

There is Always a Way

One of our northern Alberta subscribers that I was recently talking to told me this story, one that is well worth retelling. I did not ask if I could share it with you for fear that she might say no, so I will retell it to the best of my recollection without using her name.

Our subscriber, like so many of us, enjoys getting up early on weekends to do a bit of garage-saleing. One Saturday on her way through Edmonton, she saw a big sign in front of a church advertising a rummage sale being held that very day, but more importantly she caught a glimpse of what one lady was holding in her arms while walking up the sidewalk to the church door. It was a lovely lacquered cookie jar, a blue one with white flowers on it.

Immediately finding a parking spot, she all but raced to the door in search of that cookie jar. But, alas at the door, she was stopped and asked what she wanted. "I want to buy an item at the sale," she said.



"I'm sorry, but we are still setting up. You can only get in now if you are helping set up or bringing items for the rummage sale."

"But, I just saw a cookie jar that I want."

"I'm sorry, you can't go in yet. You'll just have to come back

when we open at 10:00 A.M."

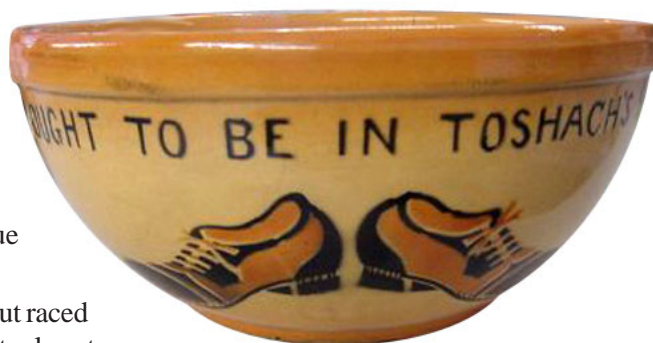
Reluctantly, she returned to the car, but there was no way, no way at all, that she was going to wait. She had to do something now or else that cookie jar would be long gone, as when at the door of the church she had seen that horse-trading was already taking place between the people inside. One person had even taken a few items back to her car already.

Not one to sit around and get frustrated at the situation, she knew exactly what she had to do. What do I have in the back seat? she asked herself. Oh my God it's empty. I always have something there. The trunk then, but that too was bare.

Cont'd on page 3

A Recent Ebay Sale

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold;
The arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;
The northern lights have seen queer sights
But the strangest of all I would say
Was the Toshach bowl that was quickly sold
In the auction that is known as ebay.*



When I saw what happened on ebay, it reminded me of the opening stanza of Robert Service's poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee", not quite as given above but close to it. (If you want to read the whole poem go to the www.robertwservice.com web site.) What was unusual about this auction was that the seller, in Drumheller, Alberta, stopped the auction a day or so before the posted closing date. One curious collector, not I, emailed the seller to see what happened, and was told that the auction was closed when the reserve price of \$499.00 was met, selling the Toshach bowl to the high bidder at that time.

Could this be the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Are there still people out there that are happy with making a fair profit rather than getting the maximum possible? I must accept the statement at face value, as it is hard to see why the auction would be closed early for

Cont'd on page 16

Contents

There is Always a Way	1
A Recent Ebay Sale	1
A New-shape Medalta Vase	2
Some Recent Prices	3
Hycroft's A&W Mugs	4
Hycroft's Mounted Police Items	5
A New Teapot Find	15

A New-shape Medalta Vase

This was another ebay surprise and one that almost all Medalta collectors missed judging by the number of people bidding on it. I even missed it as when I glanced at the small thumbnail picture I saw the common style No. 91 vase; perhaps, because the other item listed right after it was indeed a No. 91 vase.



It was decorated with a flowing mixture of cream and gray into the reddish-brown base. What did it sell for? About \$405.00 Canadian, all of the bidding taking place in the last minute or so. Effectively only two bidders went after this

vase, and the runner-up was not even a Medalta collector judging from the bidding profile.

Out of curiosity I checked back through the photocopies that I have of Medalta's letters and surprised myself to find a sketch of this vase dated April 15, 1940. Because there was no indication that it was ever made, I did not include it in my "Know Your Medalta: Vases" booklet, and promptly forgot about it. As you can see the sketch was poor, and at the time I was not sure what I was looking at. •

The Medalta Review

Editor: Ronald M. Getty
216 Maddock Way N.E.,
Calgary, Alta T2A 3X3 Canada
Phone: 403-273-1132
gettyr@shaw.ca

Photographer: Collectors
Design & Layout: Tony Hansen

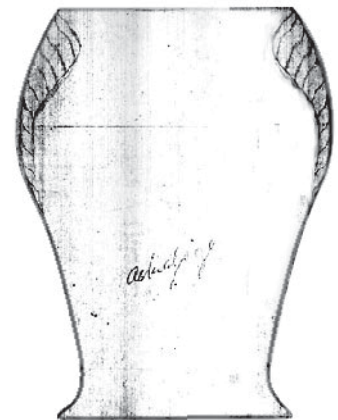
Published & Distributed by:
The Friends of Medalta Society
703 Wood Street SE
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8S9
Phone or FAX (403) 529-1070
Dianne Finch, Chairman
info@medalta.org

The Medalta Review is published quarterly in the interest of keeping collectors of Alberta made pottery informed on newly found products, current prices, history of the potteries and other aspects relating to the Alberta pottery industry. Each issue usually includes a Hycroft and Medalta section. Other columns will bring you reports regarding Alberta Potteries (Wyatt and Yuill), Athabasca Potteries, Medicine Hat Potteries (Little Chief), Medalta (1966) Ltd., Provincial Industrial Enterprises (PIE) or Sunburst Ceramics, and our question and answer column will reply to inquiries from our readers and museum visitors.

Subscription is \$25.00 per year. Back issues are available from the Friends of Medalta at \$5.00 each plus postage and handling.

Copyrighted by the Friends of Medalta Society. Reproduction of any part of this document is unlawful without written permission.

The vase stands 8 3/8-inches high and measures at its maximum about 5 1/2 inch in diameter. As you can see from the pictures it superficially seems to be made by applying long, solidly attached handles to a No. 108 vase, but it is not. The diameter of the new vase across the base is much larger, as is the maximum diameter across the bulbous body. It was stamped with the Medalta G.33 stamp variety that dates to 1940 and that is most likely the date of this vase.



