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As you can see there are not a lot of articles to publish, so I have put a Christmas card on the front to wish you all well. The reason for this being I shall be in the U.S.A. for a month (leaving early November) and rather than deprive you all of a issue of the Journal – something is better than nothing.

Congratulations to John Lennon on signing the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. John and Brian Warren combined their knowledge to include a piece on how to read the tagcodes used at the various Mail Centres operating in Ireland – otherwise we would have been down to an eight page issue. Apart from Brian's regular yearly review the well is dry for the March issue. Could I ask all members to put together something during the holiday season.

This information and any other relevant pieces, I usually try to put up on the web page which is www.philatelic.cwc.net. Also you may email me at eddydalton@ntlworld.com
Telephone 01494 583111 in the UK.

Editor

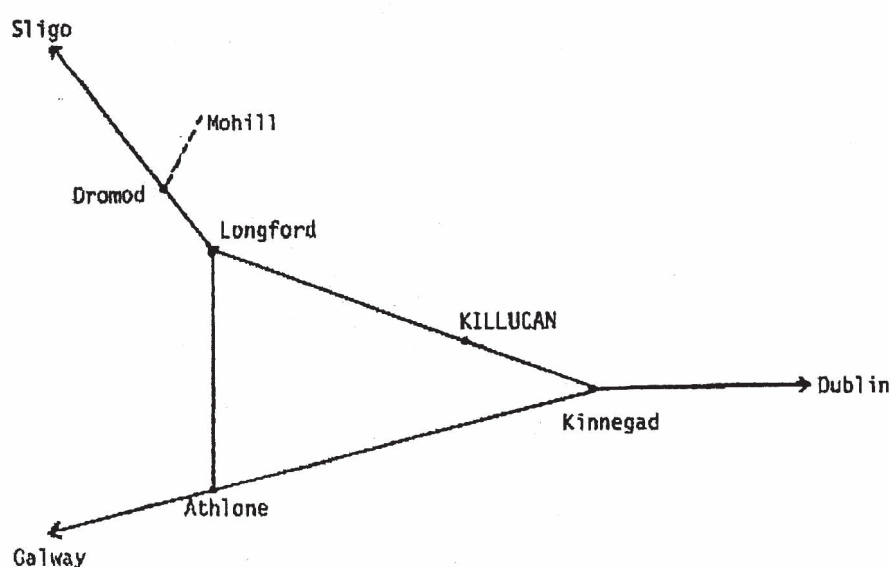
Eddy DALTON

Turn at Kinnegad

Kinnegad

Kinnegad (Irish: Cionn Atha Gad) Co. Westmeath is situated 39 miles west from Dublin. At Kinnegad the N4 splits into the N4 to Mullingar-Longford-Sligo and the N6 to Athlone-Galway. Nowadays the latter has a by-pass but the traffic to Mullingar still has to pass through the town centre. According to Tom Current's "Handbook of British Philately", appendix C, Kinnegad got its first post office in 1793 and in 1881, it had a census population of 424 (compared with Mullingar, 4787).

In the Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanac for 1807 it is stated as 30 Irish miles from Dublin (1 Irish mile = 1.27 English miles). In the 1818 Almanac it is mentioned with a mileage of 30 but during the next decades the mileage was always 29, resulting in a postage to Dublin of 5d. Up to now only straight line mileage marks KINNEGAD have come to light so it seems that there is not too much excitement with this post town.



Cross-posts

In the mid 17th century, posts were established along the roads from Dublin to Belfast, Coleraine, Derry, Sligo, Galway and Cork. Letters were carried by postboys who walked (foot-posts) or went on horseback. At that time the postroad to Sligo split off the Dublin-Galway road at Athlone and passed through Roscommon and Boyle. In the course of the 18th century however the postroads were rearranged and the Sligo road branched off from the Galway road at Kinnegad.

