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Irish Philately

THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH PHILATELIC CIRCLE

PETS GREETINGS

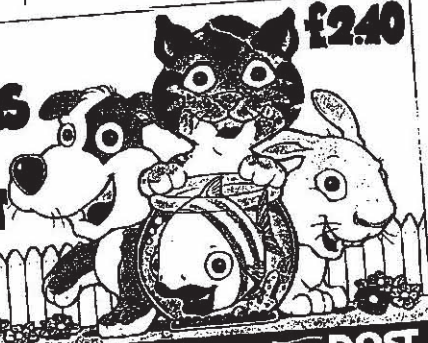


Clúdach Chéad Lac

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POST



JANUARY AND FEBRUARY ISSUES FROM AN POST; LOVE/GREETINGS issued on January 26th [above] AND THE IRISH ACTORS SET issued on February 26th. THE LATTER ISSUE IS QUITE A STRIKING TRIO AND WELCOME IN ANY PHILATELIC COLLECTION.

IRISH PHILATELIC CIRCLE

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NEWS & VIEW

Herewith the March issue of the *JOURNAL*; another new year unfolds and in this issue the by now, traditional *THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS* from the knowledgeable pen of Brian Warren. Over the years, this item has featured in the March issue of the *JOURNAL* and we would certainly be totally adrift if we did not have this as a reference to the previous year's issues.

Members should be aware that there will be changes to the *JOURNAL* in the coming year; the plan at present is to change the format from the present loose leaf A4 format to a magazine style A5. This change is planned to start with the March 2000 issue. There are several considerations still to be made which include such as font and illustration size.

From this issue the *JOURNAL* will be carrying advertisements; just the solitary one in this particular issue but there will be more from the June issue onwards. Our thanks to all these advertisers who are supporting the *CIRCLE*.

The advertising will assist in defraying the cost that will be incurred in the format change next year.

On the subject of advertising, all members are reminded to support our advertisers and do mention the *JOURNAL* when replying to advertisements.

Should any member wish to place their own advertisements in the *JOURNAL* - page is being set aside for member's wants, contacts etc. - kindly contact the Editor. A small charge will be made for this particular service.

Should any member have any queries or comments on any of the above, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Editor or Secretary.

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS - 1998

Brian Warren

There was a major revision in postal rates during 1998. A composite single rate structure with lower letter rates and the abolition of printed paper rates (for all destinations) came into effect on 6 April. Phosphor stamps were introduced in tandem with new automated sorting equipment in November.

SPECIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE ISSUES

The 1998 programme, comprising 42 sheet stamps, 6 self-adhesive stamps, 5 miniature sheets and 5 booklets, was issued over 10 release dates at a cost of IR£42.64. Four issues (Europa, 1798 Rebellion, Tour de France and Postboxes) were issued in sheetlet form at a total cost of IR£24.40 for 6 sheetlets. The 1997 totals were 51 sheet stamps (including the "75th Anniversary of the State" sheetlet which incorporated twelve separately identifiable stamps), 2 self-adhesive stamps, 4 miniature sheets (excluding the Pacific '97 definitive sheet) and 3 booklets 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.



Date of Issue	Description		Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
26 Jan	Love Stamp (14 th Issue)	- "Love is..." cartoon	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
26 Jan	Greetings Booklet (7 th Issue)	- "Love is..." cartoons	IR£2.56	Two panes - (8 x 32p)	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
26 Jan	Year of the Tiger	- Miniature Sheet	96p	3 x 32p Greetings	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
24 Feb	Irish Aviation Pioneers (1 st Issue)						
	- Lady Mary Heath/Sophie Catherine Pierce		28p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	- James Fitzmaurice		32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	- J.P. Saul		44p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	- Charles Blair		52p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	- Prestige Booklet		IR£5.20	Four panes – see below	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
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2 Apr	Equestrian Sports	- Show Jumping	30p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Three Day Eventing	32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Gymkhana	40p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Dressage	45p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Miniature Sheet	IR£1.47	One of each value	CCP3	as per singles	ISSP
6 May	Bicentenary of 1798 Rebellion	- "Liberty	30p	} Sheetlet of 12 (3 x 4) with four se-tenant strips of three stamps	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Heroic Figure	30p		CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- French Soldier	30p		CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Theobald Wolfe Tone	45p	} Sheetlet of 12 (4 x 3) with six se-tenant pairs	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Henry Joy McCracken	45p		CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
6 May	Europa	- Cruinniú na mBád (Kinvara)	30p	Sheetlets of 10 (5 x 2)	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Puck Fair (Killorglin)	40p	Sheetlets of 10 (5 x 2)	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- self adhesives	2 x 30p	IR£30 per box of 100 (50 x 2)		9½ x 9½	ISSP
6 May	Greetings Booklet (8 th Issue)	- "Love is..." cartoons	IR£2.40	Two panes - (8 x 30p)	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
2 June	Centenary of Local Government (Ireland) Act		30p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	European Union (1973-98)		32p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	Centenary of Women's Vote in Local Elections		35p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	50 th Anniversary of Republic of Ireland Act		45p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
2 June	Tour de France (Ireland)						
		- Polka Dot Jersey ("King of the Mountains")	30p	} Sheetlets of 16 (4 x 4) containing four se-tenant sets	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Mountain Climbing	30p		CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Green Jersey (Points Leader)	30p		CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Yellow Jersey (Overall Leader)	30p		CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
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20 July	Tall Ships – Dublin '98	- Asgard II (Ireland)	30p	}	se-tenant	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Eagle (U.S.A.)	30p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Boa Esperanza (Portugal)	45p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- TS Royalist (U.K.)	IR£1.00		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- self adhesives	4 x 30p		IR£30 per box of 100 (25 x 4)	9½ x 9½		ISSP
		- Booklet	IR£2.56		Two panes – see below	CCP3	14¾ x 14¾	ISSP
3 Sept	Irish Postboxes	- Ashworth (1855)	30p	}	Sheetlets of 12	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Penfold Box (1866)	30p		(3 x 4) containing	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Saorstat Éireann Box (c. 1922)	30p	}	three sets of	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- P 7 T Double Pillar Box (c. 1960)	30p		four stamps	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
3 Sept	Mary Immaculate College, Limerick – Centenary		30p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	Newtown School, Waterford – Bicentenary		40p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
	50th Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights		45p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
4 Sept	Portugal '98	- Tall Ships Miniature Sheet	IR£2.00		Boa Esperanza	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
8 Oct	Endangered Animals	- Cheetah	30p	}	se-tenant	CCP3	13¾ x 14	Walsall
		- Scimitar-Horned Oryx	30p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13¾ x 14	Walsall
		- Golden Lion Tamarin	40p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 13¾	Walsall
		- Tiger	45p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 13¾	Walsall
		- Miniature Sheet	IR£1.45		one of each value	CCP3	14¾ x 14¾	Walsall
		- Stampa '98 Miniature Sheet	IR£1.45		one of each value	CCP3	14¾ x 14¾	Walsall
17 Nov	Christmas (28 th Issue)	- The Holy Family	30p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- The Adoration of the Shepherds	32p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- The Adoration of the Magi	45p		1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Booklet (self-adhesive – Choir group)	IR£5.40		(20 x 30p – two free stamps)	11½ x 11½		Cambec

