



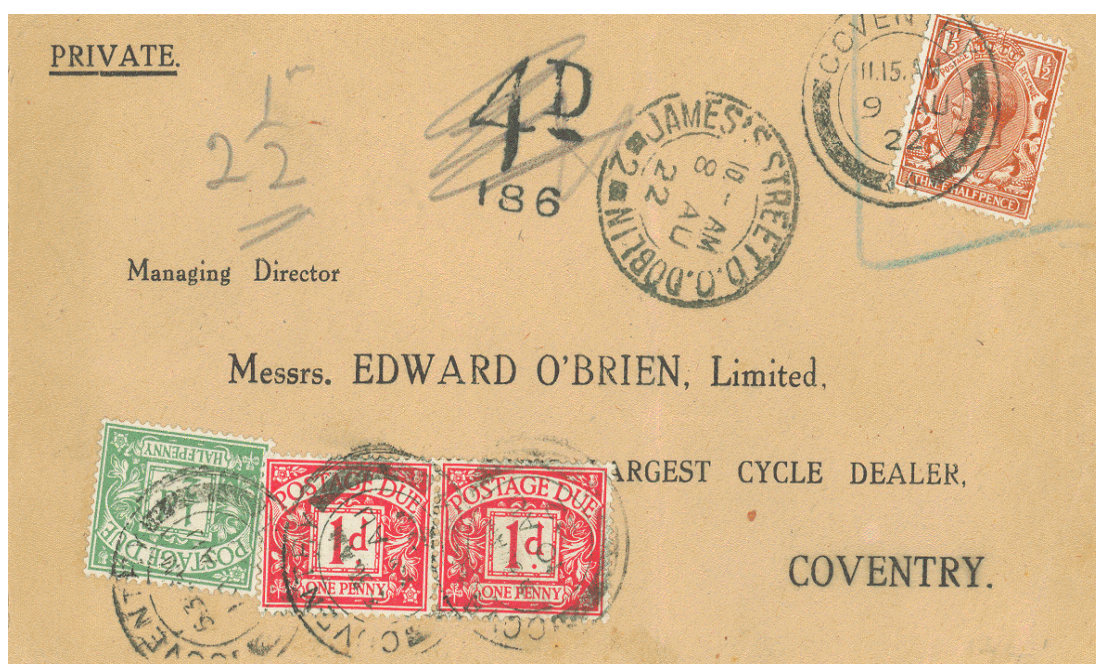
Volume 2009

Irish Philately

THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH PHILATELIC CIRCLE

Issue 1

March



British stamp disallowed in Ireland during the Transition Period
see 'My Favourite Item' on page 7

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EDITORIAL

We are constantly told that the present economic doom and gloom is doing none of us any good. I write this in early February and have no idea where we will be at, financially that is, by the time you read this. I am sure many of us sit at home, fretting miserably, wondering if our bank will still be there tomorrow, asking ourselves if our hard earned savings will still exist next week, let alone earn any interest. Or is the gloom actually doing some good? Is it making us ask what life is all about? Hopefully it has made us all put greater value on those things that are truly important to us; our families obviously, certainly our friends and perhaps also our collections, which give each of us the opportunity to get away from it all and do our own thing, if sometimes only all too briefly. That getting away from it all, in my case away from my professional clients' problems, is something that money cannot buy. It is, if you like, the truly incalculable investment value of a collection built up over many years. Yes, we have all spent money on our hobby, but we have, hopefully, spent to have fun, give ourselves pleasure and as it turns out, take our minds away from the problems of 2009.

This really came home to me just after Christmas. I was at the Hockey Club Bar, where the world's finest investment decisions are not necessarily made. One of our better heeled members came up to me (he shall remain nameless). 'Ah! Stan, you know all about stamps (*Oh! that I did - Ed*) – what do you think about these stamp investment programmes? My shares are a mess,' he went on 'my bank account is giving next to no interest, what do I do'. Reminding him that I was not qualified to give investment advice, I asked why he wanted to invest in stamps (it could just as easily have been 'fine' art). 'Ah!' he replied 'these portfolios are giving a guaranteed return'. I stressed I was a collector, pointed out that the last stamp boom of, from memory, c1980, left a lot of people with burnt fingers, from which the top end

of the market took many years to recover, counselled against his investing in something that he did not understand, suggested he spoke to his broker, who is presumably qualified to give investment advice and then enjoyed the pint he kindly bought me, telling him what I actually collected and of the pleasure (not financial return) it gives me. But, he had set me thinking.....why do we actually collect stamps (or for that matter, if we must, bottle tops)?

The answer is simply 'because we enjoy it'. We start by collecting a few pretty pictures with perforations. Perhaps they originally arrived on our letters, perhaps we inherited an old album. We then look a bit harder, acquire a few more and find out a little about the stamps themselves. We then choose either to study the stamps in depth, their designs, printing etc, or we seek to understand more about their purpose, their use and move into postal and social history, or perhaps both. The choice of fields is limitless – that is the joy of philately. We all value our collections, whatever they be of, we get pleasure from the study, research, whatever, or from just plain looking at what we have built up over time; we know that in the event of a rainy day we should be able to sell our collections for a few shillings if we really have to and in that sense they are a useful investment, but above all let us enjoy our collections, working on them, telling others about them and use our hobby to help us rise above the present economic gloom. We may well need those collections at this time but let us also be sorry for those who in these dark days do not have such an interest to fall back on.

Forget the markets, keep collecting, take pleasure from itand please tell me about what you are doing with your collection.

Stan 15.2.09

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DISTINGUISHING THE “DOLLARD” OVERPRINT SETTINGS

Barry Cousins

The first overprinted issue, by Dollard was applied to eight low value British stamps and released by the Provisional Government on the 17th February 1922. This five line overprint shown in fig.1 is characterised by the date, which used antique letters, with a long tail to the “9” and no full stop after “1922”.



