

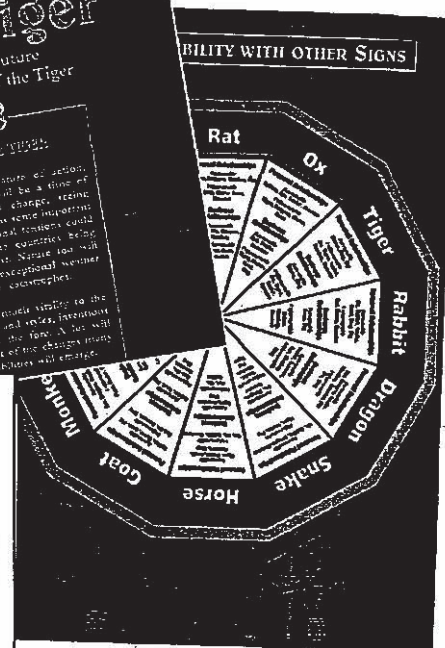
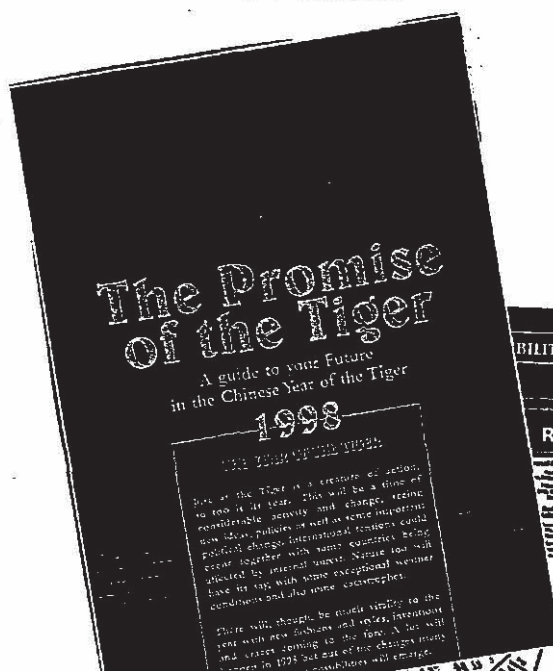


Volume
1998

Irish Philately

THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH PHILATELIC CIRCLE

Issue No
1 / MARCH



THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE YEAR - LOVE GREETING STAMPS [ISSUE DATE - January 26th]. THE THREE STAMPS, (YEAR OF THE TIGER) MINIATURE SHEET AND THE LUNAR PRESENTATION PACK. WITH THE LATTER, AS THE COLLECTORS NEWS ADVISES, ONE CAN 'UNRAVEL WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 1998' AND 'CHECK COMPATIBILITY WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY'!

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March 1998 - Issue 1/98

This issue includes the annual Irish philatelic reviews from Brian Warren and Alan Kane. My thanks to both for ensuring that the first issue of the *JOURNAL* for 1998 covers the 1997 Ireland Philatelic scene in depth.

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS - 1997

Brian Warren

Once again, there was no general increase in postal rates (except SDS rates including parcels) during 1997. Letter and printed paper rates have remained unaltered since 2 April 1991. A major revision of the rates structure will come into effect on 6 April 1998.

I have now incorporated details of first day covers and additional first day postmarks within the special/commemorative and definitive listings.

SPECIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE ISSUES



The 1997 programme, comprising 51 sheet stamps (including the special “75th Anniversary of the State” sheetlet which contains twelve separately identifiable stamps), 2 self-adhesive stamps, 4 miniature sheets (excluding the Pacific ‘97 miniature sheet which is included under the definitives listing) and 3 booklets, was issued over 11 release dates at a cost of IR£36.08. In addition to the “75th Anniversary of the State” sheetlet, the two Europa stamps were issued in sheetlet form at a cost of IR£7.60 for two sheetlets. The 1996 totals were 40 sheet stamps, 2 self-adhesive stamps, 3 miniature sheets and 3 booklets at a cost of IR£28.64; ten of the sheet stamps were issued in sheetlet form with a total cost of IR£19.52 for five sheetlets.

Date of Issue	Description		Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
28 Jan	Love Stamp (13 th Issue)	- Pair of Doves	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$	ISSP
28 Jan	Greetings Booklet (6 th Issue)		IR£2.56	Two panes - (8 x 32p)	CCP3	14 x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$	ISSP
28 Jan	Year of the Ox	- Miniature Sheet	96p	3 x 32p Greetings	CCP3	14 x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$	ISSP
18 Feb	75 th Anniversary of the State (Phase 1 - Democracy and State Institutions)	- Legislature	32p	se-tenant 1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14	ISSP
		- Defence Forces	32p		CCP3	14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14	ISSP
		- Garda Síochána	52p	se-tenant 1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14	ISSP
		- Judiciary	52p		CCP3	14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14	ISSP

Date of
Issue

Description

Cost

Plate Numbers/Notes

Paper

Perforation

Printer



Europa

An Gorta Mór

6 Mar	Fauna and Flora (20 th Issue - Marine Mammals)	- Grey Seal	28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Bottle Nosed Dolphin	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Harbour Porpoise	44p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Killer Whale	52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Miniature Sheet	IR£1.56	One set	CCP3	14¾ x 14¾	ISSP
3 Apr	75 th Anniversary of the State (Phase II - Sport, Culture, Commerce & the Arts)	- Culture	32p	se-tenant	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Sport	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Arts	52p	se-tenant	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Commerce	52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
3 Apr	Millennium of Irish Coin		32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
14 May	Europa (37 th Issue - Stories and Legends)	- The Children of Lir	32p	Sheetlets of ten	CCP3	13¾ x 14	Walsall
		- Oisín and Niamh	44p	Sheetlets of ten	CCP3	13¾ x 14	Walsall
		- self adhesive	2 x 32p	Same designs - IR£32 per box		9½ x 9½	ISSP
14 May	An Gorta Mór (The Famine)		28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
			32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
			52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
1 July	Transport in Ireland (6 th Issue - Lighthouses)	- The Baily	32p	se-tenant	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Tarbert	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Hook Head	38p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Fastnet	50p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Prestige Booklet	IR£4.64	Four panes - see below	CCP3	Various	ISSP

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
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1 July	St. Colmcille - 1400 th Death Anniversary	28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14 ³ / ₄	ISSP
	Kate O'Brien - Birth Centenary	28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 13 ³ / ₄	Walsall
	Daniel O'Connell - 150 th Death Anniversary	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 ¹ / ₄ x 14 ¹ / ₄	Walsall
	John Wesley - 250 th Anniversary of first visit to Ireland	52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 13 ³ / ₄	Walsall
27 Aug	75 th Anniversary of the State - ½d Micheál O'Cléirigh	28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 ³ / ₄ x 14	ISSP
	(Phase III - Stamps) - 9d Catholic Emancipation	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 ³ / ₄ x 14	ISSP
	on Stamps) - 1/5 Airmail	52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 ³ / ₄ x 14	ISSP
12 Sept	St. Patrick's Battalion (Mexico) - 150 th Anniversary					
	(Joint Issue) - An Post stamp	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	13 ¹ / ₂ x 13 ¹ / ₂	ISSP
	- \$3.40 Mexican stamp	38p	none		13 ¹ / ₄ x 13 ¹ / ₂	Romo
1 Oct	Bram Stoker - 150 th Birth Anniversary					
	- Dracula and bat	28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14 ³ / ₄	ISSP
	- Dracula with Lucy	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14 ³ / ₄	ISSP
	- Dracula rising from coffin	38p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 ³ / ₄ x 14	ISSP
	- Dracula and wolf	52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 ³ / ₄ x 14	ISSP
	- Mars Miniature sheet	32p	32p stamp design	CCP3	14 x 14 ³ / ₄	ISSP
	- Miniature sheet	IR£1.50	one of each value	CCP3	14 ³ / ₄ x 14 ³ / ₄	ISSP
18 Nov	Christmas (27th Issue)					
	- The Holy Family	28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14 ³ / ₄	ISSP
	- The Holy Family	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14 ³ / ₄	ISSP
	- The Holy Family	52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14 ³ / ₄	ISSP
	- Booklet (self-adhesive - Christmas tree)	IR£5.32	(20 x 28p - one free stamp)		9 x 10	ISSP
6 Dec	75 th Anniversary of the State (Phase IV)					
	- G.P.O. Dublin plus 2d Map stamp	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 ³ / ₄ x 14	ISSP
	- Sheetlet (12 x 32p)	IR£3.84	all twelve designs	CCP3	14 ³ / ₄ x 14	ISSP



Printers and Sheet Format: All stamps were litho printed by Irish Security Stamp Printing Limited (ISSP) or Walsall Security Printing Limited (Walsall). Except as indicated below, all full sized sheets contain 50 stamps in the usual 10 x 5 or 5 x 10 format with plate numbers at top left ("A" or "B"), colour checks at top right and imprint at bottom left.

