

IRISH PHILATELY

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Edited by

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EDITORIAL

Both Dorothy and me were disappointed not to have been able to attend the AGM in Dublin; by all accounts it was a most enjoyable meeting.

The last of the Provincial machines, Strabane, is covered in this issue, this completes the story of the machines outwith Belfast.

The first part of the Belfast story begins. I would be very grateful if members would list their holdings of machines and send them to me in order that I may hopefully add to my periods of use records.

OM Richards

"Irish Philately"

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IRISH PHILATELIC CIRCLE

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RANDOM NOTES

by F.E. Dixon

ALBUMS Launched at Stampa 85 was An Post's series of stock-books and albums, chief being a colourful printed album for Irish stamps, with the stamps printed in colour with spaces alongside or below for mounting the stamps when you acquire them. It sold well at £8.50 but I don't like it. I prefer the old illustrated albums in which one delighted in sticking the stamp on top of its illustration! And, any serious collector soon finds the need for spaces to show cylinder blocks or gutter-pairs and varieties and shades of printing.

CHRISTMAS STAMPS The two 22p and the 26p reproducing classical paintings are dull in colour and repeat the mistake of using gold ink which is invisible at some angles of viewing. The special 22p candle design sold at a discount of nearly 15% is much more attractive but shows the same misuse of the gold.

PICTORIAL AEROGRAM Another disappointment, the picture being another view of Dublin GPO. If An Post wishes to attract visitors to Ireland it should publicise some of the spectacular scenery, and it is tactless to depict the building where the worst Irish "troubles" commenced. It is also tactless to have the arms of all four provinces on the reverse when An Taoiseach is trying to get co-operation from the Unionists by promising that the Republic will not attempt to incorporate the six counties until that is desired by a majority of their inhabitants.

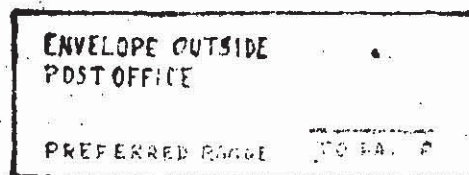
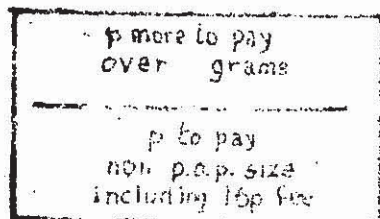
REGISTERED ENVELOPES The G and H size envelopes, issued on the same day as the aerogram, are badly printed and the feeble design of stamp will be very easy to forge. I bought only one of each and find that the 26+90p stamp on the G is doubly printed. One surprising feature is that although the letter-press has been completely reset the translation of "an officer of the Post Office" is still "Oifigeach Poist". Another surprise is that in most cases the English text is now given priority over the Irish.

MACHINE CANCELLATION NEWS John Lennon reports that Kilrush (Co Clare) has now received a cancelling machine, probably introduced during the Christmas rush. He has also discovered that Dundalk has a new die of the slogan ARE YOU ON THE DRAFT REGISTER OF ELECTORS ... It has a slightly larger frame 50x23mm but the frame has thinner lines.

An unusual error occurred at Naas at the end of November (?) when the date was shown as 31 XI and the time 30.15PM!

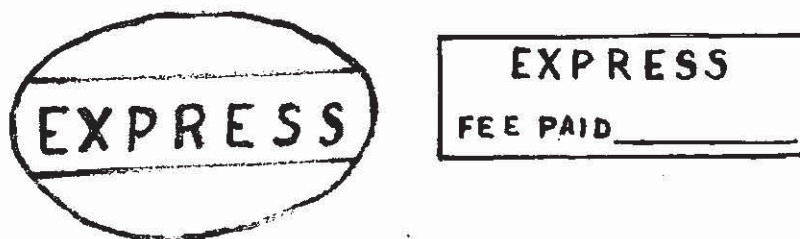
Post Early for Christmas was still in use at Blackrock on 3 January!

P.O.P. SIZE



Few sorters take the trouble of charging postage due on envelopes of the wrong size but handstamps are now in use at some offices. Illustrated are two that I have seen, the simpler one at Galway and the dual-purpose at Mullingar, both during November.

EXPRESS



The same batch of material included two more distinctive handstamps for Express letters, the oval one being from Phibsborough (Dublin) and the other from Moate.

LOVE STAMPS Congratulations to Ries Hoek and Terry Monaghan for winning the the design competition which attracted over 4000 entries. However, I feel that the heart symbol is being overworked. What the world needs is love in the mind, not merely in the heart.

HIBERNIAN CATALOGUE The 1986 edition repeats the clumsy lay-out of earlier issues, the only improvement being the addition of a section of postal stationery, over simplified, but usefully having columns for mint, used and first-day examples. The prices are realistic and higher than MacDonnell Whyte (1983). For the stamps most prices are unchanged but there are some increases, notably in the 1/3 and 1/4 commemoratives: eg An Tostal now £27.50 mint, £20 used and some of the Europas are up. Not surprisingly the withdrawn £1 Cahir Castle has jumped to £6 mint and £3.50 used. Misprints of Broscas for Brocas (p.24) and Ghandi for Gandhi (p.106) are repeated and another bad slip is in the acknowledgements where 'An Post' should have replaced 'The Department of Posts and Telegraphs'.

SLOGAN



Yet again An Post has introduced a slogan without advising us. This appeared in mid-January at Cork, Dundalk, Cavan, Galway, Limerick and Waterford, but not yet Dublin. John Lennon was the first collector to find it.

An Irish Language version of the RTE RADIO slogan has appeared at Cork, Dublin and Galway and possibly elsewhere.

HIBERNIAN AUCTION JANUARY 25 Most of the lots sold went below the estimates, the the only section to sell really well being Postal Stationery. I was shocked by two blatant breaches of the auctioning rules when lots were knocked down to room bidders although it was disclosed that equal bids had already been lodged by post.

