

OFFICER BIOGRAPHIES

Having completed publication of the biographies of all our journal editors, we continue this section with biographies of our Unit officers.

Alan J. Hanks

[Ed. Note: Alan Hanks joined the Biology Unit in 1969. He served as Unit Treasurer from 1979 to 1982. In 1982, he became the Unit Vice-President and was elected as President the following year. He served as the Editor of *Biophilately* from 1990 to 2011, the longest term of any editor, and again as Vice-President from 2004 to 2010. He has been in his second stint as President since 2010.]

Alan J. Hanks was born in Woodford, Essex, England in 1930. An only child, he developed an interest in “creepy-crawlies” at an early age and his mother was always complaining about the worms, beetles, and other ‘bugs’ that found their way into her kitchen. In school, he enjoyed zoology, botany, physics, and chemistry and hated history and mathematics, so managed to pursue the first four to a Higher School Certificate in the Summer of 1949.

He developed an interest in butterflies and his introduction to stamp collecting came along at the start of the war when he was nine. His mother collected current British stamps and would pass her duplicates to him, working at the dining room table while German bombers flew overhead and his father was fire-watching in London.

Having finished school at the age of 19, he applied for a job with a chemical company in London, where he was introduced to the art of washing laboratory glassware. Quickly figuring out that the job was not for him, he joined the Royal Air Force. After failing the aircrew medical due to deafness in one ear, he trained as a Ground Wireless Mechanic and was posted to Calshot, near Southampton, which was an air-sea rescue station. His stamp collection was expanding somewhat slowly and a new collection sprang up in the form of real butterflies. His star catch was a Bath White (*Pontia daplidice*), a very rare migrant to England, which was duly reported in the *Entomological Record and Journal of Variation*, published in London.

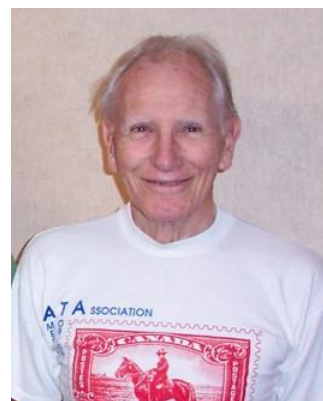
Following his discharge from the R.A.F., he found a job in England with George Wimpey, a worldwide Civil Engineering concern, working in their Soils & Aggregates laboratory in Southall. At this time, the economy was booming in North America. Ontario was short of experienced civil engineers, and one of the engineers setting up a company in Toronto who needed laboratory technicians offered him a job. He immigrated to Canada in 1957.

While browsing through a stamp magazine, he noted an ad for the Biology Unit of ATA and applied for membership after receiving a copy of *Biophilately* and being impressed with the depth of study in the journal. In 1976, he attended the International Stamp Show in Philadelphia where the ATA was holding their annual meeting and quickly became a member.

Mr. Hanks has served the ATA as Chapters Director for a few years, President from 1984–87 (the only non-U.S. President to date), member of the Board of Directors from 1987–2010, and Judges Accreditation Director from 1990–2010. He has also served as a philatelic judge.

He is a member of the Lepidopterists’ Society and the Toronto Entomologists Association where he served as Secretary, Treasurer, and editor of its Lepidoptera seasonal summary publication. He is author of *Butterflies and Moths on Stamps* and co-author of *The Ontario Butterfly Atlas*, as well as many philatelic articles. Mr. Hanks is a recipient of the Norman Criddle Award from the Entomological Society of Canada to recognize the contribution of an outstanding non-professional entomologist to the furtherance of entomology in Canada.

In addition to later serving as Editor of *Biophilately* and in several Board positions in the Biology Unit, Mr. Hanks is a founding member of the Philatelic Lepidopterists of America. He is currently President of The Philatelic Society for Greater Southern Africa and Treasurer of the Philatelic Specialists Society of Canada. He is also a member of the American Philatelic Society, Rhodesia Study Circle, North York Philatelic Society, North Toronto Stamp Club, Canadiana Unit of ATA, Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library, and honorary member of the Oxford Philatelic Society.



Alan J. Hanks

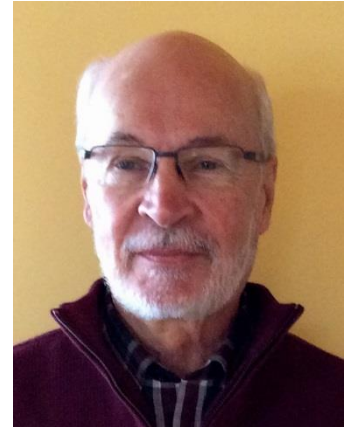
He is the recipient of the 1985 Distinguished Topical Philatelist award from the ATA, its highest award, and was inducted a Fellow of Royal Philatelic Society of Canada in 2007.

Lawrence E. Davidson

[*Ed. Note: Larry Davidson joined the Biology Unit in 2005. In 2013, he was elected as the Vice-President.*]

Larry E. Davidson is a retired university mathematics lecturer. He has been collecting stamps for 56 years and exhibiting for 29 years. He began topical collecting in the 1990s, inspired by Mary Ann Owens's exhibit on elephants. His display/thematic exhibit, *Beavers: Nature's Engineers*, has received several vermeil, gold, and "most popular exhibit" awards. His other thematic interest is Sir Frederick Banting and the discovery of insulin. Among his other collecting interests is United Nations (the first issue of 1951 and postal stationery).

He is a long-time member of the ATA and writes a column on "Foreign Thematic Exhibits" that appears in *Topical Time*. He is Awards Chair for the annual National Topical Stamp Show. He is Vice-President of the Biology Unit of ATA and is a member of APS, AAPE, Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, United Postal Stationery Society, and United Nations Philatelists, Inc., for which he served as treasurer for several years. He lives on the shores of Georgian Bay in Ontario, Canada with his wife Margaret and enjoys traveling, gardening, and nature photography.



Larry E. Davidson