First Day Covers: FDC's cost 27p (an increase of 2p). Special covers were available for all special and commemorative issues except for the four individual stamps released on 1 July; the general purpose FDC was used for this issue. Different FDC's were used for each phase of the "75th Anniversary of the State" set. As referred to below, special arrangements applied in the case of the single stamp and sheetlet issued on 6 December. The illustration on the cover for the Europa set reproduces the "Great Famine" design used on the 26p Europa stamp issued in 1982. Pictorial cancels were available for all issues.

Maximum Cards: The price of mint cards was increased by 2p to 22p per card. Sets of cards were available for the Marine Mammals, Europa, Lighthouses and Bram Stoker issues. The cards were printed by ISSP.

Love Stamp and Greetings Booklet: The two pane booklet contains eight 32p stamps in se-tenant strips of four designs. The stamps feature various farm animals and are based on characters from well known children's nursery rhymes and stories - (I) Cow Jumping Over Moon; (II) Pair of Love Doves; (III) Pig Going to Market; and (IV) Cock Crowing. Each stamp has two greetings labels attached top and bottom and the outer edges of the pane are imperforate. One stamp in each pane has an imperforate edge giving a total of five stamps in addition to the sheet issue. The make-up of each pane is as follows:-

Pane 1: 32p I; 32p II, 32p III and 32p IV (right margin imperforate);

Pane 2: 32p IV, 32p III, 32p II and 32p I (right margin imperforate).

As readers will note pane 2 reverses the order of pane 1 and thus differs from the format of prior years. Each pane is rouletted in the binding margin and stitched into the covers. Three of the designs are included in the Year of the Ox miniature sheet referred to below. Separate cancellations were used for the Love stamp and the booklet panes.

Lunar Year of the Ox Miniature Sheet: A special miniature sheet to mark the Chinese Lunar Year of the Ox was issued on the same day as the Love stamp and Greetings Booklet. The sheet contains three of the Greetings stamps - 32p II, 32p III and 32p IV (right margin imperforate). The left hand panel shows an ox and the logo for the Hong Kong '97 stamp exhibition. The Greetings cancellation was used on FDC's.

75th Anniversary of the State (Phases I & II): Both 32p and 52p values were printed se-tenant in horizontal and vertical pairs in sheets of 40 stamps. Each sheet is set out in two panes of 20 with a vertical gutter with each pane containing two columns of ten stamps giving 10 gutter pairs in each sheet, five of each design. Although not specifically referred to by An Post in their publicity literature, several designs include identifiable artists/athletes. In the second set issued on 3 April, Linda Martin is the singer featured on one of the 32p values; the second 32p includes Sonia O'Sullivan (athlete), Alan Gough (goalkeeper with League of Ireland soccer club, Shelbourne) and a scene from the 1995 All Ireland Hurling Final between Offaly and Clare. The 52p stamp featuring members of the Garda Síochána shows, according to a report in the "Irish Independent" of 19 February, Garda Damien Hogan (Skerries, Co. Dublin), Garda Marie Egan (Ardfert, Co. Kerry) and Garda Brendan Walsh (Rathmines, Dublin). All are attached to the Garda Press Office in Dublin where photographs for the stamp were taken by Q Design.



75th Anniversary Phase IV

12 Stamp Sheetlet @ £3.84

50 Sheets per Pack

Total Value £192.00

75th Anniversary of the State (Phases III and IV): All four stamps were issued in the regular 50 stamp format with no gutter. There was no official first day of issue service for the single 32p stamp issued on 6 December featuring the G.P.O., Dublin and the 2d map stamp. However, all account holders with a standing order for FDC's received a complimentary cover bearing the final 32p stamp and cancelled with a Baile Átha Cliath first day cancel with the "75" design illustrated above. It was not possible to purchase additional or unserviced covers. Collectors could, however, hand in their own personal covers for cancellation with the special first day postmark. No pictorial first day postmark was available at any other location. A special event postmark was available in Cork on the issue date which included the same "75" design - see under Exhibition Souvenirs, Postmarks and Cachets below. The official cover had an overall background design printed on the cover featuring the G.P.O. Dublin as well as reproductions of earlier definitive stamps. This is the first time I can recall the use of an overall printed design on an FDC.

75th Anniversary of the State - Sheetlet: All twelve designs in the series were re-produced as 32p denominations in a sheetlet of twelve stamps which were on sale for a limited period to 31 December 1997. Six of the stamps in the sheetlet were already issued in normal sheet form as 32p denominations; the remaining six stamps were previously issued as 28p or 52p denominations, thus giving six new stamps viz. the Garda Síochána, Judiciary, Arts, Commerce, ½d Micheál O'Cléirigh and 1/5 Airmail designs. The stamps are set out in a se-tenant format within a dark blue surround. As a result, all stamps can be differentiated from the sheet issue as any individual stamp taken from the sheetlet has dark blue tips to the perforations on at least one side. A total of 75,000 sheetlets were printed.



Fauna and Flora (Marine Mammals): The individual stamps within the miniature sheet have a common perf. (14 $\frac{3}{4}$) due to the mix of horizontal and vertical formats and thus differ from the individual sheet stamps.

Millennium of Irish Coin: Keen eyed numismatists noted that the reproduction of the silver penny on the 32p stamp included the head of King Sitric facing right and not left as on the actual coin (and first day postmark). Special replica coins were also available and An Post produced a different cover incorporating both the coin and the stamp - cost: IR£4.95. The stamp was cancelled with the same FDC cancel as used on ordinary covers.

Europa (Stories and Legends): The sheet stamps were litho printed by Walsall Security Printing Limited in the usual sheetlet format comprising ten stamps with illustrated side panels. The side panels are imperforate, all other margins are perforated. No plate numbers, imprint or colour controls appear on issued sheetlets. As announced in advance by An Post, a quantity of both values was delivered trim finished to an incorrect size with narrow margins. The standard sheetlets have an overall measurement of 153mm x 177.5mm whereas trimmed sheetlets measure 142mm x 157mm. Supplies of both types were supplied for both philatelic and postal use. Individual stamps do not differ although by reference to the author's own copies trimmed sheetlets of the 32p value are slightly bluer in appearance; however, I'm not aware if this is a constant feature.



The self-adhesive set was produced by ISSP. As usual, the overall size is smaller than the sheet stamps - 37.5mm x 26mm and is perf. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$. The roll of 100 stamps plus two labels is split into six strips of seventeen with the last two strips containing sixteen stamps plus one of the reminder labels. The reminder labels are in black. Sold in strips of two by the bureau. The Dakota logo plus a number (nos: 1 and 2 seen to date) is on one of the bottom inner flaps; the second flap has the reference 024844. The box illustrates the 32p value - "The Children of Lir".



Transport in Ireland (Lighthouses) - Sheet Issues: The 32p stamps were printed se-tenant in horizontal and vertical pairs in sheets of 40 stamps. Each sheet is set out in two panes of 20 with a vertical gutter with each pane containing two columns of ten stamps giving 10 gutter pairs in each sheet, five of each design. The remaining values were printed in the usual 50 stamp format without a gutter.