AN POST The Philatelic Bureau have been giving away large wall charts showing the Head Post Office Districts and the number of households in each, from 4100 in Wicklow to 285000 in Dublin.

A circular issued on 22 January announced 'Redirection Postcards' available from

31 January at 25p each. These are only printed cards for notifying one's change of address and are no bargain. A plain postcard plus 22p stamp will do the job as well.

OFFICIAL METERS At least one of the innumerable Tax Inspectors' offices is now incorporating its name and address in English in its metermarking: Inspector of Taxes, 85/93 Lr Mount Street, Dublin 2 Meter Number P.B. T2183M.

POSTAGE RATES From 3 March the Irish postal charges are again the highest in Europe:-

	<u>Inland & EEC</u>	<u>Other Foreign</u>		<u>Airmail</u>
20g P.O.P	28p	39p	10g	46p
50g	32p		20g	55p
Postcard	24p	28p		30p

The fine added to postage due goes up to 17p.

There is widespread dissatisfaction, especially as the service has not improved. There was another strike in Dublin the day the new charges were announced (19 February).

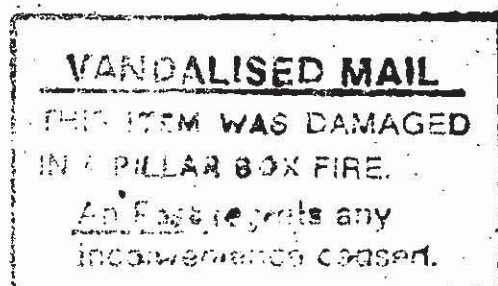
MACDONNELL WHYTE AUCTION At the auction on 22 February Irish Postal History was much in demand, many lots reaching or exceeding the estimates, top price in the section being £320 for "Missent from ../to Ballymena". In the overprints the outstanding section was the Composite printings. I thought £80 ridiculously high for a mere photograph of an O'Reilly essay. Airmails did well as did postal stationery.

UNRECORDED MILEAGE MARK Of my purchases at the auction, the most satisfying is a rather tatty cover with BALLINAMORE/83, not recorded hitherto, and a surprising discovery. I cannot find it listed as a post town until long after the period (1831) although in 1832 it became a Penny Post sub-office to Ahascragh.

UNOFFICIAL SLOGANS One very worthy organisation assists its propaganda with handstamps applied to its correspondence. It is A.L.O.N.E. and the slogans I have seen are VISIT THE OLD/LIVING ALONE and (very appropriate during recent weather) THE OLD/FEEL THE COLD.

VANDALISM CACHET One batch of delayed Valentines and other correspondence was delivered bearing a cachet explaining the cause of delay - the first case of a cachet incorporating "An Post".

The illustration is by courtesy of Tony Quigley.



ST PATRICK'S DAY CARDS Many think the "love and kisses" in bad taste: best are St Patrick's message and the floral "Beannachtai". The description on the latter's message side, cancelled by a row of shamrocks, was meant for another of the series "St Patrick's Day needle-point sampler". Some cards were sold with erroneous caption uncanceled.

The reproduction of the Ellen Clapsaddle design of c1910 is poor, copied from a rubbed card with damaged corners: the original has brighter colours, rosy cheeks, light brown hair and the strip at the foot is gold, not brown. The original is discreetly embossed.

The three large cards, not P O P size!, are attractive but unsound botanically: primroses are not meadow flowers but like mossy banks and the crocus is a plant of the meadow rather than the lakeside.

POSTAGE DUE Cards and covers showing postage due have become very desirable. Herewith photocopy of an unusual example, on a Dublin 1907 Exhibition postcard post unstamped and so charged 2 x $\frac{1}{2}$ d. The handstamp is of a common type and rather worn.



FISCAL STAMPS A lawyer friend tells me that a new series of Court Stamps will replace the present sets for Circuit Court, District Court, High Court and Land Registry. Meanwhile existing stocks are being used indiscriminantly and one can find documents of one Court bearing stamps of all four.

THE IRISH MAIL The UK £5 booklet celebrating the achievements of British Rail is likely to prove popular with a wide variety of collectors and the illustrations include the "Irish Mail" (London & Holyhead), the oldest named train in the world. It could be subject of a good thematic display, based on the special postmarks and supported by postcards of the trains and of the places on the route.

FERN STAMPS Not popular with counter clerks, the colours being too similar, but the choice of subject made that inevitable. I like the treatment of the subject, showing each fern in its natural setting, instead of the white backgrounds of the birds, animals etc.

AEROGRAM The new edition, issued 18 March, differs from the last by having 40p prepaid instead of 37p, but costs only the same 40p. Stocks of the 37p issue were withdrawn but when I asked for aerograms at the Dublin GPO I was given the old unstamped type!

