



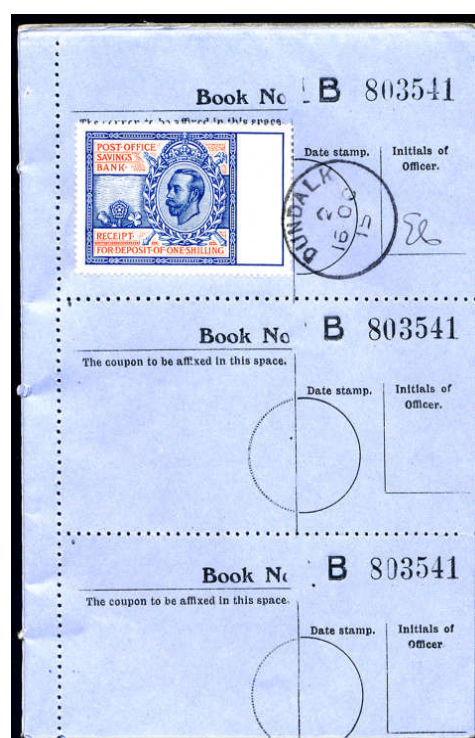
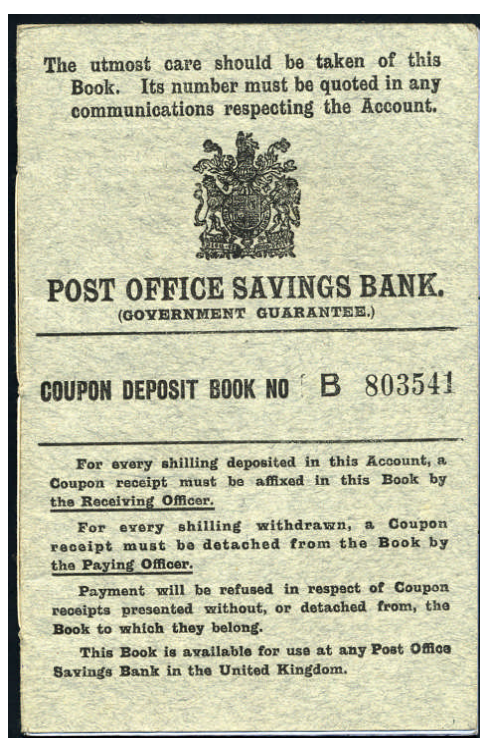
Volume 2008

Irish Philately

Issue 4

December

THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH PHILATELIC CIRCLE



British Savings Book with 1/- "coupon" cancelled Dundalk – see page 70
(courtesy of MacDonnell Whyte Ltd.)

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EDITORIAL

I must commence by thanking those who contacted me expressing their satisfaction with the last edition – my first as your editor. To be truthful, I enjoyed doing it and provided I continue to get a steady flow of input, in whatever shape or form, from you the membership, I intend to continue enjoying myself. Our hobby is important to all of us and surely a large part of that enjoyment is sharing the pleasure with others, whether it be exchanging information or discussing the acquisition of new items.

I must next make an apology, although I am not really sure why I should be apologising to you when it should be you, our membership, apologising to me! Graeme Murray, who made such a good job of the Catholic Emancipation Issue in the last edition of Irish Philately, tells me that he has effectively had zero response to requests for information on the **SHANNON SCHEME** and **RDS** issues. In consequence there is no article from him in this issue. We made a good start and I am determined that we keep it going. Therefore I ask that each and every one of you (and that includes you) looks at your own collection and sends details of anything that you have, blocks, covers, memorabilia and whatever on these two issues to Graeme. His e-mail address is G.Murray@Oilplus.co.uk - thank you for your help and just to inspire you I shall award a small prize for the most unusual contribution he receives by 15 January 2009.

Talking of prizes, the winner of September's Editor's Challenge received a small collection of 50 or so Co Clare postmarks (see page 84). It is amazing what there is lying in our boxroom which my wife is anxious to see find a new home!

I do ask myself at times where our hobby is taking us. I am constantly being told that people don't write letters any more and the postal service is dead. The fact however remains that there are certain times when the ubiquitous e-mail is not good

enough, whether it be the 'serious' business letter, the plumber's bill or a holiday postcard. I was therefore disappointed, when in Ireland recently, to find in both of the offices I called at to buy stamps for those postcards, that no commemorative stamps were available and the range of definitives was less than spectacular. I have not stopped to count how many commemoratives An Post has inflicted on those that collect new issues during the last 12 months and will no doubt do again next year and again in 2010. The stamps are simply not seen by the vast majority of the population and in consequence are not collected by as many as we would all wish. The future of our hobby involves a joint responsibility. Part of that duty is ours, to get out there and promote stamps (and postal history) to our non-collecting friends and acquaintances (like the man I sat next to on the return flight from Frankfurt a couple of weeks ago); the responsibility rests equally with An Post to ensure that their product is seen, not just on glossy posters but importantly on those letters which do from time to time still land on the doormats of every house in Ireland. The hobby must gain new collectors and thoughtful application will gain extra revenue for An Post. This is a theme I shall return to from time to time.

I was pleased to see many of you at either Stampex or the AGM in London, although not as many as I would have wished. Reports are in the Quarterly Newsletter sent to members with this issue. I do ask members to take advantage of occasions such as these to let me know what you want to see in Irish Philately and likewise the website – which do please use. I am trying to ensure this is kept up to date and welcome your telling me of any errors you may spot – e-mail address is below. And whilst mentioning e-mail addresses, do please contact Graeme for me (see above) and if you don't do e-mail yet there is always the post (I am at Roskelley, Brock Road, St Peter Port, Guernsey). It will give you an excuse to use a stamp!

Stan 16.11.08

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I write in response to the item presented as “Illegal Usage” from Eddy Dalton in “Irish Philately” June 2008, page 22. Whilst I agree this is a very interesting item I cannot agree that it is actually an illegal usage, not in the postal rate sense at least. In Ireland the foreign postcard rate remained at 1½d from 1st April, 1922 until 1st August, 1949 when it increased to 2d.

Thus it is seen that a postcard addressed to Belgium in 1928 bearing the 2d map stamp is actually **over** franked (i.e. Only a 1½d Irish stamp was necessary) The fact that an unoverprinted British stamp, of any denomination whatever, is affixed is of no consequence as far as the Free State post office revenue is concerned.

However two other questions now arise: firstly should the postal clerk have cancelled the British Stamp? I suggest he should not have done so.

Secondly, did the Free State postal rules prohibit the placing of any “label resembling a postage stamp being placed on the address side of a postal item” as the British rules did ?

From the Free State post office point of view perhaps this British stamp could have been classed as use of such a label and had there been a senders address the card could have been “returned to sender” as against regulations !

An interesting item indeed, but perhaps not for the reason suggested.

Yours etc
Peter Wood
London W12

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed Patrick William’s article in the last edition which both explained the Crescent Flaw to me and caused me to look again at my stamps. To my delight I found an example (*illustrated alongside as Tony’s fine example may well come out better than those shown in the last journal - Ed*) having previously thought all I had was a stamp with a blob of ink, possibly caused by an interchange of stereotypes. Patrick has well and truly answered my question.

Yours etc
Tony Best
Poole, Dorset UK

Dear Editor,

I write to express my thanks to Florence McCarthy for his response in “Irish Philately” of June 2008 to my article about Private Cachets.

The two items shown on the back cover are surely “illustrated envelopes” which are a related but different collecting area. Both are however super examples and please note I am suitably envious if you ever wish to donate them to a good home Florence !

To return to the cachets and one in particular has caused no little excitement to me as I have one of its partners in what may be a worldwide series of several thousand. I refer to the cachet of I.V. B. Stewart-Hunter, Cable Mess, Waterville (with the number 3875 above the crest).

I have a similar cachet but being faint and on a buff envelope does not copy clearly, which is why it was not included in my original piece. Mine is from “Michael Francis O’ Donnell, 12 Leinster Square, Rathmines, DUBLIN, Ireland” (Number 3963 appears above the crest, “member of the Internacia Ligo” appears below it.)

My envelope is addressed to : Mr. R. S. Carter, vice-President “Internacia Ligo”, P.O. 52, Balboa Heights, Panama City, Canal Zone and was posted from Dublin on 10th December, 1924. Does that address appear on the Stewart-Hunter example I wonder? I think these were two pioneer members of the Esperanto movement in Ireland, writing to a league official. Similar cachets must be out there from various countries but are there any more Irish ones ?

Yours etc
Peter Wood



MAIL GUARDS ON MAIL COACHES – Hugh McGoldrick

Coach & Post Roads of Ireland – Part 4

Mail guards were employed on Mail Coaches, on all routes from the start in 1789. They were paid 10/- per week to protect the mail in case of robberies or hold-ups by bandits or brigands. In some cases the army had to escort the mail coaches in parts of the country where outlaws or bandits continually committed robberies of the mail and passengers. Rebels also caused havoc in the lead up to and after the 1798 rebellion when they stole the mail and weaponry of the guards. When you were selected as a mail guard, it was preferred that you had an ex-army or militia service with knowledge of the firearms of the day. They were supplied with a uniform, hats and boots. These were published in the journals of the Irish House of Commons LXXXVI 1790/91 VOL. XIV.

Mail guards also carried a time - piece safe, i.e. time watch. This was set, on departure, by the time of the time clock at the GPO in Dublin. The time was entered on a sheet of paper called the time bill along with all the times of arrival and departure recorded in each post town they passed through. It was finally signed on arrival at final destination by the receiving Post Master. By 1830, mail guards were on 10/6 per week, while the coach men or coach drivers were employed by the mail contractors with wages from 10/- to 12/- per week. Mail guards were allowed to rest one journey in three. By 1838, George Louis, Superintendent of the Mail Coaches, in a return to the House of Commons XXXIV Part 1 stated that there were 85 mail guards employed in Ireland. 82 were paid 13/- per week, while 3 were on 21/- per week. In the same report there were 3 Mail Inspectors in Ireland.