Printers and Sheet Format: All stamps were litho printed by Irish Security Stamp Printing Limited (ISSP), Walsall Security Printers (Walsall) or the Australian firm, SNP Cambec. Except as indicated below, all full size 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 controls at top right and imprint at bottom left.

First Day Covers: FDC's cost 30p (an increase of 3p) commencing with the Love stamp issue of 26 January. Special covers and pictorial cancellations were available for all special and commemorative issues including the Portugal '98 miniature sheet.

Maximum Cards: There was only one set of maximum cards, which was issued for the Endangered Animals set. The price of mint cards was increased by 3p to 25p per card.

Postcards: A set of six postcards (IR£1.50) was issued in connection with the Aviation Pioneers set – further details below.



Love Stamp and Greetings Booklets: The initial two pane booklet contains eight 32p stamps in se-tenant strips of four designs. The stamps feature various "Love is" cartoons - (I) Love is .. a birthday wish; (II) Love is... thinking of you; (III) Love is... keeping in touch; and (IV) Love is... from my heart; Each stamp has two labels featuring various heart motifs which are 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 identifiable stamps in addition to the sheet issue, which bears the "Love is..from my heart" design. 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 III, 32p IV, 32p I and 32p II (right margin imperforate).

Each pane is rouletted in the binding margin and stitched into the covers. Three of the designs are included in the Year of the Tiger miniature sheet referred to below. The price of unserviced first day cover envelopes was increased by 3p to 30p with this issue.

Following the reduction in the basic domestic letter post rate from 32p to 30p (with effect from 6 April), the booklet was re-issued with 8 x 30p stamps. The second booklet contains the same eight stamps (4 designs) in the same format as the booklet issued on 26 January. The cover now incorporated the Letter Post green strip logo and the text on the inside front cover was revised and no longer referred to Valentines Day. The individual sheet stamp was not re-issued.

Year of the Tiger Miniature Sheet: A special miniature sheet to mark the Chinese Lunar Year of the Tiger was issued on the same day as the Love stamp and the initial Greetings booklet. The sheet is similar to prior years and contains three of the Greetings stamps - 32p III, 32p I and 32p II (right margin imperforate). The left hand panel shows a tiger. The labels differ from the booklet panes and refers to the Year of the Tiger (in English and Chinese) and Happy New Year (in English, Irish, Cantonese and Chinese).



Irish Aviation Pioneers: This is the first issue of an ongoing series commemorating various aspects of Irish aviation history. This set concentrates on significant flights involving Irish airmen, while later sets will feature civilian and military aviation. Lady Mary Heath (28p) was born Sophie Catherine Pierce in Knockaderry, near Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick and the local post office at Knockaderry arranged first day facilities to mark the event. They also produced with the help of local historians a short monograph on its famous aviatrix, entitled "Knockaderry's Sophie Remembered". The stamp issue was launched by An Post at the Foynes Flying Boat Museum also in Co. Limerick. Actress Maureen O'Hara Blair, widow of Charles Blair featured on the 52p value attended the event, together with relatives of the featured aviation pioneers. A pictorial first day cancel, which matched the bureau design, was available at both locations. The first day cover features an adaptation of the Short-Mayo composite flying boat design as used on the 46p stamp issued in 1988 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first commercial crossing of the Atlantic by air. The stamps were designed by Limerick artist, Vincent Killowry.

A set of six postcards was also available in connection with this issue, one each for the four aviators depicted on the stamps and their aircraft and two further cards featuring Alcock and Brown and Douglas "Wrong Way" Corrigan. Serviced cards had the stamps attached on the reverse side with the extra two cards bearing the 32p stamp. The four connected postcards could also be used maximum card style by collectors.

Irish Aviation Pioneers - 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. The panes contain a total of thirteen stamps made-up as follows:-

- Pane 1: Set of four values in a block of four with the 32p and 52p stamps imperforate at right;
- Pane 2: 2 x 28p plus 2 x 32p values with a single 28p in row 1 and 28p, 32p and 28p se-tenant in row 2;
- Pane 3: Three stamps in a se-tenant strip - 32p, 44p and 32p; and
- Pane 4: Three stamps in a se-tenant strip - 52p, 32p and 52p.

This gives two new singles – 32p and 52p, both imperf. at right. The background photos on each pane repeat photographs of aircraft as depicted on the postcards referred to above. As all stamps are of horizontal format, there were no perforation variations in this booklet. The panes are rouletted at left and stitched into the booklet covers. The text was written by Maureen O'Hara Blair.

Europa (Festivals): The sheet stamps were printed in the usual sheetlet format comprising ten stamps with illustrated side panels. The side panels are imperforate, all other margins are perforated. Sheetlets have an

imprint and colour controls but no plate numbers. The 30p design contains a spelling error - the correct Irish translation for "The Gathering of the Boats" is "Cruinniú na mBád" (and not Crinniú na mBáid). The "Gathering of the Boats" is held in Kinvara, Co. Galway in early August. The festival celebrates the Galway Hooker which is depicted on the stamp. Puck Fair is held in mid-August in Killorglin, Co. Kerry. As part of the festival's ritual, a male goat is paraded through the town and crowned "King of the Fair".