Stereo settings 1, 2 & 3 were used for the ½d., 1d. and 3d. values, whereas for the 5d., 9d. and 10d. values, settings 1 & 2 were used, and for the 2½d. and 4d. values, only setting 1 was in use. The Dollard stereos were made up of 15 clichés in a 3 x 5 format, sixteen stereos being required to make up an overprint setting for a complete sheet of 240 stamps. The stereo for setting 1 was accurately aligned, with no “R” over “Se” variants, with the “l” in “Sealadac” vertically above the “n” in “nA” and with the “i” in “hÉireann” over the “1” in “1922”. The photograph shown in fig. 2 depicts a complete 3 x 5 stereo, from setting 1.



fig. 2

Stereos from settings 2 and 3 were less accurately set, resulting in variants, which are identified in

Government’s Postal Authority on the 17th February 1922. This five line overprint shown in fig.1 is characterised

by the occurrence of the listed variants. For corner control blocks comprising three stamps only clichés 13,14,15 can be used, whereas for blocks of six stamps clichés 10 to 15 can be used to distinguish settings. For larger blocks the cliché variants from other positions can be used. As sixteen stereos were required for a full sheet of overprinted stamps, it follows that stereo variants are repeated sixteen times. In setting 2 the third cliché has the “c” in “Sealadac” slightly raised. A further consistent variant are diagonal cuts to the “R” in “Rialtas” and the “n” in “nA” and damage to the top of the “c” in “Sealadac”, this variety occurs in cliché 1. “R” over “Se” occurs six times in each stereo, together with other variants highlighted in fig. 3. With setting 3 the third cliché of the stereo has the “c” in “Sealadac” raised more than in the second setting. A further consistent variant are the diagonal cuts to the uprights of “R” and “n”, as described for setting 2. “R” over “Se” occurs eight times in each stereo in setting 3, together with alignment variants highlighted under fig. 4.

fig. 3

Dollard Stereo Setting 2.

1	2	3
G		A + I
4	5	6
B	A	Normal
7	8	9
Normal	Normal	A + C
10	11	12
Normal	A	A + D + E
13	14	15
E	B + E	A + D

For clarity the term “stereo” used is an abbreviation for the word “stereotype”, meaning an exact copy. In the case of the Dollard process, engraver’s type blocks were used to make up a forme, from which the stereos were taken.

fig. 4 Dollard Stereo Setting 3.		
1 G	2	3 A + I
4 B	5 A	6 Normal
7 Normal	8 Normal	9 A + C
10 Normal	11 A	12 A + D + E
13 E	14 B + E	15 A + D

Explanation of setting 2 and 3 cliché variants (A to J), as shown in figs. 3 & 4.

Overprint Line Shifts:

Lines 1 & 2

Normal	(A)
--------	-----

R **R**
S e **S e**
"R" over "e" "R" over "Se"

Lines 2 & 3

Normal	(B)	(C)	(D)
I n A "I" over "n" In "nA"	I n A "I" over left shank of "n" in "nA"	I n A "I" over right shank of "n" in "nA"	I n A "I" over "nA"

Lines 4 & 5

Normal	(E)	(F)
i 1 "i" over "1"	é i 1 "ei" over "1"	i r 1 "ir" over "1"

Overprint Type Variants:

Lines 1, 2 & 3

(G)	(H)
R n c	R n

(G) & (H) with diagonal cuts to the upright of "R" in "Rialtas" and first leg of "n" in "nA".

(G) with damaged top to "c" in "Sealadac"

Overprint Type Shift:

Line 2

(I)	(J)
-----	-----

Sealadac **Sealadac**

Slightly raised "c" in "Sealadac" Raised "c" in "Sealadac"

In addition to the listed variants, the incidence of "out of alignment pairs" is also to be found on overprinted stamps from adjoining stereos. This variant being caused by the misalignment of the stereos in a setting. After the appearance of many dull shades of the black overprint, arising on the first issue, a decision was taken to overprint the 2½d., 4d. and 9d. low values, using the overprint stereos from the first issue, but using a reddish colour ink. This issue was released on the 1st April 1922. The three low values used setting 2 stereos, together

with a composite setting made up of stereos from both setting 1 and setting 3, see fig. 5. Dollard's contract with the Postal Authority was terminated on the 12th June 1922. Alex. Thom undertook the finalprintings of this issue, through to

1	3	1	3
1	3	1	3
Gutter Margin			
1	3	1	3
1	3	1	3

fig. 5

July. The Thom overprints used the existing Dollard 3 x 5 stereos, from setting 2. Thom overprints can be distinguished from those of Dollard by a change of ink colour to carmine. This colour change is difficult to differentiate between that of the red ink used by Dollard, this being in part due to the base colour of the stamps, in particular with the 2½d. and 9d. values. For the high value series, with a four line overprint by Dollard, a single setting with a 4 x 5 stereo was used, see fig. 6. The three high values were released in parallel with the low values on the 17th February.



fig. 6

With the high value stereo being made up of 20 clichés, the overprinting process required two press passes to overprint a full 4 x 10 sheet of

stamps. As a result of the process adopted, consistent overprint variants are replicated in identical cliché positions on the upper and lower halves, of a full sheet. In parallel with the first Dollard issues, Alex. Thom under contract to Dollard, also released on the 17th February four overprinted stamps, being the 1½d., 2d., 6d. and 1/- low values. The Thom overprint design, settings and stereo formats differed from those adopted by Dollard, as did subsequent Thom issues. It is hoped to cover the Thom settings in future issues of the Journal.

COPPER MINING IN WEST CORK - William A Moore

The south west corner of Ireland is a very picturesque area of Co Cork with a rugged coastline stretching from Schull and Mount Gabriel to the village of Allihies on the Béara Peninsula. It is not an area that one would immediately associate with copper mines. However, an item of postal history in my collection merits discussion as a reminder of an important industry which was carried on in past times. The item (below) to which I refer is a letter of August 1859 from Henry Bath and Son of Swansea addressed to Thos. Saunders, care of Rosbrin Manor, Ballydehob, Co Cork concerning a shipment of copper-ore sent from the mines in Cork to Swansea for smelting.

The letter enclosed an account for a shipment of copper-ore from Ballydehob or Schull to Swansea, the value of the cargo realising £265. (over £20,000 today).

The cover set me digging further. My research has located two areas of mining in the West Cork area. These were:-

Mount Gabriel area

The earliest recorded date of mine workings in the Mount Gabriel/ Goleen/ Ballydehob area is 1842, but it is probably the years 1852 to 1862 that saw the production of large quantities of ore. The ore was exported by ship, directly to Swansea. There were some 30 workings on Mount Gabriel alone. A remarkable unity existed between the mines in the exploitation technology used, the mines consisting of shallow opening rarely exceeded 10m (33ft) in length.

Allihies (Irish: Na hAillichí)

Allihies is located about 1km (5/8th mile) north of Ballydonegan Bay on the western end of the Béara Peninsula. Around 1812 copper was discovered in the area and within a few years about 600 people of

all ages and of both sexes were employed there. By 1822 between 150 and 200 tons of ore were being produced, this being exported directly from Ballydonegan Bay, roads in the area being generally non-existent. By 1838, some 1000 people were reported working in mines and a number of families from Cornwall had settled in the area. The workers were not well paid, the miners rate being 1/- a day. The young boys who washed the ore earned 6d and the young girls 3½d for a day's work. There were four 'Captains' at the mine, Captain Pascoe's salary being recorded at £300 per annum.