Also run were 102 mail carts or mail cars on common roads with no mail guards.

In April 1831, when the Irish Post Office was consolidated with the British Post Office, each mail guard was supposed to be issued with the following arms, 1 double gun and bayonet, a brace of pistols, later changed to include a sword to be carried and the scabbard to be fixed to the roof of the mail coach for easy access. Mail coach Inspectors carried out spot checks to check the good order of the weapons and offenders were liable to punishment.

Further information from 1831 onwards, on mail guards, mail coaches, mail cars etc. can be researched in the Post Office Archives in London where much detailed information to be found. *(Hugh we would welcome a future article!! – Ed).*



fig 1

We illustrate two items overseen by the mail guard on the Belfast to Dublin mail coach. Fig 1 above shows an item from Killyleagh in 1809 that would have travelled via Downpatrick to reach the mail coach at Newry before being offloaded at Drogheda en route to Ardee whilst the item at fig 2 (1832) would have travelled on the entire route, having first gone from Grayabbey, Co Down via Newtownards to Belfast to join the coach.



fig 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE TAXE MARKS OF IRELAND – PART 2

continued from page 55 of the September issue

Ken Snelson

Figure 9 shows the post WWII use of the Belfast 50 ctms mark Type BE-1-50 mark referred to in Part 1 of this article.

In the UK through the 1940s and 1950s the pound was falling in value compared to the UPU gold currency. The British Post Office made a change from 1d = 10 gold centimes to 1d = 8 gold centimes on May 1, 1940. By the late 1950s the 1d had fallen to only 3½ gold centimes. There were similar changes in the equivalence applied in Eire. Through the 1950s and early 1960s I have seen neat small hexagons with values of 5, 8, 9, 12, 16, 18, and 25. These marks are similar to the 9 centimes mark shown in Figure 10. This figure also shows a late usage of the circular mark Type C-8 believed to have been used at Cork and illustrated in Part 1.

I do not have details from official sources of when the changes in the exchange rate to gold centimes

were made in Eire but the following are observations based on covers I have seen:

Table 1 - Double deficiency in gold centimes

Date	UPU Rate	Deficiency			
		½d	1d	2d	3d
Mar 1, 1951	4½d	5	9	18	
May 18, 1953	5d			16	
Apr 1, 1959	6d		8	16	25
Jun 1, 1964	8d			12	18

Following the rate change on March 1, 1951 1d was approximately equal to 4½ gold centimes with odd halves rounded up.

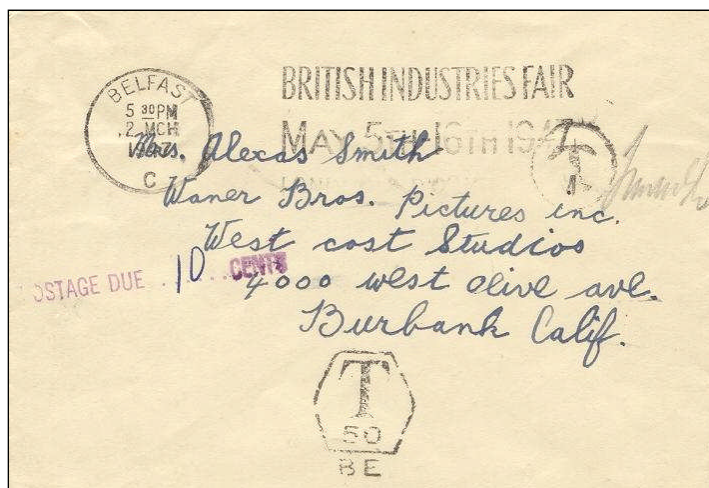


Figure 9: 1947 Mailed in Belfast unpaid to Hollywood star.

2½d rate to US not paid.

Taxed at old rate of 1d = 10 gold centimes rather than the rate introduced in 1940 of 1d = 8 gold centimes.

2 x 2½d = 5d = 50 g ctms;

Type BE-1-50 Scarcity D 1943F 1947L. Also has Type C-6 of Belfast (see Figure 5)

In USA: 50 gold centimes = 10¢ due.

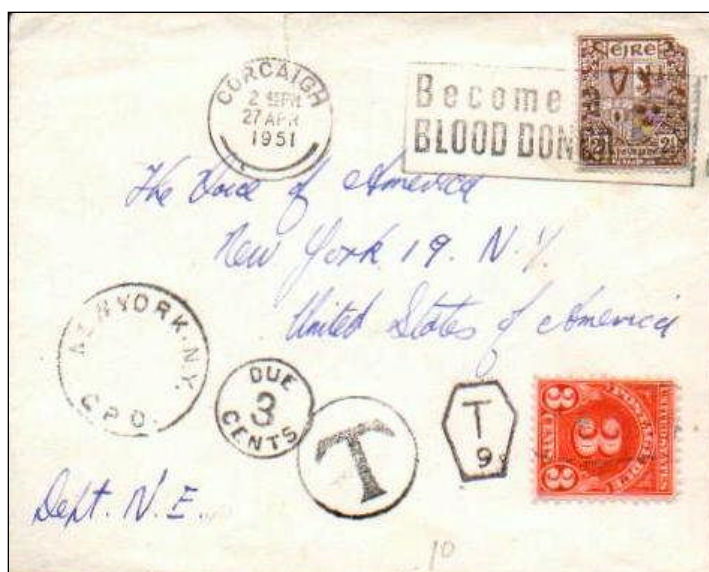


Figure 10: 1951 Mailed in Corcaigh (Cork)

1d short on 3½d rate to US.

2 x 1d = 2d

2d x 4½ g ctms/1d = 9

9 gold centimes tax mark and Cork Type C-8

In USA:

1¢ = 3 gold centimes;

9 gold centimes = 3¢ due.

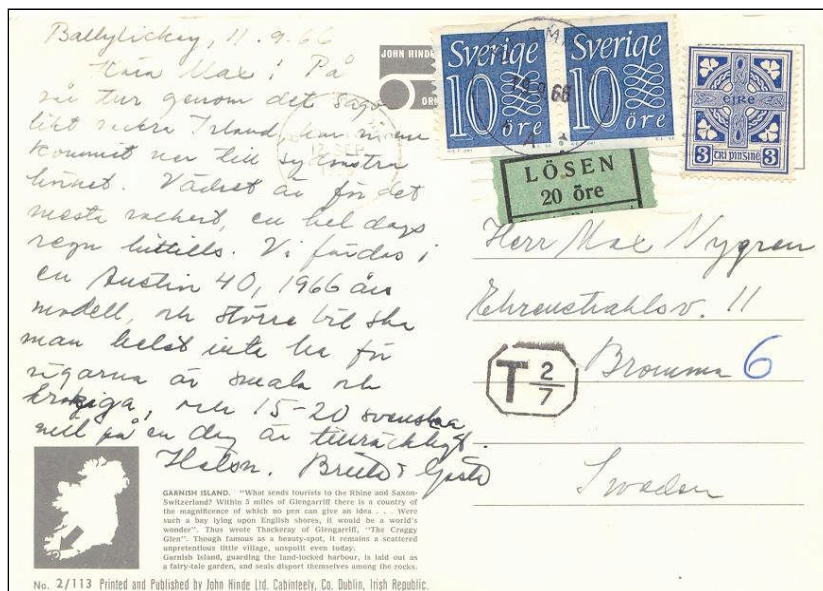


Figure 11: 1966 Mailed in Ireland

1d underpaid on
4d UPU postcard rate.

Fraction $\frac{2}{7}$ double 1d deficiency
7 UPU letter rate

In Sweden:

UPU letter rate was 60 öre

$2/7 \times 60 \text{ öre} = 17$
rounded up to 20 öre due

On May 18, 1953 in addition to the change in UPU rate, mail to the USA was charged at UPU rates rather than a concessionary rate. A lot of mail was paid at the 3d internal rate and was treated as 2d underpaid on the 5d UPU rate. Double the 2d deficiency was taxed as 16 gold centimes.

After the change in UPU rates on April 1, 1959 the equivalence appears to be 1d equals 4 gold centimes. This changed to an equivalence of 1d = 3 gold centimes on June 1, 1964.

On January 1, 1966 the UPU introduced a completely new system for showing the amount due on underpaid international mail. The centimes indication was replaced by a fraction. The numerator of the fraction was double the deficiency while the denominator was the basic UPU letter rate. Both numbers were expressed in the currency of the sending country. The receiving country multiplied this fraction by its own basic UPU letter rate in its own currency. The result was a charge that was approximately double the deficiency assuming that the basic UPU letter rates in the sending and receiving country were of comparable value.

Èire introduced octagonal marks to show the UPU fraction. Figure 11 shows a mark with a $2/7$ fraction to Sweden. The UPU rule is sometimes incorrectly interpreted that the denominator is the rate that should have been paid. For regular UPU letter mail the correct and incorrect treatment give the same fraction. The postcard in Figure 11 shows a case where the two treatments give different results. The correct denominator is the 7d UPU letter rate and not the 4d UPU postcard rate that should have been paid. From 1966 to 1968 I have seen similar fractional marks with values of $2/7$, $4/7$ (Mackay No. 1484) and $8/7$. I have also seen a mark from

1970 with a $6/9$ fraction after the increase in the Irish UPU letter rate to 9d on January 1, 1969.

On January 2, 1967 the British Post Office issued a strange tax mark to Belfast, Type BE-4. This mark included the '15' office number for Belfast within the hexagon. This mark was issued after the introduction of fractional tax marks and makes no allowance for showing the fraction. I have seen four covers using this mark from the late 1970s with a manuscript indication of the fraction. In all cases the 'I' is very weak.