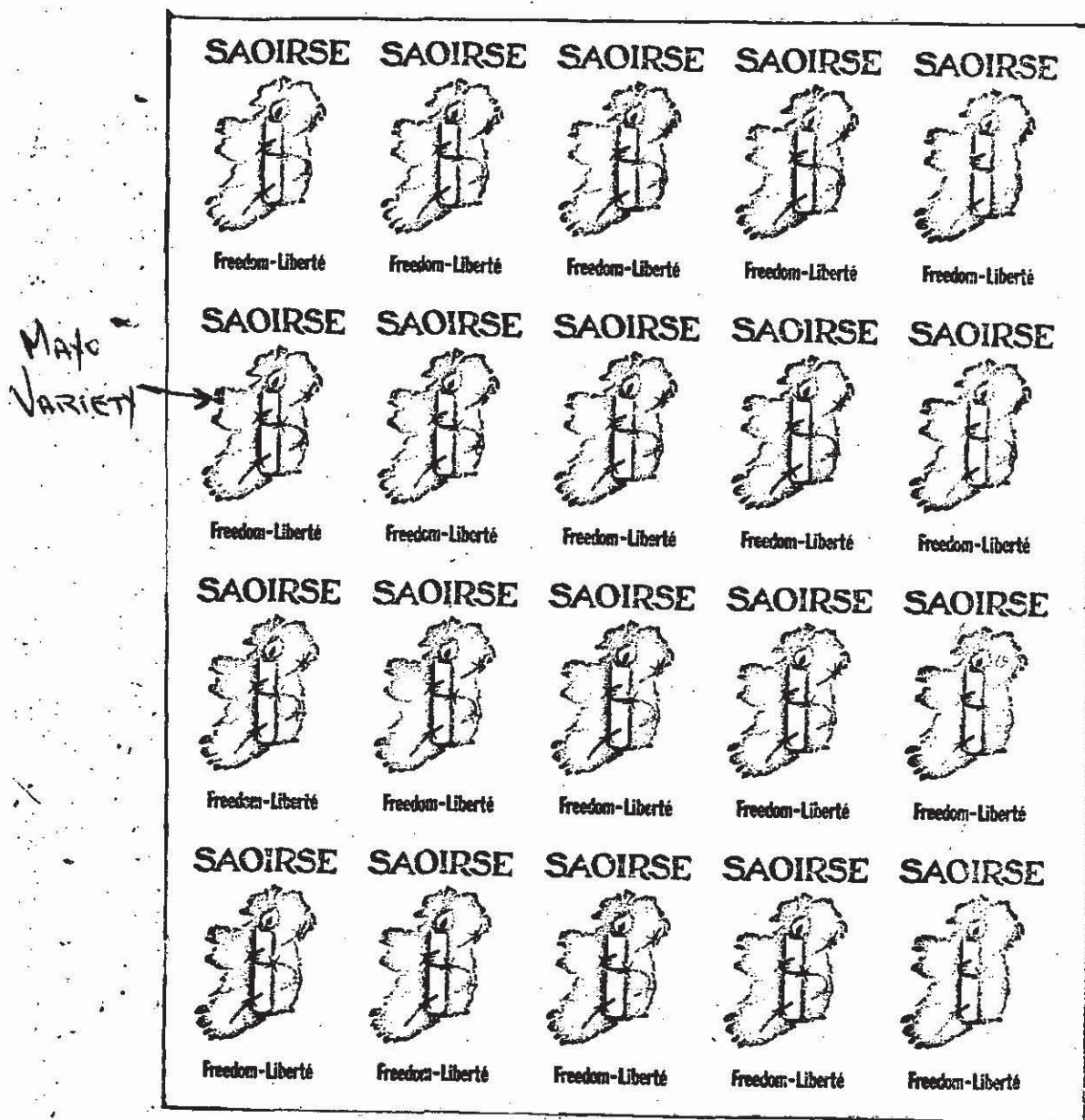
MAIL ROBBERY Another mail robbery which failed to get mentioned in the press was on 15 February. A letter to Tullamore, posted on 14 February, was delivered under cover on 18 March with a slip from the Head Postmaster, Portlaoise, apologising for the delay due to a mail robbery.

The mailbags taken were intended for Tullamore, Clara and Birr. The letters recovered had been dumped in a rubbish tip at Stradbally. There was a similar raid three weeks later, from which nothing has yet been recovered.

OBITUARY The death has occurred of Tom Dixon at his home in White Rock, B C, Canada, where he was living in retirement and enjoying occasional returns to Ireland. Quite unrelated to me, we were good friends and 40 years ago Dublin philatelists distinguished us as "Shady" (him) and "Dotty" (me) from our different approaches to stamp collecting.

REPUBLICAN CHRISTMAS SEALS

by J.A. Fingleton



Recently I have seen a number of Christmas seals which were produced by Provisional Sinn Fein for use on Christmas mail, sometime during the early 1970s.

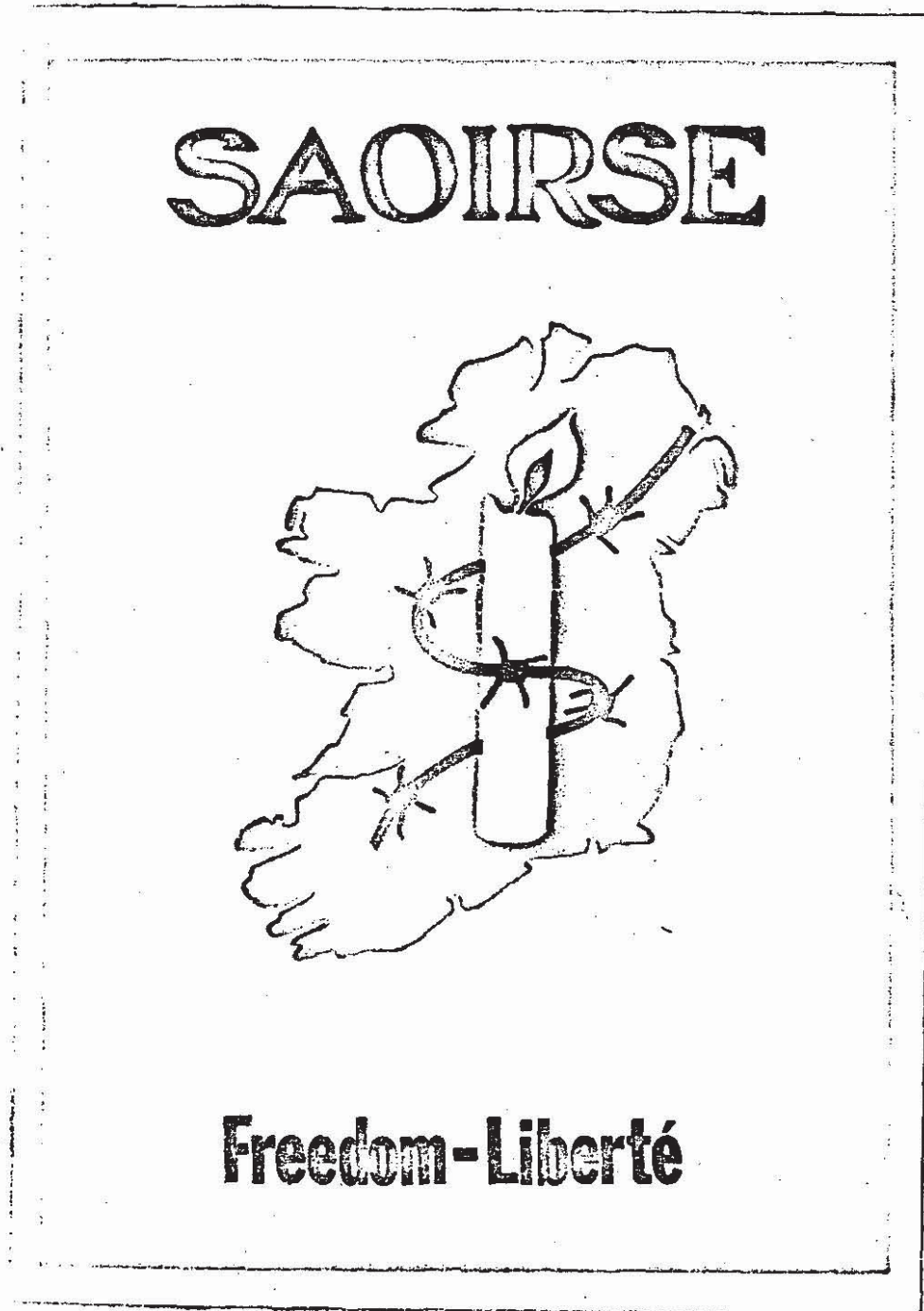
The sheets of 20 seals (5 x 4) were sold in packets of 100 and priced at 50p. All the outer edges of the sheet are imperf whilst the inner seals are perf, 12 x 18, made by what appears to be a roulette machine i.e. small cuts. Each label measures approximately 27 x 38mm. The process used for printing may have been photogravure and the gum is of a very matt finish.