Transport in Ireland (Lighthouses) - Prestige Booklet: There are four illustrated panes of stamps and eight pages of bilingual text and/or photographs; the text/photographs also extend to inside the front and back covers. Both the front and back cover features Youghal lighthouse. The panes contain a total of thirteen stamps made-up as follows:-

- Pane 1: Three stamps in a horizontal se-tenant strip - 32p (The Baily), 32p (Tarbert) and 32p (The Baily) with a background map of Howth Head, location of The Baily lighthouse;
- Pane 2: 38p and 50p in a vertical pair with a background map of the West Cork coast location of the Fastnet lighthouse;
- Pane 3: Set of four values in a mixed format block with a background map of the Hook peninsula; and
- Pane 4: Se-tenant pair of 32p (Tarbert) plus se-tenant pair of 32p (The Baily) with a background map of Tarbert Island in the Shannon Estuary.

The individual stamps within pane 3 have a common perf. ($14\frac{3}{4}$) due to the mix of horizontal and vertical formats and thus differ from the individual sheet stamps. As a result all four values exist with perf. $14\frac{3}{4}$. In addition, the two stamps in pane 2 (38p and 50p) are also perf. $14\frac{3}{4}$ which suggests that both panes 2 and 3 were perforated in the same operation. All panes are rouletted at left and stitched into the covers. A series of cards which featured all major Irish lighthouses including the four depicted on the stamps was produced by John Eagle, a photographer based in Co. Cork. There were two different cards of the Fastnet lighthouse. The cards were normally sold as a complete set but certain individual cards (including those depicted on the stamps) were sold as individual cards by the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. The Hook Head card (No: 15) was wrongly captioned "Co. Waterford" and gave incorrect historical information. A revised card (No: 15A) was subsequently issued with revised wording and the correct geographic caption of "Co. Wexford".

St. Colmcille: This was one of two late additions to the 1997 stamp programme. There was considerable public pressure to issue an Irish stamp following the issue of two stamps (26p and 37p) by Royal Mail in March 1997 commemorating the same saint - known as St. Columba in Britain.



A special first day postmark was available at a temporary post office set up in Durrow, Co. Offaly, where the saint founded one of his monasteries. The old style two line cachet "First Day of Issue/Lá a Chéad Éisiúna" was also applied to covers posted at the office. I have noted use of the postmark on the Daniel O'Connell stamp issued on the same day. A newspaper report (Irish Independent of 10 July 1997) stated that 5,000 postcards were posted from Durrow; however, I have seen only plain covers and the report did not indicate if the postcards were illustrated.

Kate O'Brien/Daniel O'Connell/John Wesley Issues: All three stamps were printed in the usual 50 stamp format. The 52p John Wesley stamp measures 28mm x 44.5mm. In addition to the usual sheet markings, all three values have the Walsall logo printed twice on each sheet in the top margin above stamps 4 and 7.



St. Patrick's Battalion - Mexican Army: This was a joint issue with the Mexican Post Office who issued a similar stamp (\$3.40) on the same day. Both stamps were designed by Lorenzo Rafael and incorporate the Clonmacnoise Cross. An Post sold the Irish FDC complete with both stamps and an Irish (Dublin) cancel for 97p. A Mexican cancel was also available for use with the Mexican stamp on plain covers; the Mexican cancel was not available on the Irish FDC. The Irish stamp measures 28mm x 44.5mm and is perf. 13½; it was distributed in sheets of 50 comprising two panes of 25 (5 x 5) with gutter with the usual sheet markings.

The slightly smaller Mexican stamp (24mm x 40.5mm) was printed in the same but somewhat deeper colours and incorporates the name of the designer and the Mexican printer (Romo) and is perf. 13¼ x 13½. It was distributed in sheets of 50 (5 rows of 10 stamp) with no gutter. Sheets available at the philatelic counter in Dublin were imperforate through the left margin; all other margins perforated. Apart from thin lines in all margins, there were no sheet markings. A separately applied number in black (probably a sheet number) was applied on the gummed side of the lower left margin.

This issue was a further late addition to the 1997 stamp programme. An Post informed collectors of the issue by mailing out a large postcard (211mm x 147mm) complete with pre-printed stamp - see under Miscellaneous Items.



Bram Stoker - 150th Birth Anniversary: The An Post FDC was printed on buff coloured paper. This is the first time that I can recall the use of paper other than white for an official first day cover. The individual stamps within the single set miniature sheet bleed into the surrounding design and, as a result, have a grey rather than the white border which is found on the sheet stamps. In addition, the stamps in the miniature sheet have a common perf. (14¼ x 14¼) due to the mix of horizontal and vertical formats which also differentiates them from the individual sheet stamps.

The special "Mars" miniature sheet incorporates a single 32p stamp with the regular perforation of 14 x 14¼ but, once again, the design bleeds into the surrounding design. The individual stamp is thus readily distinguishable from the equivalent value from sheets or from the single set miniature sheet. The miniature sheet incorporates the "Mars" logo and was used as part of an in-store promotion by the confectionery firm of their fun size chocolate bar packs. Despite regular visits to several supermarkets at the time, I never saw evidence of the promotion. I understand from one collector that the purchase of two fun size packs of Mars products entitled you to a special plastic carrier bag (available in-store) which contained a free miniature sheet - the packs retail at circa IR£1.70-IR£2.00 per pack.

One further connected item was promoted by the Voyager Club and was available either from their stand at Stampá or by post. A set of six plastic coated mini-cards (89mm x 63mm) was sold for IR£2. Four of the cards reproduced the individual stamps superimposed on a blow-up of the main element of the design; the fifth card reproduced the miniature sheet and the sixth featured a further Dracula image. Three cards were printed by Nicolson & Bass. Clear stamp mounts were provided for the four stamps and the Mars miniature sheet. The stamps had to be purchased separately at an additional cost of IR£1.82.

Christmas: An Post's first self-adhesive stamps in booklet form replaced the normal discount sheetlet, first introduced in 1985. Each booklet contained 20 x 28p stamps giving one free stamp per booklet, an effective discount of 5% as compared to 6.7% for a sheetlet of fifteen stamps in 1996. Each booklet contained one pane of 20 stamps, folded twice; each pane contains 2 columns of 10 stamps. No variations of significance were noted on the panes of stamps. Individual stamps measure 25mm x 30mm i.e. the same as the definitive self-adhesives. There was widespread criticism from the general public due to the difficulty in extracting individual stamps from the surrounding selvedge. The cover of the booklet varied in colour shading from dark blue to dull violet. Different qualities of paper appear to have been used for the combined cover/backing sheet which is probably one of the causes of the colour shading.



DEFINITIVES - BIRDS OF IRELAND



Date of Issue	Description	Value	Plate Numbers and Notes	Paper & Gum	Perforation
16 Jan	New Definitives - Birds of Ireland				
	Sheet Issue - Phase I				
	- Blue Tit	28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14¾ x 14
	- Robin	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14 x 14¾
	- Puffin	44p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14 x 14¾
	- Barn Owl	52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14 x 14¾
	- Greenland White-fronted Goose	IR£1	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14¾ x 14
6 Mar	£1 Booklet (1/97)	- Robin IR£1.00	3 x 32p plus 4p Heritage	CCP3	14¾ x 14
6 Mar	Self-Adhesives - ISSP				
	- Robin and Peregrine Falcon	2 x 32p	IR£32 per box of 100 (50 x 2)		9 x 9¾
Apr	Self-Adhesives - SNP Printset Cambec				
	- Robin and Peregrine Falcon	2 x 32p	IR£32 per box of 100 (50 x 2)		11½ x 11½
29 May	San Francisco - Pacific '97				
	- Freshwater Duck	IR£2.00	Miniature Sheet format	CCP3	14 x 14
27 Aug	Sheet Issue - Phase II				
	- Magpie	1p	1A1A/1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾
	- Gannet	2p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾
	- Corncrake	4p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾
	- Kingfisher	10p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾
	- Lapwing	20p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾
	- Shelduck	IR£5.00	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14
Oct	Reprints on CCP3 paper				
	- Robin	28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾
	- Blue Tit	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾
6 Dec	£1 Booklet (2/97)	- Peregrine Falcon IR£1.00	3 x 32p plus 4p Corncrake	CCP3	14¾ x 14