BE-4
Scarcity D
1967I
1978F
1979L

After decimalization in 1971 there were rapid changes in UK postal rates and a wide variety of UK tax marks were used as they tried to have up to date marks including at least the UPU letter rate denominator. Many UK marks were only in use for about a year. I do not have details of how Èire coped with these circumstances. Mackay No. 1486 is a small rectangular framed 'T' mark with a fraction bar to allow the fraction to be entered in manuscript. I have not seen this mark used but Mackay in 1982 says it "has been noted lately."

On January 1, 1976 the UPU made another significant change. The numerator of the fraction was changed to single deficiency rather than double deficiency. The receiving country multiplied by its own UPU rate as before and added a handling fee. Figure 12 shows a cover from Èire to Austria. The tax mark is a circular type with the fraction bar and space to allow the fraction to be inserted in manuscript. This shows the correct use of a single deficiency fraction.

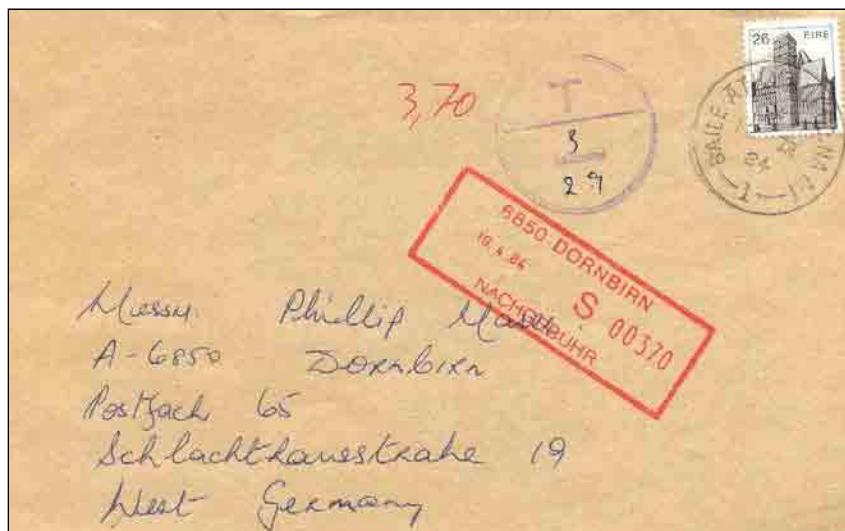


Figure 12: 1984 Mailed in Ireland
3p short on 29p UPU letter rate.

Fraction $\frac{3}{29}$ single deficiency
29 UPU letter rate

Dornbirn is in Austria
not West Germany.
Correctly sent to Austria.

In Austria: 3.70 Schillings due.

I do not have the UPU rate or the
postage due fee to show how this
was calculated.

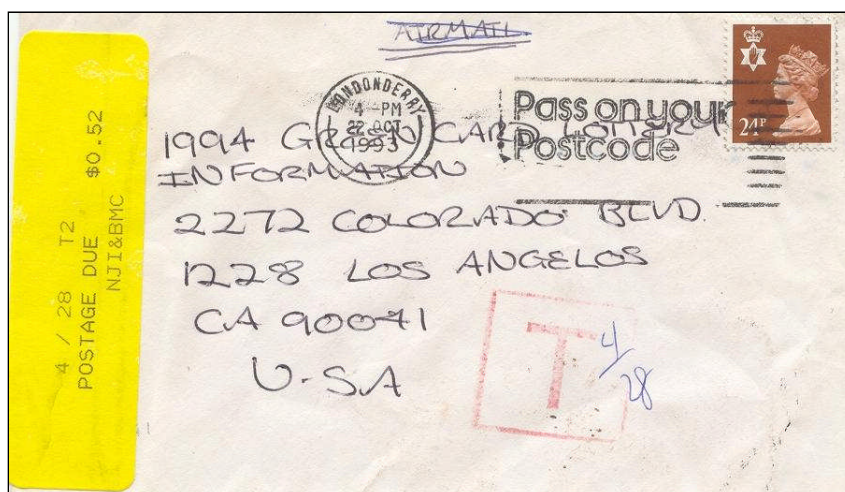


Figure 13: 1993
Mailed in Londonderry
4p short on 28p UPU letter rate.

Fraction $\frac{4}{28}$ single deficiency
28 UPU letter rate

R-7(ii) tax mark
probably applied in Belfast.

In USA: UPU letter rate 70¢;
Handling charge was 42¢.

$\frac{4}{28} \times 70¢ + 42¢ = 52¢$ due
Shown on yellow label

On October 20, 1986 the British PO started to treat mail to Ireland according to UPU rules for international mail. The rates from the UK to Ireland became the same as to other EEC destinations. The Éire PO may have made similar changes for mail in the other direction but I do not have any information. [Separate rates for GB were introduced by An Post on April 2, 1991 – Ed.]. This caused a lot of confusion, particularly for mail from Northern Ireland to Éire. Mackay discusses this at length in his 1988 Postal History Annual.¹ A lot of mail was paid at the UK internal 13p second class rate, 5p short on the 18p EEC concessionary rate. The British PO did not seem to adopt the UPU practice of showing a fractional deficiency. Some covers were marked with the deficiency in pence, in this case 5p. In England some special tax marks were issued including the 5p deficiency. Mackay illustrates an example of Type BE-4 with the 'I' removed used as a 5p tax mark.² I do not know whether An Post used tax marks on mail to GB; Northern Ireland continued to be treated as internal.

By the early 1990s the UK post office was reducing the use of tax marks. Most underpaid mail was

either returned to sender, charged to the sender or the underpayment was ignored.

Figure 13 shows an underpaid cover from Northern Ireland to the USA. It has a red rectangular framed tax mark which may have been applied in Belfast.

Although the UPU rules still show the taxing of mail as one of several methods allowed for handling underpaid mail, I have a letter from the British PO indicating that the use of tax marks in the UK had been completely discontinued by the end of the 1990s. I do not know whether the Éire post office still uses tax marks.

This introduction to the tax marks of Ireland has many gaps. If any one has additional information on the marks of Ireland before partition or Northern Ireland after partition, I would welcome it as an addition to the listings of my book on UK tax marks. If some one wants to undertake a thorough study of the tax marks of Éire, I would willingly contribute the details of covers known to me.

¹ Mackay, James A. The Postal History Annual 1988 (published by the author 1987) Pages 81-84.

² Ibid Page 84.

MY FAVOURITE ITEM(S) - Tony Best

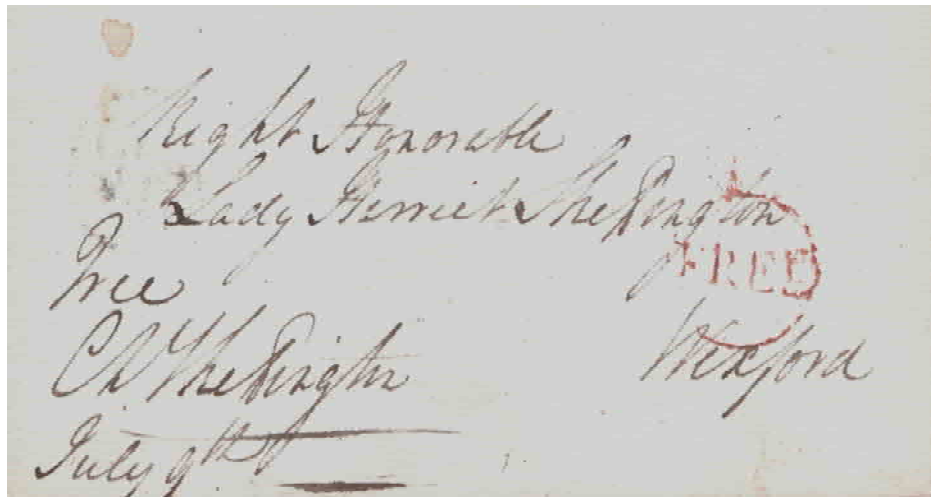
Below are two prestamp items which represented an incredible piece of luck. For when I got them I had no idea that they were family correspondence relating to my late wife. Her maiden name was Skeffington and her family originally came from Rock near Dungannon in Co Tyrone. These came from an IPC auction some years ago and I did write briefly about them in the June 2004 edition of Irish Philately. The descriptions were simply 'Free front from Dublin to Wexford circa 1760' and '1834 entire with Inspector's crown'. Such simple descriptions but an exciting find they were.

The earlier item is addressed to the Right Honourable Lady Harriet Skeffington and in the letter there is no reference to any family so it is assumed it was written just after her marriage. The Skeffingtons had three daughters, hence the title lapsed as it would have run through the male line.

Skeffington is a village near Leicester in England. I have sought but never found a postcard although some years ago I did take a photograph when I managed to pass through on a business trip. That was before I had any interest in Postal History.

The second is addressed to The Right Honourable Lord Ferrard and has an Inspector's crown. Lord Ferrard's son, the Hon Thomas Foster married the Skeffington's second daughter, also named Harriet. In 1817 by Royal licence they took the name and he became Lord Skeffington.

When I wrote 4 years some helpful members sent various items and cuttings so I now have a much better story. It is amazing to think these two items have stayed together in 'family' correspondence for over 170 years.



A JOINT ISSUE WITH SPAIN – DANCING - John Mullen

On the 7th November the Irish Post Office “An Post” and the Spanish Post Office “Correos” issued two stamps depicting the theme of “Popular Dancing”. The launch took place on Wednesday the 6th in the conference room at the GPO.

