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# Collector created fake toonie catalogue 'because there were so many'

By Jesse Robitaille

Ontario collector Brent Mackie has spent the past few months cataloguing \$2 circulation coins with the goal of weeding out and better understanding the current spate of counterfeit toonies.

Mackie, the long-time treasurer of the Waterloo Coin Society and a life member of several other numismatic groups, says he searched through more than 100,000 toonies between March, when he started his project, and late June. Among those coins, each counterfeit provides a data point in his ever-growing catalogue, which comes as collectors across Canada are finding fake toonies in their change, in rolls from banks and elsewhere in circulation.

"I started to catalogue the defects and varieties in the fake toonies because there were so many of them," Mackie told *CCN*. "I felt a need to have some way of describing a coin to other collectors without needing to say something like, 'the one with the die crack through the Queen's cheek. No, not the one on a 2006... It's a 2005,' and to avoid having to send photos around all the time."

Reports of fake toonies circulating in Toronto and other major cities began last fall ("Dozens of counterfeit toonies allegedly passed in Toronto," *CCN* Vol. 58 #10). Since then, the fakes have been reported across the country ("Surge of suspected fakes hits cities across Canada since fall, collector finds," *CCN* Vol. 59 #1), and Mackie believes there may be millions of them out there.

He's mostly cataloguing the "Camel Toe" fakes – named after the tell-tale marker on the polar bear's right paw – but he's also tracking the fakes struck at the so-called "Montreal Mint," an advanced counterfeiting operation that minted 2004- and 2005-dated toonies before the Royal Canadian Mounted Police shut it down more than a decade ago.

"My cataloguing system, which I'm calling 'BWJM Numbers,' covers both

the Camel Toe toonies and the Montreal Mint toonies. The latter, however, I don't know a whole lot about other than it is the only other significant series of counterfeit toonies to ever hit circulation. Thus, my cataloguing system merely gives them the codes MTL04 and MTL05. It is far more extensive for the CT (Camel Toe) toonies."



**Under Brent Mackie's numbering system, a coin with the code 'CT96-RD340-3a-E4' is known to be a 'Camel Toe' toonie from 1996 with a 340-degree rotated die, obverse die crack '3a' and reverse die crack 'E4' (shown).**

Mackie hopes his numbering system will make the complex and comprehensive collecting area of fake \$2 coins more approachable for collectors.

"With a cataloguing system, a coin with the code CT96-RD340-3a-E4 is known to be a 'Camel Toe' toonie from 1996 with a 340-degree rotated die, obverse die crack 3a and reverse die crack E4. Further, those die crack codes can be looked up to see what they look like and how they differ from others. It just makes the task of describing any specific coin that much easier."

## NUMISMATIC FINDINGS

In Mackie's research into the more recent CT counterfeits, Mackie has made several noteworthy findings.

"I've seen many of the counterfeits and have noticed a great deal of defects

on them including die rotations, die clashes, die cracks, extra die metal and weak strikes," he said. "Many coins feature multiple defects."

These defects include:

- die rotations, most of which are about 10 degrees counterclockwise, "but several exceed that and some go clockwise," he said;
- die cracks, including 11 different obverse die cracks and seven different reverse die cracks, some showing various levels of progression;
- die clashes, including six different obverse die clash varieties and one reverse die clash;
- weak strikes, with at least three different varieties; and
- extra die metal, with one "notable" variety.

Mackie's cataloguing system identifies the coin's year-date and counterfeit variety plus any die rotation, die clash and die crack varieties or other defects.

"An elaborate example of a coin with a 45-degree die rotation, die cracks on both sides and an obverse die clash would get the BWJM Number of CT06-RD045-OC4-2-f," he added.

The counterfeits' various die cracks – Mackie has found 18 of them so far – also shine a light on their potential prevalence in circulation.

"Most of the reverse die cracks are seen on multiple years. The obverse die cracks are specific to particular years. This is a clear indication that reverse dies are being used interchangeably across all five years. The variety and prevalence of the die cracks is another clear indication that the dies are poor quality and they are being used until they destroy themselves. This, in turn, supports the theory that there are millions of these counterfeit coins in circulation."