Wages were so poor that some miners sought relief in the workhouse at Castletown in January 1868. Miners' strikes and disputes are recorded in 1835 and 1861 when the local magistrate of the County was ordered to take a force of police to the village



Above: 1d QV red cancelled by SWANSEA sideways duplex in black, a single ring circular LONDON receiver, in red, a DUBLIN 'signet-ring' receiver, in dark blue, and a large SKIBBEREEN skeleton circular datestamp, 35mm diameter, struck in green, together with an oval handstamp of Henry Bath and Sons. (Bill's cover also shows two scarce marks, the Dublin signet ring postmark which I have only seen used with 1857 dates, always code 8, and a large size early skeleton mark of Skibbereen, also code 8 (does anyone know what the '8' signifies?). I would also suspect the Swansea sideways duplex is not a common item. A very nice combination – Ed.)

‘to restrain the miners from illegal acts’, this according to the ‘Cork Evening Herald’.

Many of the poor families lived in miserable cabins in the village. However, further up the hill were the residences of the Cornish miners, a neat row of cottages, many of them having two stories. As well as having these homes rent free, the Cornish miners were provided with free fuel and candles. The miners normally purchased their Indian meal and flour from the employer.

The miner had a very dangerous job. With candle stuck in his hat, he would descend a series of iron ladders down the shaft to the level at which his business lay. This would sometimes be from 170 to 200 fathoms (c1300ft) below the surface. Whilst at work he was liable to many accidents. Maimed hands, scarred faces and sightless eyes are all recorded.

Some mines changed ownership and a number of different mining companies were established. In 1872 the Berehaven Mining Company reported selling 4,122 tons of ore to Swansea which realized £29,790. (about £1.5mn today); the mountain mine

had produced 2,988 tons and a third company 1,299 tons. However, by 1882, men were being laid off and the area saw large scale emigration, with competition coming from Chilean ore resulting in a fall in the price of copper. By the early 1890s the mines were idle. However in the 1950s an attempt was made by a Canadian company to restart mining but this did not proceed.

An abandoned copper mine engine house on a hill above the village is a reminder of Allihies’ heritage. The engine house has recently been conserved by the Mining Heritage of Ireland and a museum has been established. This project and some of the underground workings have been featured on RTE One’s ‘Townlands’ programme. The village is now a quiet place but the ruins of the old mine workings and the chimney of the engine house remain a stark reminder of the days when Allihies was an important and thriving copper mining centre.

I would wish to acknowledge help in compiling this article willingly given by Richard Forrest at Cork County Library and also by staff at the National Library, Dublin.

THE EDITOR’S CHALLENGE

Firstly, the answer to the December ‘Challenge’. Brian Warren has produced the only response. He writes - ‘At the time the European letter rate was 11p and the Rest of the World incl. USA was 15p. So I expect that when somebody from the original address went to Youghal PO, handed it in with the forwarding address and the postmaster/postmistress decided that the differential should be paid for USA. But surely it was handed in at Lackaroe on the 12th or else how did it get that date and that the 4p was added before delivery to Templemichael. So forget that.

On looking at the express fees I think I have the answer. From 1971 the inland express fee beyond the first mile was 4p (The various leaflets I have between 1973 and 1976 have do not mention express fees). By 1 April 1977 the rate was 5p. The 1971 PO Guide has 4p and the 1977 guide 5p. This seems to indicate that the additional mile rate changed at 1.4.77. The basic rate appears to have changed on 1 October 1974 from 7½p to 9p for the first mile but I cannot see how I determined this but I have recorded this as such. It went to 10p on 1.4.77. So I reckon the 4p was a further express fee. But should not a postage due have been used?’

Brian – I think you are nearly there. I certainly think the 4p is a portorage charge and agree that postage due stamps should have been used to enable the postman to collect the charge. I have established that Lackaroe was in fact a delivery office at the time, using cycles, but may not have dealt with the delivery of express items, so the van from Youghal ran the extra mile to Templemichael. Hence, Youghal decided that a Portorage charge should apply, but only for the ‘second mile’ namely 4p – effectively a local anomaly. Does anyone know more?

That does bring us to the issue of ‘Portorage Fees’ on express mail. I suspect that very few covers have survived. Thus, in this issue, I issue a challenge to each and every member to send me copies of items subject to ‘Portorage’ charges. I believe these charges may also be found on telegram forms; thus, there is a further challenge – show me an example. Please let me hear from you! There will be a prize!

In the meantime, I have posted a small prize to Brian – a small batch of registered covers from Northern Ireland into the Republic which featured in the December article on that subject. Ed.

ILLUSTRATED ENVELOPES FROM DRAWINGS BY LORD GERALD FITZGERALD (1821 – 1886) - James M Rankin

A few years ago my collecting interest turned to illustrated envelopes and while searching through some old auction catalogues I came across a series of printed envelopes depicting caricatures which were obviously drawn by the same artist. The catalogues described them as "*printed envelopes of drawings by Lord Gerald of Dublin*". One envelope in particular depicted, a Drummer Boy, which was sent from Maynooth to London on 5th October 1853. This envelope had a manuscript note on the inside flap, which read "*one of Lord Gerald's drawings of our present race of Drummer Boys*". This appears to be the earliest example so far recorded. All of the drawings are crudely drawn caricatures, with spaces left in the design for the address and postage stamp. The envelopes are all in vertical format and measure 121mm x 71mm (4¾" x 2¾").

Lord Gerald FitzGerald was born in Northampton on 6th January 1821. He was the second son of Augustus Frederick FitzGerald, 3rd Duke of Leinster. He was an officer in the Scots Fusilier Guards from 1840 – 1846 and also served as an officer in the Westminster Rifle Volunteers from 1861. As an amateur artist and etcher he became a member of the Junior Etching Club based in London. Ten of his etchings were used to illustrate "*Hood's Poems*" in 1858. He lived with his brother for a few years at No. 6 Carlton House, London until

his marriage to Anne Agnes Barker in 1862. Carlton House was leased to the Dukes of Leinster from 1829 – 1889. A full-page caricature of Lord Gerald appeared in Vanity Fair magazine on 19th May 1883, captioned "*A Wandering Minstrel*". He was depicted playing the cello by the caricaturist Sir Leslie Ward, otherwise known as "*Spy*". Lord Gerald died at his residence in Sloane Street, London on 23rd September 1886 aged 65.

The FitzGerald family were at one time one of the most powerful families in Ireland. They built Maynooth Castle, outside Dublin, as well as Leinster House (seat of Dáil Eireann) and Carton, in Co. Kildare, one of the grandest Palladian mansions in the British Isles. The family acquired many titles over the centuries; in addition to the Dukedom, the Dukes of Leinster held the titles of Marquess of Kildare, Earl of Kildare, Earl and Baron of Offaly, Viscount Leinster, and Baron Kildare.