On a "Map of Postroads of Ireland, 1803" by William Larkin in fact we find eight main postroads. The Limerick road split off the Cork road at Naas, with the Derry road from Belfast road at Drogheda and the Sligo road from the Galway road at Kinnegad as mentioned before. The system was based on the assumption that all letters passed through Dublin. Until 1814 letters from Belfast to Cork paid 8d to Dublin plus 10d to Cork. From 3rd August 1814 mileages were added and such a letter was merely charged with 1/1d. In the 18th century it was already realized that it would be unwise to send letters to Dublin from/to towns only a short distance apart because they were situated on different post roads. The connection between Limerick and Cork could be taken as one of the earliest cross-posts. It stands to reason that letters were charged at a lower rate than if they had travelled through Dublin.

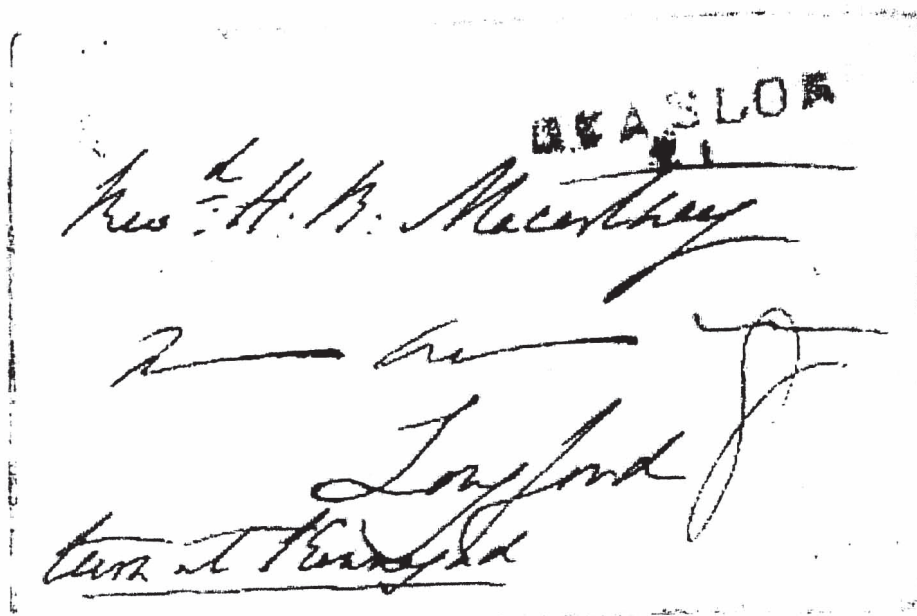


Fig. 1

Shown is an 1826 letter from Ballinasloe to Longford, with abbreviated mileage mark BNASLOE 71 and in manuscript "turn at Kinnegad" (fig.1). This meant that the letter had not to go via Dublin and no Dublin datestamp is applied. Calculation of the postage is as follows: Ballinasloe – Kinnegad 42 miles + Kinnegad – Longford 29 miles, making 71 miles. Amount to be paid 9d. On the letter is written 8d which would need an explanation. In 1826 an attempt was made for the amalgamation of the currencies in Great Britain and Ireland. Up to then there were 13 pence in an Irish shilling and 12 in a British shilling. By the amalgamation the Irish penny got the same value as the British one but that would mean an increase of postage of approximately 8%. So on 6th January, the Post Office published a list of the post towns of Ireland with the postage on a single letter from Dublin, in which the postage was 1d lower than before. Also crossroad letters benefited from the reduction and this explains the 8d instead of 9d. This reduction was too good to last and in 1827 the 1814 scale was re-introduced but now in British pence!

An 1839 letter from Athlone to Mohill even bypassed Kinnegad by a shorter route: from Athlone on the Galway road to Longford on the Sligo road by mailcar. Then by mailcoach to Dromod and from there by footpost to Mohill. The total distance was 35 miles which resulted in postage of 5d. Of interest are the manuscript "+ post" (cross-post) and "too late for Down mail" (*illustration not available – to be published in March issue*) which means that the letter failed to catch the Sligo coach and had to stay overnight at Longford.