Background colour is orange with a green map of Ireland. The candle is entwined with black barbed wire, the text is also in black. The word 'SAOIRSE' (Freedom) at the top is translated into both English and French at the bottom. Packaging is

also bilingual ie Gaelic and English slogan: "Use Saoirse Seals on all correspondence, 100 for 50p". A Christmas card, of a very similar design, was also produced at the same time (twist of barbed wire differs).

One constant variety appears on all the sheets I have seen; a blackening on part of the county of Mayo, running approximately from Portacloy in the north to Newport in the south. This variation only shows on R2 S1.

It may be unlikely that examples exist tied to covers as the main use of the labels was propaganda and were probably fixed to the bottom corner, or reverse sides, of envelopes. Perhaps some member may be able to improve on this data.



It is unlikely that Mr Grierson was responsible for the overprinted postal stationery. He would have used the same printing face that Dollard employed for overprinting stamps. There is a more likely suspect, TA Stoddart. He was associated with Col FF Freeman of the Mint Stamp Co, but was on the staff of the Irish Times and would, therefore, have access to printing types and presses. The arrows in the photograph point to differences in the two overprints, eg the first A of RIALTAS and the accent on the e.

* * * * *

THE CANCELLING MACHINES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

by O.M. Richards

BELFAST

Part 1 Belfast being the largest city in the north of Ireland and also the most industrialised city in the whole of Ireland had the problem of handling and cancelling large amounts of mail. A machine was issued to assist in this in 1908. Over the years, since that time, it has been issued with Hey & Dolphin, Universal and Krag machines, strangely enough the latter machine, which was issued to many offices as a successor to the Columbia machine, was not used in Belfast until 1949, however, I will cover the story of that machine in turn.

COLUMBIA MACHINE

This was the first cancelling machine which the Post Office authorities had purchased in quantity, between 1906 and 1918 some 34 machines had been used, 58 in 32 London offices and 26 in Provincial offices. In Ireland only two offices, Dublin (1906) and Belfast, were issued with this type of machine.

The machine issued to Belfast came into use in 1908, FE Dixon has the earliest recorded example for 20 August 1908, Figure 1. My own earliest example is for 11 September 1908, Figure 2.

BELFAST
2. 30 PM
AUG 20 08A

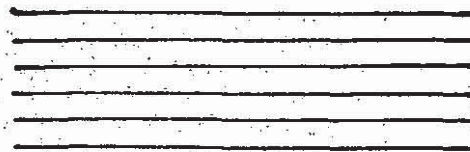


Figure 1

BELFAST
2. 45 PM
SEP 11 08A

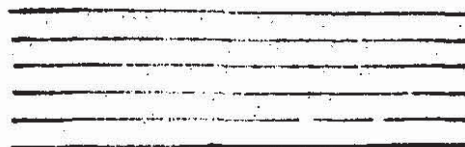


Figure 2

SOME 1922 OVERPRINT FAKERS

by F.E. Dixon

De Mortuis nil nisi bonum has its exceptions and it is sometimes desirable that facts be made widely known, even if it means blackening the reputations of some deceased individuals. What has prompted me to write this article is coming across a letter from the late Dr Stafford Johnson while remounting some material for display. The material in question is overprinted postal stationery given to me by the late Thomas E Field. It, with similar items, had come to him from the collections of WS Brocklehurst and WT Wilson, who had obtained them from Dr Paul Carton, a Dublin surgeon. Dr Carton alleged that he had bought them across the counter at the Dublin GPO on 3 June 1922.

His letters to Mr Wilson reported that he obtained seven each 1d wrapper, 1½d postcard and 1½d + ½d adhesive lettercard, all with similar but not identical overprints, 5-line, similar to Dollard's overprinting. One wrapper was lost: he kept one of each and gave a set to Dr Stafford Johnson. He thought the overprinting to have been by handstamp. I disagree; the impressions are too uniform and I believe that the perpetrator had access to a printing press. The impression was heavy enough to show through both thicknesses of the lettercard and this demonstrates that the ½d adhesive was overprinted after attachment.