As usual, the self-adhesive stamps are smaller in overall than the sheet stamps and measure 37.5mm x 26mm. Produced in boxed rolls of 100 stamps plus two reminder labels (10 and 20). The roll of 102 stamps/labels is split into six strips of seventeen. The rolls are reeled sideways with right hand delivery commencing with the "Puck Fair" design. The usual Dakota logo plus number (No: 9 seen to date) is on one of the bottom flaps; the matching flap has the reference 028906B. Sold in strips of two as well as complete rolls by the bureau.



Bicentenary of 1798



Bicentenary of 1798 Rebellion: The 30p sheetlet contains four se-tenant strips of the three stamps. The 45p sheetlet contains three rows of four stamps; each row contains two se-tenant pairs. On both sheetlets, the imperforate top margin bears the inscription "Bicentenary of 1798" together with the symbol of the United Irishmen, the Harp as also depicted on each stamp (illustrated); the remaining margins are perforated. There are no imprint, colour controls or plate numbers. A pictorial first day postmark was available in Wexford for this issue.



Tour de France (Ireland): The set was issued in advance of the annual cycling race which commenced in Ireland in 1998 (11-13 July). The sheetlet of sixteen stamps were made-up of four horizontal se-tenant strips, each strip containing one of each design. The top margin is imperforate and bears the inscription "Tour de France 1998" plus four colour blocks (as illustrated); the remaining margins are perforated. There are no imprint, colour controls or plate numbers.



Paquebôt cover from the Mexican ship *Cuauhtemoc*

Tall Ships – Sheet Stamps: The two 30p values were printed in se-tenant format (both vertically and horizontally) in sheets of forty. Each sheet is set out in two panes of 20 with a vertical gutter with each pane containing four columns of five stamps giving 5 gutter pairs in each sheet. The 45p and £1 were printed in the usual 50 stamp format without a gutter.

The Cutty Sark Tall Ships race started in Falmouth and ended in Dublin on 22 August. The ships remained in Dublin until 25 August. Unfortunately, there was no special cancel available during the visit but a fine collection of ships' cachets was possible. The *Asgard II* was the only ship featured on the stamps to participate in the race and visit Dublin. It was previously featured on the 26p value from the Irish Boats set issued in 1982. There was no Portuguese or U.S. ship in port but there were several U.K. boats including The Lord Nelson. *Asgard II* won its class and the overall winner was the British owned ketch, *Duet*. The Mexican naval training ship *Cuauhtemoc* received the overall Cutty Sark trophy for the ship voted for contributing most to international friendship and understanding.

Portugal issued a set of six stamps commemorating the Vasco Da Gama Tall Ships Regatta in July – one of the two 85esc values from the six stamp set depicted the *Asgard II* (85esc).

Tall Ships – Booklet: The stitched booklet contains two panes with no interleaves. The two panes contain a total of six stamps which are fully perforated and are made-up as follows:-

Pane 1: 30p (*Asgard II*), 30p (*Eagle*) and 30p (*Asgard II*) in a se-tenant strip of three; and

Pane 2: 45p (*Boa Esperanza*), 30p (*Eagle*) and £1 (*T.S. Royalist*) in a se-tenant strip of three.

All the individual stamps in both panes are perf. 14¾ due to the mix of horizontal and vertical formats in pane 2. Both panes are rouletted at left and stitched into the covers. *Asgard II* is illustrated on the front cover with the remaining ships on the back cover.

Tall Ships – Self Adhesives: As usual, the self-adhesive stamps are smaller in overall size (37.5mm x 26mm) than the sheet stamps with a mix of both horizontal and vertical designs. The same designs as per the individual sheet values were repeated on the 4 x 30p values. The roll of 100 stamps plus two labels is split into six strips of seventeen stamps/labels with the last two strips containing sixteen stamps plus one of

the reminder labels. The reminder labels (10 and 20) are in black. The roll (with right hand delivery) commences with the *Boa Esperanza* design. The waste paper was not removed from around the stamps as is usual with ISSP printings. The usual Dakota logo plus number (No: 9 seen to date) is on one of the bottom flaps; the matching flap has the reference 030293. The box illustrates the *Asgard II* stamp. Sold in strips of four as well as complete rolls by the bureau. The self-adhesives were effectively pre released by An Post. A special letter dated 20 July (the day of issue of the stamps) was sent to all standing order customers encouraging them to add self-adhesives to their standing order. One of the 30p Tall Ships self-adhesives was used on the cover containing the letter. However a large proportion of the letters were placed in the postal system in advance of the issue date and were slogan postmarked in Dublin on 17 July 1998.

Irish Postboxes: The sheetlets of twelve stamps are made up of three se-tenant strips of four stamps, each strip containing one of each design. The design order is the same in all three rows. The top margin has the inscription *Irish Postboxes*; the remaining margins incorporate the various cyphers/logos which can be found on Irish postboxes – VR, EviiR, GR, SE, P₇T and Post. Sheetlets have an imprint in the bottom margin but no plate numbers or colour controls and are perforated through both left and right margins; the top and bottom margins are imperforate. The individual stamps measure 27.5mm x 48.5mm.

As an Irish member of the Letter Box Study Group, I was particularly excited to see this issue. The Ashworth box (1855) is the oldest box in Ireland and is currently on display in the foyer at the National Museum, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. The Penfold box (1866) is an early example of this type of which there is only one example in Ireland – in Skibbereen, Co. Cork. There are several examples of the P₇T wallbox with SE logo but they are also a rare box. By reference to the large black and white bromide photographs of the stamp designs provided to newspapers, I was able to read the collection plate notice on the P₇T wallbox with the SE logo, and note, that the box featured on the stamp is situated at Sandycove Avenue West, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. Although the Double Pillarbox featured on the stamps refers to 1899, the date they were first introduced in Britain, the modern P₇T example shown is circa 1960.