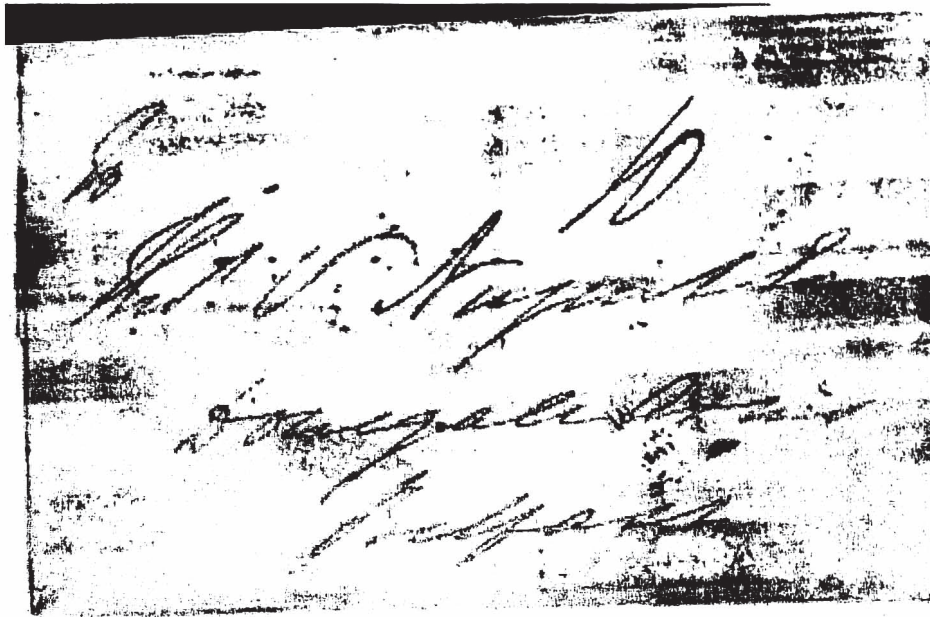


Fig 2 a

A second 1839 letter went from Killucan to Belfast (fig. 2a + 2b). It has the mileage marks for KILLUCAN 32 and KINNEGAD 29. Further a Dublin "diamond" JY 21 39 and a BELFAST JY 22 1839 (*weak Y appears as I*). Total mileage was 112 resulting in a charge of 10d. Obviously the letter was re-sorted at Kinnegad, probably from the Sligo coach into the Galway coach. In Kinnegad there was formerly a coaching inn on the Galway road which was demolished decades ago (information from Mr Coyne, local publican). Nowadays the post office is in the local chain store of Supervalu.