Sheet Issues: A new series featuring Irish Birds was launched in January 1997. It is the first set of definitives to utilise full colour printing for all values. All values are double pane printings with both "A" and "B" sheets as before but the format/size has been altered for both low and high values. The low values (1p to 52p) measure 27mm x 24mm (28p - horizontal format) or 24mm x 27mm (32p, 44p and 52p - vertical format) and are issued in sheets of 100 (10 x 10); the IR£1 and IR£5 values which are in vertical format measures 27mm x 48mm and are issued in sheets of 50 (5 rows of 10). There are no gutters. The positioning of the marginal markings is the same for both low and high values irrespective of format and for both "A" and "B" sheets - plate numbers in top margin at left, colour controls at top right and imprint in bottom margin at left. This is the same layout as on the majority of special/commemorative issues. The CCP1 gum varies and can be found either mottled green or near white with slight blue tinge. The initial five values (28p, 32p, 44p, 52p and IR£1) issued in January 1997 were printed on CCP1 paper. The 28p and 32p values have now appeared on CCP3 paper with the same plate numbers (circa October 1997). The second phase of five values were printed on CCP3 paper.

A special first day of issue cancellation was produced on behalf of the conservation organisation "Birdwatch Ireland" to coincide with the first phase of the definitives. In strict postal terms it is a cachet given that there is no reference to a postal town or city within the cancellation.

IR£1 Booklet (Robin): The booklet was litho printed by ISSP in the same layout/format as the previous series except that the designs are all vertical format. The binding margin is at the top of the pane with a narrow selvedge at foot. The pane cover features a robin and the content is 3 x 32p Robin plus 4p Dunamase Food Vessel from the Heritage and Treasures series. All stamps measure 21mm x 24mm and are perf. 14¾ x 14. Printed on CCP3 paper. As the overall size of the booklet and thus the stamps remains the same in order to fit the dispensing machines, the stamps differ in size from the equivalent sheet values. There are two new identifiable stamps - 32p Robin imperf. left and 32p Robin imperf. right (both CCP3). The 4p imperf. left on CCP3 paper was first issued in booklet form in 1990; however the colour is somewhat more intense than the previous issue.

IR£1 Booklet (Peregrine Falcon): The cover reproduces the "Peregrine Falcon". The vertical four stamp pane contains 3 x 32p of the Peregrine Falcon plus 4p Corncrake giving three new booklet stamps - 32p Peregrine Falcon imperf. left, 32p Peregrine Falcon imperf. right and 4p Corncrake, imperf. right - all perf. 14¾ x 14 and printed on CCP3 paper.

Self-Adhesives: The initial rolls issued on 6 March were produced by ISSP. This was the first appearance of the Peregrine Falcon design which is not available in regular sheet format, but no first day cancel was provided. The stamps measure 25mm x 40mm and are perf. 9 x 9¾ i.e. the same as 32p Brighter Collar printings except the designs are in vertical format. The rolls are reeled vertically with top delivery commencing with the Peregrine Falcon design. The waste paper around the stamps was not removed as is now the case for all ISSP self-adhesive printings. The joins are every 20th stamp with the usual 10 and 20 reminder labels (all in black); There is a yellow strip at the join between stamps 60 and 61. The box only illustrates the Peregrine Falcon design and the wording "Produced by Irish Security Stamp Printing Limited" can be clearly seen on the top "C" flap without opening the box. The Dakota logo plus a number appear on the inner bottom flaps (numbers 1, 4, 5, 8 and 9 seen to date). The stamps are sold in strips of two by the bureau as well as complete rolls.



ISSP



Prinset Cambec

The Australian printing of the same rolls were not available until April (earliest date noted - 16 April in Galway). The philatelic bureau stated in 'Collectors News' (4/97) an issue date of 6 March (as for the ISSP printing) but they were not available at the Dublin bureau counter on that date. Can any member confirm an earlier date than 16 April ? Although the stamps are of the same size as the ISSP printing there are several other identifiable differences:-

- the simulated line type perforations are $11\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$;
- the waste paper has been removed from around the stamps (as in all previous Australian printings);
- the design element bleeds into the margins and in particular the birds are larger in size;
- the shading of the colours differ, particularly the redbreast of the Robin ; and
- the Irish/English inscriptions of Robin/Spideog and Fábhcún gorm/Peregrine Falcon are smaller.

The words "Sprintpak - SNP" plus a black box are printed on the backing strip of each stamp in similar manner as the previous Australian printing. The rolls are reeled vertically with top delivery commencing with the Peregrine Falcon design. There are four coils joins with strips of 25/25/26/24 + 2 reminder labels (in black). The box is similar to the Irish printing except that:-

- the reproduced stamp design is larger;
- the shading of the bird is darker;
- a number appears on one of the inner bottom flaps (number 12 seen to date) but no logo on the second flap;
- the inscription "*Produced by Irish Security Stamp Printing Limited*" appears on the top "C" flap but is hidden by the "D" flap and thus cannot be seen until the box is opened. This would appear to indicate that whereas the stamps are printed in Australia, ISSP arrange for the printing of the boxes and presumably place the rolls within the boxes. At the time of writing the Australian printing is only sold in complete rolls by the bureau.

The ISSP definitive self-adhesives are more commonly seen on commercial mail and, therefore, presumably they are responsible for the majority of the printings.

Pacific '97 Miniature Sheet - IR£2 (Pintail): This major FIP World Stamp Exhibition took place in San Francisco (29 May - 8 June). A special exhibition miniature sheet containing the IR£2 'Birds' definitive Pintail design was produced for the show. This is the first time that a definitive value has appeared in miniature sheet format. The Pintail stamp has yet to be issued in sheet format and as a result the stamp was available on FDC complete with special insert and cancelled with a San Francisco "Lá A Chéad Éisiúna" postmark. The 29 May cancel incorporates an illustration of the 'Golden Gate' bridge. This was the only first day cancel available. A special cachet in similar design together with a special card illustrating the sheet was also available - see under Exhibition Souvenirs, Postmarks and Cachets.

DEFINITIVES - HERITAGE AND TREASURES

52p - ISSP Printing: I can now confirm that plate 1A1A as well as plate 1B1B of the CCP1 printing exists.

IR£5 - ISSP Printing: In October 1997, the IR£5 value was noted on CCP1 paper (plates 1A1A and 1B1B). Presumably this was printed prior to the issue of the new Shelduck design in August 1997. Can anybody confirm an earlier date ?

20p - Enschedé Printing: In a prior report, I referred to imperforate as well as the usual perforated margins on certain values of the Enschedé printings. Plate 1A1A sheets of the 20p value were already reported with either perforated or imperforate top margin. The top margin incorporates the plate numbers (top left) and colour circles (top right). I can now report that plate 1B1B sheets also exist in both formats and as a result the plate block exists both with perforated and imperforate top margin.

Many post offices are still selling values from the "Heritage and Treasures" series even though there is often an equivalent "Birds of Ireland" stamp. New finds can still be found. I would welcome details of any new items noted by members.

FRAMA LABELS

During December, whilst travelling through Dublin Airport, I obtained examples of Frama labels from both of the machines (01 and 02) situated in the airport. Subsequent examination under U.V. light revealed that a different paper appears to be in use. The paper used since introduction of the current series in 1992 has a yellow-green reaction under U.V. light whereas the current paper has a yellow reaction. Subsequently I have seen examples obtained from the 002 machine in May 1997 on the new paper. Labels recently obtained from the Bray machine are printed on similar paper with the yellow reaction but Sligo labels were on the older yellow-green paper. The Waterford machine was out of order as of February 1998. As yet, I have not been able to check examples from the remaining five machines at Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Killarney and Limerick.