Some Recent Prices

I received the following from one of our Ontario collectors. It is a listing of prices asked, not what was actually paid for the pieces. Undoubtedly, many were bargained down and others likely went unsold, but at least it gives us an idea of what dealers in Ontario are asking for their pieces.

Hi Ron: here is a sample of the prices at the Christie show this past weekend, nothing great seen this time.

5" POLYGON BOWL, mottled red	\$85.00
5" POLYGON BOWL, matt blue	\$95.00
7" POLYGON BOWL, 2001 decoration	\$95.00
and another at	\$125.00
BULB BOWL, decoration #2000	\$145.00
sold at show	
VASE #66 ruffled edge, brown and cream	\$85.00
VASE #118, 7" pink	\$95.00
VASE #71, 6", aqua	\$95.00
VASE #94, mottled, brown, cream and green	\$85.00
PAIR OF WALL POCKETS #99, mottled cream and brown	\$165.00
ICE WATER COOLER with liner, blue bands	\$395.00
BLUE MIXING BOWL #10	\$110.00
COOKIE JAR, tulips on mauve background	\$95.00
sold at show	
PITCHER, ship style, 3 pint, sailing ship stencil	\$425.00
PITCHER, ship style, 1 pint, sailing ship hand painted, flake on spout	\$325.00
CHURCHILL JUG, brown, small chips on base	\$200.00
TEAPOT, green drip glaze	\$125.00
sold at show	
FRY'S HOT CHOCOLATE CUP & SAUCER, yellow cup, orange saucer	\$65.00
STONEWARE BOWL "ART BEAUDIN, MONTREAL, TEL. FITZROY 1412"	\$145.00

There were a few further items offered, but their prices were so outrageous, I wouldn't dare mention them. Regards. •

Cont'd from page 1

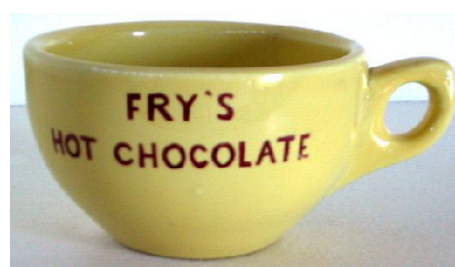
All she could spot was her four rubber floor mats, a couple of them a bit worn and dirty on the top, but clean on the bottom, and better yet she had some string in the trunk.

She quickly rolled and tied them together and promptly marched up to the door. Once again she was almost turned away by the guardian of the door, who recognized her, but when questioned she quickly said that she had decided to help them out by donating some extra floor mats that were in her car.

Thus she got in the door, donated her floor mats and luckily found the cookie jar that had caught her eye. She quickly paid the \$2.00 asking price and made her escape.

What she acquired that day was the large twist cord handle cookie jar finished with the white apple blossom decoration on a blue background. It was well marked with the coloured maple leaf decal and the impressed word "MEDALA" (the M.7 mark). The one shown here is not the actual cookie jar found that day, as I did not take a picture of it when I recorded her collection.

That almost ends the story, but not quite. Later that day on her way home, she passed by the same church which now had a half price sign up. Always seeking a bargain, she decided to take a second look and even though the pickings were slim, she did spot her roll of floor mats. Thus she got them back, paying just 50 cents for them. •



Hycroft's A&W Mugs

The impetus for this article examining the A & W mugs made by Hycroft China over the years derives from several recent ebay sales. So far three variations have shown up in the marketplace and, surprisingly, all sold fairly high, much more than what Hycroft collectors would be willing to pay.

A & W root beer was first served to the public on a June day in 1919 when Roy Allen set up a stand along the route of a World War I veterans parade held in Lodi, California, where he sold drinks for a nickel each. Just a few months earlier he had met a pharmacist from Arizona from whom

he purchased the secret formula. The drink was so popular that he soon had a regular outlet for the sale of his new drink.



In 1922 one of his workers, Frank Wright, partnered with him to invest in further outlets, and at that time the name A & W was adopted, the A from Allen and the W from Wright. From those roots the business was franchised and eventually expanded throughout the world.

By 1933 there were some 170 franchises in the US, by 1950 the total was up to 450 and by 1960 it had grown to over 2000 separate locations. The first Canadian outlet was actually established in Winnipeg in 1956, and it was just a few years later that Hycroft China came into the picture.

1960 saw the first A & W mugs coming off Hycroft's production line. Just which style it was is not known for certain as the invoice records lack specific details. In all likelihood, though, it was the arrow and bulls-eye logo. The

reference to the Chubby Chicken and the Burger Family logos appear together and are first itemized on a Hycroft invoice dated December 1967.

In preparing this article, I compiled a listing of all Hycroft invoices that I could find covering the sale of A&W mugs. I wish that I could include them here as they show the wide distribution of the mugs from Quebec outlets through to British Columbia locations, but as they take up a page and a half, it is not practical to do so.

A quick total of these sales records reveals that Hycroft produced at least 818 dozen mugs. Wow! That adds up to some 9816 mugs. At least 6336 of these were the Burger Family and Chubby Chicken ones, but that still leaves 3480 that could all be the Bulls-eye decoration.

Why do the A & W mugs made by Hycroft fetch such high prices on ebay? The main reason I suppose is that these mugs were only available in Canada, and therefore they must be extremely difficult to find in the United States where the majority of A & W memorabilia collectors are found. One thing for sure, they are going to be hard to find in Hycroft collections due to the prices that have recently been set by ebay's bidders.

The Bull's eye mug just recently sold for \$202.49 US and two Chubby Chicken ones for \$79.00 and \$62.00 US within the same week. Some six months or more ago the Burger family one sold for just under \$17.00 US, and only that low because the seller made the error of only showing the oval logo with the slogan "the difference is delicious" below and not the

scene of
t h e
burger
family.



Recently, in July, the same \$17.00 mug sold for \$41.00 as it was fully illustrated.

Now let's see at \$300.00 Canadian per mug that's enough to buy a new house! All I need now is to find a patio made of the Bull's Eye mugs. •

Hycroft's Mounted Police Items

Last month our feature article looked at Medalta's production of items made for the Malibu Club of Canada, and as it was such a long article we did not have a chance to examine any Hycroft items in depth. That we will do in this issue, looking at the variety of items that Hycroft made over the years on which Mounted Police imagery was used.