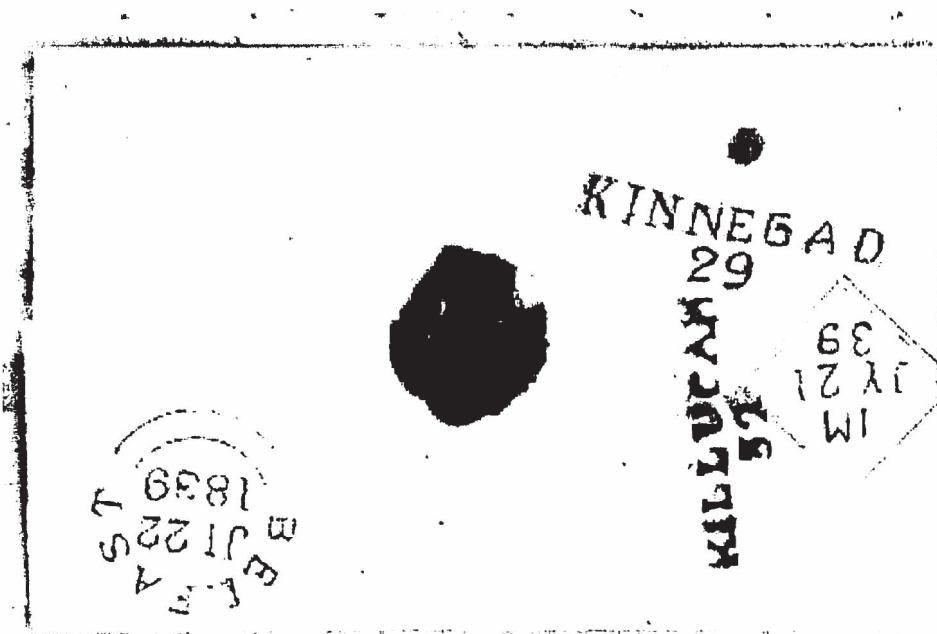


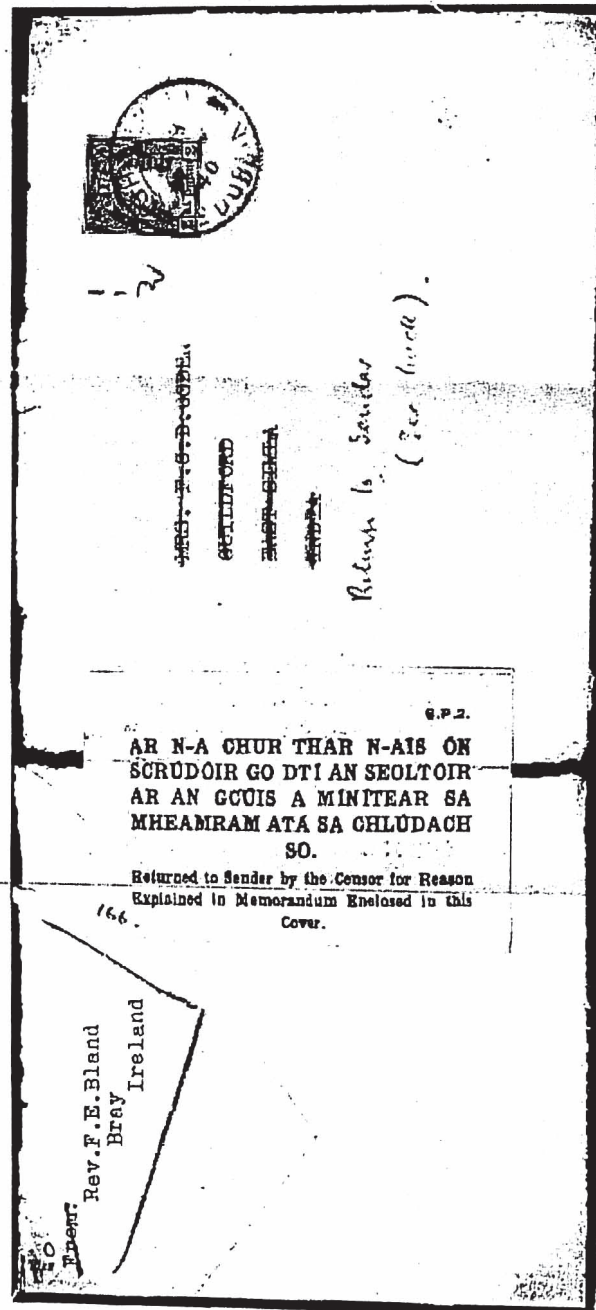
Fig. 2b

Frans HERMSE

Returned by Censor S.P.2

Having reviewed the book "Censorship of Mail in Ireland", I think there is a surprising omission. In the WW11 period of "Censorship of Mail in Ireland", the author gives a lot of attention to the pink "Opened by Censor" S.P.1 label but no mention of the yellow "Returned by Censor" S.P.2 label. Sadly my example does not have the Memorandum mentioned but I dare say some will be able to show us one.