Those attending included the Spanish Ambassador to Ireland, Her Excellency Mercedes Rico, Mr. Colm Murphy Head of Strategy and Planning An Post, Mr. José Luis Fernández Reyero Manager of Philatelic Service Correos, Mr. Adian Murphy Irish Philatelic Manager, Mr. Stephen Ferguson Assistant Company Secretary (An Post) and Mr. Conor Walton Artist/ Designer of both stamps.

The two stamps show an Irish Dancer 55cts and a Flamenco Dancer 82cts which surprised me as I

thought the higher value would show the Irish dancer, this being the rate to Europe and America. After the introductions and speeches the two stamps were unveiled by Mr. Aidan Murphy and Mr. Jose Luis Fernandez Reyero after which we were treated to a dancing spectacle by an Irish dancer Moya Hannigan age 11 from the Purcell D’Arcy Academy and then by a Flamenco dancer Maria O’Hanrahan age 10 from the Aires Flamenco Dancers.

The Spanish Ambassador was given the task of cancelling a FDC which concluded the launch. Lunch followed with all attending being presented with a FDC and a miniature sheet. At this time, we were able to have the covers signed by the Artist/Designer Mr. Conor Walton.



FDC of 7 November signed by Mr. Jose Luis Fernandez Reyero and Conor Walton Artist

A POSTMARK MUSEUM

I suspect that few of our members will find themselves at Bellevue, Ohio (about 50 miles west of Cleveland). I have, however, been sent details by a friend in the USA of the Postmark Collectors Club Postmark Museum in this small town. Apparently the museum contains photographs of over 40,000 post offices and a collection of postmarks in over 300 binders. The material is 99+% American.

Quality of information inevitably varies from state to state but if any member is looking, for example, for Irish related US material this could be a useful place to start seeking information. If any member does, perchance, visit, I would welcome a report. To find out more visit www.postmarks.org. I am hopeful that we may be able to exchange a link to our website.

Ed

AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL GIFFNEY

During the recent 'Stampa' show in Dublin, your editor was able to persuade Michael Giffney to spend a few minutes talking about his philatelic life. Michael, a long term member of the Circle, has been a part of the Dublin philatelic scene for over 60 years and stamps have played a big part in his life. Michael, now semi-retired (no philatelist ever fully retires) now lives with his wife at Swords some ten miles north of the City. Our photograph shows Michael on Andy Ballard's stand at Stampa. This is what he told me:-



SC: What made you start collecting?

MG: I have to thank my brother for that. He was older than I was and having lost interest he passed his collection on to me. That was in 1947 and I am so glad he did it.

What were the 'In' stamps at that time – overprints?

No the interest in the overprints was largely finished. Many were still on sale at the GPO. The interest was in the latest commemoratives although they were relatively few and far between. Otherwise it was largely British Empire as it then was.

And your first serious collecting area?

Those commemoratives. They were exciting in the 1940s and 50s. We had far more new stamps than Britain in those days.

And how have your interests changed over the years?

I have moved to appreciate Postal History more and more as the years have gone by – just like so many other collectors.

What caused you to become a dealer?

It was somewhat forced on me. There was a managerial fall out where I was working in the drinks industry. That was in 1980; jobs were not easy to come by at time and at the age of 50 I felt I had little chance of finding a new position. The stamps were wonderful to fall back on. It was then I took the lease on the premises at Ormond Quay.

And you never regretted doing so?

Most certainly not! My customers have become my friends.

Michael, I understand you were involved in the establishment of the Dublin Stamp Society?

Yes, that was in 1948. I was the first Secretary and have been involved ever since. As you know the Society is celebrating its' diamond jubilee this year and I am now the 'senior member' – something I am really proud of. It has enabled me to meet so many people over the years.

And your most exciting moments in philately?

As a collector, I look back to first meeting with Bill Kane. That was in 1947. As a dealer, my pleasure was simply welcoming collectors from all parts of the world into the shop. Once again, the pleasure was in meeting the people and discussing stamps and philately.

Your worst moments?

Losing stock several times from burglary. I did not enjoy that.

How have you seen the hobby change?

It is a very different hobby today. There was nothing like the interest in covers in the past. Now there are whole new fields, first flight covers for example and of course the demand for older material on cover. In my earlier days we did First day Covers of course but the stamp was the thing.

Who have been the most knowledgeable collectors you have met.

Fred Dixon, Bill Kane of course, T E Field, Father Brennan, Fred Meredith. Sadly they are all gone now and all their knowledge has gone with them.

And some amusing incidents?

Those many callers at the shop who had to be disillusioned about the value, or non-value, of their stamps. It was really hard to dissuade many of them.....when I think of the number of 2d map stamps offered to me as great rarities!

Finally, Michael, your thoughts for the future of the hobby?

Collectors will have to specialise on a theme. It is quite impossible to keep up with the new issues. The Post Office is issuing too many. No one can study them in depth.

Thank you for those thoughts Michael. What comes out to me is that you have enjoyed the people more than the stamps!

Without people, there would be no stamps!

POST OFFICE SAVINGS STAMPS - Brian Warren

Part 1 – the Pre-Decimal Issues

Most members will be well aware of my interest in all aspects of modern Irish philately with particular emphasis on definitive, commemorative/special issues and postal stationery. However, there is one aspect of post office activities which I have ignored over the years – the Post Office Savings Bank and the related collectable material.

British Administration

The Savings Bank had been in operation under the British regime since 1861 and on the front cover of the *Journal*, I illustrate the cover of a British Savings Book together with the first page containing a 1/- savings stamp cancelled 16 October 1915 in Dundalk (60% normal size). I'm also aware of the existence of a savings form (c. 1908) for 12 x 1d postage stamps which when completed, was probably exchanged for a 1/- savings stamp.

All Post Office Services in the Irish Free State were transferred to the control of the Provisional Government from 1st April 1922. Both the British Post Office Circular and the *Iris* for the period refer to one exception – Savings Bank Business.¹ The same circulars also state "*there will be no change in the present method of making deposits in, or applying for withdrawals from, the Savings Bank*".² This indicates that the Irish administration continued to operate the existing business on behalf of the British Post Office until a separate Irish Post Office Savings Bank came into operation in 1923.³

In this and the subsequent article, I set out the known Post Office savings stamps issued since 1923. I suspect the list is incomplete and other designs or variations may exist. Hopefully members will examine their collections and perhaps uncover further material which I can illustrate in a future issue of the *Journal*.

Sword of Light Issue

The first question which comes to mind is whether or not GB savings stamps in use in 1922 were overprinted. Apparently not, although the second illustration (fig. 1 on next page) shows an unapproved two line Saorstát/Éireann overprint in black, without date, on thin paper together with a 6d Minerva head GB National Savings. This stamp has a CANCELLED overprint for which this two line overprint may have been intended. This example

comes from the estate of the former Director of Stamping, Dublin Castle, A.S. Roberts.

The first savings stamp was a variation on the then current 6d Sword of Light stamp. The stamp was printed in orange (instead of the claret colour of the regular definitive) and a 4 line bi-lingual overprint was added (fig. 2 on next page). This stamp has SE watermark paper. Given that the P.O. Savings Bank was established in 1923 per F.E. Dixon's article³, presumably the stamp was first released at that time but I note the regular 6d definitive was not released until 21 December 1923. Presumably it was not issued prior to the regular definitive stamp.

This raises a further question - Did non-overprinted GB savings stamps continue to be used post 1922 until the issue of the first Irish savings stamp? I understand the earliest known recorded examples of the 6d Sword of Light are circa 1929/30 arising from collectors affixing the savings stamps as postage to envelopes which were subsequently postmarked.

I presume the sheet layout of the 6d stamp matched the regular definitive stamp viz. 240 (two panes of 12 x 10) but I have never seen any gutter pairs of this stamp or the subsequent E watermarked printing.

The 6d claret definitive stamp was subsequently issued on E watermarked paper in March 1942. It is unknown if the printing of the savings stamp on E watermarked paper was pre, or post, this date. The orange colour of the basic stamp varies, as does the intensity of the black overprint, given the long period of use of this stamp

I'm unsure as to the first type of savings card or book used for the 6d stamps. P.O. Guides issued during the 1940's do not refer to savings stamps although they do mention the Savings Bank. The 1954 P.O. Guide refers to the use of forms for 12 x 1d postage stamps and booklets for 6d savings stamps. A completed form with 12 x 1d (1/-) postage stamps could be used as a deposit to a savings bank account or could be exchanged for 2 x 6d savings stamps. Alternatively, when 10/- had been accumulated in savings stamps, a savings bank account could be opened or a deposit made to an existing account. Stamps could also be used to purchase a savings certificate or cashed in. The reference to 10/- indicates there was a booklet which held at minimum 20 x 6d savings stamps.



Fig. 1 - Unapproved Saorstát Éireann overprint plus GB Savings stamp with CANCELLED overprint (courtesy of MacDonnell Whyte Ltd.)