When Tom Field presented a set to me in 1955 I asked Dr Stafford Johnson about them. He had never believed Dr Carton's story in toto but stated there was another case of items being passed across the Post Office counter to improve their status. This was a series of sheets of up to the value of 1s, all with inverted overprints, specially printed for PH Grierson, a director of Dollards. Someone in the Irish Philatelic Society learned of the occurrence and a deputation was sent to JJ Walsh, Post Master General. He alerted the Police and detectives visited Mr Grierson. He, however, must have been warned and when they arrived asserted that he had realised his wrong doing and had destroyed all the offending sheets. We still do not know if he spoke the truth and suspect that some day the market will be flooded with inverted overprints.



My records show that other 1908 examples are 19 September, British Postmark Society and 12 October, J Lennon. I am always grateful for further information if this extends dates.

In the earlier machines there was a line above and below the name, date and year, this type of die box was used on the machine issued to Dublin in 1906, as it was on all the first issue machines. When this machine was issued to Belfast it had the die box shown in Figures 1 and 2, in fact, all the Columbia machines were subsequently issued with this type of die box.

There were six straight line cancelling bars, at least two sets can be identified, one being 17mm between top and bottom bars and the other 19mm. I have examined about one hundred examples of this machine but have not been able to positively identify different sets of die details. Differences can be seen but these are caused mainly by under/over inking of the dies when in use in the machine. Towards the end of its life there were distinct signs of wear, especially in the letters and figures which thickened. The last recorded use of the straight cancelling bars is for 31 July 1913 (FE Dixon).

In 1913 the straight lines were exchanged for wavy lines, Figure 3. This was a new policy on the part of the Post Office; as machines needed maintenance, replacement of worn parts etc., the cancelling bars were changed. The British Postmark Society record a date of 4 September 1913 as the earliest recorded use of the wavy lines, FE Dixon has an example dated 5 September 1913. My own earliest example is for 14 March 1914, Figure 3. I must mention J Lennon's example dated 25 November 1913.

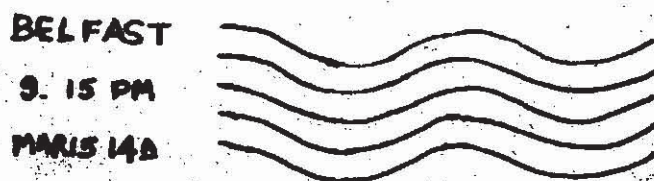


Figure 3

I have not as yet mentioned the small capital 'A' with line below which appears after the year in the bottom line of the box. It appears to me that, as in the case of the earlier machines which had numbers between the cancelling bars, the letter 'A' would seem to indicate that the makers hoped to sell additional machines for use in an office which already had a machine.

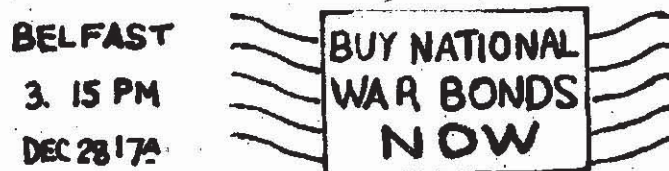


Figure 4

In 1917 and 1918 slogans were used in the Columbia and Krag machines. These publicised the sale of WAR BONDS; one of them - BUY NATIONAL WAR BONDS NOW - was used in the Belfast machine during the latter half of December 1917, Figure 4. KB Miller of Belfast has an example dated 24 December 1917. Reports of other 1917 dates would be welcome.

To date I have not seen, neither have I had reports of, PAID or OFFICIAL PAID dies used in this machine.

HEY & DOLPHIN MACHINE

After trials in 1893 and 1902 - 03, and the insistance of Hey & Dolphin that they would only hire and not sell their machines to the Post Office, in 1911 they changed their minds and offered the machines for sale at £500 each. At this time the Universal machine, on trial in London, was priced at £250, half the cost of the Hey & Dolphin, and was in fact reduced to £200. A popular machine at this time was the Krag which could be bought at a cost of only £96. The problem with the Krag machine was that, because it gave a continuous impression, it was not possible to incorporate a counting device.

The decision was made to purchase six machines on extensive trial and by 1915 they had been installed. One of these six Hey & Dolphin machines went to Belfast, known as the 'Flier' type. Five 'Flier' type machines in all were purchased, the other was a slow Model 'M'.

The cancelling device was in two parts - the name, date and time die, and the cancelling bars. The year was an integral part of the name die therefore it had to be replaced each year. The replacement dies were slightly different each year, especially in the size of the office name BELFAST, the year was almost exactly the same. As this machine was used for some years in partnership with the Columbia, which was designated 'A', it was felt that there was no need to give the new machine a designation, the difference in the design of the name etc., die was probably another reason for not designating the dies.

It is evident that the machine in Belfast was issued in December 1914, the British Postmark Society report a date of 18 December 1914, the earliest recorded use. This would seem to indicate installation prior to the Christmas rush of mail. My own earliest example is for 15 February 1915, Figure 5. J Lennon has an example dated 1 July 1915.

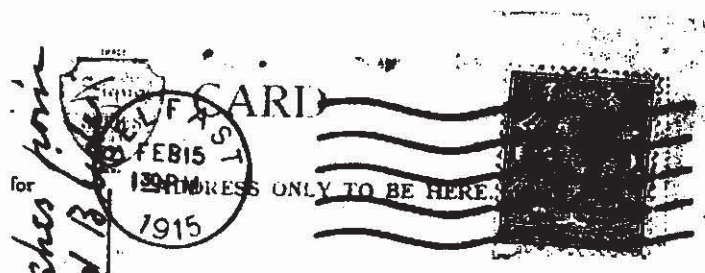


Figure 5

As can be seen from Figure 5 the name etc., dies were single-ring, this type of die was used to 1922 by which time it had acquired the designation 'A', Figure 6.