CENSORSHIP - THE EMERGENCY
Returned to Sender



Peter WOOD

John Lennon – Roll of Distinguished Philatelists of Ireland



Pat Casey (right), Secretary of FPSI looks on as John Lennon signs the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists of Ireland at the Stamp Awards Dinner held in the Lansdowne Hotel on 11th October 2003.

The Circle are pleased to announce that John Lennon was selected this year to sign the Federation of Philatelic Societies of Ireland "Roll of Distinguished Philatelists".

John began collecting over 50 years ago when he got the mumps and his father, who had recently transferred to the Department of External Affairs, brought home stamps from the office. In those days most mail had stamps and diplomatic bags carried high values. 10/- stamps were used on outgoing bags and these were usually still on the labels on their return. These were usually bartered for Irish overprints and Vatican issues at the Mint Stamp Co. One day in 1965, he noticed a card of individually priced stamps in a Clare Street art shop window. The kindly old man inside was Arthur Stokes, the secretary of The Irish Philatelic Society, who introduced him to the world of organised philately and he has been a member of the Society ever since. In 1966, money he earned from student dances was spent with a fellow scholar from Rathfarnham when he bought the high value overprints. A few old covers, which neither of them knew anything about, were acquired also and thus began his interest in postal history. The other student was David Feldman.

He served as secretary of The Irish Philatelic Society for four years and in 2001 was responsible for writing a history of the Society to mark its centenary. "The Netherlands" was his first display in 1969 and he has given displays on various postal history topics in the intervening years, most recently at the IPC Annual Convention in Dublin last May.

In 1972, he helped in the set-up and running of the first Stamp, and has continued to do so every year since – twenty of them as a member of the Stamp Council. The 1973 Stamp catalogue contained his first published article "The First Irish Miniature Sheet". For many years he ran the Schools Competition and has promoted the hobby at school level. He has gained several awards at National level and has been a member of the Stamp jury given his wide philatelic knowledge. Irish postal history of all periods is now his main interest and he is fortunate to have a good source of modern mail that allows him to keep abreast of today's goings on.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Reference Michael Priestley's "The Overprinted Issues – Almond First Day Covers (June 2003 Irish Philately)"

Envelope No. 5 bears the single-circle handstamp **BALLS'BRIDGE B.O.(BRANCH OFFICE) DUBLIN**, whilst the other covers bear the double-circle handstamp **BALL'S BRIDGE D.O. (DISTRICT OFFICE) DUBLIN**, both handstamps being used at the same office.

DUBLIN 6 which appears on the registration label of cover No. 5 is (or I should say was – prior to the introduction of bar-coded registration labels) the number allocated to Ballsbridge Post Office for the purposes of sending mail by registered post.

Tony FINN

Postal Snippet

Your Cheque's in the Post – at last

OVER €1 million in tax refunds started dropping through letterboxes yesterday – nine months after the cheques simply disappeared.

Some 1,017 cheques were sent out from the Revenue Commissioners in Knauls, Co Clare on October 18, 2002 but people soon started complaining that they had not received the money they were owed.

Revenue launched an investigation and An Post admitted it had received the cheques but did not know where they had gone.

Staggering

Revenue then cancelled the originals and re-issued new cheques but the originals started to arrive yesterday – a staggering nine months late.

An Post admitted yesterday that the mailbags – containing cheques for hundreds and thousands of euro – were probably lost, then found and sent out.

"Well clearly there was a bag or two bags involved

in this and they went missing and they turned up," a spokesman for An Post said.

"But all those cheques have been cancelled. They are completely ineffective.

"The individuals who got them today would have got valid cheques last October.

"I'm trying to find out exactly what happened but that seems to be the situation – I can't be any more precise about the sequence at this stage."

However, the explanation was cutting no ice with one man who received a refund cheque yesterday.

"I was delighted at first.

Letters 'lost' for 9 months

I thought I was due the money back," he told *The Star*.

"Luckily I noticed the date on it because it could have led to a lot of trouble if I'd lodged the cheque or got a business to cash it.