Before I started working on this article, I believed that Hycroft only started making Mounted Police items to coincide with the Police centennial in 1973. This supposition likely came about as the common pieces indeed are all from that date, including the centennial mugs and the commemorative large safety ashtrays. But I was wrong, as when I started pulling the invoice records together, I found that the Mounted Police imagery was first used in February 1962, albeit not very often.

The items from the early 1960s show that the first Mounted Police decal was rather plain in its design. Basically it is a prairie scene where the Mountie seated on his horse is looking at the countryside through binoculars. The whole is pretty well executed in black except for the red serge jacket that he is wearing. Other highlights such as the reins, saddle skirt and the Mountie's face are executed by the background colour. For quick reference in the discussion to follow, I will refer to the this image as the "black decal."



About the same time, the more elaborate and colourful decal was produced. I have only seen two examples of it so far, and in those instances the horses were in different

colours, one black (on the large safety ashtray) and the other brown (on a 10 1/2 inch plate). In all likelihood, these plates were in part hand-painted over the original decal.

When one compares this decal to the early black one, it is readily apparent that the Mountie on his horse is effectively the same image as described above. What is different is that one can now see the details of the image. The horse is standing on a rock outcropping, behind the rider is a river and beyond that the far side of the river valley and prairie leading to the horizon and sky in the distant background. All this detail is in the natural brown and blue colours of the scenery. In addition, evergreen trees have been added to one side, along with placing the Mounted Police crest just in front of the horse and rider.

Future reference will be given as the "hand-painted decal."



Also about this time, in January 1963, we see beer steins being decorated with the Mounted Police crest in gold. I suspect that the crest was applied to these steins using rubber stamps rather than decals, but admittedly I would have to take a closer look at the pieces to see if this is indeed the case.



The next real change we see came in 1973 when a more colourful version of the basic black decal was introduced.

It is effectively the same decal with a bit more detail and a lot more colour added. The whole takes on an oval shape with the horse and rider being more clearly defined, bushes or tree tops added to the near side of the river valley, more greenery on the far side, and a bright blue sky behind. This decal will be abbreviated as the "multicoloured decal."

At this time the Mounted Police crest was once again introduced to be used on the large safety ashtrays made for the Scarlet & Gold Association of Lethbridge, Alberta. It will be referred to as the "crested decal."

The only other Mounted Police imagery that I have recorded includes the decal that was designed by Tibor Rada and used on both a 9 1/2-inch plate and a large safety ashtray. As you can see it depicts a mounted policeman with lance in hand sitting on his horse.



The second was a bright, multicoloured design placed on the small safety ashtray. As it appears to be a unique design, used on a single product, it is discussed separately below.



Alberta Map-Shaped Ashtray

The ashtray in the shape of the province of Alberta has the distinction of being selected for producing the first souvenirs using a Mounted Police decal. The ashtray was not too popular judging by the few entries that make reference to this product. So far, the orders I have run across include souvenirs for the city/towns of Lethbridge, Fort Macleod and Waterton Lakes, and all were relatively small orders.

The ashtray was made in the shape of the province of Alberta, with a high edge all around. It is approximately 6 3/4 inches high x 3 3/4 inches wide x 1-inch thick, and invariably the rim is trimmed with gold.

The Lethbridge ashtray order was for 101 Alberta ashtrays marked "Lethbridge, Alberta. Canada", with rope lettering & Mountie, sold to the Halifax Gift Shop, Lethbridge, at \$1.00 each on 20 February 1962, invoice no. 2224.

The "Fort Macleod" ashtray has the town's name in red rope style lettering with the "Alberta Canada" below in gold. The order was for 99 Alberta ashtrays with Mountie at \$1.00 each on 10 May 1962 (3039), being billed to Hodnett's Pharmacy in Fort Macleod.



Lastly, the Hycroft invoice records show that one was made as a souvenir of "Waterton Lakes, Canada", once again in red rope style lettering. The billing to the Cardston Pharmacy, Cardston, Alberta, included 101 Alberta map ashtrays with Mountie at \$1.00 each on April 11, 1962, invoice no. 2784.

Round Flat Ashtray

The round flat ashtray decorated with the Mounted Police decal was used only a few times to produce a souvenir for a town or event. Of the ones listed below, I only have a couple to share with you, and both of these used the black decal. This ashtray measures about 5 3/8-inches in diameter, and as you can see in the photographs, the butt holders are placed obliquely across the rim of the ashtray.



The one with "W A B" on the rim in red and with "1973" in red below the mounted police decal is found on a white ashtray with gold trim around the edge. The Hycroft invoice lists the order as 100 flat ashtrays, white with Mountie, gold trim, Mountie jacket and lettering in red, at \$1.20 each, and it was billed to the Western Association of Broadcasters, Golf Tournament, Lethbridge, on the 29 May 1973 under invoice number 4359. I was actually surprised to see the black Mounted Police decal used on this ashtray as the similar multicoloured one was already in use.

The second one that I have recorded was a souvenir for the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba. In this instance only 48 flat ashtrays with Winnipeg, Canada and the Mountie decal were ordered at \$4.80 doz. on 17 May 1963 (7345), the order being billed to the T. Eaton Co. in Winnipeg. In addition, on the same order, Winnipeg was billed for 51 safety ashtrays with the Mountie decal at \$.75 each. The ashtray shown here recently received no bids at all when it was listed on ebay starting at \$6.00 US.



Still to be seen in the marketplace are the orders listed below, and all were relatively small orders. Almost certainly, the black decal would have been used on all of these 1963 orders.

- 24 flat ashtrays with the Mountie decal and "Nelson, B.C., Canada" were sold to Wood Vallance Co. Ltd., Nelson, B.C. at \$4.80 doz. on 8 April 1963 (6939).
- 12 flat ashtrays, with Mountie decal and marked "Kamloops, B.C.", were sold to Bennett Stores Ltd., Kamloops, at \$.40 each on 28 May 1963 (7434). In addition the store also received 24, 9.5" plates, with bear & salmon scene at \$1.15 each; 12 safety ashtrays, Mountie, at \$1.00 each; and 12 safety ashtrays, bucking horse, at \$1.00 each.
- ashtrays marked "Port-of-Entry, Coutts, Canada" were ordered in 1963 and 1964. The first order, for 52 white flat ashtrays with gold trim

& Mountie, was billed to Kitson Wholesale Ltd., Lethbridge at \$.40 each on May 31, 1963 (7493), and the following year the order for 48 white flat ashtrays with gold trim & Mountie decal was billed to Kitson Wholesale Ltd., Lethbridge, for the Hillview Café at Coutts, Alberta, at \$.45 each 10 March 1964 (1295).