A life member of the Canadian Paper Money Society, Royal Canadian Numismatic Association-

*Continued on page 29*

## Pick our BRAIN

*In this corner of each issue, our writers will work with collectors, dealers and other numismatic leaders to uncover practical knowledge for people who are looking to bolster their hobby. To submit an inquiry, email info@trajan.ca or write to 'Pick Our Brain,' PO Box 25009, Rose City RO, Welland, ON L3B 6G9.*

**Reader Clark K. writes: "How many clubs are still operating in Canada?"**

While the dust has yet to settle after COVID-19, many clubs continued

to run throughout the pandemic, and more still plan to resume regular operations once health restrictions are lifted across the country. The *CCN* website ([canadiancoinnews.com/collecting/coin-clubs](http://canadiancoinnews.com/collecting/coin-clubs)) lists about 40 local clubs located across Canada complete with their meeting details. There are 20 in Ontario, seven in Québec, five in British Columbia, three in Alberta, two in Saskatchewan and one each in Manitoba, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Canada is also home to about a dozen national and regional numismatic organizations, including the Association des Numismates Francophones du Canada, Canadian Association of Wooden Money Collectors, Canadian Associa-

tion of Token Collectors, Canadian Banking Memorabilia Society, Canadian Error & Varieties Numismatic Association, Canadian Numismatic Research Society, Canadian Paper Money Society, Canadian Tire Coupon Collectors Club, Enthusiasts of Newfoundland Numismatics, Ontario Numismatic Association, Polish-Canadian Coin & Stamp Club (also known as Troyak) and Royal Canadian Numismatic Association (RCNA). Most of these national and regional groups will meet at this July's virtual RCNA Convention; see *CCN* Vol. 59 #7 ("10-day virtual RCNA 'a big step' back to normal") or visit [bit.ly/3ABFsV2](http://bit.ly/3ABFsV2) for a full schedule.

# Trends...

Continued from page 16

In the George VI series, a 1939 in ICCS MS-65 sold for \$632 against a *Trends* valuation of \$600. The same result was seen for a 1942 also graded MS-65. A 1946 "6/6" variety in ICCS MS-64 sold for \$460, and a 1947 "Maple Leaf" variety in MS-65 brought \$373. An elusive variety in high grade, a 1957 "Bug Tail" five cents, graded MS-65 by ICCS, also sold for \$517.

Previously, there was no valuation listed for this grade, but I have added a \$500 listing for this column.

## MORE RESULTS...

The Canadian Numismatic Company (TCNC) also hosted its Prominence Sale III in April.

Highlights include a key-date 1921 five cents, graded Fine by ICCS, that sold for \$7,050. An exceptional 1933 five cents, graded MS-65-plus by Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS), sold for \$8,568.

In the George VI series, a 1943 five cents graded MS-66 by ICCS sold for \$1,309.

We do not have MS-66 valuations listed for this series, but *Trends* lists only \$150 for MS-65.

The huge premiums didn't stop there.

A 1947 five cents, graded ICCS MS-65, sold for \$1,904 against a *Trends* valuation of \$750. The coin looked outstanding.

Also, a 1947 "Maple Leaf" five cents specimen coin, graded Specimen-65 by ICCS, sold for \$2,380. Obviously, at least two collectors really needed it.

# Fakes...

Continued from page 6

tion, Ontario Numismatic Association, International Bank Note Society and American Numismatic Association, Mackie has been a collector – mostly of banknotes – for almost two decades. A long-time tech worker, he catalogues his paper money collection online at [currency.bwjn.ca](http://currency.bwjn.ca).

Mackie also hopes to share his counterfeit toonie catalogue online "sooner or later," he added.

## LATEST OFFICIAL RESPONSE

In March, collector Mike Marshall, an award-winning counterfeit coin expert who's also collecting data on fake toonies, met with his local MP Neil Ellis.

Marshall showed Ellis his data on the many counterfeits he encountered, as well as photographs and physical examples, while explaining the various markers, including the polar bear paw responsible for the CT moniker.

Ellis, who has represented the Bay of Quinte since 2019, told CCN in March the counterfeits are "definitely a concern." He said he planned to send a memo plus a complete set of all five known counterfeit toonie dates to the federal finance department.

Ellis' office later confirmed the package was sent.

Kevin Maillat, media relations manager with the finance de-



An obverse die crack is catalogued as 'G1.'

partment, told CCN on July 8, "After accessing your request, the Royal Canadian Mint would be best placed to comment on the circulation of coins in Canada."