Figure 6

My earliest example of this die, first used on 1 July 1922, is for 14 July 1922, my latest 21 November 1922. I have a photocopy of an example held by C Dulin for 25 December 1922.



Figure 7

In 1923 the double-ring dies appeared, Figure 7, again with the designation 'A'. Double-ring dies designated 'A' appeared each year to 1933. The British Postmark Society report dies without a designation from 4 March 1924 to 1933 but I have not seen these dies for 1924 and 1925. The fact that there were dies with no designation and with 'A' indicates that an additional machine was issued in 1924. The replacement dies issued each year were very different in certain years, Figure 8 shows the 1924 'A' die.



Figure 8

Figure 9 shows two of the subsequent dies, that for 1925 has a smaller BELFAST, that for 1928 shows a larger inner circle. The letters of BELFAST and the figures of the year are squat.



Figure 9

The two machines continued in Belfast to 1933 and up to that time could be positively identified as Hey & Dolphin machines by the unique dies. In 1933

The Post Office decided that the name and date dies used in machines should be standardised as far as possible and they laid down the pattern to be followed in future. These dies were to be as those used in the Universal machines, ie single-ring, time, date and year in three lines in the centre of the die. In fact, the Hey & Dolphin 'E' and 'F' models continued to be manufactured by Messrs Roneo Neopost Ltd and were still supplied after 1933. The 'F' "Flier" machines were in use until well after 1945.



Figure 10

Slogans were used frequently in both Belfast machines, some of these are shown in Figure 10 above. I must mention especially the two British Empire Exhibition exclusive to these machines - BRITISH EMPIRE/VISIT THE ULSTER PAVILION/ EXHIBITION 1925 and VISIT THE/BRITISH EMPIRE/EXHIBITION - 1925/ULSTER PAVILION -, see Figures 8 and 9. During the Telephone slogan campaign which took place between 1931 and 1934, the two Hey & Dolphin machines at Belfast were the only ones of this type to carry two of the ten Telephone slogans used. These are shown in Figure 10.

The Paid Dies

Yet another unique feature of the Hey & Dolphin machines were the PAID dies, these were struck in red as is usual with both PAID and OFFICIAL PAID mail. I have only one example of the PAID die, I have obtained a photocopy of the one which is illustrated in the Stitt-Dibden - Lowder book on these machines, Figure 11. J Lennon reports that he has an example of the OFFICIAL PAID dated 13 November 1928 and AJ Gilpin has an example dated 19 September 1929.



Figure 11

This concludes the story of the recognisable Hey & Dolphin machine dies, there is no doubt that the machines continued in use in Belfast until the outbreak of World War II at least and perhaps after that conflict. It is regrettable that no records are available, the paper for pulp campaign of the war years, I believe, was the cause of many records being disposed of. Even today in Northern Ireland machines are taken into the workshops for routine maintenance or in the case of a breakdown and replaced from spare stocks held. Apparently no records are kept, although I find this hard to believe, however, that is what enquiries reveal. In the meantime, I would urge members of the Circle to record what they hold and I would be grateful for a copy so that I can build up my records.

To be continued.

* * * * *

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS - 1985 POSTSCRIPT

by B. Warren

POSTMARKS



There were two postmark illustrations missing from the article - the Christmas first day postmark and the FPSI Sligo Exhibition cancel - copies are now to hand as shown.

SLOGANS



FACING
THE
CHALLENGE

International Youth Year 1985.



National Tree Week

17 - 24 March 85

Plant trees
for tomorrow

COUNCIL FOR STATUS OF WOMEN
End of UN Women's Decade
FORUM-NAIROBI-JULY
Enquiries 01-607731

SAVE MONEY-BE WISE
USE THE P.O.P. SIZE.

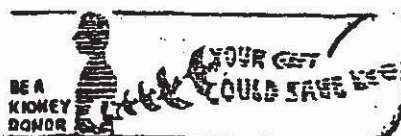
Visit
MARITIME MUSEUM
Dún Laoghaire
Open May - Sept



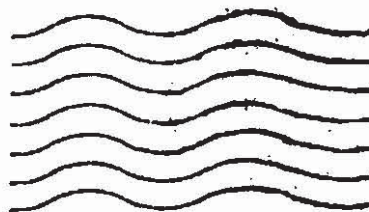
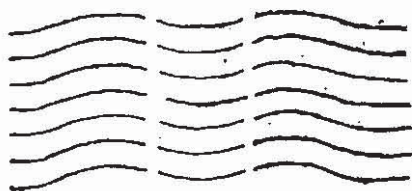
June 30th

to

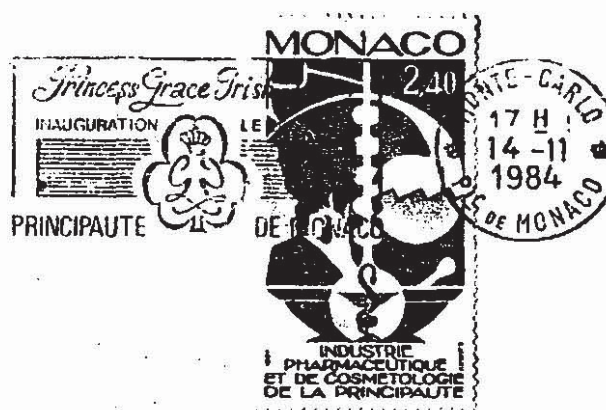
July 7th



ARE YOU ON THE DRAFT
REGISTER OF ELECTORS?
CHECK NOW AT YOUR
POST OFFICE



The 1985 slogans together with illustrations of the Kilrush, Kildare and Shannon machines are also to hand courtesy of John Lennon.