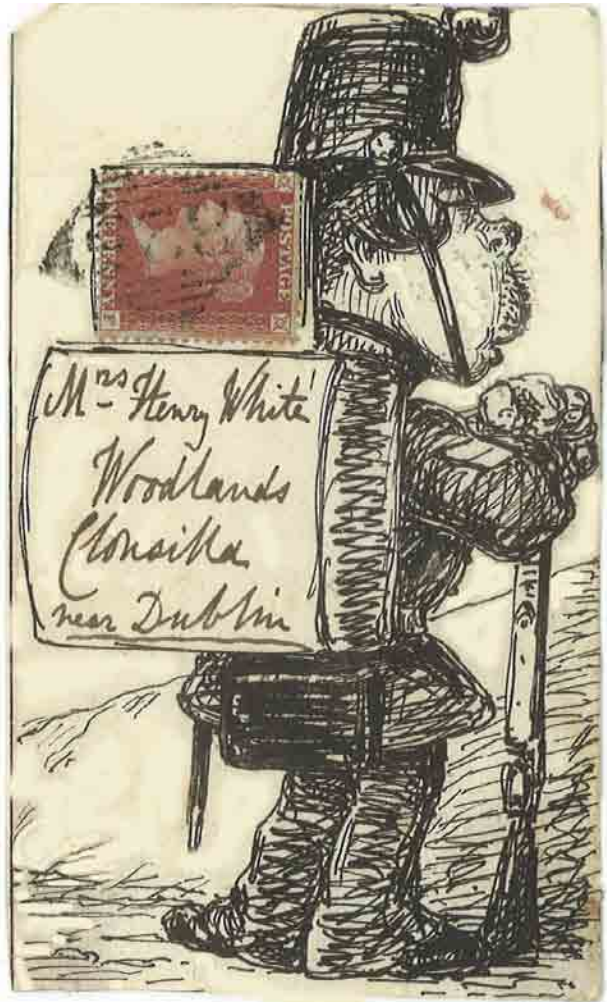
It would appear that Lord Gerald spent most of his adult life in England. It's not clear whether the envelopes were published by Lord Gerald himself or whether they were published by the Junior Etching Club in London. I have listed below all of the envelopes recorded to date using Lord Gerald's drawings. Details of any other envelopes and dates of use would be most welcome.

1. Drummer boy. Maynooth to London 5 Oct. 1853
2. Country gentleman with pipe and walking stick reading the address. Maynooth to London 5 Dec. 1855
3. Gentleman with sandwich board and top hat. Rathfarnham to Fort William, Scotland 13 Aug 1858 (postmarked Dublin – see next page)
4. Soldier resting on his rifle. Markethill, Co. Armagh to Clonsilla near Dublin. (front only no date)
5. Soldier playing a saxophone. (unused)
6. Old lady wearing a bonnet and carrying an umbrella and hat box. (unused)
7. Herald playing a trumpet and holding a scroll. (unused)
8. Man wearing flat cap and holding a tankard. (unused)
9. Egyptian gentleman wearing a Fez and carrying the address panel. (unused)
10. Pirate with a sword holding up a flag pole. (unused)
11. Young lady skating holding a small case on her head and carrying a large basket. (unused)
12. Gentleman wearing a top-hat and having his shoes polished. (unused)
13. Old milk-maid with a large milk bucket on her head and carrying a stool. (unused)

Items 3 and 4 are illustrated on the following page.

These charming envelopes are all very early, dating from 1853 onwards. Illustrated envelopes from the Victorian period are by no means scarce and can be found even into the Edwardian period. However, I cannot recall seeing any examples from Ireland dated after the 1914-18 war. I do not think the Post Office banned them; presumably people had less time and they merely went out of vogue?

Particularly in Ireland these were troubled years and such items were not kept in the way that they had been saved and treasured in the past. Your editor would welcome examples of late usages. Perhaps a member could produce an example that could form the basis of a 'My Favourite Item' page in a future edition of Irish Philately – another Challenge from your Editor!!



MY FAVOURITE ITEM - Graeme Murray



This cover sent in August 1922, well after the use of British stamps was illegal in the Provisional Government Area, is a perfect example of postage due procedures applying at the time to 'Cross-Channel' mail. At that time the Irish 'internal' rate (for Britain was internal) remained at 2d but the British rate had dropped to 1½d on 29 May 1922.

The cover was dealt with absolutely correctly by the Irish Post Office, James Street District Office, treating the item as 100% unpaid, leaving the British

stamp un-cancelled and raising a '4d' fine (twice the 2d letter rate), but indicating the date (and place) of posting by applying its datestamp. However, the '186' charge mark is likely to have been applied at the main Sorting Office at the Rotunda, James Street DO sending on an 'unpaid bundle' for further treatment.

The British Post Office has also treated the item absolutely correctly. Coventry Head Office has recognised the use of British stamps and properly allowed the 1½d stamp against the 4d fine raised by the Irish Post Office. It has therefore amended the 4d charge to 2½d, affixed 2½d in postage dues and cancelled the British stamp.

An interesting feature is that despite the item being 'internal', it clearly displays the use of the different 'internal' rates in Britain and the Provisional Government Area, the 4d fine standing, although an unpaid item within Britain would only have been assessed 3d due.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT – FRANS HERMSE

I met with our President Frans Hermse at the London AGM in November. It was a good opportunity to find out a little more about our Dutch President and what turned out to be some unusual collecting interests. This is what he told me:-

SC *When did your interest in Ireland start?*

FH In 1970. I visited Cork as a part of a men's choir and a friend had asked me to bring back some stamps. I liked what I found; there were not too many issues so I kept half of what I had bought and my interest began. I had not thought of Ireland previously..

But you were already a collector. Tell me about what else you collect.

Austria is the main area (my mother was from Vienna). But only certain aspects; the inflation period (1918-1926); then there is a traditional specialist collection of the 1schilling Maria Zell Basilica stamp from 1957 – there were various printings etc; also the Zollausschlussgebiete. I also have a worldwide collection of anything to do with letterboxes; this includes sorting offices, post vans, everything from posting to delivery. Then I keep anything to do with Industrial and Maritime Safety – I was a Process Safety Engineer when I was working.

Let me stop you a second. The Zollauss...

Ah! You would not know that (100% correct!) – this is a small area of Austria to which the only access is from Germany, so it always was a part of the German Customs Union and you could use either currency before the Euro. I collect anything I can find from this area.

So Ireland is a relatively minor interest?