Fig. 2 - 6d Sword of Light in Orange with overprint in black

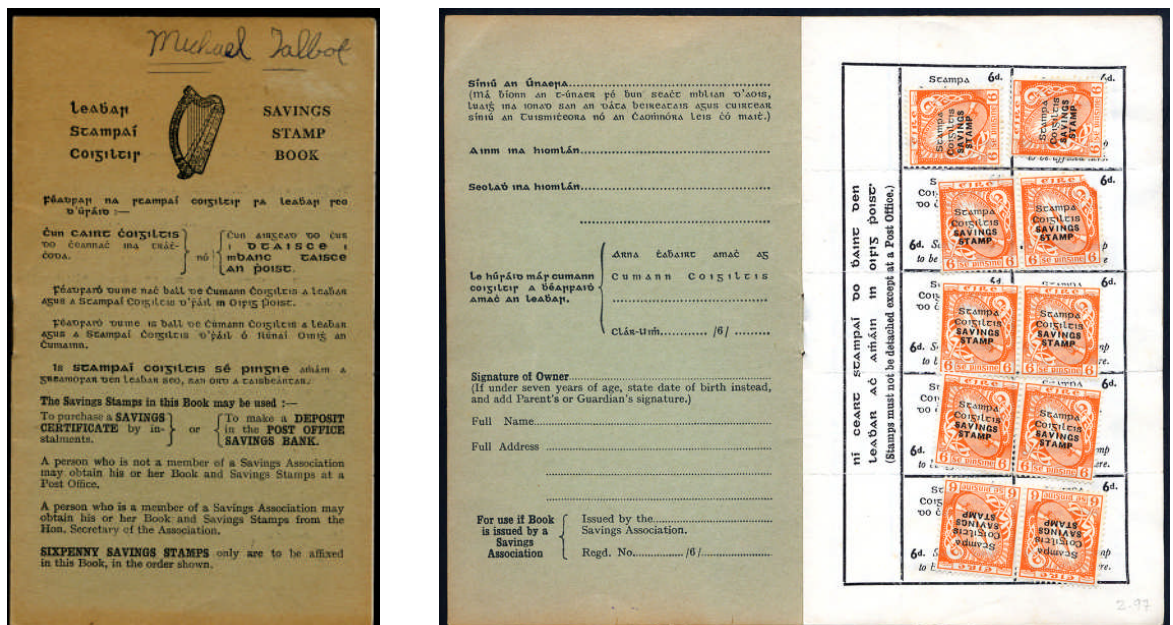


Fig 3. - Card cover of Savings Book (left) together with inside cover page and first page from same booklet with 10 x 6d Sword of Light savings stamps with E watermark. (both reduced to approx 50% of normal size)

AINM NAME SEOLADH ADDRESS Síniú an t-úinéara (nó an dáta breithe, má faoi bhun seacht mbliana d'aois dhó). Signature of owner (or date of birth if under seven years of age). 	6d STAMPA COIGILTIS SAVINGS STAMP If card na h-athnaisc do baint den leabhar ach amháin sa phost-offis. Pages must not be detached except at a post office. ✱
--	---

Fig. 4 - Inside of later Savings Card with 6d Sword of Light stamp
(probably c mid 1960s as typeset in modern style – as illustrated in F.E. Dixon article
and reduced to approx 50% of normal size)



Fig. 5 - 6d Wolfhound
design - c. 1968?
(note p = pingin, Irish
for pence)



Fig. 6
2/- Salmon

Ní fhéadfar na stamplaí seo a shóinséil. N.B. Féadfar cárta iomlán (£1) a úsáid chuig cuntas a oscailt nó taise a dhéanamh i mBanc Taisce an Phoist ☐ nó ☐ CE ACU? chuig Cairt Coigiltis a cheannach. ☐ These stamps cannot be cashed. N.B. A full card (£1) may be used to open an account or make a deposit in the Post Office Savings Bank ☐ or ☐ WHICH? to buy a Savings Certificate. ☐	Stamplaí Coigiltis 2/- amháin is cairt a ghreamú Only 2/- Savings Stamps to be affixed.	2/- SAVINGS STAMP STAMPA COIGILTIS
--	--	--

Fig. 7 - Inside of 2/- Savings Card – 1968
(also ex F.E. Dixon article and reduced to approx 50% of normal size)

The booklet illustrated in fig 3 (on page 72) dates from no earlier than 1960 and contains spaces for 40 x 6d stamps. The savings booklet contains a total of 4 pages i.e. space for 40 x 6d stamps = £1. The printers imprint date on the back of the booklet is 4/60. A later savings card is also shown (fig. 4 on the previous page).

New Photogravure Issues – Pre Decimal

This overprinted 6d Sword of Light stamp appears to have continued in use until 1968 as F.E. Dixon refers to its use at that time in his April 1968 article³. He also refers to the holding of a competition for a new design in the same year but then refers to a new 2/- Salmon value although, a 6d Wolfhound stamp also exists (fig. 5 on the previous page).

This new 6d in a multicolour design featured an Irish wolfhound and was printed by the Revenue Stamping Branch on their photogravure press on E watermarked paper provided by Harrison & Sons with gum arabic. A number of definitive stamps of this period also exist on paper supplied by Samuel Jones & Co with a whiter shinier gum arabic or on paper with PVA gum. I'm not aware if these two other paper/gum combinations were used for this stamp but as I have examined very few examples, such combinations may exist. I have not noted any cylinder numbers and I do not know the sheet layout.

At some time circa 1968 and prior to decimalisation in 1971, the 6d stamp was replaced by two new values - 1/- Bull (?) and 2/- Salmon designs. They were probably also printed by the Revenue Stamping Branch. Although I have seen reference to a 1/- denomination, I have yet to personally view or see an illustration of such a stamp. Can anybody confirm that it definitely exists? The only examples seen of the 2/- (fig. 6 on the previous page) are on Harrison paper with gum arabic. Again, as for the 6d wolfhound, other paper/gum combinations may exist.

In F.E. Dixon's article he states that the 2/- was issued on 1st August 1968 but he makes no reference to a 1/- value (or the 6d Wolfhound

stamp). He also illustrates a savings card (fig. 8) which clearly states that only 2/- Savings Stamps should be affixed which I illustrate above (reduced). The 1969 P.O. Guide also only refers to 6d and 2/- stamps and I therefore doubt the existence of a 1/- stamp.

I'm unsure as to sheet layout and whether or not gutter pairs exist. I would presume that sheets were in a 240 two pane layout as per the Gerl definitive £.s.d. values of the same period. I have not seen any cylinder blocks but would expect that cylinder numbers were etched on the printing cylinders. Finally, apart from the above illustration, I have not seen any savings books or cards for this period.

The P.O. Guide for 1969 states that a completed card (fig. 7 on the previous page) of 10 x 2/- stamps could be used to open or make a deposit to a Savings Bank account or to purchase a Savings Certificate. A separate booklet was used for the 6d stamps. It continued to hold 40 stamps made-up of four pages of ten. A full booklet (£1) could be used to buy a Savings Certificate, a minimum of two full pages (10/-) to open a Savings Bank account and one (5/-) or more pages to make a deposit to an existing account. Stamps of the 6d denomination could be exchanged for cash but not the 2/-. It would appear that a separate savings books existed for the 1/- value (if it exists). A lot of questions remain unanswered relating to this pre-decimal period.

The next article will detail the issues in the post decimal period. If anybody is aware of any other pre-decimal issues/savings cards, I would be grateful if you would forward details and a jpg scan in colour to me at bmwarren@eircom.net.

¹ British Post Office Circular No. 2616 of 29th March 1922 and Iris an Phuist No: 3 of 30th March 1922.

² Refer to *Ireland's Transition – The Postal History of the Transitional Period 1922-1925* (page 46) by Dr. C.I. Dulin, published by MacDonnell Whyte Limited, 1992.

³ Per *Post Office Savings Bank* by F.E. Dixon, Éire Philatelic Association Supplement No: 40, April 1968.

DAMAGED IN TRANSIT - George King

In the past when an item was found damaged, or possibly unsealed, in the course of its transit through the postal system a gummed label, suitably inscribed, was applied to cover the damage in order to get the item the item safely home. The gummed labels will be the subject of an article another day perhaps (*any offers – Ed?*). In this note, I am, however, looking briefly at the system which has applied in recent years particularly since the establishment of An Post. For no longer is it the practice today to apply the simple gummed label but rather the damaged item is now placed in a plastic bag – a by-product perhaps of mail generally becoming larger or have Health and Safety regulations led to licking labels becoming unacceptable? – but surely these bags lack the attraction of the old labels which can be found going back to the Edwardian period at least. It is hard to date these bags, but a date of 2000 has been seen on one and I have no doubt the system will remain in force.

Amongst the items I acquired recently in what must be one of my strangest purchases were:-

1. A clear plastic bag size 260mm by 138mm with added label (green) 'RECONDITIONED IN THE POST' Pch 8.36. (fig 1)



2. A clear plastic bag size 294 by 122mm printed in black 'Dear Customer' with a WARNING 'To avoid suffocation...' A dual language version also exists. (fig 2). Another similar example has been found headed 'Dublin Postal District'.

3. Clear plastic made as a long tube, pleated 110mm each side, face about 250mm, repeat on roll about every 320mm 'The enclosed (sic) was found damaged' plus a Green block 'SAFETY FIRST/ To avoid suffocation....'. Another version exists 380mm wide for use by SDS, An Post Special Distribution Services presumably on parcels.

Safety is clearly the order of the day! The bags will rarely be kept but do legitimately form a part of a 'damaged in transit' collection, however difficult they may be to store. At least eight different versions in all have been seen and one must ask

bearing in mind that one of these bears the legend 'Dublin Postal District' if there are any other 'local' variations.

(*Space precludes more than a sample of the bags, which are hard to copy and scan, being shown – Ed*)



Dear Customer,

The enclosed item was damaged in transit.
It has been sealed by An Post.

While every effort is made to ensure the safe
handling of mail, damage can occur occasionally.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

If you have any queries, please contact
An Post:- Telephone: (01) 7058709

A Chara,

Fritheadh é seo damáistithe.
Shéalaigh An Post é.

Láimhseáiltear níthe a churamaí agus is féidir,
ach tarlaíonn damáiste uaireanta.

Is dona linn an clotaí seo.
Fiosrúcháin chuig: (01) 7058709

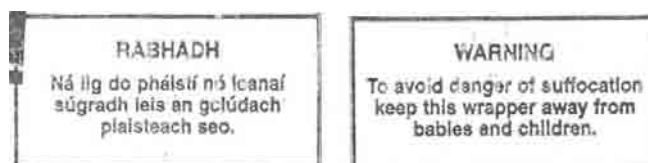


fig 2

(note the gap between the message and the warning is much larger than shown here, c70mm and the two are at right angles to one another. Actual size of the warning boxes is 51 x 25mm).