There is little evidence that the small, round, flat ashtray was used a general Mounted Police souvenir in the 1973-1975 period. In fact, I could only identify one such order and it was for only 36 flat ashtrays, with Mountie decal, at \$.85 each 11 July 1973 (4577) billed to the Travel-In Motel in Medicine Hat, Alberta. The decal used could be either the black decal or the multicoloured one, so until we actually see a specimen, the question remains open.

Plain Beer Stein, Style No. 297

The plain beer stein, as opposed to the large and small sizes of the fancy beer stein that have an embossed decorative band just above the base, stands about 4 5/8" high, and it was used to produce a pair of souvenir steins bearing the crest of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In both instances the steins have a blue exterior, white interior, gold banding around the rim and a gold stripe around the middle. The police crest itself is also in gold, and it actually stands out quite well against the blue although it is difficult to photograph.



For first stein shows the 'King's Crown' crest which was in use from 1920 to 1952, while the other one shows the 'Queen's Crown' crest adopted in 1953 following Queen Elizabeth's coronation and still in use today.



The orders for these steins appear to have been few in number, and for those that were placed, limited to the Victoria area. It is likely that there was other orders beside these, but these were the only ones where the Mounted Police crest was specifically mentioned. In these few instances the invoice records specifically stated with "R.C.M.P. crest in gold":

- 12 small beer stein, blue w/gold trim at \$2.00 each 24 January 1963 (5756) sold to Captain. G.R. Newell, Victoria, B.C.
- 24 small beer stein, blue w/gold trim at \$2.00 each 24 January 1963 (5757) sold to R.C.M.P. Officers' Mess, Victoria, B.C.
- 2 beer steins, decorated, at \$2.00 each 3 July 1963 (7840) sold to the R.C.M.P. Sergeant's Mess, Victoria, B.C.

What would the value of these steins be? I believe that each would sell in the \$50.00 to \$75.00 range as there are more collectors of Mounted Police memorabilia than there are Hycroft collectors, and these are in fact very attractive items.

Other Steins

I actually found only one other invoice that specifically mentioned steins. It recorded the billing to the T. Eaton Co. Ltd. of Regina, Saskatchewan, for a variety of Mounted police decorated items. Specifically 25 safety ashtrays (\$1.00 each); 25, M-3 assorted mugs (\$1.00); 24, 238 assorted mugs (\$1.25) and 25 small steins (\$1.50) all with "REGINA, SASK. CANADA" and the Mountie decal, were ordered on the June 4, 1962 (3322). Both the price and the description suggest that the order was filled using the small fancy stein, but until one shows up we cannot rule out the small plain beer stein.

I did not run across any orders for large beer steins but at least one has shown up in the marketplace. On one side it bears the multicoloured decal of the Mountie viewing the countryside and below the decal it has "R.C.M.P. / CANADA" in black lettering. On

the other side it has in gold lettering "Medicine Hat, / ALBERTA CANADA", all on a white stein with thick/thin gold banding at the rim and with a gold stripe around the middle. It stands 5

3/4" high, and by the Hycroft stamp on the bottom dates after 1975.



Small Safety Ashtray

The small safety ashtray measuring 6-inches in diameter appears to have been used only once to produce a Mounted Police souvenir, but it is a beauty. The center of the ashtray is filled with the Mountie seated on his gray horse, nicely contrasted against the colourful background scenery. The decal is captioned "THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE" below and partly across the horse's feet, and below that the dates "1873-1973". What really brings the decal to life, and perhaps some patriotic feelings as well, is the ring of red maple leaves most of the way around the whole scene, the ring broken only at the bottom with the word "CANADA" which is also in red.

The Hycroft invoice records are not detailed enough to identify the specific order(s) for this item, but it definitely appears to have been a production item as several have shown up in the marketplace. I believe that it might be the small safety ashtrays that were sent to Tibor Rada in May 1973, but definite proof is still lacking.

Within a one week period, Rada was billed for 636 small safety ashtrays as



given in the orders below. All of the invoices stated "with RCMP Centennial" decoration.

- 8 small safety ashtrays, w/RCMP Centennial, sent to Renaissance Imports, Lethbridge, at \$.70 each 25 May 1973 (4356)
- 100 small safety ashtrays, sent to The Bay, Calgary, at \$.70 each 30 May 1973 (4368)
- 24 small safety ashtrays, sent to Billy's News & Smoke Shop, Calgary, at \$.70 each 30 May 1973 (4369)
- 24 small safety ashtrays, sent to Card & Candy Shop, Calgary, at \$.70 each 30 May 1973 (4370)
- 18 small safety ashtrays, sent to The Calgary Card Shop Ltd., Calgary, at \$.70 each 30 May 1973 (4371)
- 72 small safety ashtrays, sent to Kripp's Pharmacy Ltd., Vancouver, at \$.70 each 30 May 1973 (4372)
- 48 small safety ashtrays, sent to Mardi Gras, Calgary, at \$.70 each 30 May 1973 (4373)
- 144 small safety ashtrays, sent to Simpson-Sears Ltd., Calgary, at \$.70 each 30 May 1973 (4374)
- 144 small safety ashtrays, w/RCMP Centennial decal, sent to The Western Shop, Banff, at \$.70 each 30 May 1973 (4375)

Once again I wish that I was a collector as I would like to have one of these small ashtrays in hand to examine it again. My notes make no reference to Rada's name being on the small safety ashtray, but perhaps it is there. The bright colours and the encircling maple leaf border certainly look like Rada's work to me.

The 238 Coffee Mug

The invoice records suggest that the 238 mug decorated with the Mountie was first used as a city/town souvenir on

May 10, 1962. At that time A.A. Neddow, Jeweller, of Fort Macleod, Alberta, was billed for 108 coffee mugs at \$.85 each, under invoice number 3046, each marked "Fort Macleod" and decorated with the Mountie. While I have not actually seen a sample of this mug, we can be fairly certain that the black Mountie decal was used. In all likelihood the town's name was on the opposite side in red, rope-style lettering.