I would not say minor. However, Austria is the most in terms of quantity, but the Irish is most interesting. I only collect Postal History, pre 1840 and have built up 5 Irish collections. These are, 1) mail via the Donaghadee to Portpatrick route, 2) mail via the Dublin/Kingstown to Holyhead/Liverpool routes, 3) mail via Waterford to Milford haven, 4) internal Irish mail pre 1840 and finally 5) Ballymoney in Co Antrim. This interest came about because I was at the open air Stamp market in Amsterdam some time ago and bought 300 covers sent to Belfast Bank in that town and as a result, I wanted to find out about the place. I have enjoyed using the postmarks on those covers to study the mail routes across the north of Ireland to that town. I have visited Ballymoney but was not very impressed; for me, The Giant's Causeway was the star attraction of that part of the Country.



Our president stands in the doorway of the now closed office at Kylemore, Co Galway during one of his many visits exploring Ireland (1988)

Where do you get your material? It cannot be easy. Irish and even English material is not that common in Europe. In fact the Irish is quite rare; the prices are very variable. There is little knowledge of Irish material in most of Europe.

Have you found it difficult to research Ireland from your home in the Netherlands?

Not really. I started off with British stamps used in Ireland and then moved into Postal history. I was intrigued the figures on the covers, such 9, 1/3 etc. I soon got into correspondence with Bill Kane and Fred Dixon – that started my knowledge. I have found Feldman and Kane's book¹ very useful. I also corresponded with Dennis Salt. He had much old correspondence addressed to his family firm. Above all, he had copies of the Acts of Parliament. I visited him at Shrewsbury on several occasions and learned a lot.

How do you see your collecting moving on?

I have much to do. I would dearly like to get more items via the Howth route. I want to study the routes and rates of mails to India and other foreign countries. One needs to know the Irish, British and foreign rates to study it properly. Spanish mail, also that passing through Thurn and Taxis² attracts me –

but the letters must start or finish in Ireland. But I am also still building my Austrian collection. In the inflation period there were 15 different rate periods and I have over 200 covers showing these. I always keep a list of what I have got with me.

Your collecting highlights?

I have been a club member for 40 years and there have been many. I was especially pleased to get a Limerick to India cover dated 1838, a couple of years ago but I must tell you a little story. The most expensive item is seldom the rarest. One Sunday morning I was at my home in Holland and I discovered in a German auction catalogue the Austrian 10,000 kroner stamp of 1922 used on a cover as a single franking for a registered express item. It is not an expensive stamp but as a single franking..... (*Frans drooled at this point!*) it was unknown. It was too late to post a bid from Holland. I live just 2 miles distant from the German border, so I drove into Germany to a main post office, posted my bid at many times estimate and I got the item; this was a wonderful addition to my collection.

And your collecting regrets?

I have no regrets about what I have collected. The collections have given me so much pleasure over the years. In general, I do regret the volumes of new issues in recent years. Postal Authorities are robbing the Collectors. I used to get the new issues of Germany, Netherlands, Austria and Ireland but no more. To collect the modern stamps serves no purpose and merely subsidises the post offices. But I have missed opportunities. Close to where I live there is a small area of territory, a few villages, which were Dutch between 1949 and 1963 when they were transferred back to Germany. It was so close and I could have got the material but I had no interest in Postal History at that time. I also regret that we did not keep the envelopes from our family correspondence; my grandmother lived in Austria, the mail was all censored and we soaked off all the very ordinary and worthless stamps – that was a tragedy!

Outside your collection?

I also do some judging at exhibitions. I went on a course some 30 years ago. I still do it at National level. I enjoy it and hope that I will be able to continue doing it for a number of years.

Frans, finally a little about yourself

I was born in 1938 at Kerkrade in Holland. I lived there through the German occupation. My father died in 1944 but my Austrian mother chose to stay in Holland. I was one of three children. After school, I joined a chemical company becoming an

analytical chemist (*good training for studying postal history – Ed*). I was 20 years in a laboratory and then became a process safety engineer, retiring in 1998. My wife died in 2004 but I have a son and daughter in Holland. They have presented me with two grandchildren and of course beyond stamps I do enjoy my family life.

Thank you Mr President. I think our membership will be fascinated with your wide interests – there are surely some ideas for all of us there.

I get great pleasure from this society and it gives me an excuse to travel to London and of course to Ireland.

Notes: 1. Handbook of Irish Postal History to 1840 – Feldman and Kane published 1975. 2. The 'house' of Thurn and Taxis maintained a postal monopoly over much of Germany prior to being 'Nationalised' in 1867.

SLANE POSTMARKS

It is always nice to determine almost exactly when a new postmark is introduced and when examining Co Meath postmarks recently it was possible to pin down the introduction of one of the 'Maltese Cross handstamps' to within 4 days. My two examples will not copy well, so those shown below are for different dates.



I have seen the skeleton (left above) in use between 23 November and 19 December 1922, whilst the new postmark, which is not in the list in 'Dulin', is recorded from 23 December. This 'new' postmark survived until May 1950 by which date it was one of the last of the Irish language postmarks from 1922 to remain in use. From memory (excluding the 'Rubber handstamps') this is the first occasion on which I have found the 'Dulin' list incomplete. Subsequently (not shown) the postmark at Slane, there was just one in use, read 'Baile Sláinghe' until at least 1956; it read 'Sláine' from 1959 until 1977 before becoming 'Baile Sláine'.

COMPLETION OF THE SHANNON HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME

co-ordinated by Graeme Murray

The completion of the Shannon hydro-electric scheme at Ardnacrusha was commemorated by the issue of a single stamp on 15th October 1930.



Figure 1: the issued stamp.

The official announcement stated that the date of issue was 16 October and this was indeed the date of issue at most offices. However, the stamp went on sale at Dublin GPO and possibly elsewhere late on the afternoon of 15 October. Although scarce, covers and postmarks with that date do exist.

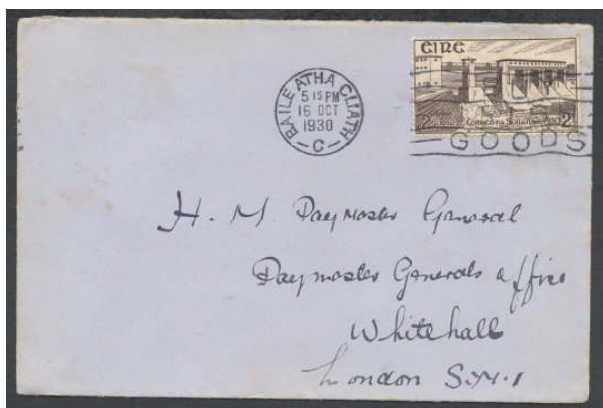


Figure 2: cover dated 16th October for long believed to be the date of issue.