Portugal '98 – Miniature Sheet: A special miniature sheet incorporating the *Boa Esperanza* Tall Ship design as an IR£2 value was issued on the opening day of this exhibition. The philatelic bureau provided full first day facilities for this miniature sheet with both a Baile Átha Cliath pictorial postmark and a first day exhibition cachet.



Endangered Animals – Sheet Stamps: The two 30p values were printed in se-tenant format (horizontally but not vertically) in sheets of forty. 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. The sheet markings are set out at right angles to the horizontal stamp design and as a result they are positioned as follows:-



Plate Numbers: Right margin of rows 1 and 2;
 Imprint: Left margin of rows 1 and 2;
 Colour Controls: Right margin of row 10; and
 Walsall Logo: Right margin of both rows 4 and 7.

In addition, a large **P** is printed in both the top and bottom of the gutter margin. This issue was to be the first set of stamps to incorporate phosphor tagging and the **P** was to identify the sheets as a phosphor issue. However, no phosphor was added to any of the three values.

The 40p and 45p values were printed in the usual 50 stamp format without a gutter. The markings are as normal with the addition of the Walsall logo in the top margin above both stamps 4 and 7 and the inclusion of a large **P** as referred to above in both the left and right margins of row 3.

Endangered Animals – Miniature Sheets: All the individual stamps in both miniature sheets are perf. 14¾ due to the mix of horizontal and vertical formats and thus differ from the sheet stamps; in addition the individual stamps have a white frame and do not bleed into the adjoining design. The Stampa '98 sheet is slightly larger to accommodate the additional imprint at the top of the sheet "National Stamp Exhibition STAMPA 98 RDS – Dublin – 6-8 November 1998". This is the first time that An Post has issued a specific miniature sheet for Stampa and was, in addition, to the privately produced members' souvenirs (see below).



Christmas: The self-adhesive booklet format was repeated this year. Each booklet contained 20 x 30p stamps giving two free stamps per booklet. The inclusion of two free stamps as compared to one in prior years was to offset the rate increase due to the abolition of the 28p printed paper rate last April. The twenty stamps are set out in one pane, folded four times, containing two columns of ten stamps. The booklet was printed in Australia by SNP Cambec and each stamp incorporates a 2mm yellow phosphor border. Individual stamps measure 25mm x 30mm i.e. the same size as the definitive self-adhesives. They are the first phosphor special issue from An Post. The back of the booklet incorporates a bar code (5 391346 000003).

The sheet stamps were in the usual format and did not incorporate phosphor. I understand that all future sheet issues will incorporate phosphor.

FRAMA LABELS

In addition to the two machines at Dublin Airport and the machine at Bray Post Office, I can now confirm that the machines at Cork, Galway, Killarney, Kilkenny and Waterford are now dispensing labels with the new paper which gives a yellow reaction under U.V. light. The Limerick and Sligo machines were still utilising the original paper with yellow-green U.V. reaction.

DEFINITIVES - BIRDS OF IRELAND

Date of Issue		Description	Value	Plate Numbers and Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
2 Apr	Sheet Issue – Phase III	- Woodpigeon	5p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Blackbird	30p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Stonechat	35p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Ringed Plover	40p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Song Thrush	45p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14 x 14¾	ISSP
		- Sparrowhawk	50p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14¾ x 14	ISSP
		- Pintail	IR£2.00	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14 x 14¾	ISSP
	Self-Adhesives – ISSP	- Goldcrest and Blackbird	2 x 30p	IR£30 per box of 100 (50 x 2)		9 x 9¾	ISSP
	Self-Adhesives – SNP	- Goldcrest and Blackbird	2 x 30p	IR£30 per box of 100 (50 x 2)		11½ x 11½ Cambec	
	£1 Booklet (1/98)	- Blackbird	IR£1.00	3 x 30p Blackbird plus 2 x 5p Woodpigeon	CCP1	14¾ x 14 (30p)ISSP 14 x 14¾ (5p)	
Mar	Reprints on CCP3 paper	- Corncrake	4p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14x 14¾	ISSP
Sept		- Woodpigeon	5p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
April		- Blackbird	30p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
April		- Stonechat	35p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
Sept		- Song Thrush	45p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
Aug		- Sparrowhawk	50p	1B1B1B1B (“A” not seen)	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
Sept		- Shelduck	IR£5.00	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP1	14¾ x 14	ISSP
4 Sept	£3 Counter Booklet	- Blackbird	IR£3.00	10 x 30p – two designs	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
17 Nov	1 st Phosphor Issue Sheet Stamps	- Blackbird	30p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14	Walsall
		- Robin	32p	1A1A1A1A	CCP3	14 x 14	Walsall
		- Stonechat	35p	1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14	Walsall
		- Ringed Plover	40p	1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14	Walsall
		- Song Thrush	45p	1A1A1A1A	CCP3	14 x 14	Walsall
		- Sparrowhawk	50p	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14	Walsall
17 Nov	Self-Adhesives – Phosphor	- Goldcrest and Blackbird	2 x 30p	IR£30 per box of 100 (50 x 2)		11½ x 11½ Cambec	
14 Dec	Self-Adhesives – Phosphor	- Goldcrest and Blackbird	2 x 30p	IR£30 per box of 100 (50 x 2)		9 x 9¾	ISSP



Private first day cover of ISSP self-adhesives

Sheet Issues (Non-Phosphor): The third phase of six values released in April were similar in format and layout as the previous two releases with the £2 denomination the only large format stamp. The £2 value repeats the "Pintail" stamp included in the Pacific '97 miniature sheet. However, apart from the perforation change (the miniature sheet stamp was perf. 14), the new stamp differs in colour shading, the typeface for the inscriptions is smaller and the paper/gum is now CCP1.