The Calgary mug shown here uses the black Mountie decal with the name Calgary being in red rope lettering and Alberta, Canada below in black. In this instance the decal was placed on a pink background, but one in blue has also been recorded. This appears to be the mug that was invoiced to Hudson's Bay Wholesale, Calgary, on July 3, 1962, under invoice number 3652. They received 152, No. 238 mugs (\$.90 each); 150, M-3 mugs (\$.85) and 148 safety ashtrays (\$.75), all with Mountie decal and with gold trim. The invoice gave the naming as Calgary – Canada, which

is not the exact wording on the mug; however, because it is the only order mentioning the Mountie decal, I believe it to be the order for the mug shown here.



The third mug, presumably also from the early 1960s, is one produced as a souvenir of Medicine Hat. It is known from the pictured specimen only as the order cannot be positively identified. Once again the name of the city is in red rope-style lettering, but in this instance it is obliquely placed on the side opposite the black Mountie decal. It has been recorded on a green and a yellow mug, both white lined and both with gold banding around the rim and a broken gold stripe around the middle. Two of the three examples had "NOW/BACK TO/WORK" in gold in the bottom of the mug.

The New Mountie Decal

One invoice dated July 11, 1973 makes reference to the new Mountie decal in the description, and this is apparently the oval-shaped, multicoloured one.

The exact introduction date is not known for sure but by June 22, 1973, it was in use as it was



the decal used on the RCMP Centennial mugs.

As shown here, the colourful decal was placed on one side

of the mug with the commemorative information on the opposite side in three lines. The initial invoice was for just 3 dozen no. 238 mugs bearing the Mountie decal and marked "R.C.M.P. CENTENNIAL/1873-1973." in gold, and the order was billed to Imperial Oil Ltd., Lethbridge, at \$1.75 each on 22 June 1973 (invoice # 4488). It was just one of dozens of orders to follow, all of which were billed to Esso Service Stations throughout Alberta.



While I have not actually looked for the correspondence relating to this venture, the deal appears to have been struck though the Imperial Oil Limited office in Lethbridge. Not only was the first order shipped to their office, but also John Cole (likely the manager) received four specially named Mountie mugs. That order, dated July 13, 1973, stated "4 Mountie mugs, with Now Back to Work, at no charge for John Cole, Imperial Oil Ltd., Lethbridge, named to BETTY, ELSIE, JEAN & EDITH". Harry Veiner often gave named pieces to the person placing a large order with Hycroft, and this most certainly was a large order.

In total, from June to December 1973, 74 separate orders totaling 436 dozen

mugs were shipped to Esso service stations. The most northerly one was located at Lacombe, and from there south, the province was blanketed from east to west.

Hycroft must have given this venture special attention as 350 dozen mugs were shipped out in July alone as given in the monthly breakdown below.

*June 27 dozen
July 350 dozen
Aug. 24 dozen
Sept. 3 dozen
Oct. 12 dozen
Nov. 16 dozen
Dec. 4 dozen*



For your perusal, I have included herein all but the July orders. Every example that I have actually seen and recorded had the Mountie decal on one side and "R.C.M.P. CENTENNIAL/ 1873-1973." in gold lettering on the opposite side of a white mug with gold banding around the rim and a broken gold stripe around the middle.

- 36, 238 mugs billed to Imperial Oil Ltd., Lethbridge, at \$1.75 each 22 June 1973 (4488)
- 96, 238 mugs billed to Downtown Esso, Medicine Hat, at \$1.75 each 27 June 1973 (4498)
- 192, 238 mugs billed to Imperial 3 Star (Esso), Calgary, at \$1.65 each 29 June 1973 (4512)
- 96, 238 mugs billed to Fairview Esso Service, Lake Louise, at \$1.65 each 3 August 1973 (4694)
- 48, 238 mugs billed to Redcliff Esso, Redcliff, at \$1.65 each 15 August 1973 (4697)
- 48, 238 mugs billed to Nanton Esso, Nanton, at \$1.65 each 17 August 1973 (4716)
- 96, 238 mugs billed to Walt Bruce Esso Service, Medicine Hat, at \$1.65 each 27 August 1973 (4775)
- 36, 238 mugs billed to Skyline Esso Services, Lethbridge, at \$1.65 each 4 September 1973 (4797)
- 48, 238 mugs billed to Downtown Esso, Medicine Hat, at \$1.65 each 9 October 1973 (4889)
- 48, 238 mugs billed to L-I Services (Esso), Bellevue, Alta., at \$1.65 each 17 October 1973 (4908)
- 48, 238 mugs billed to Redcliff Esso, Redcliff, at \$1.65 each 25 October 1973 (4994)
- 96, 238 mugs billed to Willow Street Esso, Red Deer, at \$1.65 each 16 November 1973 (5073)
- 94, 238 mugs billed to Downtown Esso, Medicine Hat, at \$1.65 each 30 November 1973 (5137)
- 48, 238 mugs billed to Stadium Esso

Service, Calgary, Alberta, at \$1.65 each 31 December 1973 (5228)

In conclusion, I would like to ask any of our subscribers to drop me a note if they remember acquiring any of these mugs. Were they giveaways or did one just have the opportunity to acquire a mug at cost when one filled their gas tank? Also if any collector has this mug in any colour other than white, I would like to hear about it.

The Other No. 238 Mountie Mug

Likely because the multicoloured decal was reserved for use on the mugs made for Esso gas stations, Hycroft put out another one utilizing the black decal. Basically it has the black Mountie decal on the side of a coloured mug with the dates 1873 and 1973 in gold above and to the left and right-hand sides of the decal. So far I have recorded this mug in green and yellow as shown here, but in all likelihood it was also produced in blue and pink.



The orders for this mug are not readily apparent, and I suspect that it was produced in relatively small numbers as it is not seen in the marketplace very often.

M-5 Coffee Mug

The M-5 coffee mug, a vertically paneled mug with ribs between, was used as both a general souvenir and one marking the Mounted Police Centennial.

The souvenir of Medicine Hat one uses the black Mountie decal and you can



find it in yellow, green, pink and blue colours. All have a white interior and all are trimmed with gold, consisting of thick/thin banding around the rim and a broken gold stripe around the middle. The name "Medicine Hat" placed on the side opposite the decal, runs obliquely upwards, left to right, in red rope-style lettering.



The Mounted police centennial mug is the same except that the dates "1873" and "1973", executed in gold, have been added above the decal. Medicine Hat once again is on the opposite side in obliquely placed rope-style lettering, but in this instance in gold rather than red. The gold banding is the same. So far it has been seen in blue and green, but the sales records suggest that pink, yellow and white ones will also be found as the orders were regularly described as "assorted colours".



Almost always the decal faces left, but at least one example of the Mountie facing right has been found. It was executed on a blue/white lined mug.