"It wouldn't have been my fault.

"I think An Post has a lot of explaining to do – the least they could do would be alert the people affected to the problem."

The Revenue Commissioners have confirmed that they also became aware of the problem yesterday.

"Until this morning we had absolutely no idea where the batch had gone but it is important to acknowledge that these cheques are cancelled," a spokesman said.

Hugh McGOLDRICK

OPTICAL CHARACTER READER TAGCODES

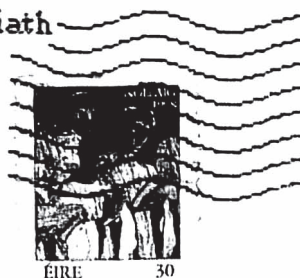


Baile Atha Cliath

DMC

13.12.98

24102942



This article illustrates how you can "read" the phosphor type vertical lines ("tagcodes") printed on the reverse of envelopes which pass through any of the Integrated Mail Processors ("IMPS") at the four Mail Centres (Athlone, Cork, Dublin and Portlaoise). The cancellation illustrated above and the matching tagcode (illustrated on the next page) are used as working examples.

Side of envelope	Machine Number (see list)	Day (1 to 31)	Time (½ hr) (0 to 47)	Sequence Number
------------------	------------------------------	------------------	--------------------------	-----------------

↓



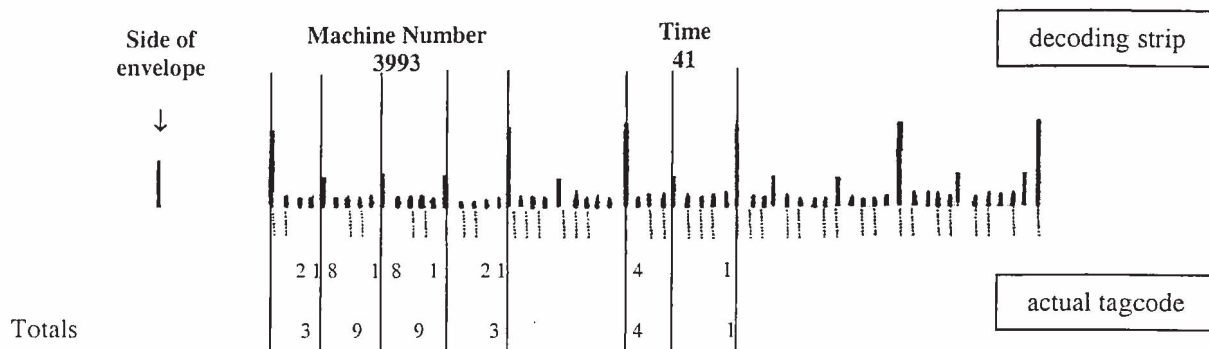
← guillotine

A decoding strip is set out above to enable members decipher the Optical Character Reader ("OCR") tagcodes printed on the reverse of the envelopes. Members are advised to photocopy this strip, laminate it (or glue it to a piece of card) and then cut/guillotine along the bottom as indicated.

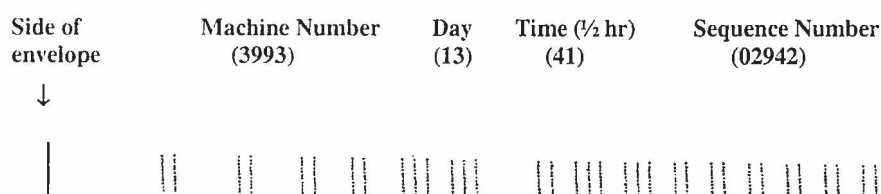
OCR tagcodes are usually printed on all mail whether outgoing or incoming which pass thro. the four Mail Centres. It should be noted that any incoming overseas mail which already has a similar tagcode (e.g. U.S. mail) may not have a second Irish tagcode applied as the OCR machinery will read the item number etc. already applied to track the envelope/postcard through the sorting system.