QUERY CORNER

Space necessitates this being held over to the March issue, together with the answers from the September issue.

We have one new query from Tony Best with regard to frame breaks on the 1½d Harrison coil overprint and welcome whatever you wish to throw at our invigilator, John Lennon.

AUCTION WATCH - 'Erinman'

In the UK (and Ireland) the 'credit crunch' is upon us. As this is also linked to global financial and economic performance, what effect it will have on the philatelic market in general and Ireland philately in particular only time will tell. Where there is less disposable income due to financial insecurity, less money will be spent on stamp collecting. However where quality, the unusual or scarce item is concerned, I believe the market will remain healthy.

Sold by Cavendish in their September 2008 Auction, is a letter dated 1st August 1776 sent from Grenada (West Indies) to London. The letter is endorsed by the Post Office presumably at Cork "The Captain who brought this sayd he was taken by an American privateer and all his letters were opened and returned to him again". On the front of the letter are very fine "Cork" and "Ship" markings together with a charge of 5d (1d for ship's captain + 4d inland rate to Dublin) and then "11" (the 5d + 6d for onward transmission to London). Bishop Marks of Dublin (8 May 1777) and London (10 May 1777) complete the postal markings. The item sold for £1400 plus premium against a pre sale estimate of £750.

A sale held by David Feldman in October 2008 featured many scarce items. An interesting lot described as '1922 Design Competition, essay for a 2s6d design showing Hibernia and Wolfhound greeting the dawn, preliminary pencil sketch on board with ""na h-Eireann"" moved to lower scroll, the preamble to the submitted design by Edward Nolan (No. 33 of the official P.O. record, where ascribed to Edward Dolan), also an album of bromides of the 75 unaccepted designs held by the P.O. on which the 1972 Robson Lowe monograph (copy included) was based' was offered at an estimate of Euro1500 but remained unsold.

Also in the sale was the rare missing accent on 1d red Saorstat. 1922-23 Thom 3-line overprint, in a right marginal vertical block of six, position 15/12. The block has full original gum, and has minor separation which is reinforced by hinges. The error shows the original "t" missing and inserted by hand, with a tiny dot at top and missing accent on "a". Against an estimate of Euro6000 the item sold for Euro5500 plus premium.

Also in demand were two FDC dated 15th October 1930 of the Shannon Hydro-Electric Scheme each realising Euro700, 40% over estimate.

Errors and varieties are always eagerly contested and a fine mint unmounted example of the '15p'

1976 missing silver of the Bicentenary of the American Revolution made Euro1,000.



The internet auction market seemingly remains buoyant and eBay is a good source of obtaining moderately priced items.

Illustrated FDC with type written address issued prior to 1960 often attract several bidders. Items which caught my eye meeting the above criteria were 1d & 1/- FDC of 1949 Air Stamps making £40, 1953 An Tostal FDC £60 and a pictorial Father Mathew registered FDC with a neatly hand written address £89.

A more unusual lot to be offered on eBay were 7 lino cut unadopted essays of the 1972 Patriot Dead issue which were produced by the artist Robert Sellar. Hammer price was £142, surely a bargain for the buyer!

The "Craigie" stamped to order cards continue to make a regular appearance with prices generally declining but an unusual 1 1/2d 1954 with printed "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year" on reverse made £191.

Censor covers are regularly offered and attract strong bidding. A 1944 cover Dublin to Germany via Spa with handstamp "No air mail route by this service at present" with English and German censor labels fetched £54. Similarly 1943 cover Dublin to Germany with "passed US Civil Censorship" in red and Irish and English censor labels made £120.

The Europa 1960 set has always been heavily speculated in and the market price has been artificially high. It is not a scarce set. September was a month for off loading this issue with sets of eight complete sheets selling for £1,599 and a set in sheets of 50 from plate 1A £244. Plate blocks of four remained unsold when offered at £85.

NORTHERN IRELAND REGISTERED MAIL TO THE REPUBLIC 1984 – 2004

This is part 1 of an article that I had planned to write some months hence after doing further research, a visit to the London Archives being necessary. However, with space in this edition suddenly becoming available it is, as 'they' say 'better to write and be damned than not to write at all'.

In recent weeks, I have had the opportunity to examine a large number of registered, insured and 'suchlike' items sent from Northern Ireland into the Republic in the years from c1984 to c2004. First acquired to look for postmarks, it soon became apparent that the true worth of the lot was in the huge variety of rates and services depicted. Sadly almost all of these were addressed to a single address in Co Wicklow; however when added to the existing material I already had from Northern Ireland addressed 'internally' I have located a new area for study.

The registered system in the British Isles has been researched in depth by a number of authors but most significantly by the late James Mackay in 'Registered Mail of the British Isles' which he published in 1982, almost immediately prior to the period presently under review. Although he illustrates a few marks from Northern Ireland there was no cause for him to differentiate the Province from any other part of the United Kingdom, the 'British' system having prevailed at all times.

For those unfamiliar with the history of registered mail, a few words might be appropriate although I shall not attempt to comment on events pre 1878. It was in that year that the first 'Formula' envelopes (with blue lines and embossed stamp) were introduced. The next significant change was the introduction of the blue labels to be affixed at top left showing the name of the office of posting; that occurred on 18 February 1907. Originally some offices used 'blind' labels, the office of posting being indicated by use of an undated postmark being stamped on the label. With very minor amendments that is how the system survived for the next 87 years.

Charges did, of course, increase over the years. From 1d for postage and 2d for registration in 1878, the rates had increased to 3p for postage plus 20p registration on the introduction of decimal currency in 1971. Rates in the decimal period were increased as follows, the standard 'formula' envelopes being issued on each of these rate changes in a number of different sizes:-

24 June 1974	25p	17 March 1975	35p
29 September 1975	45p	13 June 1977	60p
20 August 1979	65p	4 February 1980	75p
26 January 1981	90p	1 February 1982	£1
3 September 1984	£1.10		

By this date a basic first class (registered mail could not be sent second class) letter was 17p giving a combined charge of £1.27 and it is at this point our story really starts. Registered mail from Northern Ireland to the Republic was treated no differently to that sent to the rest of the UK just as it had been for the last 60+ years. Rates were the same, the Republic being treated as internal and although there was the possibility of customs checks, outwardly mail to the 'South' bore no special markings. Examples from this period at the £1.27p combined rate are shown at figs 1, 2, and 3.



fig 1

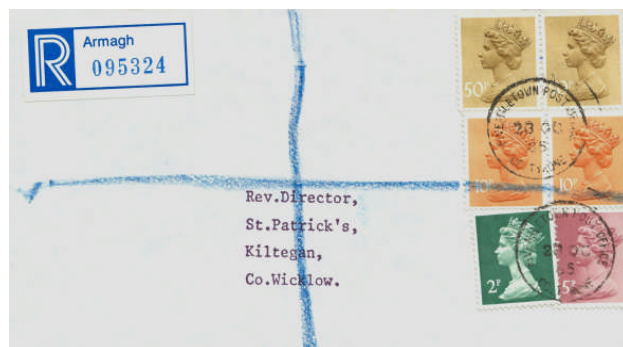


fig 2

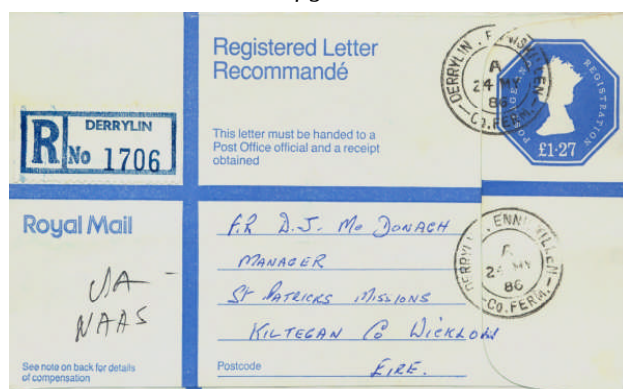


fig3

Fig 1 shows a late example of a small office (Derrylin, Co Fermanagh) still using its personalised registration label. None of these were issued after 1973 but it took several years to use old stock up. Labels showing the name of the Head Office were the norm by 1984 (fig 2 shows an item from Ballycastle with a Coleraine label). At this period the British Post Office was moving to a new style of label first seen used at December in December 1984 (fig 3 shows an unusual postmark 'Fivemiletown Post Office' with the label of its head office, Armagh; it does make one ask where one might post registered mail if not at the post office?)



fig4



fig5

Two labels of interest have shown up amongst the £1.27p envelopes; Londonderry head office had 'old style' labels showing the postcode BT48 6AA, which is fine if the labels had been used at that office (fig 4), but when used at Ballykelly which has BT49 postcodes only serves to add confusion, whilst Ballymena head office had been issued with a smaller label (R 12mm high – 13mm is more normal) in deeper blue, although this shade later to become the norm, this seen from Portglenone in March 1985 (fig 5). This envelope with 1.35 written above the 'stamp' tells us the price paid for the envelope, the British Post Office, like the Irish, always having made a small surcharge to cover printing costs.

Needless to say, it was not long before the £1.27p rate was superseded following yet another increase.

The internal rates went up regularly during the years 1986 to 1996 are shown below:-

20 October 1986	£1.20 plus 18p
5 September 1988	£1.40 plus 19p
2 October 1989	£1.55 plus 20p
17 September 1990	£1.75 plus 22p
16 September 1991	£1.90 plus 24p
1 November 1993	£3.00 plus 25p
8 July 1996	£3.00 plus 26p
27 January 1997	£3.50 plus 26p

It was, however, on 20 October 1986 that a sea change occurred in the postal relations between the two parts of Ireland, for as of that date the Republic of Ireland ceased to be 'internal' so far as Northern Ireland (and Britain) was concerned. On this date, the British Post Office introduced a European Community rate which for letters up to 20 grammes was the same as the internal rate, although higher for heavier items. The registration fee went up to £1.20p on the same date making a 'combined rate' of £1.38p.