Dinner Plates

So far I have only run across one example where the 10 1/2 inch dinner plate was used to produce an anniversary plate, one for the town of Hilda, Alberta. In this instance the colourful oval Mounted Police decal was used on a white plate banded with gold around the rim. The commemorative naming was in gold with "50th ANNIVERSARY" arced above the decal, "HILDA ALBERTA" arced below, and with "1923" & "1973" on each side of the decal.



The order was quite large when compared to many anniversary plates as the 50th Anniversary Committee, Hilda, Alberta, was billed for 504, 10.5" plates with the Mountie decal, at \$1.75 each on July 20, 1973 (4677). At the same time under the next invoice num-

ber, 4678, they were billed for 454 pairs of white elevators at \$2.50 a pair with "50 years, Hilda - Alberta, 1923-73" in gold lettering. I have yet to see a pair of elevators, but the plates are found in the marketplace fairly readily, usually priced in the \$15.00 to \$25.00 range.



The 10 1/2 inch plate was also used as a general souvenir for the city of Medicine Hat. Two samples have been recorded so far differing only in the placement of the city's name. One had the name above the decal while the other was below. Once again the colourful oval decal was placed in the center of a white plate trimmed with gold banding around the rim. The name Medicine Hat in both instances was executed in gold rope style lettering.



To date, this pair of plates is known only from single examples that were part of the Hycroft Warehouse collection. None have been found in the marketplace, suggesting that these may have been prototypes that did not

go into full production. Only time will tell, as the Hycroft invoices do not shed any light on the matter.

The last 10 1/2 inch plate that I have recorded was found in the marketplace, but so far I have only recorded a single example. I cannot positively identify the order but I believe it is this one due to the date and the price. The R.C.M.P. Veterans Association, Edmonton, was billed for 24, 10.5" plates with Mountie decal at \$3.50 each and 12 mugs, No. 238, also with Mountie decal, at \$2.00 each on July 4, 1975 (6722). The plates were apparently sold at the 'Fort Jarvis' booth at Klondike Days.



In this instance the multicoloured decal with the inset Police badge was used. The caption arced at the bottom of the decal says "THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE"

So far only one 9 1/2 inch dinner plate has been found bearing Mounted Police imagery, and the decal design was actually owned by Tibor Rada and not Hycroft itself. The same image was also used on a large safety ashtray produced by him, and it is there that I have given a fuller description of the decal.

The only difference between the plate shown here and the safety ashtray shown later is that this one has BANFF/ALBERTA added at the bottom of the decal. The Hycroft sales records as given below show that other plates did not include the Banff naming.



Tibor Rada, Calgary, was billed for 24, 9.5" plates, with RCMP Centennial, at \$1.50 each 4 July 1973 (4527) along with another 24 plates with both RCMP Centennial & "BANFF". The next billing was for 36, 9.5" plates, w/ RCMP Centennial, which were sent to Happy Valley Esso Services, Calgary, at \$1.50 each on 10 July 1973 (4570), and the final billing that I found was for 12, 9.5" plates, w/RCMP Centennial, sent to Woodward Stores, Market Mall, Calgary, at \$1.50 each on 18 July 1973 (4657).

Another likely trial piece was the 12-inch platter, as it too is known only from a single sample found in the warehouse. Unlike the plates, though, it was not finished with gold banding around the rim, and it did not have any Hycroft stamp on the back. Also please note that the picture shown here is distorted as the decal is actually centered on the plate.



Large Safety Ashtray

The large safety ashtray, about 8 3/4 inches in diameter, was used to produce a variety of Mounted Police collectibles. All appear to have been trimmed with gold on both the butt ring and on the rim of the ashtray. The majority of these used the plain decal with the Mounted Policeman wearing a red serge jacket while seated on his black horse looking at the countryside through his binoculars, but at least one used the more colourful decal with the inset RCMP crest.



It, though, is extra special as it not only includes the Mounted Policeman against a colourful scenic background with fir trees to the left, but it also has the forces buffalo-head crest included towards the lower left. The image fills the central area of the ashtray within the butt ring. Above, in the trough area between the rim and the butt ring, it is marked "1873 1973/ NWMP RNWMP" & below "RCMP", all of this in old English style lettering executed in a gold oxide. Obviously, it is a commemorative marking the centennial of the Mounted Police, but so far I have not been able to identify a specific order.

As mentioned, the rest of the ones that I have seen are pretty well all made using the plain black and red decal, and most were made in 1962 or 1963.



The orders that were identified in the Hycroft invoice records along with the ones that I have recorded in collections are listed below in alphabetical order. Regretfully, for many of them, I do not have a picture to share with you.

- 146 safety ashtrays (\$.75 each) and 144, M-3 mugs in assorted colours (\$.85 each), all marked "Edmonton, Alberta, Canada" and with the Mountie decoration and gold trim, were billed to Hudson's Bay Wholesale, Edmonton, on 3 July 1962 (3653).
- 12 safety ashtrays, with "KAMLOOPS, B.C." and Mountie, at \$1.00 each were sold to Bennett Stores Ltd., Kamloops, 28 May 1963 (7434).



- an ashtray with Mountie decal, marked "Medicine Hat" horizontally above the decal in red rope style lettering & "ALBERTA CANADA" in gold below, the butt ring & rim trimmed with gold.

- 12 souvenir ashtrays with "Nelson, B.C., Canada" and Mountie decal were sold to Wood Vallance Co. Ltd., Nelson, B.C. at \$1.00 each 8 April 1963 (6939).



- 102 safety ashtrays with "REGINA in large red rope print, SASKATCHEWAN in smaller red rope print and with the Mountie decal were sold to Regina Hardware Ltd., Regina, at \$.75 each on 23 May 1962.
- A private collector has an ashtray that I have not yet seen marked "Skiff, Alberta". It is described as being decorated "with a scene of a saluting Mounted Policeman on a horse".
- The B.C. Toll Authority Fare System, Victoria, was billed for ashtrays that were sent to the Swartz Bay Terminal at Victoria. The order was for 299 souvenir safety ashtrays, with Mountie and gold trim, at \$1.00 each on 16 April 1963 (6969), 149 with "VICTORIA, B.C." and 150 with "VANCOUVER, B.C."