PRESENTATION BOOKS AND PACKS

16 January - Definitives (Phase I): The initial set of five stamps was also available in a presentation pack which included the Ducks miniature sheet issued in September 1996. Cost: IR£4.50 - face value: IR£4.22 .

6 March - Marine Mammals : The miniature sheet was also available in a presentation pack. Cost: IR£3.00 - face value IR£1.56.

27 August - Definitives (Phase II): The second definitive presentation pack contains one of each of the six sheet values issued on the same day plus a pair of the 32p self-adhesives (ISSP printing) together with the Pacific '97 miniature sheet. Cost: IR£9.00 - total face value of IR£8.01. At the time of issue of the pack, the Pacific '97 miniature sheet was "sold out" and was only available on purchase of the complete pack.

1 October - Dracula Presentation Pack: The single set miniature sheet from the Bram Stoker set was included in the pack. Cost: IR£3 - face value IR£1.50.

1 October - The "Horror" Collection: A special "Horror Collection" pack included the Bram Stoker set as well as the Horror stamps issued by Canada, G.B. and U.S.A. One stamp in each set of four had a Dracula connection - 45c Vampire (Canada), 26p Dracula face (G.B.) and 29c Belalugosi as Dracula (U.S.A.). Romania's Europa set for 1997 was also on the Dracula theme but this was not included in the pack. The special pack also included a board game and a Dracula poster. Cost: IR£8.95.

6 December - 75th Anniversary of the State Presentation Pack - Sheetlet: The sheetlet in the presentation pack was spot gummed to the card and cancelled with the same first day postmark as used for the individual 32p stamp issued on the same day. Cost: IR£5.00 - face value IR£3.84.

6 December - Year Pack: The Year Pack contains one each of the special and commemorative stamps issued during the year, including both the sheet and self-adhesives for the Europa set, a pair of the Christmas self-adhesive (cut from a normal booklet with backing) and the Mexican St. Patrick's Battalion stamp, but excludes the Greetings booklet panes, miniature sheets and 75th Anniversary of the State sheetlet - a total of 44 stamps with a face value of IR£16.32. Cost: IR£16.50.

6 December - Year Book: Each book contains all special and commemoratives issues as per the year pack together with the 75th Anniversary of the State sheetlet, three of the four miniature sheets (Year of the Ox, Marine Mammals and the full set Dracula sheet, but not the "Mars" sheet) plus one of the Greetings booklet panes - total face value of IR£25.46. A numbered black print of the 32p stamp issued on 6 December featuring the G.P.O. and the 2d Map stamp is also included in the book. Total printing of 3,000 standard copies (1995/96: 3,000) and 120 (1995/6: 130) half-bound leather editions. The books cost IR£30 and IR£100 respectively.

POSTAL STATIONERY AND GREETING CARDS



postcards



envelope

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Notes	Printer
20 Feb	St. Patrick's Day			
	- set of five prepaid postcards	39p	per card	Colorprint
	- set of five greetings cards with prepaid envelopes	65p	per card/envelope	Colorprint
June (?)	"A" Envelope - new printing - see notes	36p	inner lining altered - two subtypes	Trimfold
Oct (?)	"A" Envelope - earlier printing on white paper	36p	blue inner lining (as before)	Trimfold
24 Oct	Oireachtas '97 (Béal Feirste) - postcard	-	no charge	Printstone
7 Nov	Stampa Exhibition Cards - set of three	32p	per card	BCR Press

In addition to the above listed items which were generally available, An Post also sent collectors on their mailing list in the New York/New Jersey area a special postcard to publicise their attendance at the Postage Stamp Mega Event show in New York (see under Exhibition Souvenirs for further details). A second postcard was produced by the philatelic bureau to publicise the St Patrick's Battalion stamp. Finally a special postcard was produced by the FAI with the permission of An Post. Further details of the latter two items are included under Miscellaneous Items.

St. Patrick's Day Cards: Five postcards were available featuring (1) Country scene and rainbow with shamrock in silver bowl in foreground; (2) The Brian Boru Harp; (3) Peace and Celtic motif; (4) Stonechat (bird) on gorse bush with background of Croagh Patrick; and (5) Flying letters and ribbons ("Thinking of You"). All cards bear a misspelling on the reverse "Bennachtaí" should read "Beannachtaí". The Postage Paid imprint is the same R.J. King design first used in 1995 except that the "Postage Paid" indicator is in a different typeface as compared to prior years. All cards feature the new Bord Fáilte logo of "heads joined" (see illustration). The new logo has been subject to widespread criticism within Ireland and subsequently, a revised Shamrock design was re-introduced alongside the new logo.

Five greetings cards complete with prepaid envelope bearing the same R.J. King stamp design in slightly larger format (overall size 20.5mm x 39mm) were also available. The cards feature (1) St. Patrick (stained glass window);

(2) Candle and Shamrock; (3) Celtic Motifs (4) Shamrock, flower and ribbon; and (5) Flying bird with greetings. The typeface used for the "Postage Paid" indicator is the same as prior years and thus differs from the postcard design.

None of the designs (postcards or greeting cards) were used in prior years. The usual green first day of issue cancel was available from the philatelic bureau for use on both cards and envelopes. Although a large number of the cards are sent overseas and the cost of the cards includes airmail postage, neither the postcards or the envelopes bear a pre-printed airmail label which became normal practice for all overseas airmail as from 1 January - see note under Miscellaneous Items.



Roman "a"



weave pattern



modern "a"

"A" Envelope: In June 1997, I first noted a new printing of this envelope. The "Postage Paid" imprint has been reset and the lettering now incorporates a roman "a". The previous printings were with a modern "a". The envelope is printed on white paper and the former "all blue" inner lining has been altered to a blue "weave" type pattern (as illustrated). Initial supplies were noted with the conventional type of folding whereby the back of the envelope was gummed down over the side flaps. Subsequently, the same envelope was noted with the side flaps gummed down over the back of the envelope.

In October, the former printing with "all blue" inner lining appeared on white paper; the initial supplies which were first noted in 1995 were on cream paper. The imprint has a modern "a" as per the cream paper printing.

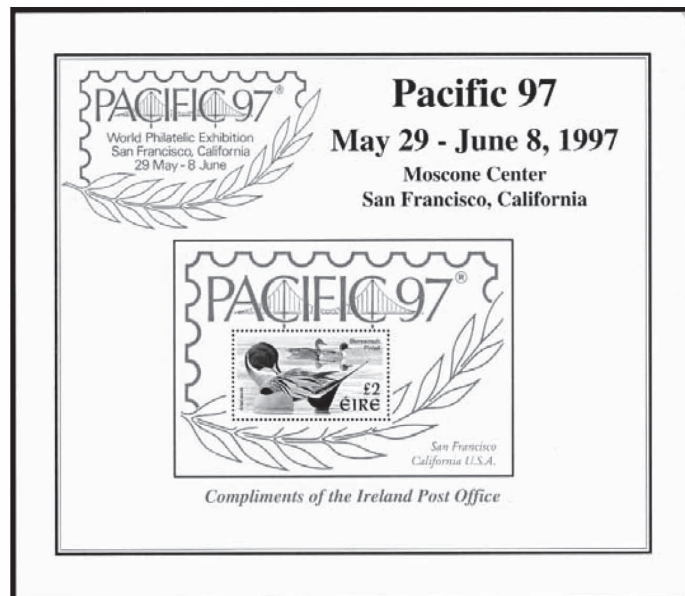
Oireachtas Card: The 1997 Oireachtas was held in Belfast (24 October to 2 November). The undenominated card features a firework display over a dolmen.

Exhibition Cards: A set of three exhibition cards were issued by An Post at Stampa '97 - full details are set out under Exhibition Souvenirs, Postmarks and Cachets.

Plastic Registered Envelope: This envelope which was released in 1996 and referred to in my article last year is printed by Globophan.