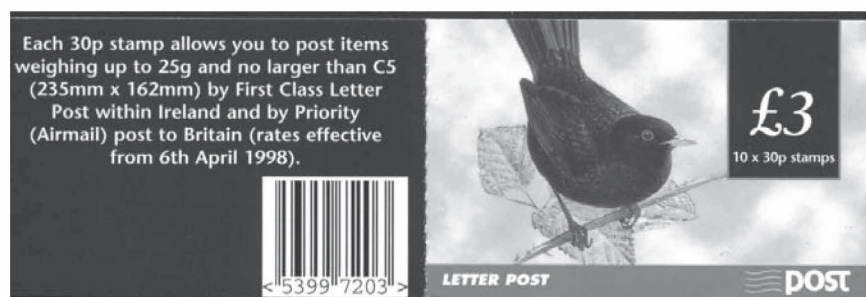
There were several reprints as listed. The dates given are the earliest known although in the case of the five values originally issued on 2 April, some CCP3 printings may have been available from this date. "A" sheets of the 50p value on CCP3 paper not yet noted. Apart from previously recorded printings, it is possible that other values exist on both papers. The release of phosphor issues further complicates the tracking and recording of new printings.

Self-Adhesives (Non-Phosphor) - ISSP Printing: The stamps measure 25mm x 40mm and are reeled vertically with top delivery commencing with the Goldcrest design. The waste paper was not removed from around the stamps. The joins are every 20th stamp with the usual 10 and 20 reminder labels in black. I have also noted quarter circles in the left margin at the joins between stamps 60/61 and 80/81. I'm not sure if this is a constant feature on all rolls. The box illustrates the Blackbird 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 one of the inner bottom flaps (numbers 5 and 8 seen to date); the matching flap bears the number 028906-A.

Self-Adhesives (Non-Phosphor) - SNP Cambec Printing: As per previous Australian printings, the waste paper is removed and the perforation size and style differs from the ISSP printing. Despite the note in "Collectors News", the designs do not bleed into the margin this time. The usual SNP Sprintpak reference is included on the reverse of the backing paper. There are four coil joins with strips of 25/25/26/24 + 2 reminder labels (in black.) The stamps are reeled vertically with top delivery commencing with the Goldcrest design. The correct inscription is included on the top "C" flap but hidden by the "D" flap. The inscription reads *"Produced by Sprintpak - SNP Cambec"*. There are other minor variations but there are no logos/numbers on the bottom flaps.

A first day cover service was available for both printings. Both printings were sold by the bureau in strips of two and in complete rolls.

£1 Booklet (Blackbird): The cover incorporates the "Blackbird" design. The pane of 5 stamps and 1 label contains 3 x 32p Blackbird and 2 x 5p Woodpigeon on CCP1 paper, giving two new booklet stamps - 5p imperf. at bottom and 30p imperf. at right.



£3 Counter Booklet: The pane of ten 30p stamps is set out in two rows of five stamps with a fold between columns 3 & 4 and contains five each of the Goldcrest and Blackbird designs in se-tenant format. The outer edges are imperforate with an imperforate binding margin at left and a perforated margin at right. The individual stamps are the same size as the regular sheet issue and the imperforate edges give a total of four new stamps i.e. both designs with either imperforate top or bottom edge. The back cover incorporates a barcode, the first stock item to have a code included. The front of the booklet depicts the Blackbird design. There is no rate or other information included inside the covers. The wrapping label for a pack of 25, which is also bar coded, refers to £3 Vending Booklet but given the overall size (82mm x 54mm) this is obviously a counter booklet.



Phosphor Sheet Issues: Arising from the introduction of new sorting machinery at the Dublin Mails Centre, phosphor definitives were issued on 17 November. A full first day service was provided by An Post. Initially six sheet values covering the five main rates plus a 50p stamp have been released. This initial printing has been by Walsall Security Printers; however I understand that later printings and issues will be produced by Irish Security Stamp Printing Limited (ISSP).

Apart from the application of a 2mm phosphor border on all sides, the individual stamps differ in two other respects as compared to the non-phosphor issue. Although the overall size of the stamps does not differ, elements of the design have been cut-back, if necessary, in order to ensure a clear 2mm border. Presumably this is to ensure that the stamp design does not interfere with the phosphor signal, which appears as yellow under ultra violet light. In addition, the perforation size differs from the non-phosphor ISSP issue and measures 14 x 14. The horizontal and vertical perforation do not exactly match but to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$, the measurement is 14.

Sheets are in the usual 100 stamp format (10 x 10). However it would appear that only the 30p and 50p values exist with both "A" and "B" plate numbers. The 32p/35p and 45p/40p only appear to exist with either "A" or "B" plate numbers and were probably printed side by side in the original master sheet. The phosphor border extends 2mm into all four margins of complete sheets. Although I have not checked all values, I could not detect any "phosphor plate number" in the margins of any full sheet checked under U.V. light.

Walsall has ignored the vertical/horizontal formats when assigning the sheet marking positions. The vertical format values (30p, 32p, 35p and 45p) have the plate numbers, imprint and colour controls in the usual positions with, in addition, the letter **P** included in the bottom margin under stamp 10 (previously the blank corner in the sheet). The letter **P** is to enable identification of the sheets as phosphor issues. The two horizontal format values (40p and 50p) have the sheet markings in the following positions:-

Plate Numbers:	Right margin of row 1;	Colour Controls:	Right margin of row 10; and
Imprint:	Left margin of rows 1 and 2;	P (Phosphor):	Left margin of row 10.

The two line imprint reads "Produced by Walsall Security/Printers Limited". There are no Walsall logos on the issued sheets. One final observation – I noted a significant light/dark shade variation on the 50p value.

Phosphor Issue – Self Adhesives: SNP Cambec printed the initial issue. The roll format does not differ from the previous non-phosphor issue (25/25/26/24 plus 2 labels). The labels do not have a phosphor border. The U.V. lamp gives a paler yellow reaction as compared to the sheet issue or the later ISSP self-adhesive printing. In this case, the designs were not cut-back and the phosphor border which is slightly larger than 2mm encroaches into the design area.

The ISSP printing was placed on sale at the philatelic counter on 14 December. I'm not aware of it being available anywhere prior to that date. This was the first Irish phosphor issue to be printed by ISSP. Once again the roll format matches the previous ISSP issue with joins every 20th stamp and the usual 10 and 20 reminder labels (non-phosphor). The overall size of the design element on the individual stamps has been reduced (particularly in the case of the Goldcrest stamp) to ensure a clear 2mm phosphor border. In addition, both ÉIRE and 30 have been repositioned further away from the top (Blackbird) or bottom (Goldcrest) of the stamp. The phosphor border extends into the surrounding waste paper.