- 12 large safety ashtrays with "Weyburn, Sask." and Mountie decal, were sold to the Weyburn Co-op. at \$1.00 each on 5 April 1965 (5216).
- 100 safety ashtrays with "Winnipeg, Canada" and Mountie were billed to H.B. Co. Wholesale, Winnipeg, at \$.75 each 15 June 1962 (3458) and then another 100 on 10 July 1962 (3700) at the same price. In addition the T. Eaton Co., Winnipeg, was billed for 51 safety ashtrays on 17 May 1963 (7345) at \$.75 each.

The Mounted Police Centennial Ashtrays

The next group of large safety ashtrays was produced to celebrate the Mounted Police centennial with the first order being placed in late 1972. The Lethbridge branch of the Scarlet & Gold Association (the Mounted Police Veterans Association) commissioned Hycroft to make a special ashtray to help celebrate the centennial of the force. Basically it consisted of the Mounted Police badge in use in 1972 in the center of the ashtray with the changing initials of the force around the badge. The badge itself was in blue with the initials in gold old English style lettering.

However, the FOMS have a few blanks in its collection, and it appears that some of these pieces made their way into the marketplace. From the picture shown here, you can see that it consists of the crest only without any further embellishment other than the

gold trim on the rim and butt ring. The crest, all in blue, is comprised of a central buffalo's head with "ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE" on a ribbon below, and on an annulus around the buffalo is the force's motto "MAINTIENS LE DROIT".

The ones most commonly found in the marketplace, though, bear the initials representing the three name changes of the force that were placed around the badge. **NWMP** standing for North West Mounted Police (1873-1903) and **RNWMP** for Royal North West Mounted Police (1904-1919) were placed more or less level with the top of the badge at the left and right-hand sides while **RCMP** for Royal Canadian Mounted Police (1920-present) was placed below the badge. The dates **1873** and **1973** were placed above the badge but still within the butt ring.



Letters in the Hycroft files show that the Scarlet & Gold Association undertook the venture to raise funds for its association. They definitely set their aims high counting on a production run of at least 5000 ashtrays and hopefully more, and with that in mind the order for 5000 ashtrays was placed September 23, 1972

The initial order invoiced 10 November 1972 (3488) was for 1000 RCMP ashtrays, numbered 1-1000, at \$2.25 each, all with the Scarlet and Gold oval stamp (in gold) on the bottom. 200 ashtrays were to be personalized for members stationed in Lethbridge and Harry Veiner had agreed to provide



these as his contribution to the project. You can find samples of these in the marketplace as I have recorded the numbers 300, 550 and 768. Whether or not all 1000 were sold is unclear from the sales records, but they certainly did not sell quickly as the Association had hoped.

That the Lethbridge Scarlet & Gold Association

started to receive the additional 4000 ashtrays is clear from the selected invoice records given below:

- 504 of 4000 RCMP ashtrays w/blue crest, lettering & trim in gold, at \$2.25 each 12 December 1972 (3640), unnumbered as per a letter
- 288 of 3496 RCMP ashtrays w/blue crest, lettering & trim in gold, at \$2.25 each 22 January 1973 (3813)
- 44 of 3208 large safety ashtrays, crest of force in blue, lettering in gold, personalized, at \$2.25 each 14 November 1973 (5048)
- 4 large safety ashtrays, crest of force in blue, lettering in gold, personalized, at \$2.25 each 22 February 1974 (5451); names include "Cst. B.D. Rodgers Reg. # 24254, Cst. J.A.R. Byrne Reg. # 26284, Cst. Brian Clarke Reg. # 26627 & S/Sgt. J.F. Stewart Ret. Reg. # 8918".

After the initial two orders of 504 and then 288 of the 4000 requested on September 23, 1972, the remainder appear to be named to specific people. I have only included two of these orders here, the first for 44 ashtrays and the other for just four. The order for four was included to show how the name, rank and regimental number was given for these orders, and in addition it includes the one shown here that was made for Staff Sergeant Stewart.



In total the invoice records indicate that as few as 134 ashtrays may have been ordered bearing the Mountie's name, rank and regimental number. Most of the orders were placed in 1973 with 81 being requested, another 51 were placed in 1974 and the last two single orders were filled in February 1975. Once again, in spite of their best efforts to market the ashtrays, orders were slow in coming.

The only one in the Friends of Medalta collection is described as:

"a large safety ashtray with the blue R.C.M.P. crest in the center with "1873 1973" & "NWMP RNWMP" at the top of the crest in old English style letters & "RCMP/ #8918" at the bottom of the crest in gold old English style letters, arced around the bottom trough in gold "S/SGT. J.F. STEWART" RET.", all on a white ashtray with the butt ring & rim trimmed with gold, on the back in gold lettering the Scarlet & Gold Sub Division stamp, but with no limited edition number".

Was it truly the quality of the pieces



or were such complaints just an excuse to explain the low number of sales? I wish my notes regarding the letters on file were more complete, but they do shed some light on the matter. This is what I recorded:

One letter comments on the fact that some gold printing is wider than the rest (no date, ca. January 1973), another on the poor quality of the gold lettering (16 April 1973), another that the plates are too cluttered (16 April 1973), next it is faulty plates that are mentioned (10 June 1973) along with the fact that sales were not going well. Finally, a letter attached to invoice no. 5451, dated February 22, 1974, comments that the Scarlet & Gold has no letter on file to show that they have to fulfill the agreement to buy 5000 ashtrays.

My conclusion is that they were trying to find reasons to justify the poor sales. As to the question did they have to pay for 5000 ashtrays? I do not think so. Today in the Hycroft warehouse, one can still find stacks and stacks of these ashtrays sitting in wooden crates. Whether or not it is just 400, 500 or all of the 3000 that is not accounted for by the sales records, I do not know, but it is certainly a pretty impression pile.

In conclusion, I would like to comment on the value of the large safety ashtrays? Most usually sell in the \$15.00 to \$20.00 range, but if it is decorated with the large colourful decal with the fir trees and inset Mounted Police crest, one can expect to pay up to \$15.00 more. The ones with the forces changing initials (NWMP, RNWMP and RCMP) are readily available, and therefore the only ones that command a premium are those marked with the name of the Mounted Policeman and his regimental number. They are seldom seen in the marketplace, but I am sure that Mounted Police memorabilia collectors would pay up to \$35.00 for the named ones.

Tibor Rada's Ashtray

Newsletter number 1, Spring 1998 discussed the various attractive souvenir/commemorative ashtrays that were designed by Tibor Rada, and I will refer you to that article for general information about the artist. One of his designs, though, was an ashtray to commemorate the Centennial of the Mounted Police, and therefore we will repeat it here.