EXHIBITION SOUVENIRS, POSTMARKS AND CACHETS

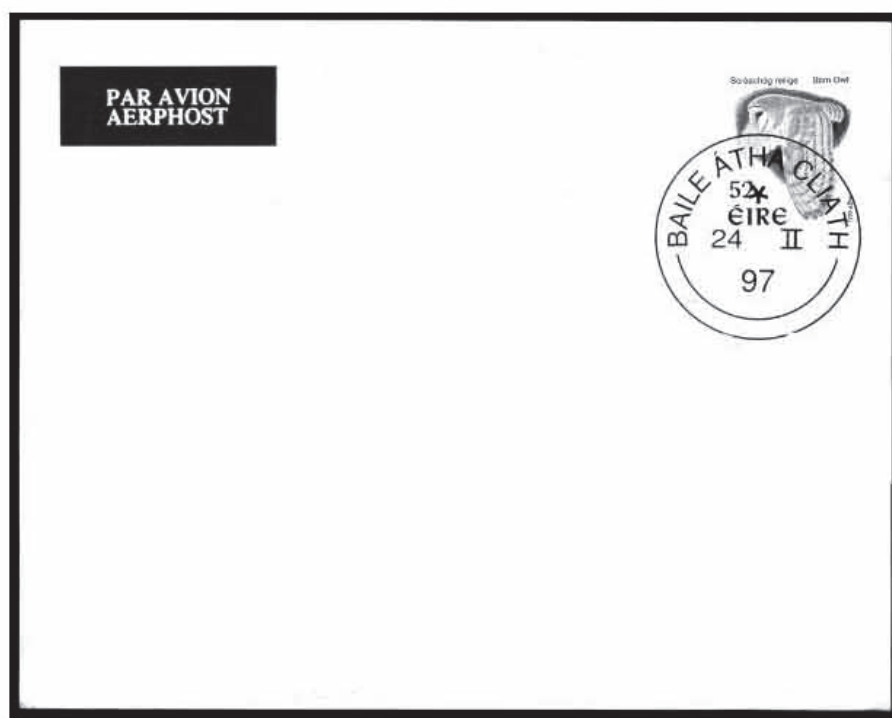
SOUVENIRS AND CACHETS - OVERSEAS



Pacific '97 (San Francisco, 29 May to 8 June): In addition to the miniature sheet and special first day cachet referred to under the Definitive listings, a general cachet with the same design was available. A special card measuring 210mm x 179mm was also distributed by An Post at the show. The card illustrated the IR£2 miniature sheet and it was thus possible to affix the sheet and obtain either of the show cachets on the card. The card was not available from the bureau. A special postcard advertising the event was sent to collectors in the San Francisco area – see next page.



Other Cachets: Special cachets were also available for **Hong Kong '97** (12 to 16 February), **Philatelia '97** (Cologne, 18 to 20 April), **Stamp '97** (London, 24 to 27 April) and **Mockba '97** (Moscow, 17 to 26 October). The "Year of the Ox" miniature sheet included under the Commemorative and Special issues listing incorporated the Hong Kong '97 logo but was issued in advance of the show. The Stamp '97 cachet was not available from the bureau but was used at the show.



Postage Stamp Mega Event (New York, 13 to 16 March): In advance of the New York show, the philatelic bureau posted out a specially printed card to collectors on their mailing list resident in the New York/New Jersey area inviting them to the show. The “stamp” on the card was a full colour pre-printed 52p definitive (“barn owl”) from the new Birds of Ireland series which was “postmarked” with a pre-printed bureau CDS cancel. Collectors who surrendered this desirable stationery item at the An Post booth received a large card (217mm x 180mm) illustrating the first five stamps in the definitive series. This was the only way the card illustrating the definitives could be obtained. There was no cachet or general souvenir for this show. Neither item was available from the philatelic bureau in Dublin. A similar card with the same owl design and printed postmark (16.V.97) was used to advertise Pacific '97 held in San Francisco as referred to on the previous page.

Other Overseas Exhibitions: A special cachet was made available for **Norwex '97** (Oslo, 16 - 21 April) but no cachet was subsequently returned to the philatelic bureau and I cannot confirm its actual use. An Post were also represented at **Shanghai '97** (19 to 23 November) and **Delhi '97** (15 to 22 December). Cachets may have been available but, to date, they have yet to be returned to the bureau in Dublin. There was no cachet for **Stampex** (London, 22 to 26 January) in 1997.

SOUVENIRS, POSTMARKS AND CACHETS - REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Philatelic facilities were available at all of the Irish shows referred to below. All overprints on booklet panes and miniature sheets are in black unless otherwise indicated. Numbers printed and printer details given, if known.

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Number Printed	Printer
8 Mar	IPTA/Collectors' Road Show, Dundalk - Irish T.T. Winners miniature sheet with o/p	IR£2.00	400	Mahons
23 Mar	IPTA/Collectors' Road Show, Limerick - Year of the Ox miniature sheet with o/p	IR£2.50	200	Mahons
12 Apr	IPTA/Collectors' Road Show, Dublin ("Stampania") - Marine Mammals miniature sheet with o/p	IR£3.00	500	Mahons
6 Sept	IPTA/Collectors' Road Show, Sligo - Lighthouse booklet pane 1 with o/p	IR£2.50	400	Mahons
21 Sept	IPTA/Collectors' Road Show, Tralee - Lighthouses booklet pane 2 with o/p	IR£2.50	400	Mahons
11 Oct	Cork Philatelic Society - Annual Exhibition - Booklet	IR£2.00	150	
28 Oct	Stampa '97 - Lighthouses booklet pane 1 with o/p - Lighthouses booklet pane 3 with o/p - Lighthouses booklet pane 4 with o/p - Lighthouses booklet pane 2 with o/p	IR£15.00 IR£2.00	Members' Souvenirs Ordinary	Mahons Mahons Mahons Mahons
7 Nov	Stampa '97 Large postcard - Exhibition handbook/catalogue - Norwegian Post Office postcard	40p IR£1.00 IR£1.50	300 3,000	Reprint All Print & Design
23 Nov	IPTA/An Post Collectors' Road Show, Galway - Lighthouse booklet pane 3 with o/p in red	IR£2.50	400	Mahons
6 Dec	Cork Stamp Show - Booklet	IR£1.00	250	Raven Stamps

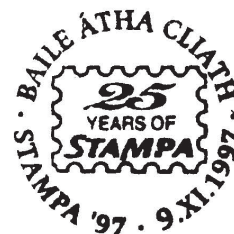


IPTA/Collectors' Road Shows: The Dublin show (also known as "Stampania" or "Spring Stampania '97") was a two day event and was held at the Riverside Centre, Dublin 2. The provincial shows were all one day shows and were held at Imperial Hotel, Dundalk, Jury's Hotel, Limerick, Silver Swan Hotel, Sligo, Brandon Hotel, Tralee and Great Southern (Eyre Square), Galway. Special postmarks as well as souvenirs were available for all shows. All souvenirs were numbered. The Dublin and Tralee cancels were new designs. The illustration in the Tralee postmark features the refurbished windmill in nearby Blennerville.



Cork Philatelic Society Exhibition: A numbered booklet containing a se-tenant pair of the 32p Lighthouse stamps was available. A special cover (40p) and cancel, both featuring a lighthouse, were also available. The back cover of the booklet reproduces the show cancel.