Designed by E. L. Lawrenson, the 2d (inland rate) stamp shows the Shannon Barrage at O'Brien's Bridge in County Limerick. It was typographed at the Government Printing Works, Dublin, from plates prepared for the Royal Mint in London. Three plates were prepared at a cost of £150; Lawrenson was paid £44 for his efforts.

The size of the stamp (double the width of the 2d definitive of the time) was responsible for a certain lack of popularity.

When a commemorative stamp was issued, the corresponding definitive was temporarily withdrawn from sale.

Many stamps were used for revenue and tax purposes and the larger size caused problems when affixing the stamps to receipts and other official documents. A note in the archives reads "Inconvenience was experienced in the handling of the Shannon stamp and it was also found to be too large as a receipt stamp". It was seven years before another commemorative of this size was issued.

The stamp was issued in sheets of 120, in two panes of 60 stamps (10R x 6C) with a central gutter margin. The sheet has the usual coextensive rule with 'T bars' opposite stamps 3 - 4 in the top and bottom margins. Perforated 15 x 14, it is possible that two types of perforator were used. *Does anyone have any information on this aspect?*

The sheets are usually perforated through top, right and bottom margins with the left margin imperforate. However, part of the issue has the left sheet margin perforated through.

The paper has a monogrammed Se watermark and is believed to have come from Swiftbrook Paper Mills. It seems two papers were used; white and a yellowish-white. Brown gum was used on both papers.

The white paper results in an agate coloured stamp whilst the off-white or yellowish-white paper produces a blackish-brown shade. These two shades have also been described as light agate and dark agate.

The Hibernia catalogue lists two varieties described as 'trees' (behind the bridge) at position 15/1 and 'birds' (flying) at 15/2. This second variety shows as broken lines through "Eire". Both varieties are non-constant.

The stamp exists overprinted specimen but I do not have an image to show. 19,330,805 stamps were issued and the stamp was withdrawn from general sale on 31st December 1930.

Thanks are due to Paul Baines and John Lennon, without whom this article could not have been written.

BICENTENARY OF THE ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY

co-ordinated by Graeme Murray

The Bicentenary of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) was commemorated by the issue of a single stamp on 12th June 1931. The Society was founded for “the improvement of husbandry and other useful arts.



Figure 1: the issued stamp.

The issue was initiated by Edward Bohane, director of the RDS, when he wrote to the Minister of Posts & Telegraphs on 7th November 1930 requesting a stamp for their bi-centenary celebrations the following June. Plan A was for the issue to be on sale from 1st May to 31st August 1930 “to embrace the Spring Show, Bi-Centenary celebrations and the horse show”.

Whilst the Minister was in favour of the issue he opined that the RDS should bear all the costs involved! A costing was prepared for the (successful) artist's fee (£50) and retaining fees for unsuccessful artists of £20. Three artists were to be approached; Leo Whelan, George Atkinson and P. Oswald Reeves. A statement was added that the RDS should not be asked for costs as the additional revenue generated should more than cover the cost of production.

The Department of Finance responded to this on 9th March 1931 with “the Minister sanctions the payment of a fee of £25 to the artist who submits the winning design. The Minister sees no reason for the payment of a retaining fee to other artists who may submit designs.” The Executive Council approved the terms the same day.

Bohane visited the Executive Council, carrying with him four designs by George Atkinson. The designs were referred to the design committee who recommended the same design as was selected by the Council. As time was short and a consensus of opinion had been reached on the design, the Finance Department was asked for permission to proceed. This was duly granted on 19th March.



Figure 2: Atkinson's unsuccessful designs.

Atkinson was asked to complete the design and to put the name of the society in Irish.



Figure 3: the successful design.

He completed it on 23rd March and it was approved (with slight modifications to the white lines at the top and bottom) on 25th March by the Stamping Department Revenue Commissioners. Further approvals were required and given by the Executive Council on 1st April and the Revenue Commissioners on 2nd April. The engraved die was approved by George Atkinson on 14th May.

Seven colour essays were sent to the Department of Posts & Telegraphs: chocolate brown, ruby, blue, pearl green, umber, grey and brown. Whilst Atkinson preferred blue (the colour of the RDS flag), Roberts, in the revenue department, was not keen "in my opinion blue is hardly the appropriate colour for the subject". On 15th May blue was given the go-ahead.

Two weeks later Roberts had sorted out production of the stamps, telling O'Hegarty (Secretary, Posts & Telegraphs) that he could deliver 50,000 sheets (of 240 stamps) on 10th June and 20,000 sheets a week until complete. 12th June was selected as the day of issue.

The stamp was typographed in sheets of 240, in two panes of 120 (10R x 12C) with a central gutter margin. The sheet has the usual coextensive rule with 'T bars' opposite stamps 6 - 7 in the top and bottom margins. Perforated 15 x 14, the left sheet margin is imperforate, the right and top margins are perforated through and the bottom margin has been reported as perforated through and imperforate.

The paper has a monogrammed Se watermark and is likely to have come from Swiftbrook Paper Mills. Two papers were used; a thin white paper with white gum and watermark clearly visible, and a cream paper with white gum but more obscure watermark. A brown gum has also been reported. There is a range of shades; blue and bright blue on the thin white paper and dull blue and deep dull blue on cream paper and brown gum.

The stamp is known overprinted specimen and also *Especimen*. The *Especimen* overprint, in use between 1926 and 1931, is thought to have been applied by the Portuguese authorities prior to sending stamps to its colonies.



Figure 4: FDC signed by the artist, George Atkinson.



Figure 5: *Especimen* overprint in violet from a Portuguese colony archive. The stamp has no gum.

The curious case of the suicidal left-handed mower. The issued 2d (inland rate) stamp shows a reaper carrying a scythe. Whilst this seems innocuous enough two letters appeared in the Irish Times. In June readers were treated to "I have been looking at mowers carrying their scythes since God gave me sight and I have never yet seen one of them putting a scythe on his shoulder who would not put the front small handle behind his shoulder against his shoulder blade. The mower knows that it would not be safe for him to put a scythe on his shoulder with the two small handles before him". In September it was noted "... that the scythe was yoked so that it could only be used by a left-handed man". It is not recorded whether Atkinson's model for the mower survived his dangerous ordeal!

No major flaws have been reported but minor flaws exist on the background horizontal lines in the bottom tablet due to plate wear near the end of the print run.

In total 20,675,040 were issued together with 2,160 specimens. 1,145,040 stamps were 'spoiled' and 2,052,000 were destroyed on 3rd November 1931. It was withdrawn from general sale on 31st August 1931.

Thanks are due to the following, without whom this article could not have been written: Paul Baines, Roy Hamilton-Bowen and John Lennon.