In both SNP and ISSP printings the boxes do not identify the stamps as being a phosphor issue and match the previous issues. The ISSP box has the same reference number on the bottom flap (028906-A) and the usual Dakota logo plus number (No: 5 seen to date).

Both printings were sold in strips of two as well as complete boxes by the philatelic bureau.

COUNTER MACHINE LABELS

A new type of counter machine label has been recently introduced in a number of offices. It was first noted by a collector in use at St. Andrew's Street Post Office, Dublin 2 during August 1998 but may have been introduced as early as June 1998. Two counters are using self-adhesive labels for items of mail handed in over the counter. The white labels are currently used at counters 9 and 10 on a test basis. The postal items are weighed manually and the labels are printed in black from a non-integrated computer terminal and printer. The counter 9 printer is a dot matrix printer; counter 10 has a better quality printer but the labels are similar as regards layout and design.



Andrew Street P.O. labels – counter 9 (left) and 10 (right)

The labels are large (56mm x 107mm approx) and are primarily for large bulky overweight items. They are affixed by the Post Office counter staff, and incorporate the date and time and amount paid, the office code (GROF code – see below), but not the name of the office. The type of service is also indicated – First Class, Priority, Registered etc. Mint labels are not normally available. The *An Post* "wavy" lines logo is also printed on the label. Staff at the St. Andrews Street office stated that originally it included the SDS logo but was subsequently altered to *An Post*. The labels themselves are not normally postmarked in the mail but the cover may be postmarked (for example if it is a registered cover). The GROF Number (3230) on the label is specific to St. Andrews Street. As the labels/covers may not be cancelled the GROF number is often the only way the office can be identified.

The labels were initially experimental and were only available for certain services - all Irish services (regular mail handed in over the counter, registered mail and, presumably, Swiftpost items) but only for regular mail items overseas. The label on the cover splits the total cost between the various services (for example, Postage 45p/Registered IR£1.70) and prints this out on the label. On Irish registered items there is some sort of integration between the computer system and the track and trace ("T&T") system as the customer payment receipt will give the T&T registered number (being the bar code number on the self-adhesive registration label). This receipt which is available at all ServicePlus offices is in addition to the registration receipt.

Four other pilot offices are known - Bettystown, Co. Meath (GROF 0638), Enniscorthy (GROF 1633), Navan (GROF 2844) and Newtown-Vevay, Bray (GROF 0735). Later in the year labels have been seen from Kilkenny (GROF 2201) which introduced the machine week commencing 12 October and Renmore, Co. Galway (GROF 3142). In total, labels have been seen from a total of eleven offices countrywide (including the pilot offices) and it is, therefore, assumed that they are in relatively widespread use at this stage.

PRESENTATION BOOKS AND PACKS

There were a large number of packs as compared to prior years. The price of the packs is excessive, averaging well over twice face value, in the case of the individual commemorative and special issues.

26 January – Lunar Presentation Pack: The pack contains a fun guide to your Chinese horoscope together with a Year of the Tiger miniature sheet. Cost: IR£3.50 – face value: 96p.

24 February – Irish Aviation Pioneers: The pack contains a single set with a face value of IR£1.56 – Cost: IR£3.00.

2 April – Birds of Ireland (Volume III): The pack contains seven sheet stamps together with a pair of the ISSP self-adhesives issued on the same date. Cost: IR5.00 – face value: IR£4.65.

2 April – Equestrian Sports: The pack contains a copy of the miniature sheet. Cost: IR£3.00 – face value: IR£1.47.

2 June – Tour de France: The pack contains a single set in a se-tenant strip of four. Cost: IR£3.00 – face value: IR1.20.

20 July – Tall Ships: The pack contains a single set of the sheet issue. Cost: IR£3.00 – face value: IR£2.05.

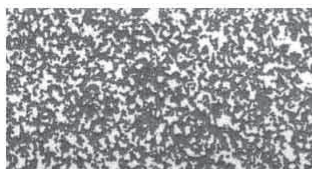
8 October – Endangered Animals: The pack contains one of the ordinary miniature sheets. Cost: IR£3.00 – face value: IR£1.45.

17 November – 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 and Tall Ships sets and a pair of the Christmas self-adhesive (cut from a normal booklet with backing), but excluding the Greetings booklet panes and any of the miniature sheets – a total of 50 stamps with a face value of IR£17.79.

17 November – Year Book: Each book contains all special and commemorative issues as per the year pack together with one of the 30p Greetings booklet panes (but neither of the initial 32p panes), three miniature sheets (Year of the Tiger, Equestrian Sports and Endangered Animals, but not the Portugal '98 or Stampa sheets) – total face value of IR£22.87. A numbered black print of the 30p Ashworth postbox stamp is also included in the book. Total printing of 3,000 standard copies (1997: 3,000) and 120 half-bound leather editions (1997: 120).

POSTAL STATIONERY

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Notes	Printer
?	"A" size prepaid envelope – Roman "a" imprint	34p	Cream paper with mottled blue inner lining	
?	International Reply Coupon – new printing	77p	Code CN 01 (4.95)	
?	Lettercard - reprint	34p	Whiter card and revised rouletting	
14 Feb	St. Patrick's Day			
	- set of five prepaid postcards	40p	per card	
	- set of five greetings cards	80p	per card including prepaid envelope	
6 April	Registered Envelope (C5 size)	IR£2.20	includes IR£1.70 registration fee and up to 35p postage.	
June	Bureau de Change postcards	no charge	set of five postcards	
July (?)	Postcard – new imprint - pack of five	IR£1.40	Revised layout	
23 Oct	Oireachtas '98 (Trá Lí) - postcard	no charge		



"A" Envelope: I referred to a number of new printings of this envelope in my 1997 article. I can now confirm a further variation of the envelope with the Roman "a" Postage Paid imprint. The inner lining now has a blue speckled pattern (previously a weave pattern). Printed on cream paper with normal folding on reverse.

