

WHAT to COLLECT?

Getting started was easy. The year was 1988, and the Winter Olympics were being held in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The venues in and around the city were awesome, and the evening medal presentations at the Olympic Plaza were extremely exhilarating. A very popular attraction near the Plaza was the large Coca Cola tent. Without the faintest idea about what was happening and why, a visit inside proved to be the beginning of a new hobby for me – Olympics pin collecting. The chase was pretty hectic for the first few months; but, as the months turned into years and the collection grew slowly, the product dwindled to the point where pin acquisitions were months apart. The time was right for a change.

In 1997, the Canadian Men's Curling Championship was held in Calgary; and our Pin Club was invited to attend and take part in the pin trading that went on at the Brier. I was a curler so I decided to give this new field a try. There were many Curling Club pins out there; but I decided to narrow my collection to only Door Pins, which were the pins that were sold at the venue kiosks. The seasoned collectors were after the Heart Pins, which were given to the Brier participants and executive members; but I wasn't going there, having learnt my lesson with a few "scarce" Olympic pins. Brier Sponsor pins made their appearance and proved to be an exciting chase as new pins appeared each day, thereby, improving the trading action.

The Brier came back to Calgary in 2002 and with it came more sponsor pins and robust trading. Choosing just door pins and their availability proved to slow down my pin trading. At this event we were treated to a great collection display of Brier Heart pins put together by Larry McGrath of Dodsland, Saskatchewan.

When the dust settled after the Brier and returned to monthly pin club meetings, pin trading slowed right down so I decided that I needed to come up with a new collection theme. I wanted something that was not the run of the mill but popular enough to be able to find a steady source. Upon looking over my collection of odds and ends, I realized that I had the makings of a new collection, and it was FISH pins. Many of the towns in Western Canada have fish as logos on their pins, so if there is water near a town and a stop is in order, one can easily add a fish to the collection. Since I am the only member in our club collecting these pins, the market is all mine and my fellow club members think of me in their travels and keep adding to my collection.

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