THE VISITS OF THE RYNDAM - John Mullen/ Editor

One of the all time great collectors of Ships' hand stamps especially ships that visited Ireland was the late Norah Wright. I was fortunate to have viewed a display given by Norah a number of years ago which fascinated me.

After the display I spoke to Norah and asked how she managed to get these ships hand stamps and I quote "You ask" she told me, and then elaborated, "when a ship arrives in Dublin go along to a member of the crew and ask if they have a Ship's hand stamp its as simple as that, be prepared with a number of covers and you will find that 99% of the time you will be successful".

Armed with this information I took up the mantle, and as per the advice I received from Norah, over the years I have been very successful. A number of years ago while attending Stampex I came across the cover below addressed to Norah with a postmark I have never seen before. SS Ryndam Dublin with centre star and appears to have a changeable date.

I am looking for any information from collectors about this postmark and would be very grateful for same. What dates are available? I know of one other cover that my good friend Mr. Brian Warren has, as we both got them at the same show, with the same date.



fig 1 – skeleton postmark



fig 2 – with postmark
'Postagent A/S SS Ryndam, 27 X 1968'

Having received this item from John and an e-mail message from Brian Warren, aware of John's query, reading 'I hope you will publish this piece in the March issue as this skeleton has me puzzled. Was there some special event when the ship visited so that P&T decided to provide some sort of postal facility - should it be listed as a special event cancel etc ?' I got thinking. There is no doubt that fig 1 is a P&T (as it then was) skeleton, whilst clearly that on the cover addressed to Norah belonged to the Ship. Fig 1 is actually on a cover addressed to Norah and I suspect she had a contact at the GPO who agreed to 'knock up' a skeleton for use on mail posted on board – highly irregular and a Paquebot mark should have been used. As to whether this counts as a 'Special Event' I reserve judgement until an example is found, perhaps on a passenger's postcard. Fig 2 shows the Ship's 'postmark'. I suggest that strictly a Dublin Paquebot mark should have been struck alongside.

So what was the Ryndam? A little research was needed. This is a précis of my discoveries -

Ryndam was launched in 1951 with a weight of 15,015grt, and was operated by the Holland Amerika line. The maiden voyage left Rotterdam for Southampton, Le Havre and New York. Later She called frequently at Cobh. In July 1958 She began regular calls at Galway, this as a result of 'cruising' replacing the traditional Trans-Atlantic voyages. In 1964 She did a round the world cruise visiting, inter alia, Sydney. In 1966 Ryndam was transferred to the German flag Europa-Kanada line but this was not a commercial success – She became a one-class operating 'floating university cruises and made Atlantic crossings for various student organisations. It would have been during this period that She visited Dublin. Her final Atlantic crossing left Bremerhaven in September 1967 and shortly thereafter She was renamed 'Waterman'.

However, on 10 October 1968, Holland Amerika Lijn (to give the correct name) took control of the ship once again, renaming her 'Ryndam'. It is interesting to note that the date of the cover alongside is 27 October 1968. The student cruises continued until 1971. A change of owner saw Her renamed 'Atlas'. After further name changes She finally sank in 2003 en route to Alang, a small port in the Gujarat district of India, specialising in shipbreaking,. How have the mighty fallen!

John, whether that tells us significantly more about your cover, I rather doubt, but an interesting story nevertheless.

POST OFFICE PAGE

DUNGANNON – Co TYRONE

It is time for Post Office page to move north and cross the Border. It is also right that we look at a larger office and one that remains open even if substantially downgraded in recent years. We are entirely indebted to the late Tony Graham for these notes. Before he died in 1999 Tony let me have copies of much of the research work he was doing on the Post Offices of Northern Ireland. Other than references in passing, I do not believe any of his work has been published previously and I intend that we return to his invaluable notes from time to time.

By way of introduction, Dungannon is situated in the south eastern part of what is Northern Ireland's biggest county. The present population is c11,000, the town serving as headquarters of the local government 'Dungannon District' which covers the south part of Co Tyrone. Below follows a synopsis of Tony's research on Dungannon.

Dungannon is one of the oldest provincial post offices in Ireland. Earliest record is from the Irish PO accounts of 1659 which records the town as being situated on the Ulster Road to Londonderry 12 miles (Irish) from Ardmagh (Armagh) with one Thomas Hall serving as postmaster at a salary of £26 p.a. Not surprisingly there is a lack of early detail. The 1729 almanac records the town as being 74 miles from Dublin and there being three posts a week; this was increased to six in 1786 with an additional cross post operating to Aughnacloy thrice weekly.

A reference has been found in the Londonderry Journal of 1778 stating 'The Strabane bye bag was recently lost between Dungannon. Whoever shall return said bag shall receive a Crown reward...'. One 'Mr Porter' was postmaster at Dungannon at that time. By 1809 the Postmistress was Mrs Francis Powers on a salary of £37 p.a. The 1838 circulation map shows no direct link to Portadown prior to the coming of the railway, Belfast mail travelling via Armagh. When the railway was opened from Portadown in 1858 mail would have immediately transferred to that service and continued to arrive/ depart thus until the closure of the line on 15 February 1965.

The location of the office is unknown prior to 1834 when one John Hughes was postmaster. The town plan of that year shows his property, comprising a large inn with house and office on the east side of the main (Market) square to the north of the corner

with Church Street. The neighbours were the Belfast Bank on the south and the Provincial Irish Bank to the north. In 1851 the Northern Whig records 'A great improvement has been effected by the removal of the establishment to the present well situated and handsome house. The exertions of the excellent postmaster Mr Hughes deserve to be appreciated'. The 1859 town plan shows the office on the east side of the Market Square next but one to the corner of Thomas Street. Robert Bloomfield, who had taken over in 1855, was postmaster at this time. He was succeeded by John Linton (shown in directories 1868-70) and later by Jacob Orr (1877-92).

The Post Office is recorded as moving again in 1891 to a new purpose built premises at the north side of Market Square. The Tyrone Courier of 3 January of that year records a presentation to Mr Orr 'the much admired postmaster' and records the new office as being in the course of erection. Mr Orr was succeeded by one Pierse Lanigan (1895-97) and then by Matthew Creighton who is recorded in the directories of 1900 and 1903. In that latter year his salary was £194 p.a. Patrick McCool postmaster in 1908 was paid £220. No less than eleven further postmasters are recorded as having served between 1911 and 1970 when the office was reduced in status from Head Office to a salaried sub office (under Portadown initially). At that time W M Morrison is recorded as postmaster, he serving through the change of status from 1960 to 1981. The purpose built office of 1891 was replaced, c1960, by a modern building on the same site constructed very much in the Spartan style of that period. That building still (2007) stands but a few years ago Dungannon Post Office suffered the humiliation of being downgraded from being in a 'proper' post office to become a counter in a shop a few doors to the south of the former site in Market Square.