- align a copy of the decoding strip ABOVE the vertical lines on the reverse side of the envelope and read the relevant BLANK spaces as indicated below;
- all lines on the envelope are of the same length but the decoding strip set out above shows lines of various lengths to illustrate the different types of lines as referred to below;
- the first line at left represents the left vertical side of the reverse of the envelope - this line does not appear on the actual envelope;
- the five longest lines represent the division points between the **four** items of information viz. the **machine number/date/time/sequence number**;
- the lines of medium length represent the division points between digits; these lines (or absence of lines) at the various divisional points on the envelope **SHOULD BE IGNORED**;
- the smallest lines represent the binary code numbers which determine the various number references;

- the digit positions for the four items of information are set out from left to right and are made up of either 3, 4 or 5 binary numbers; each of these individual binary numbers are read **from right (position 1) to left (up to either 2, 3 or 4 positions)** with position 1 = 1 if blank, position 2 = 2 if blank, position 3 = 4 if blank and position 4 = 8 if blank. If there is a line rather than a blank, the line = 0.



If we take the decoding strip and align the bottom of the strip with the top of the tagcode for the postmark shown on page 60, you will be able to read the binary codes by assigning the relevant number 1, 2, 4 or 8 to each appropriate blank space. The make-up of the machine number and time reference are shown. The additional thin vertical lines are included on the sketch in order to illustrate the division points between each digit. Note some tagcode lines can be marginally out of alignment.



Taking the same tagcode and repeating this exercise for every digit, the various blank spaces (ignoring the division lines) are made up of the following binary numbers, each read from right to left:-

OCR Machine Number:

Digit 1: 1+2+0 = 3

Digit 2: 1+0+0+8 = 9

Digit 3: 1+0+0+8 = 9

Digit 4: 1+2+0+0 = 3

i.e. 3993 (= machine number 2 – see list on page 63)

Remember a line = 0
A blank equals a number - 1, 2, 4 or 8

Day:

Digit 1: 1+0+0 = 1

Digit 2: 1+2+0+0 = 3

i.e. 13 (only the day in the month given)

Time:

(0 to 47)

Digit 1: 0+0+4 = 4

Digit 2: 1+0+0+0 = 1

i.e. 41 (8.30 p.m.)

Time given in half-hour intervals
0 = 12 midnight to 47 = 11.30 p.m.
(Divide by 2, to give 24hr clock)

Item Number:

Digit 1: 0+0 = 0

Digit 2: 0+2+0+0 = 2

Digit 3: 1+0+0+8 = 9

Digit 4: 0+0+4+0 = 4

Digit 5: 0+2+0+0 = 2

i.e. 02942

Sequence returns to 1
after each half-hour

For some unknown reason the number 11 (1+2+0+8) in any section should be read as 7.

Dublin and Portlaoise Mail Centre postmarks incorporate the same information within the printed cancellation (see illustration at top of 60). Taking the same example the "all in one" number in the postmark reads:

24102942

The first digit identifies the OCR machine (# 2) which equates to the tagcode number of 3993 (see full listing on next page). The remaining 7 digits match the time (41) and sequence (02942) information as included in the tagcode. The full date is included in the printed cancellation at all Mail Centres.

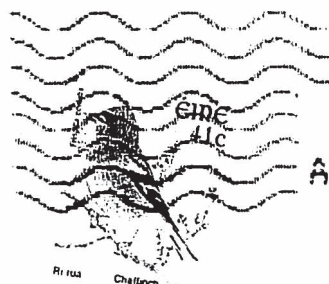
Discover
Science + Engineering

PortLaoise
FMC
12.11.03
07:00 pm
23810892

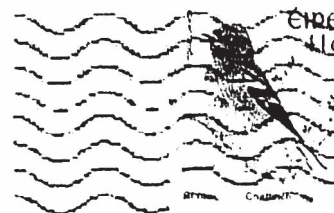


The actual time to the half-hour has always been included in Portlaoise postmarks since commencement of operations at this location in February 2000. Dublin also incorporated the time within the postmark but only during the period from 2 July 1999 until late June 2000 (# 3992) or until early September 2000 (# 3993). The Dublin tagcode continues to include the time (as does Portlaoise).