One further item of an Irish association relating to 1984 was given to me by Tony Quigley. Monaco opened a special library in that year in memory of the late Princess Grace. Known as the Princess Grace Irish Library, a special slogan was used in the Principality to mark the opening of the library. The example seen is dated 14 November 1984. Correspondence from the library also used a green cachet on the back of the envelope which reads "Princess Grace Irish Library Monaco".

* * * * *

"GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS"

A purchase at an auction of 1930s era kiloware on piece (with some non-Irish noted), plus considerable duplication, provided one of our members with a few "nuggets".

A quick pre-bid check had indicated that it was probably genuine 1930s unsorted kiloware and, whilst it contained a large proportion of slogan cancels, the good clear circular datestamps had not all been removed. However, there was no time for a more thorough examination.

Upon securing the Lot, detailed examination revealed a very rusty pin which had stained a few stamps, one or two worm holes and a few British stamps of the

early 1950s, indicating that this was probably the last time that the bag had been opened. The material was generally 1934/5/6 era with the non-Irish amounting to approximately 25% British stamps. Amongst the Irish there was a small amount of reasonable skeleton and rubber cancels together with a couple of six-sided late fee Dublin cancels, all on piece. The most interesting cancels were a "97" barred diamond killer of Carlow cancelling a DF D2 1d definitive (date unknown but obviously after 1922) - used as an emergency cancel?, and a Limerick parcel post rubber parcel datestamp of 23 October 1906 cancelling three QV 1d lilacs.

The real "nuggets" were to be found among the stamps themselves rather than the cancels and these included (all on piece):-

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--------|-------|----|-----------------|--------|------|--------|----------|-----|
| a) | SG 74b | DF D4 | ci | 2d | perf | 15 x | imperf | coil. | one |
| b) | SG 74a | DF D4 | ci | 2d | imperf | x | perf | 15 coil. | two |
| c) | SG 71a | DF D1 | ci | $\frac{1}{2}$ d | imperf | x | perf | 14 coil. | six |

So you see there is still "Gold in them there hills".

PS. A subsequent purchase of "Kiloware 1930s - 40s GB, Ireland etc mixture apparently collected in Ireland" contained 20% worm holes and no coil stamps. On second thoughts - BEWARE OF FOOL'S GOLD.

(The writer of this article wishes to remain anonymous).

* * * * *

THE CANCELLING MACHINES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

by O.M. Richards

STRABANE CO TYRONE This office used a Krag machine to cancel mail from at least 20 July 1949 (GM Stelfox), FE Dixon has an example dated 21 December 1949, my own earliest example is for 25 May 1951, Figure 89.



Figure 89

The die box had four lines with sets of 5 wavy lines in between. The machine was a hand operated chain driven type numbered C416167 and was used to 1962.

It was apparently stored at the Strabane office until January 1968 when it was refurbished and transferred to the Castlederg office where it is still in use.

A Universal machine was brought into use in 1962 but my own earliest example is dated 13 September 1963, Figure 90.

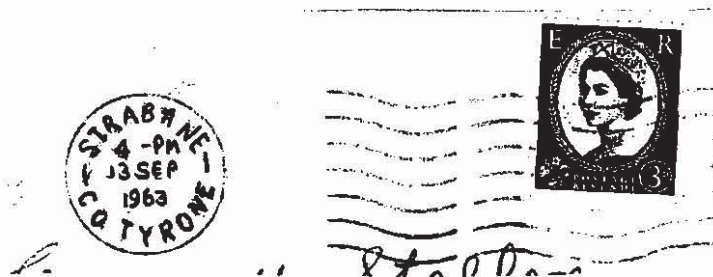


Figure 90

Slogans are in regular use, Figure 91, I have not seen PAID or OFFICIAL PAID from this office.