International Reply Coupon: A new printing with a revised imprint code of CN 01 (previously C 22) was noted earlier this year. The layout/wording has not altered. There is also a date imprint of 4.95 (previously 9.1992) which may refer to the date of printing; however, this does not necessarily coincide with its distribution within Ireland.

Prepaid Lettercard: A reprint of the lettercard (first issued in 1991) was noted during the year. The new printing is on whiter card and has a wider rouletting resulting in 6 perforation holes per 2 cm instead of the previous 11.



St. Patrick's Day Cards: Five postcards were available featuring (1) Shamrock Dawn; (2) Síocháin; (3) Milk Bottles; (4) Detail of mosaic by Boris Anrep in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar; and (5) Girl in field. The Postage Paid imprint is the same R.J.King design as used last year. The Bord Failte logo has been replaced by a new "St Patrick's Festival" logo. The cards are bigger than in prior years and measure 178mm x 122mm and are now laminated on the obverse side. The price of individual cards was increased by 1p to 40p. The mosaic in Mullingar Cathedral was featured previously on one of the cards from the first set issued in 1984.

Five greetings cards complete with prepaid envelope bearing the same R.J. King stamp design as used in earlier years (i.e. with different typeface as compared to the postcard) were also available. The cards feature (1) Cross of Cong (2) Jumping lamb; (3) Heart of shamrocks; (4) Shamrocks; and (5) Celtic designs. The price of individual cards was increased by 15p to 80p.

Both postcards and envelopes incorporate a pre-printed "Priority/Aerphost" logo. This differentiates the envelope from prior year issues. A green "first day of issue" cancel was available from the bureau for use both on postcards and envelopes; the postmark design differed from prior years. Shrink-wrapped packs of six postcards or greetings cards were available for the price of five i.e. IR£2 and IR£4 respectively. The extra card in the postcard pack was the Shamrock Dawn design; the greetings pack repeated the Shamrocks design.

A special promotion was undertaken at the time of issue by the Letter Post division of An Post to business users with meter licences. The promotion offered a discount on large orders of either postcards or greetings cards. The outer white envelope (230mm x 162mm) containing details of the promotion had the same pre-printed Postage Paid stamp as used on the smaller greetings card envelope. Inside, as well as details of the promotion, a free set of the five postcards was included. In the past, similar promotions have included free examples often bearing a "Specimen" overprint in the message section. However, the cards enclosed this year did not bear any additional printing but were a special printing **without** the Postage Paid stamp. The stamp element was replaced with the wording "Please/Affix/Postage/Stamp/Here" within a square of imitation perforations. I understand that 100,000 sets of these cards were printed and distributed. Obviously, given that all recipients had a meter post machine, An Post did not want to forego the postage in addition to the printing cost. As the cards were not generally available in post offices, they cannot be given full catalogue status and are somewhat similar to the special American set of cards issued in 1985.




 old imprint


 New imprint

Posted on 3 April 1998, three days before official release date

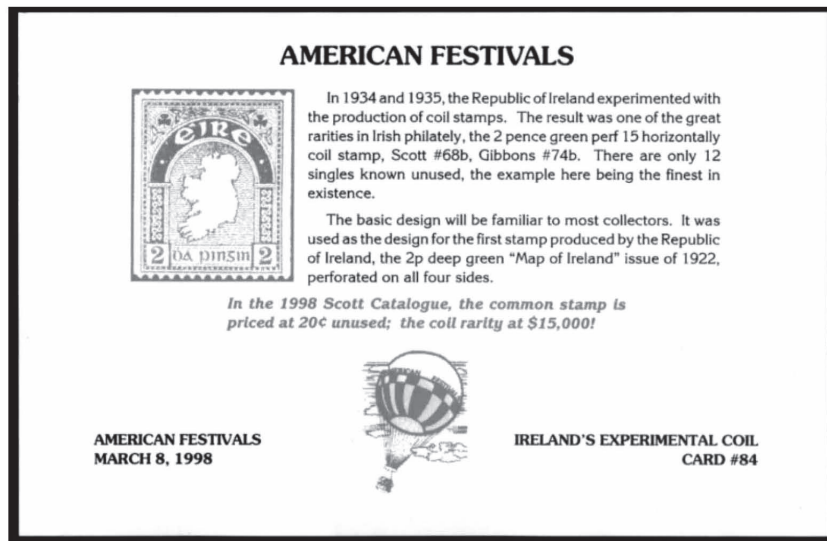
Registered Envelope: A new paper type registered envelope was released on 6 April 1998 in conjunction with the revised postal rates which came into effect on the same day. The new envelope measures 228mm x 162mm with a similar Postage Paid/Minimum Registration Fee Paid as the previous plastic envelope. As the envelope was distributed to most post offices at the same time as the new definitive values issued on 2 April, some post offices are known to have sold the new envelope as early as 3 April.

Postage Paid Postcards: The Postage Paid imprint now has 3 An Post logos (previously 4) and is thus smaller in size. The Irish wording within the imprint has been altered to the correct spelling of *Postas Iochta* (previously *Postas Iochta*) and the word *TO:* is now in larger type; in addition, a feint grey "ghost MESSAGE" is printed on the reverse of the card in large letters. The card stock is somewhat whiter than previous printings. The wrapping band is in the now familiar Letterpost format, green printing on a white background with the text "5 Postcards / Postage Paid / to / Ireland and Britain" and, in Gaelic script, "5 Cártaí Poist / Postas Iochta / go / Éire agus An / Bhreatain". The change in wording is due to the changes in the rate structure last April; previously, the cards could also be used to E.U. countries without additional charge. A further 2p stamp must now be affixed for mailing to any European destination.