While Mint officials were aware of Marshall's claims about fake toonies last winter, they had "not yet received a specimen of a suspected counterfeit \$2 coin," senior manager of public affairs Alex Reeves told CCN on March 11.

On July 7, while he stopped short of confirming an investigation, Reeves said the Mint's staff are "currently monitoring the situation."

"We aware of claims made by a number of collectors and are currently monitoring the situation," he told CCN. "We have no further details to share at this time."

In June, based on reports from collectors, CCN contacted TD Canada Trust to confirm if its branches were withdrawing \$2 circulation coins to check for counterfeits.

Carla Hindman, TD's manager of corporate and public affairs, said the bank "will decline to comment." ❄️

More recently, TCNC hosted its Prominence Sale IV at the end of June. In the five cents series, there were several notable results. An 1874H "Plain 4" variety in PCGS MS-64 sold for \$2,500. An 1875H "Small Date" in ICCS MS-63 brought \$7,437 while an example of the "Large Date" variety, in ICCS Very Fine-20 (VF), sold for \$1,309 against a *Trends* valuation of \$1,100.

An 1880H "Obverse 2" five cents, graded MS-65 by ICCS, was also offered. This is a gem example of a scarce variety. It sold for \$8,925 against an estimate of \$10,000-\$12,000. It was previously offered in the Prominence Sale III, but with an opening bid of \$8,000 (\$9,520 with the buyer's premium).

This variety was previously unlisted in higher MS grades. Because of this sale, as well as the aforementioned sale of an AU example, I have now included prices through MS-64. I have also added prices for the 1892 "Obverse 5" in VF and Extremely Fine (EF) grades.

Another example of the "Prince of Canadian Coins," the 1921 five cents, was offered in the latest TCNC sale. Graded VF-20 by ICCS (it also had issues with corrosion and hairlines), the coin realized \$8,330 against a *Trends* valuation of \$8,500 (for a VF example).

A 1924 nickel five cents, graded MS-66 by PCGS, realized \$5,355 against a *Trends*

valuation, in MS-65, of \$2,000.

In the George VI series, another 1939 five cents, graded MS-65 by ICCS, sold for \$833. With two coins selling for more than \$600 in the span of three months, I felt it necessary to raise the gem price to \$700. I also moved up the 1942 nickel version to the same level.

As mentioned in a recent article, two more examples of the 1954 "No Shoulder Fold" five cents have been certified, one Fine-15 resulting in a sale, ultimately at \$4,000. As such, I have included valuations for this coin in grades from Very Good through EF.

I also added the 1990 "Bare Belly" variety to the modern coin listings. ❄️

# SHOW & Bourse

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, many shows, auctions, club meetings and other numismatic events are being cancelled. For the most up-to-date information, visit CCN's online 'Events' listings at [canadiancoinnews.com/events](http://canadiancoinnews.com/events) or contact event organizers.

## JULY 15 - 25, OTTAWA, ON

2021 RCNA Convention, **\*\*IN-PERSON CONVENTION CANCELLED; VIRTUAL EVENTS PLANNED\*\*** This year's online-only convention, to be held via Zoom, is open to everyone to attend. Visit [rcna.ca/2021](http://rcna.ca/2021) for full details.

## JULY 25, OTTAWA, ON

Ottawa Westboro Coin Show, Royal Canadian Legion, 389 Richmond Rd. The coin show features nine dealers across about 30 tables – plus free admission! Show hours are 9 a.m.-3 p.m. All local public health measures will be enforced. For more information. Website: [ottawacoinshows.com](http://ottawacoinshows.com).

## AUG. 5 - 7, DEARBORN, MI

Dearborn Michigan Coin & Currency Show, Ford Community & Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Ave. The large Dearborn Michigan Coin & Currency Show is set to return this August with more than 100 dealer tables. Admission is \$3 (Cdn.), and the venue is located just minutes from both the tunnel and bridge in Windsor, Ont. For more information contact Joseph LeBlanc, email [dealersfirstchoice@gmail.com](mailto:dealersfirstchoice@gmail.com), telephone 734-216-1004. Website: [dearborncoinshow.com](http://dearborncoinshow.com).

