stamp Club Annual Show**

Royal Canadian Legion

505 Scott St Walkerton

Hours 10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Door Prizes / Exhibits / Dealers / Circuit Books / Lunch Counter

Free admission / Free Parking

**NEW  
LOCATION**

## **Saugeen Stamp Club**

Chapter 220, Royal Philatelic  
Society of Canada  
Chapter 1538, American  
Philatelic Society  
Chapter 21, Grand River Valley  
Philatelic Association

Website: <https://www.rpsc.org/chapters/saugeenstampclub/>

**Meeting:** St. Matthew's  
Evangelical Lutheran Church  
356 9<sup>th</sup> Street,  
Hanover, Ontario  
Use 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Entrance

### **Club Officers:**

**President:** Walt Berry  
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## Owen Sound Zoom Auctions

The links to see items and read the terms and conditions follow below:

[https://stampsmarter.org/AuctionSQL/Auction\\_Owen\\_Entry.php?operation=insert](https://stampsmarter.org/AuctionSQL/Auction_Owen_Entry.php?operation=insert) – Please use this form to enter your individual lots for auction

[https://stampsmarter.org/AuctionFiles/Cat\\_OwenSC.aspx](https://stampsmarter.org/AuctionFiles/Cat_OwenSC.aspx) – You may view listed items in the current auction on this page. These will be the same scans used during the auction

<https://stampsmarter.org/AuctionFiles/OwenTCs.html> – Terms and Conditions - please read if you are listing or bidding in the auction

Now, not wanting to leave his mother alone on such a terrible night, he got back into his boat to head for home across the dark waters. As perilous as the first crossing was, the storm only grew worse as the son set out. Having already used so much of his strength ferrying the little family to safety, the exhausted young man soon lost control of his boat against the howling wind and rushing water. Resigned to his fate just as he was about to be drawn into a giant whirlpool, there appeared before him a tall, beautiful woman who shone with a warm, soft light that seemed to emanate from within her. As the amazing figure reached out and touched the man's oar, the boat surged away from the dangerous pool as if the wind and the current scarcely existed and, in no time at all, the boat was safely ashore.



Before the worn out and confused sailor could fully comprehend what had just happened, his rescuer silently disappeared into the rushing waters of the river. In this way, the courageous young ferryman was thanked by the Mermaid of the Strudengau for defending her honour and dignity against the rude and vulgar young men just days before.

And the well-dressed mother whom he ferried to safety with her children that same stormy night? "The Danube Water Nymph" She, too, remembered and remained grateful. Once the Turks were driven out and the land was safe once more, she returned to the ferryman's modest little hut to thank him and paid him so well for his selfless service that he and his mother never lacked for anything for the rest of their lives.



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