er Majesty's Service



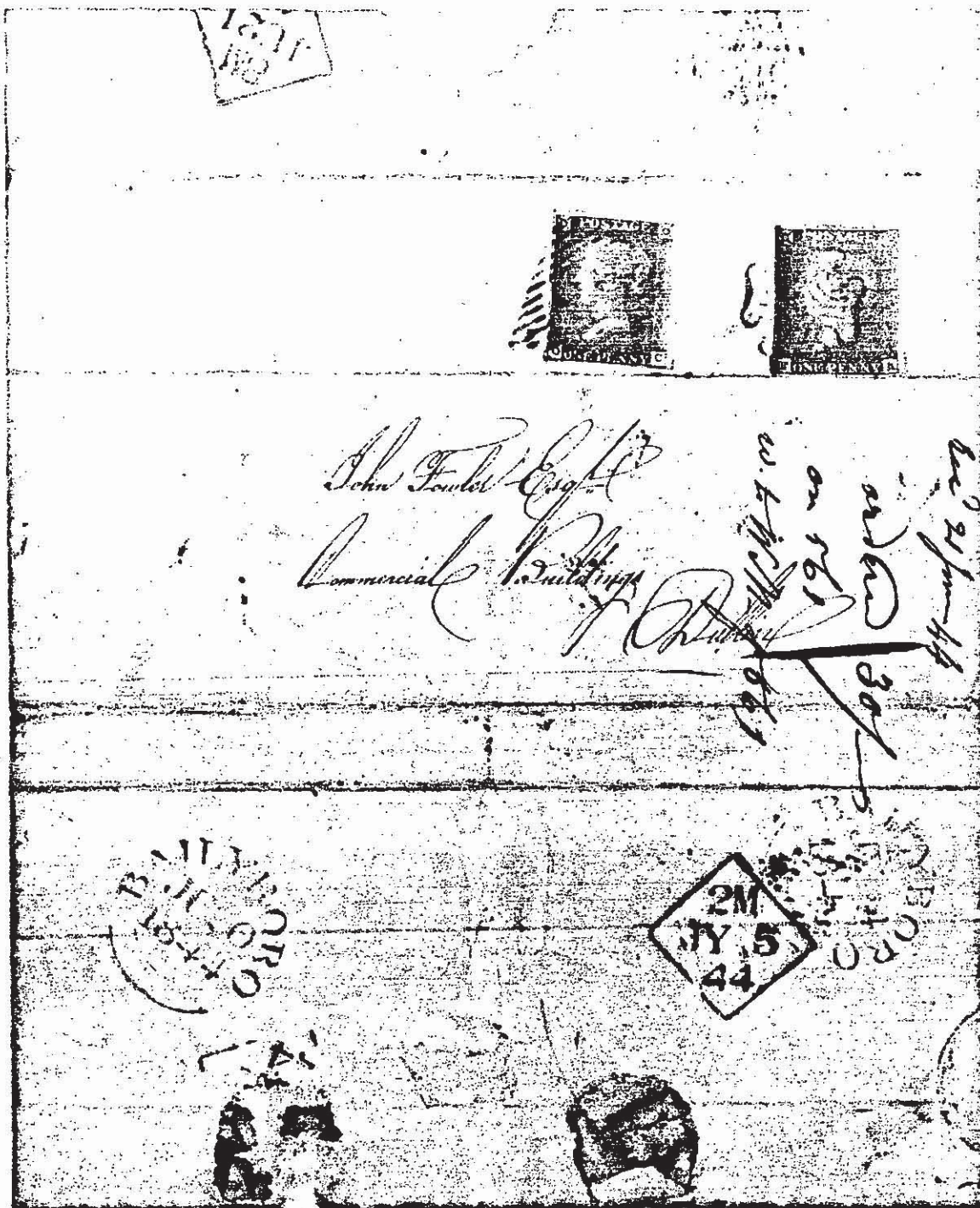
Figure 91

This completes the story of The Cancelling Machines of Northern Ireland outwith Belfast. The story of Belfast begins on Page 30 of this issue.

A CURIOSITY OF A COVER

by W.E. Davey

As I have stated before in these columns, every now and then a cover turns up that arouses questions and research. Here is another that is now safely housed in one of my albums. At first sight a very ordinary cover except that there were two separate penny-red imperfs on it. I immediately thought that the additional stamp was for forwarding -- but no re-addressing whatever. So it must be a double-weight letter incurring double postal rate -- but further examination made it obvious that that could not have been the case. The cancellations on the stamps were very unusual when taken together -- one was cancelled by a Maltese Cross and the other by the Number 26 (of Bailieborough Co Cavan) in a diamond of bars. When I examined the cancellations on the reverse I was startled to find that there were two circular datestamps of Bailieboro (sic) 20 June and 4 July 1844 -- a fortnight apart! Ditto for the Dublin diamond receipt for 21 June and 5 July. After some search I found my "thinking cap" (seldom used - had to shake off clouds of dust prior to donning it!) and sat down in strict seclusion for intense meditation and study.



It was addressed to John Fowler, Commercial Buildings, Dublin and therefore part of the Graham/Fowler Masonic "find" of over 20 years ago - it is noteworthy that almost invariably there is no actual letter, only wrappers, in this correspondence. The puzzle was the different dates and the differing cancels. Suddenly a surprising solution presented itself - could it be that John Fowler, to whom it was addressed, for some unknown reason had returned this letter under separate cover to the sender? The sender, having some Scottish blood in his veins from the settlement in Ireland of 1604, had for reasons of economy re-used the original wrapper with the addition of a second penny-red imperf when replying?

I put this theory before the doyen of Irish Postal Historians, FE Dixon, and he wrote:- ".... I agree that Mr Fowler must have returned the item to the sender who reposted it a fortnight later. The most striking feature is the demonstration of the changeover from the Maltese Cross to the numbered cancellers. The latest crosses I have are 21 June and the earliest numbers 22 June 1844".

In other words, between 20 June and 4 July 1844 the canceller of Bailieborough (to use the modern spelling) was changed from a Maltese Cross to the Number 26 in a diamond of bars. I do not think for a moment that the changeover took place in all offices on the same date - that would be too much efficiency to expect 140 years ago - but I am pretty certain that it took place over a period of time, and that can only be determined if others will search through their collections and note the latest dates for Maltese Cross cancels and the earliest for the 1844 numbers. My own latest Maltese Cross cancel is that of Cavan town for 24 June and, like F.E.D., my earliest numbered cancel is for 21 June (Ashbourne). My other early number in bars is 304 of Lisburn for 5 July 1844.

(NB What did this "curiosity of a cover" cost me? All I will say is that the vendor "hadn't a clue!!").

- Notes:-
1. Dublin Diamond "8M JU 21 44" in red.
 2. Dublin Diamond "2M JY 5 44" in red.
 3. CDS "BAILYBORO JU 20 1844" in black.
 4. CDS "BAILYBORO JY 4 1844" in black.
 5. Adhesive stamps cancelled by 26 in Diamond and Maltese Cross.
 6. Annotation in manuscript on righthand side of wrapper:-
"Recd 21 June 44 - ordered 30/- on 561 - W to WM of 561".
561 is, I presume, Lodge Number.
WM Worshipful Master.
W? Might mean "Warrant" and hence return to sender.

* * * * *

POST OFFICE REMOVAL The former Harcourt Road sub-office, which moved to South Richmond Street about 1982, has moved again to the opposite side of the street and has a new pillar-box bearing the An Post logo.

RHOMBOID CANCELLATIONS I can add another to the list of rhomboid handstamps which were used into the 20th century, 51 at Dunmorris (Co Roscommon). Date not clear but probably 1902.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK I am puzzled by the Savings Bank, now operated by An Post. They are using An Post envelopes with postage prepaid but are passing them through a metering machine (HF 14001) showing 30p postage, an impossible amount on the current scales.

REVIEW Bill Kane's "Undated Namestamps of Ireland 1823-1860", handbook No 6 published by the FAI in Germany but printed in Ireland, was available at the IPC's Dublin AGM and sees the completion of many years' effort. It will be very useful but there are many misprints and names not in alphabetical order.

F.E.D.

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