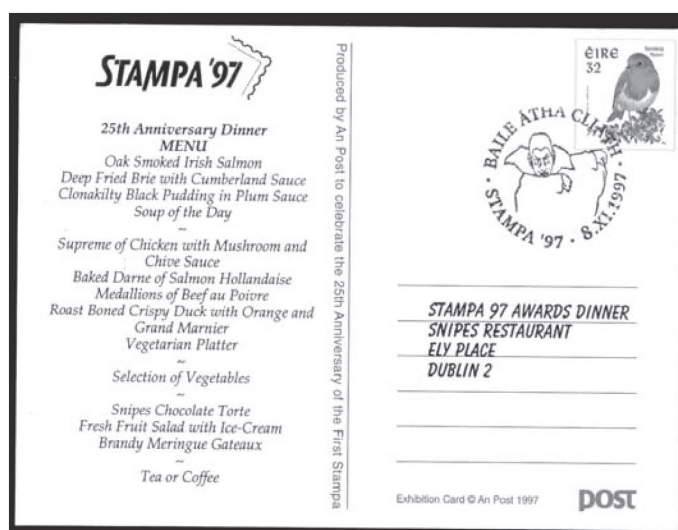
Stampa '97: The souvenirs were distributed to members prior to the show on 28 October. Members received three souvenirs this year (1,100 of each printed) plus, at no extra cost, the general souvenir (2,000 printed) which was on public sale at the show. None of the souvenirs were numbered. A large cream coloured card was also available at the exhibition which reproduced the three exhibition cancels. The large size was to facilitate collectors who wanted to affix any of the souvenirs to obtain the show cancel(s). A similar card was provided in 1996.



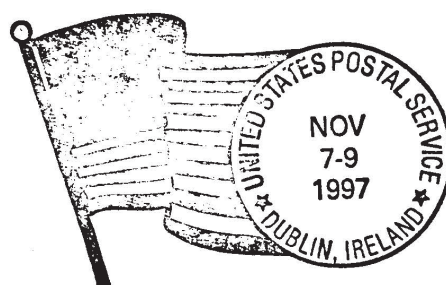
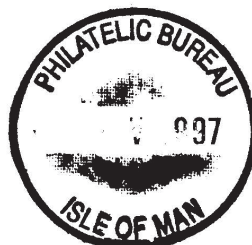
An Post issued a set of three exhibition cards on the opening day of the show. The three postcard themes, pre-printed stamps and matching postmarks were as follows:-

- 7 November: 75th Anniversary of Irish Stamps/32p Legislature stamp/Harp postmark;
- 8 November: 150th Anniversary of Bram Stoker's Birth/32p Dracula stamp/Dracula postmark (8 November was Bram Stoker's actual birth date); and
- 9 November: 25th Anniversary of the First Stamp/32p Robin definitive/25 Years of Stamp postmark.

The stamp designs are the same as the sheet issues complete with issued values and simulated perforations but reduced in size. The standard of printing of the stamp element was poor. The illustrations were once again on the obverse of the cards and incorporated reproductions of the 2d Map stamp, 32p Dracula stamp and the 1972 miniature sheet featuring the map design respectively. A slogan die was used during October in Dublin to publicise the show - see Slogan Postmarks below.



The 25th Anniversary of the First Stamp card was overprinted on the reverse for the Stamp Awards Dinner which was held in Snipes Restaurant, Ely Place, Dublin 2 on 8 November. The cards were distributed uncanceled but collectors could have the 8 November cancel applied on the cards at the An Post stand the following day.



All visitors to the show were given an exhibition passport at no extra charge. There was a separate page for Ireland, the Crown Agents plus the six other postal administrations who attended the show and provided cachets and/or cancellations. The Crown Agents, Isle of Man and Norway stands were staffed by their own personnel; Canada, Finland, Mexico and U.S.A. were represented by An Post. Norway also produced an attractive card featuring a view of O'Connell Bridge, Dublin. Two stamps were affixed to the picture side of the card and were cancelled with their show cachet. Cachets were also available from Canada, Crown Agents, Isle of Man, Mexico, and United States of America. Finland did not provide a cachet - stamps were cancelled with a Helsinki steel datestamp (as illustrated above).

In the case of the Isle of Man, the special Stampa cachet was normally applied to the envelope/passport with a rubber bureau CDS with moveable date used to cancel the stamp(s). However, the bureau cancel was giving poor impressions and was rarely used. As a result the Stampa cachet can be found cancelling the stamps. Envelopes handed in for subsequent cancellation in the Isle of Man were postmarked with either a Douglas, Isle of Man steel CDS of 7 NO 97 or a rubber bureau CDS of 7 November with, in each case, the cachet applied to the cover.



Cork Stamp Show: A stamp, coin and callcard show was organised by local dealership Raven Stamps on 6 December, to coincide with the actual anniversary date of the issue of the 2d Map stamp. A special booklet containing two strips of 3 x 1p magpie definitives was available plus a special postmark.

OTHER SPECIAL POSTMARKS AND CACHETS

I set out below details of special postmarks other than the exhibition items referred to above.



A number of new air services were introduced in May and several dealers organised 'First Flight' covers. An Post provided a number of cachet type postmarks for the "First Flights" as follows:-

1 May 1997:

- Dublin to Bristol (Ryanair)
- Dublin to Brussels Charleroy (Ryanair)
- Dublin to Helsinki (Finnair).
- Dublin to Paris (CityJet)
- Dublin to Paris Beauvais (Ryanair)



All cancels are of the same format with the same envelope plus plane illustration. As members will note they are not a "true" postmark given the absence of the place of posting in Irish - Baile Átha Cliath.

15 May 1997:

- Dublin to Newark (Aer Lingus)





CILL CHOMHGHAILL

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Murphy's Irish Open: No special postmark was available this year although post office facilities were available at the venue (Druid's Glen, Delgany, Co. Wicklow); the Bray 5 (Bré 5) self-inking datestamp (SID) was used at the temporary post office (2-6 July incl. Pro-Am day). In the absence of a special postmark, one enterprising collector arranged a private cachet, similar in format to the postmark used in 1996. Covers bearing this cachet exist with the stamp cancelled with the Bray 5 SID. This is the first time since 1976 that a special cancel was not available.

Scout Jamboree - Lough Dan, Co. Wicklow: Post office facilities were provided at this event which was held from 30 July to 4 August. A special postmark/cachet as illustrated was available.



75th Anniversary of the Air Corps: A special Dublin postmark was available on 6 July 1997 to mark the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Air Corps. In addition, a special official cover depicting three different aircraft was produced by the Air Corps (100 produced); each cover bears the 10p and 17p stamps issued in 1978 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first East-West transatlantic flight from Baldonnel to Greenly Island, off Labrador, Newfoundland.

John Wesley: To coincide with the 250th Anniversary of John Wesley's first visit to Ireland, a special cancellation was provided by the philatelic bureau on the actual date of the visit, Saturday 9 August 1997. You will note that there is no reference to "Baile Átha Cliath" in the postmark. The postmark was requested by the Methodist Philatelic Society who also produced a special illustrated cover.



India: To mark the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of India's independence, a special Dublin postmark incorporating a map of India was sponsored by the India-Irish Cultural Society and was available on the actual anniversary date, 15 August 1997. The Society also produced a special illustrated cover.

SLOGAN POSTMARKS



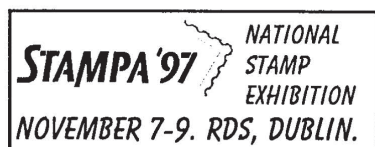
334 - Please don't/leave the elderly/ALONE: In use in Dublin since January 1997 (dies D and F).

335 - Inter/Media Inter/Media: Used in Cork during March and April (also noted in use in June). I have been unable to ascertain the significance of the term "Inter Media".



336 - COUNTY WICKLOW/THE GARDEN OF IRELAND: Used in Wicklow during the months of May and June.

337 - Nestlé® K^{it} K^{at}® Have a Break..... : This slogan was introduced countrywide in late July commencing on 21 July in Cork. Also noted in Cavan, Donegal, Dublin, Dundalk, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. The slogan was due to continue in use until October 1997 but remains in use at the time of writing (February 1998). The wording and layout is identical to the U.K. slogan used nationwide in 1996.