ATHLONE MAIL CENTRE
AMC
04.10.02
00017430

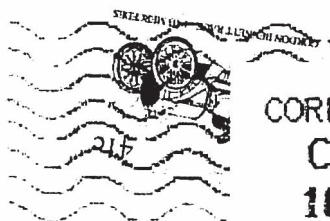


Baile Átha-Luain
Athlone Mails Centre
14.07.03
03406641

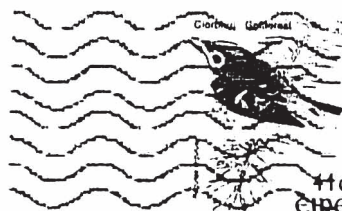


Initially the Athlone cancel was inscribed in English but was altered to a partial bi-lingual format in February 2003

CORK MAILS CENTRE
CMC
05.09.03
00163002



CORK MAILS CENTRE
CMC
10.09.03
00127315



Cork is "all English" to date. Since mid-Sept. 2003, cancels with tagcode 3996 have the "CMC" aligned left with the date

The Athlone and Cork machines do not include the time in the postmark and the number DOES NOT correspond with the tagcode information on the reverse. This number appears to be a continuous sequence since the machine was introduced with a different sequence for each machine.

John LENNON and Brian WARREN

Mail Centres in the Republic of Ireland

Introduction of IMP's

Dublin Mail Centre (DMC)

	<i>Number in postmark</i>	<i>Number in tagcode</i>	<i>First known use on live mail</i>
OCR only, no postmarks, for use on meter and PPI mail	n/a	3989	January 1994 ¹
	n/a	3990	January 1994 ¹
	n/a	3991	January 1994 ¹
with cancelling machine postmark	1	3992	9 November 1998
	2	3993	9 November 1998
	3	3994	March 2001
	4	3995	April 2001
	5	3996	May 2001

Port Laoise Mail Centre (PMC)

with cancelling machine postmark	1	3994 ²	28 February 2000
	2	3995 ²	28 February 2000
then changed to	1	3985 ³	February 2001
	2	3986 ³	February 2001

Athlone Mail Centre (AMC)

with cancelling machine postmark	none	3980 ⁴	Late 2002
	none	3981	August 2002
	none	3982	August 2002
	none	3983	January 2003

AMC postmarks were first inscribed in English, altered to combination of English/Irish⁵ in February 2003.

Cork Mail Centre (CMC)

with cancelling machine postmark	none	3996 ⁶	August 2003
	none	3997	August 2003
	none	3998	August 2003
	none	3999	September 2003

CMC postmarks still inscribed in English (as of November 2003).

No slogans used to date at either at AMC or CMC.

¹ DMC came into operation in January 1994; not sure if all 3 OCR machines were operating from first month.

² Live mail put thro. Portlaoise from 11 January 2000 but a Dublin (Baile Átha Cliath) slogan used and no tagcode applied; mail then transferred to DMC where DMC tagcode applied some hours later. This continued to Friday 25 February 2000. No activity over the weekend of 26/27 February. Monday 28 February saw first use of Port Laoise cancelling machines (and tagcodes).

³ With the introduction of three new machines at DMC in March 2001, the Port Laoise machines were re-numbered prior to their introduction. New numbering first seen on IMP 23 (Prize Buy.com)

⁴ Tagcode 3980 first noted later in 2002 on unpostmarked item.

⁵ Note non IMP roller cancellations at all four centres including Athlone are inscribed in English.

⁶ Tagcode same as DMC but no re-numbering (unlike Port Laoise) as yet. Since mid-Sept. 2003 the postmark on mail with this tagcode had "CMC" aligned with the left of the date (instead of normal centre position).