One immediate effect of the Republic becoming foreign was that the 'insurance' cover offered by the registration service was much reduced (I believe the figure may have been as low as £5.00 but can find no reference to this and would welcome further information). This led to some 50%, possibly more, of items destined for the Republic that I have seen to be sent by the insured service. As you will see from the illustrations my sample is entirely of mail sent to a Catholic mission and this may be far from representative of general practice. A small number of offices identified the use of this service by marking the envelope with a red diagonal cross, this believed to be so as to comply with international regulations (fig 6 - Coagh May 1987).



fig6

Other offices used a red vertical line or a red cross superimposed on the blue cross, but these are few and far between, an example being shown at fig 9.

Although the Republic was now 'foreign' the familiar blue registration label continued to be applied (as was the case with all foreign registered mail), although a couple of items have been seen without, this being an erroneous treatment (fig 7 – Portaferry April 1987).

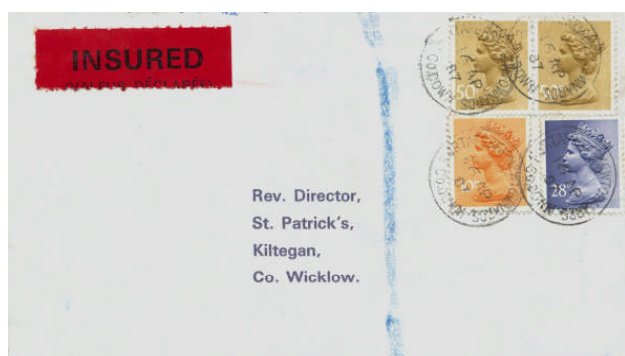


fig7



fig8

A further element to consider is that no formula registered envelope showing a £1.38p 'stamp' was issued but a new design inscribed 'Minimum postage and registration fee paid' was introduced (fig 8). These have been seen in both 'G' and 'H' sizes. I believe the larger K size also exists. One is inclined to assume that in the majority of cases the weight of the 'H' envelopes exceeded 20 grammes including contents, an empty envelope weighing 12 grammes, however the majority of these have passed through the post with no additional stamps added giving rise to the impression that controls were generally lax. The earliest date seen for one of the 'no value indicated' envelopes is at Ormeau Road, Belfast on 15 January 1987 most offices using up their stocks of £1.27p envelopes with 11p in stamps added until about April 1987, a normal practice after increases in rates, as is known only too well by collectors of the Republic's postal stationery. Fig 8 also shows the handwritten lettering 'P.O.C.'. This stands for Posted Out of Course – i.e.: the item was posted in an ordinary letter box. An item so posted should be surcharged on delivery with the amount of the registration fee at the office of delivery. Although endorsed, no formal charge mark was

applied at Coleraine Head Office and in consequence no charge was raised on delivery.

As will be seen from the table on page 81 the basic combined rates increased on 5 September 1988 to £1.59p, to £1.75p in October 1989 and £1.97p in September 1990, then £2.14p with effect 16 September 1991, this lasting until November 1993. All through this period the standard under 20 gramme rate to the Republic was the same as the UK internal rate, this also being the 'EU' rate. Examples of these rates are shown at figs 9-12.

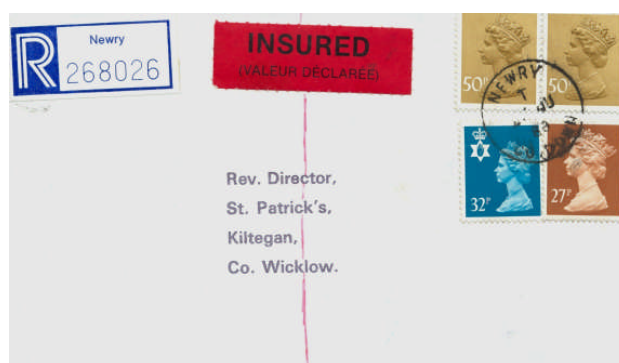


fig9



fig10



fig11

Approximately one half, only, of the items from this period (1988-93) carry the red Insured label. There seems to have been little consistency and much confusion. Of the covers shown above fig 11 is the most interesting in that it bears a foreign parcels serial label used at Newcastle Co Down in November 1990 when the combined rate was £1.97p. This is most irregular and one must assume

that this office had run out of registration labels and did the best that was available to it.

It is also interesting to note that a 'Portadown' label has been used at this office, indicating that although this office was believed to have come under the control of Newry at this time, foreign parcels were sent to a depot at Portadown. (I would appreciate confirmation of this if any member has detailed information).



fig12

It is appropriate to add a few words with regard to the inscription on the blue registration labels in this period. From c1988 the individual head office labels were superseded by a series inscribed 'Belfast'. (see figs 9 and 12 showing the change at Newry; fig 10 shows a Belfast label used at Tempo, Co Fermanagh in December 1989). Subsequently the nomenclature was changed to 'Northern Ireland'. Both one and two line versions exist, while a third type shows 'N Ireland' (fig 13). The earliest date seen for a 'Northern Ireland' label is 21 October 1991 (Belfast Head Office), just two years before the major system change of November 1993.

I have not attempted any detailed analysis of the red Insured labels in use during this period. It is sufficient to say that that they are found in at least three shades from a dark bright red to 'blood' red and also a shade of watery pink these only seen from c1989 (fig 10). There are at least two settings of the type.



fig13

In addition to the rates already noted, a goodly number of items can be found at non standard rates. The reasons range from carelessness, arithmetical error/ mistake, non understanding of regulations,, the item being over basic weight and being registered/ insured for an amount over the basic sum covered. An example of the former is shown at fig 14 (Limavady, 20 January 1986 when standard postage was 17p). The sender has not been charged for registration, 3 such items being noted amongst the 600 plus items examined.

Your editor wishes to visit the London Archives before expounding more on this topic and in consequence part 2 of this article will appear in a future edition. If any member does have details of rates for higher weight steps and increased fees for higher value registration/ insurance cover I would be pleased to hear from them.



fig14

BOOK REVIEW - HIBERNIAN 2009 CATALOGUE

Roy Hamilton-Bowen released the 12th (2009) edition of the Hibernian Catalogue of the Stamps of Ireland to coincide with Stampex in mid October. Rightly, it received a Gold Award. Priced at Eur29.80, the printing and especially the colour illustrations are of the highest quality. The general collector will find a well presented simplified listing

of Ireland's stamps and First Day Covers. The specialist will discover details of blocks, booklets and varieties, the latter being particularly well illustrated. I particularly liked the listing of the Railway Letter Stamps, a new feature, as is the listing of overprint controls. Whilst we all have our own views on pricing, whilst some are too high, overall this is a generally realistic guide. You will need this on your bookshelf and copies can be obtained from the publisher at Rheinstrasse 18, Rodgau, Germany 63110 or your favourite dealer.

POST OFFICE PAGE

BUNNACURRY, CO MAYO - Hugh McGoldrick/ Editor

As recently as 2002 Achill Island off the coast of Co Mayo had as many as seven functioning post offices. Today just two remain (Achill Sound and Keel). Achill's resident population is now some 2,500; it had been much higher at up to 10,000 in the past. Amongst the closures was the office at Bunnacurry which closed its' doors for the last time on Friday 27 August 2004 after 123 years of operation. The closure resulted from the retirement of Postmistress Mary Lineen McNulty who had served in this position since 1975. The business had been family run since 1881.

In that year, John McCabe, who had retired from the Royal Irish Constabulary, started a business in Bunnacurry. He also acted as a minder of the post, or Receiver, taking in letters from the mail cart on its route from Newport to Dugort. He applied for a licence to sell stamps, which was granted. He was then appointed Postmaster in 1883 after he had applied for remuneration for the two previous years, the Post Office Archives in London giving an opening date of 1883.

John McCabe had been born in Fermanagh in 1834. At the age of 21, he joined the Revenue Police and two years later on 1 October 1857 he transferred to the RIC as a sub-constable No 22076. He was posted to Co Donegal where he married Mary Doherty of Malin Well House, Malin and was then moved to Cashel on Achill Island where his daughter Bridget was born in 1875. He retired from the RIC on 11 September 1880 with a pension of £46 per annum (translating to about £4,000 today).

After John McCabe's death, in 1912, his daughter Bridget was appointed Postmistress, assisted by her mother who subsequently married a Mr Lineen. She resigned as Postmistress in 1944, her son Philip Lineen being appointed Postmaster a position he held until his death in 1975.

The premises which housed the Post Office was accidentally burned down in 1949 and for a period the Post Office and grocery business was run from a Nissen Hut, erected across the road from the burnt premises. The original house and shop were rebuilt on the original site. On the night of the fire, the only telephone within a 4½ mile radius was in the centre of the flames.

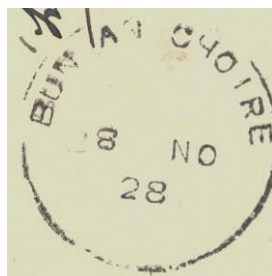
The telegraph office, under guarantee, was established in 1900. A telephone office followed in 1959, this being upgraded to 'automatic' in 1984. A record in the archives from 1896 notes the increase in the allowance for the delivery of letters to Balls Mouth, thus confirmed Bunnacurry as a delivery office.

The help of Mary Lineen McNulty and the RIC Museum Belfast are acknowledged in proving information for this article.