## AUG. 8, PARIS, ON

Paris Coin Show, **\*\*SHOW CANCELLED, AUCTION STILL ON\*\*** For more information contact Jared Stapleton, email [pariscoinshow@gmail.com](mailto:pariscoinshow@gmail.com), telephone 647-403-7334. Website: [www.pariscoinshow.ca](http://www.pariscoinshow.ca).

## AUG. 29, TROY, MI

10th Michigan Summer Regional Coin Show, American Polish Cultural Center, 2975 East Maple Road Polish American Numismatic Society and Huron Valley Numismatic Society. Over 100 US and World Coin Dealer Tables. Hours are 10am - 4pm. Free admission and free parking. Authentic Polish food. Tables \$95, case rent \$10, lamp rent \$5. NO SALES TAX in Michigan on Coins & Bullion. [www.pans-club.org](http://www.pans-club.org) For more information contact Brett Irick, email [xr7gt@prodigy.net](mailto:xr7gt@prodigy.net), telephone 313-207-3562. Website: [www.pans-club.org](http://www.pans-club.org)

## SEPT. 10 - 12, MISSISSAUGA, ON

Fall 2021 National Postage Stamp & Coin Show, Hilton Mississauga/Meadowvale hotel, 6750 Mississauga Rd. Presented by Canadian Coin News and Canadian Stamp News, the National Postage Stamp and Coin Show features 50-plus professional coin and stamp dealers from across Canada. Highlights include a two-day live "Premier Auction" by Colonial Acres; various seminars; and

the Young Collectors discounted sales table and popular free youth auction on Sunday. Admission is \$5 on Saturday and \$2 on Sunday. Families are free on Sunday. The show is open on Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Parking is free. For show updates, visit [stampandcoinshow.com](http://stampandcoinshow.com). For more information contact Mike Walsh, email [info@trajan.ca](mailto:info@trajan.ca), telephone 1-800-408-0352. Website: [www.stampandcoinshow.com](http://www.stampandcoinshow.com).

## SEPT. 18 - 19, CALGARY, AB

2021 Calgary Numismatic Society's Annual Fall Money Fair, Clarion Hotel and Conference Centre, 2120 16th Ave. NE 2021 Calgary Numismatic Society's Fall Money Fair. The show hours: Saturday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm & Sunday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission \$5.00 for adults and Free for youth 16 and under. Dealers from across Canada in attendance. 55 Dealer tables on site along a Coin Kid's table with handouts. Lots of FREE parking and Show location is fully accessible. There are hourly door prizes given away, along with a Gold coin as the major door prize. Hotel restaurant is open for breakfast and lunch. For more information contact James A. Williston, email [jawilliston@shaw.ca](mailto:jawilliston@shaw.ca), telephone 403-461-2663. Website: [www.calgarynumismaticssociety.org](http://www.calgarynumismaticssociety.org).

## SEPT. 25, GUELPH, ON

Guelph Fall Coin Show, Colonel John McCrae Legion Branch 234, 57 Watson Pkwy. S. The annual Guelph Fall Coin Show is open from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Admission is \$2, and each attendee will receive a coupon for free admission to the Toronto Coin Expo the following week. Free level parking, fully accessible and with a legendary lunch counter. Coins, banknotes, tokens, Canadian Tire money, medals, books and supplies will be offered at more than 35 dealer tables, featuring some of Canada and Europe's top numismatic dealers plus free appraisals. For more information contact Mike Hollingshead, email [cholling@uoguelph.ca](mailto:cholling@uoguelph.ca), telephone 519-823-2646. Website: [www.southwellingtoncoinsociety.com](http://www.southwellingtoncoinsociety.com).

## SEPT. 25, MEDICINE HAT, AB

Medicine Hat Coin & Stamp show, Auditorium of Cyprus Centre, 2055 21 Ave SE Medicine Hat Coin & Stamp Show. 2055 21 Ave SE. Different location this year because of Covid. New location is in the Auditorium of the Stampede Grounds, (north entrance of Cyprus Centre) Lots of room to maintain Covid restrictions. Buy, Sell, Trade, or if time permits appraisals also. Door prices. Free Parking, Admission \$ 2:00. children with parent Free. One Day only, 10:00am to 4:00pm. Vendors Welcome. For more information contact Ron, email [medhatcsc@live.com](mailto:medhatcsc@live.com), telephone 403-526-5158. Website: [www.mhcasca.ca](http://www.mhcasca.ca).

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