In my notes it is described as having in the center of the ashtray the scene of a Mountie dressed in scarlet and blue, riding a black and gray horse and holding a lance in his hand, at the upper left in relatively small lettering the caption "SALUTE TO THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE/ ESTABLISHED IN 1873.", the whole scene surrounded with a double red ring broken at the N., E., & W. sides with a maple leaf and by the word "CANADA" at the bottom, "T. RADA" appears beside the horse's rear hoof. As usual the white ashtray has the butt ring and rim trimmed with gold.

The sales for this ashtray appear to have been limited to July 1973, and the total number distributed that month add up to some 520 pieces. At least 25 of these apparently had the name Banff added, but so far I have not recorded any examples. Presumably it was the same as what is shown on the 9.5-inch Rada plate above. •

A New Teapot Find

At long last the 'piece de resistance' has shown up. Most of us have heard about it, but to my knowledge this is the first one to be found in the marketplace. My, what some of us might give for this little beauty, and if you can believe it, it went for the price of an ordinary teapot.

For your information, I have copied a part of Medalta's year end inventory sheet for 1931 where the gold owl teapots are mentioned, and the stamps on the bottom of this teapot suggests that this teapot may well date from that time.

Rather than me telling the story of how it was acquired, I will let the proud owner tell the story in his own words.

Several weeks ago, my wife and daughter spent a day out shopping. On their way home, they spotted a small antique shop, one we had never seen before. They had driven by it and after a long day did not bother to turn around.

However, my wife did mention the shop to me that evening and we agreed to make a point of stopping there someday.

As fate would have it, about a month later I was out on business when I realized I would be passing right by this shop. Curiosity got the better of me and I stopped in. It was a small shop and within ten minutes I was ready to leave as there was nothing that really interested me. As I turned to leave, the lady who runs the shop asked if I was looking for anything special. "Yes" I said, "I'm looking for Medalta art pottery." "What is it?" she asked. I told the lady about some of the Medalta products and their decorations such as the ships, cottage scene, owls, etc. Then, I left my business card with her and asked her to call if she ever got anything. Upon returning to my office, some two hours later, my wife greeted me with "the antique shop called." "Which one?" I asked, having left my card at dozens of shops. "The one you were in this morn-



LIMITED

SHEET No.

DATE December 31st, 1931. DETAILS OF

Ware in A/c Room

STOCK

CALLED BY

ENTERED BY

PRICED BY

CALCULATED BY

VERIFIED BY

STOCK No.	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	✓	PRICE	PER	EXTENSION	✓	TOTAL
AMOUNTS BROUGHT FORWARD						3058.81		
42	Owl Teapots	450		2.40		90.00		
36	" "	60		2.88		14.40		
30	" "	85		3.92		27.76		
2 Pt.	Gold Fruit Pitchers	8		5.60		3.78		
42's	" " Teapots	12		4.80		4.80		
36	" " "	2		6.00		1.00		
42	" Owl "	8		4.80		3.20		
36	" " "	6		6.00		3.00		
30	" " "	20		8.00		13.33		
	Fruit Bowls	10		9.00		7.50		

ing, the lady has something for you.” This was hard to believe, a lady who two hours previous had never heard of Medalta, now had something for me. I called the shop fully expecting her to have some mediocre piece of Medalta and at the same time trying to think of a nice way of saying “no, that’s not really what I’m looking for.”

“Well, hello again” she said. “The strangest thing happened not thirty minutes after you left the shop. One of my vendors came in with a piece of Medalta.” I braced myself for what I was sure was about to follow. “It’s a teapot” she said, “with a beautiful blue and green glaze”, one of the most common glazes Medalta ever produced, I thought to myself.

But then it got interesting. “It has a black tree trunk outlined in gold” she said, “with an owl outlined in gold sitting on a branch.” AN OWL. For a moment I was speechless, but quickly recovered and asked the lady to repeat the description. This was a piece I had to have, but was almost afraid to ask the question. “How much are you asking for the teapot?” “One hundred and ten dollars” she said. “Well, yes I think I would be interested in your teapot and as luck would have it, I just happen to be traveling in your area tomorrow, so consider it sold and please put it away

for me. I’ll see you tomorrow.” I didn’t sleep very well that night. All night long I had visions of someone walking into her shop, spotting the teapot and making an offer that she couldn’t refuse. My fears were groundless. The next day I walked into the shop and she handed me the teapot, which is actually a cobalt



blue fading to pale blue, with the tree, the owl, and a full gold moon. A superb piece of Medalta, If I may say so. •



Cont’d from page 1

any other reason, especially when you look at the bid history. It went this way: At 7:20 A.M. the bidder entered the auction at \$400.00 matching another bid. At 7:21 a bid of \$450.00 was placed, 1 minute later \$475.00 and finally at 7:23 the bid was raised again. Within minutes, at 7:26, the notice that the auction was terminated early came up selling the bowl to the current bidder at \$499.00 US.

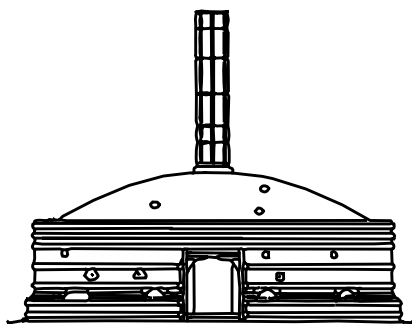
From this, it would appear that the seller was glued to the ebay screen waiting for the reserve price to be met, and when it was, the auction was quickly closed. Sometimes auctions are terminated early giving the reason as the piece was broken, when in fact the seller received an off-line offer that was too good to refuse. From the time line, I do not see this early closure as an off-line deal.

Whatever the reason, the auction ended abruptly, taking me by surprise as I did not know that this was even allowed under ebay rules. I have certainly never seen it happen before. Quite frankly, I was hoping to see the auction to completion as the bowl was described as mint and I really wanted to see what one would go for today.

The \$700.00 Canadian that this bowl fetched was a good price, and I can only wonder what it might have gone for if left to run its course.

*There are strange things done
in an ebay run*

When the vendor is not out for gold! •



Friends of Medalta Society

**703 Wood Street
Medicine Hat, Alta
T1A 8S9 Canada
Phone 403-529-1070
FAX 403-580-5868
<http://www.medalta.org>**