Five postmarks have been recorded for Bunnacurry, a Climax Rubber datestamp of 1893 reading Bunnacurry/ Westport is recorded in the archives. The other four are shown below, no really clean strike of the third having been found.



Recorded 1922-1928



Skeleton 28.11.1928



1931-1950



1952-1994

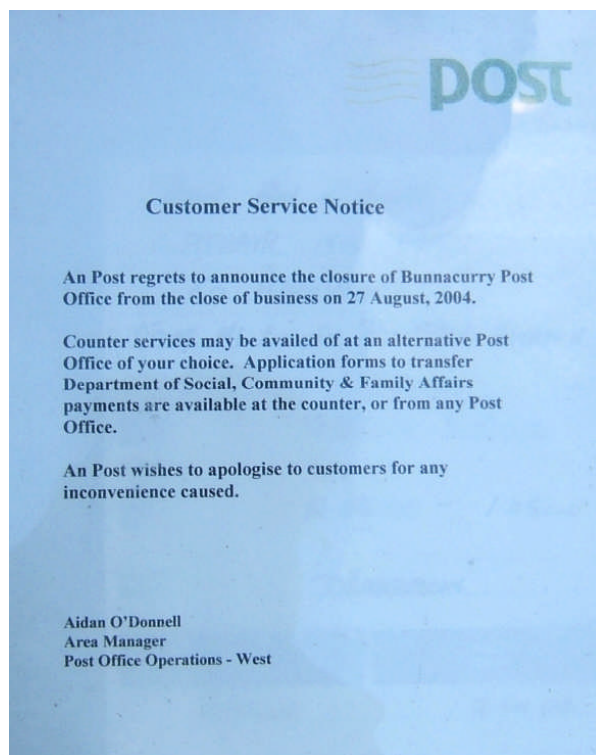
It is likely that the original rubber mark of 1893 would have superceded by a steel datestamp on the office being upgraded to become a telegraph office in 1900 but no postmark has been seen by your editor prior to 1922, the above example being of a style introduced generally from c1905. The skeleton

would have been short lived in 1928. It is interesting to note that the third postmark, probably introduced late 1928/ early 1929 clearly survived the fire in 1949 being recorded in use as late as 2 October 1950. The replacement may have remained in use until closure.



The office in 1989 with a young visitor buying a stamp for his holiday postcard.

BUNNACURRY continued from previous page



The closure notice, suffering a little from damp, was still in the window in October 2008

THE LOW VALUE DEFINITIVES 1922 – 1969 - Patrick Evans

As editor, I was fascinated to learn that Pat Evans was undertaking a task that no other philatelist has, to my knowledge, seriously undertaken in the 86 years since the original 2d map definitive was issued on 6 December 1922, namely a detailed study of the 'first' and 'second' definitive issues that were (with just a few changes) on sale continuously from that 1922 date to 1969 when the Gerls arrived. Others have started but none has finished and whilst Pat's research to date is largely limited to the 1d map stamp he is hoping to study all the other values from ½d to 1/-.

The stamps themselves are all common (despite what the catalogues may suggest) but surprisingly few large blocks exist of all but the lowest values and it is these that enable the sheet position of the flaws to be determined. Pat has already written an article for 'The London Philatelist' and details of many of the flaws he has discovered to date are shown in the new 'Hibernian' catalogue (see p83) hence they are not repeated here. Pat freely admits he has a lot of work to do on papers and shades and realises his task has barely begun. Nevertheless, I felt it important to invite

him to tell our membership of his project and there follows what he has written.

He has kindly agreed that he will, from time to time, keep us advised of his progress and for our part I do suggest that if any of us do have substantial quantities of these stamps otherwise sitting in stockbooks or tins gently gathering dust you do let Pat know for as he said to me 'To study any subject properly you just cannot have enough material'. These two sets are no exception.

Ed

My interest in the low values of the First and Second Irish Definitive Issues was first sparked when I obtained used examples of the E watermarked 1d Map with a distinct break in the arc directly under the first "É" of "Éire from Pádraig O'Shea of Raven Stamps in Cork. The noted Irish Philatelist, Mr. Eddie Fitzgerald, had first reported this in The Revealer as occurring on stamp 12, Row 1. As my interest grew, I was surprised to discover that neither the First nor the Second Issues had ever been studied systematically throughout their

45-year life. Eddie Fitzgerald has observed, "*The amount of information on these definitives in catalogues is lamentable and often inaccurate. Some of the varieties listed are suspect...*" Certainly, occasional material had been produced on watermarks coils and booklets but most catalogues and other material on the issue simply stated, "*all stamps appear in numerous shades ... different quality of paper thin ... different gums.*"

The reasons for this neglect are something of a mystery. It could well be argued that it was due to the refusal of the Irish Stamping Branch and Post Office Executive to have anything to do with philatelists

"... they try to ferret out every detail of manufacturing... and it has always been considered that the best way ... is by ... having nothing to do with philatelists or with philatelic exhibitions." On the other hand, any keen researcher would surely have had sufficient access to the stamp sheets being produced at the time to study gums, papers, shades and flaws?

Whatever the reasons for neglect, I am pleased to report that the situation is slowly changing. In 2005 I got the opportunity to study 135 complete sheets of the E watermarked 1d Map. The result was confirmation of the *Fitzgerald Flaw*. On the suggestion of Declan O'Kelly of Cathedral Stamps, Dublin, I searched for further positional flaws. The result was identification of a total of 23 flaws, 18 of which are now listed in the 2008 Edition of the *Hibernian Handbook and Catalogue of the Postage Stamps of Ireland* (Catalogue page 192 Refs. D17a-D17q -). One of these flaws (D17i) was also seen in a positional block of SE Watermarked 1d Maps and this is catalogued as D2a. The catalogue now contains ten varieties in the SE watermarked low values, compared with seven varieties in 2002, and nineteen varieties in the E watermarked low values, compared with one variety in 2002.

The identification of 23 flaws in one printing of one value of an issue that has survived for 45 years is perhaps an indication of the potential size of a completely new field in Irish Philately. How many hundreds of positional flaws remain to be discovered on the entire First and Second Definitive Series low values? And how many different papers, gums, watermarks and shades are there for research?

The main challenge is to get access to adequate research material. It is known that *An Post* and the Revenue Commissioners hold valuable archival material.

One hopes that the opening of the Revenue Museum in the Crypt of Dublin Castle, and the rumoured opening of a postal museum in the General Post Office, Dublin, will facilitate access to material hitherto difficult to access. I eagerly await a reply to my correspondence with the Curator of the former. In addition, much material on the manufacture and repair of printing plates right up to the end of the issues is held in the UK National Archive and British Library, and both institutions are eager to assist the researcher. One hopes that the publication of this paper will stimulate further research and access to these resources.

The research conducted thus far is only the tip of a very large iceberg. There is a pressing need for access, through mail, email, visits, or computer scans, to any and all multiples, blocks and sheets of the First and Second Irish Definitives. While I have accumulated a substantial collection of sheets and part sheets for the other values, (including large blocks of the E watermark shilling!) much more material is needed to establish the positional nature of any flaws. Even if the material is out there, its accumulation would be prohibitively expensive. The only way forward, in the absence of material in the Irish archives or difficulty of access, is to accumulate a "virtual" library of high resolution TIFs (not less than 600 dpi) sent in by kindhearted philatelists. I eagerly await the emails to me at pat.evans@eircom.net. I am also happy to receive scans and give my opinion on any stamp whose owner thinks it might contain one of the flaws catalogued in *The Hibernian*.

What next? I continue to wade my way through thousands of used copies of the other values in the hope of discovering trends in shades and papers. It is very difficult without access to a substantial number of complete sheets to confirm shades, papers, gums and constant or non-constant positional flaws that can be associated with different printings and, hopefully, dates. My immediate goal is to shed some light on the occurrence of the "Clonakilty and Dunmanway Flaws" that occur on the 1d map sheet, booklet and experimental coils but not on the other (1½d and 2d) map stamps. I am more than willing to share my own material and work collaboratively with any others researching the First and Second Irish Definitives, and am always receptive to, and grateful for, advice from those more knowledgeable than myself, and which has always been so freely and generously given. I do realize that this is an enormous task but nothing is impossible in this world and I do hope you will contact me if you have done any research in this field.

THE EDITOR'S CHALLENGE

Below is a cover posted 'Espresso' at Parma Italy on 2 August 1976 addressed to Templemichael, Youghal, Co Cork. Templemichael is actually in Co Waterford and situate 1 mile from Lackaroe post office which may not have been a delivery office. A 4p Irish stamp has been added, cancelled at Youghal on 6 August. The other postmarks are Lackaroe (Leaca Ruadh) for 12 August and Youghal postmark

(double ring sorting office datestamp) for 1.45am on the same date (on reverse). It will be seen the item was redirected to California. My challenge is a simple one: 'What is the 4p Irish stamp doing on the cover with 6 August postmark?' I have my own thoughts but need to hear what you have to add! A small prize will be awarded to the best explanation reaching me by 1 February 2009.



The September challenge. Winner was our Vice-President Paddy Smithers who wrote 'In fact there is no street of that name, but it was used unofficially at one time for Aungier Street (Thomas Moore's birthplace). In the first half of the twentieth century people who were dissatisfied with the names of streets celebrating landlords, lords lieutenant etc. campaigned to replace these with names commemorating figures in Irish history, especially Seán Treacy Street for Talbot Street and Thomas Moore Street for Aungier Street.' Runner-up Tony Finn added "'Thomas Moore St." (and not to be confused with Moore St) may not appear in any directory but following extensive consultation with a colleague and into our own collections, we feel "DN. 23" on the registration label gives the clue, which is/was the allocated number. for Aungier St. Dublin and the birthplace of the eponymous poet and author of "Moore's Melodies" at No 12 in 1779.

Your editor recently acquired a postcard showing the house (right).