338 - STAMPA '97 - NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION NOVEMBER 7-9. RDS, DUBLIN. Used at the Dublin Mail Centre (one die) during October but appears to have been withdrawn before the end of the month. All examples seen were of very poor quality. The illustration is taken from the original artwork and does not exactly match the type font used on the actual die.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

16 January - Definitives - Fine Art Prints: Three Fine Art Prints were available at IR£15 per print (IR£40 the set) featuring the Greenland White Fronted Goose (per the IR£1 value), Pintail (IR£2) and Shelduck (IR£5).

5 September - St Patrick's Battalion Issue Notification -

Postcard: An Post informed collectors of the St Patrick's Battalion joint issue by mailing out a large postcard (211mm x 147mm) complete with pre-printed stamp. The stamp reproduced the 32p design which incorporated the 9d Catholic Emancipation stamp and issued as part of the 75th Anniversary of the State set the previous month. "Postas Íochta" was included under the design instead of a figure of value. The stamp was "cancelled" with a preprinted Baile Átha Cliath CDS of 5.IX.97. The pre-printed "Par Avion/Aerphost" sticker was the old O.E.78 type rather than the "Priority Aerphost" label introduced in February 1997.



7 November - FAI Postcard: A special postcard was produced with the co-operation of An Post to mark 75 years of Irish stamps. The card incorporates the normal An Post Postage Paid indicator as used on regular postcards. It was only available with the FAI's publication "75 Years of Irish Stamps". Both the book and the card were printed by Laekamp GmbH of Osnabrueck. This is probably the first time that an Irish stationery item has been printed outside of Ireland or Britain.

December - An Post Christmas Cards: No separate card was forwarded by the philatelic bureau to customers this year. However as already referred to earlier, the special 75th Anniversary of the First Irish Postage Stamp FDC. A special insert card was included bearing Christmas greetings and a reproduction of the 28p self-adhesive Christmas tree design. However, this FDC was only forwarded to account holders who had standing orders for FDC's.

The general card used by An Post incorporated the same Christmas tree design behind a cut-out window. The actual stamp was also reproduced on the back of the card without the value indication. Both SDS and the Post Offices Operations Division also produced cards but neither had any philatelic connection.

December - Santa Christmas Envelope: The 1997 postage paid envelope once again reproduced the same design as used both in 1995 and 1996 featuring Santa pulling a sleigh together with a pre-printed "NORTH POLE 12⁰⁰ PM Dec CHRISTMAS" postmark (in red). The postmark was repositioned and now covers a greater proportion of the An Post Postage Paid indicator.

Swiftpost Labels: A revised printing of both Swiftpost labels have appeared on matt paper with an off-white backing paper. The labels were first issued on shiny paper with a yellowish backing paper. This follows a similar change with the Registration labels. The layout and inscriptions etc. remain unaltered. I first noted the change in both labels in February 1997 but a fellow collector has noted use of the revised inland type in December 1996. Can any member confirm any earlier dates of use ?

Registration Labels: There have been no major changes noted. However, due their high usage there are constant new printings which can give rise to minor variations. Towards the end of 1997, a new printing appeared with a revised setting of the text on the reverse.



Valentine's Day Labels: In order to encourage advance posting of Valentine's Day cards, An Post distributed special self-adhesive labels to post offices in advance of 14 February. The red heart shaped labels were printed in sheets of 24 (6 rows of 4). The inscription on the label reads "Deliver On Valentine's Day 14th Feb". There was no charge for the labels.



Airmail Labels: A new type of self-adhesive airmail label was distributed to post offices in the week commencing 24 February. The dark blue labels with white lettering are available in sheets of 48 (16 rows of 3 labels). The white backing paper is rouletted. The labels are also distributed in rolls of 500 which are on a buff coloured backing paper. The inscription on the label reads "Priority/Aerphost".

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland Issues: No new issues were released during 1997.

CONCLUSION

Once again, I wish to thank An Post and my many philatelic friends for their help in producing this article and in particular Maurice Barrett, Jim Derwin, Bernard Donohoe, Tony Finn, Peter Geoffroy, Heinz Grunz, John Holman, Otto Jung, Jimmy Kelly, Michael Kelly, Gene Labiuk, John Lennon, Gerry Mooney, John Mullen, Bill Murphy, Jim Ryan, David Turner, Ronny Vogt and Ian Whyte for their never ending patience in answering my queries and providing much valuable information.

1997 POSTMARKS AND HANDSTAMPS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

Alan Kane

SLOGAN POSTMARKS

The following are all used at Belfast.

[1] February 3rd/16th

KEEP IT SECRET SEND A CARD FOR VALENTINES DAY (1996 design)

February 14th

NESCAFE GOLD BLEND / Be a coffee lover on Valentine's Day

[2] February 24th/March 9th

SEND A CARD FOR MOTHERS DAY 9 MARCH

Seen used March 13th.

[3] March 17th/30th.

SEND A CARD FOR EASTER 30 MARCH

[4] June 2nd/15th

Father's Day 15 June 1997 What Will YOU Send?

[5] July 7th/20th

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL

[6] September 1st/October 26th

HAVE A BREAK NESTLE KIT KAT

[7] September 15th/21st

OPERATION ROAD SAFE. ITS SAFER WITH A SEATBELT

In use until December 10th

[8] November 24th/30th

WORLD AIDS DAY 1 DECEMBER

[9] October 27th/December 28th

NESTLE QUALITY STREET MAGIC MOMENTS

[10] December 1st/29th

What will you send this Christmas?

[11] December 13th/January 2nd (approx.)

the Perfect prEsent At Christmas for Everyone

1995 slogan used unannounced

Apart from these, Belfast also used the slogans

NEED A POSTCODE RING 0345 111 222, ROYAL MAIL 0345 740 740 CUSTOMER

SERVICES and

NEED A CORRECT POSTCODE CALL THE POSTCODE ENQUIRY LINE 0345 111 222
ALL CALLS CHARGED LOCAL RATE.

Ballymena, Ballymoney, Bangor, Coleraine, Downpatrick, Enniskillen, Limavady, Newtownards, Omagh, Portadown and Strabane all used the HAPPY CHRISTMAS PLEASE POST EARLY slogan.

Antrim and Lisburn used

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS THE POST OFFICE

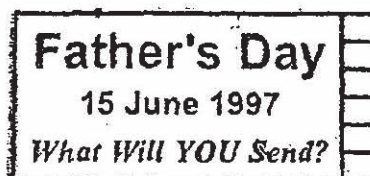
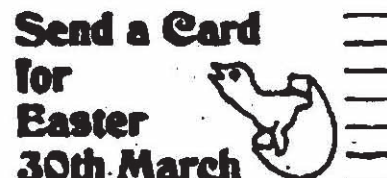
which has been in use since 1971.

LONDONDERRY used the 1996 slogan

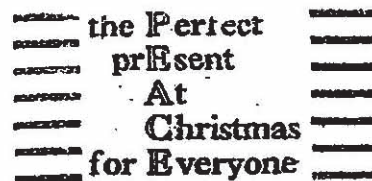
A CARD MAKES EVERYONES CHRISTMAS.

A cover from Omagh dated December 16th is cancelled with bright mauve ink.

The above towns used an assortment of postcode slogans throughout 1997, but most mail is cancelled in Belfast these days.



READING IS
FUNDAMENTAL
0171 828 2435



SPECIAL HANDSTAMPS

[1] from March 18th until further notice ROYAL MAIL BELFAST with enhanced design of City Hall, Belfast.

This replaces PHILATELIC COUNTER BELFAST handstamp that was last used on March 17th.

[2] April 2nd; 40th ANNIVERSARY OF SHORT SCI with aircraft design.

Sponsored by *Philatelic Trader*.

[3] July 29th.

CASTLE HIGH VALUES, CARRICKFERGUS, Co ANTRIM.

Sponsored by *Philatelic Trader*.

[4] September 23rd.

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF THE BBC.

Sponsored by *Philatelic Trader*.

[5] December 2nd.

45th ANNIVERSARY OF SHORT SB5.

Sponsored by *Philatelic Trader*.



My thanks to Royal Mail (BRITISH POSTMARK BULLETIN) and IPC members for their help in compiling the above.