Bureau de Change Postcards: The Bureau de Change section of An Post promoted their foreign exchange facilities to overseas visitors by offering a free pack of postcards (on request) when completing an exchange transaction. The attractive set of five unstamped postcards feature (1) Map of Ireland depicting various sports and pastimes; (2) Map showing the 32 counties of Ireland; (3) Various activities (golf, hurling, fishing) plus current Irish coins; (4) Extract from W.B. Yeats *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* together with an illustration of the Lake and a reproduction of the 5d W.B. Yeats stamps issued in 1965; and (5) Reproductions of four stamps featuring Irish writers – 5d W.B. Yeats (1965), 1s 5d Jonathan Swift (1967), 13p Oscar Wilde (1980) and 12p Sean O'Casey (1980). There is a wrapping band in the Letterpost format, which refers to the Bureau de Change and includes the words *With Compliments*.

Oireachtas Postcard: An attractive multicoloured postcard in a cartoon style featuring a boy playing a bohrán and a girl playing a tin whistle was issued for the annual Oireachtas which was held in Tralee (23 October to 1 November).

EXHIBITION SOUVENIRS AND CACHETS - OVERSEAS



American Festival - International Stamp Day: The one day show was held at the Meriden East Inn, Meriden, Conn., U.S.A. A souvenir card was given free to all show visitors. The 4¼" x 5½" card in green and black features an enlarged reproduction of the 1935 2d experimental coil (perf. 15 x imperf.). Further cards were available from the organisers at \$2.75.



Essen – Prepared but not used

A cachet was advertised and illustrated by An Post in *Collectors News* in advance of **Essen '98** (7 to 9 May) However, members resident in Germany have confirmed to me that the cachet was not available at the show, nor was it provided by the bureau in Dublin. A cachet was available at **Israel '98** (13 to 21 May). The cachet was not returned to the bureau in Dublin and was only applied to covers presented to the An Post agent at the show. In addition to the first day cachet for the miniature sheet, there was a general cachet in use at **Portugal '98** (4 to 13 September).

There was no cachet available this year at **Stamp '98** in London. A cachet was due to be made available for **Delhi '97** (15 to 22 December), as referred to in my 1997 article, but was not returned to the bureau and, therefore, has not been seen by the author.

EXHIBITION SOUVENIRS, POSTMARKS AND CACHETS – REPUI



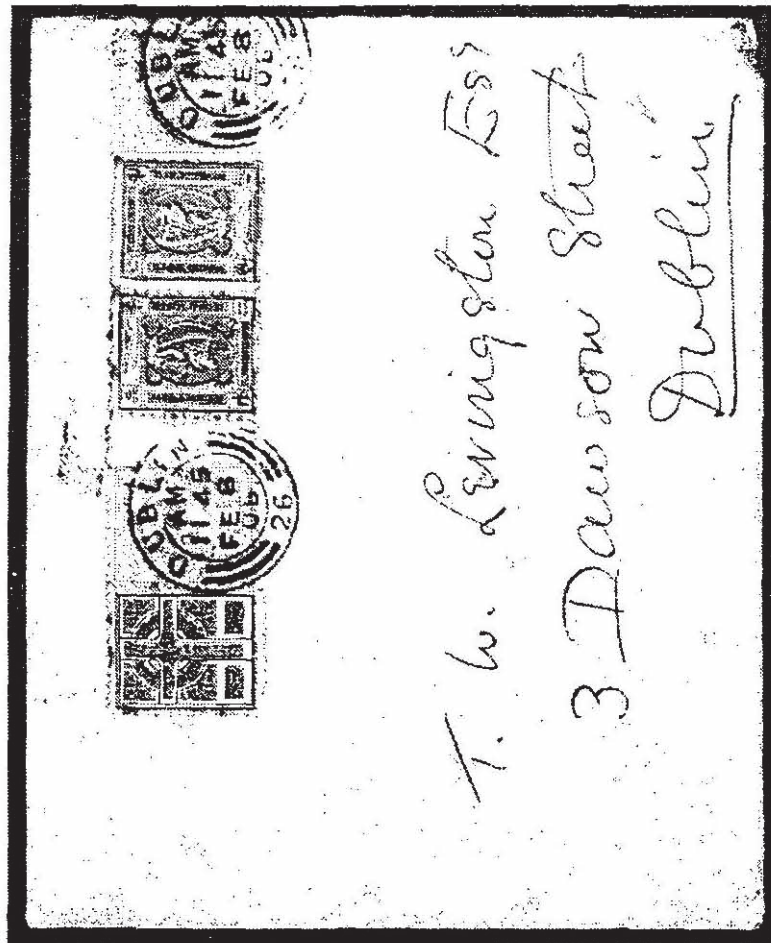
Date of Issue	Description				Printer
22 Mar	IPTA/An Post Collectors' Road Show, Limerick - Lighthouses booklet pane o/p in blue	IR£3.00	400		Mahons
26 July	IPTA/An Post Collectors' Road Show, Killarney 1798 Rebellion Sheetlet (30p) with o/p in green	IR£5.00	500		Mahons
19 Sept	IPTA/An Post Collectors' Road Show, Sligo 1798 Rebellion Sheetlet (30p) with o/p in blue	IR£5.00	500		Mahons
3 Oct	Cork Philatelic Society – Annual Exhibition - Booklet (2 x 30p Postbox stamps)	IR£2.00	150		
17 Oct	IPTA/An Post Collectors' Road Show, Kilkenny 1798 Rebellion Sheetlet (30p) with o/p in black	IR£5.00	500		Mahons
21 Oct	Dublin Stamp Society - 50 th Anniversary Cover	IR£1.50	300		
26 Oct	Stampa '98 - Tall Ships Booklet pane with o/p in black - Tall Ships Booklet pane with o/p in black	IR£15.00	1,100		Mahons
			1,100		Mahons
6 Nov	Stampa '98 - Postcard (small) - Postcard (large) - Official Handbook	20p 20p IR£1.00			
22 Nov	IPTA/An Post Collectors' Road Show, Galway 1798 Rebellion Sheetlet (30p) with o/p in maroon	IR£5.00	500		Mahons
1 Dec	Dublin Stamp Society - 50 th Anniversary Exhibition - Postcard of G.P.O. with o/p in black on reverse	IR£1.00	100		
5 Dec	IPTA/An Post Collectors' Road Show, Cork 1798 Rebellion Sheetlet (30p) with o/p in red	IR£5.00	500		Mahons



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