The earliest postmark of which there is a record is a straight line mark reading D.GANON dated 1729. Mileage marks are known used between 1810 and 1831 (see article in June 2004 edition 'The Road to Dungannon'). Numeral cancellation 193 was issued to Dungannon in 1844; two 'killer' and six 'duplex' cancellations bearing this number are known, last recorded used in 1893. In addition to the usual range of handstamps, a Krag machine is recorded used between 1949 and 1955, being replaced c1957 by a universal machine which remained in use certainly until 1997 but withdrawn since.

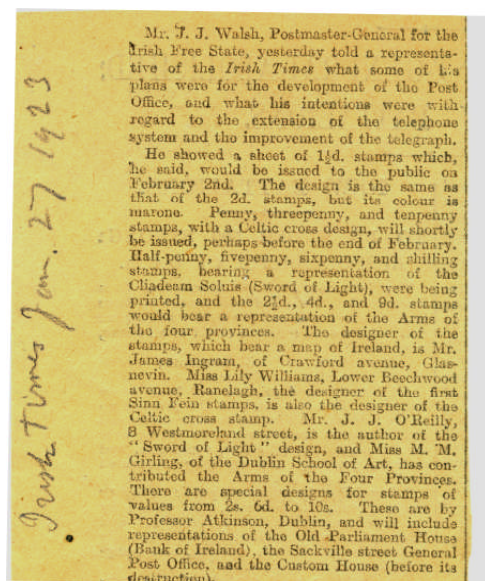


Dungannon: the almost empty Market Square c1900 with the 'new office' on the right.



Left: the new Post Office on the site of the previous one (taken in May 1994 by the late Tony Graham). The Market Square today is a clutter of street furniture and cars. Since this was taken, this office has been closed and Dungannon's once proud Head Post Office is now reduced to a small shop a few doors to the right of 'Oxfam' at 11 Market Square.

Dungannon also has town sub offices at Scotch Street (opened 1891) and Oaks Centre (opened 1997). Scotch Street office, formerly 400 yards south of the Market Square, is now listed as being half a mile away in Newell Road, but seemingly the name remains unchanged.



A CUTTING FROM 1923

I am grateful to member, Florence McCarthy for letting me have sight of the cutting alongside which comes from the Irish Times of 27 January 1923. At that time the 2d map had been issued but no other value had appeared. Next to appear was the 1½d stamp (for use on postcards) on 2 February, the 1d value appeared on 23 February. The Celtic Cross design debuted with the 3d value on 16 March, the Sword of Light design following with the ½d value on 20 April. It was not until September 1923 that the first value showing the Arms of the Provinces appeared when the 2½d value was placed on sale. The high never appeared in the suggested designs.

As Editor, I am pleased to receive contemporaneous material such as this which gives us an insight to the thinking at the time – a true case of 'Beyond the Catalogues'.

AUCTION WATCH - 'Erinman'

One of the great rarities of modern Irish philately was offered by Schwanke of Hamburg in their November 2008 auction. Few examples of the 1995 Fauna and Flora Butterflies imperforate miniature sheet are known. However, with an estimate of Euro 5000 the item remained unsold.

Overprint coil leader strips are avidly bid over. On offer at Grosvenor's November 2008 sale was a Harrison 2d orange Die 1 (SG 29) vertical coil leader Q with six stamps attached. Against an estimate of £1,000 the hammer price was £1,300. In the same auction, a lot consisting of 1940 1/2d, 1d, 2d booklet panes and 1d booklet pane of 3 stamps plus 3 labels with booklet selvage attached, all with watermark inverted made £1,700 plus premium against the lower estimate of £700.

Auctions held by MacDonnell Whyte Ltd. are always eagerly awaited and the December 2008 auction did not disappoint.

A rare 1746 EL (small faults) with forged frank "Free Rd Wolseley" on face, with Free crossed out and COUNTERFEIT/2 and RECHARGED/1 horseshoe marks applied in black, endorsed "1N" made Euro3,100 against an estimate of Euro2,000. Similarly another rare marking, a small datestamp April 21/1811 in red on an 1811 EL from Tulnacross to Carlow made a very respectable Euro2,600 against a pre sale estimate of Euro800. A newly discovered serpentine scroll MEMBER Not IN DUBLIN and above Inspectors crown both in red on an 1828 EL from Castlecomer cost the buyer Euro5,750 plus premium against the estimate of Euro2,500.

The sale featured a number of ship letters and maritime mail. A very rare 1850 E with Dunmore East scroll SHIP LETTER in black with DUNMORE EAST/92 in black with WATERFORD/SHIP LETTER in green fetched Euro1,900 (estimate Euro1,500). Similarly the only recorded example of the COLERAINE/SHIP-LETTER in red on an 1818 EL from Nashville to Belfast made Euro3100 (estimate Euro2500) and the framed LIMERICK/SHIP LETTER in black one of only four known made Euro1100 (estimate Euro800).

Mail from the Galway Line which ran between St.John's Newfoundland and Galway is very scarce. An 1860 EL from New York to London sent via the steamer Brazil with blue GALWAY/JU 12 60 cds cost the buyer Euro1100 plus premium against a pre sale estimate of Euro350. A very good result (to your Editor's regret!).

The illustration on the front cover of the catalogue is of a 1932 registered flown cover Galway to Recife sent on 22nd October 1932 with first flight Galway to Berlin cachet and with Ninth South America flight Friedrichshafen to Brazil and Anschlussflug flight cachets back stamped Pernambuco cds 27th October 1932. Against a pre sale estimate of Euro750, the hammer price was Euro1,050.

Turning to the overprint section of the sale, a good result was obtained for a 2d orange unmounted mint gutter pair Thom 3 line overprint in blue/black (SG 55). Although there was a slight fold through the centre of the gutter the item sold for Euro290 (estimate Euro180).

A rare 10/- blue fine used vertical narrow and wide overprint pair (SG 85a) dated 8th April 1929 one of two such pairs recorded, sold for Euro6,250 (estimate Euro5,000).

One issue that is slowly creeping up in price is the 1935 Waterlow Re-engraved set of 3 SG 99-101. An unmounted mint set made Euro750 (estimate Euro700).

Inverted watermark varieties of the 1922 se watermark issue find ready buyers especially when showing positional varieties as well. An unmounted mint top marginal block of 12 of the 3d value with row 4/3 EI-RE variety sold for Euro775 (estimate Euro450).

A rarely offered coil leader, N/£3.0.04 of the 1 1/2d Map stamp with 13 stamps attached in mint condition made Euro975 (estimate Euro800).

Modern definitive varieties when auctioned are eagerly contested. The 1998 Birds Stonechat proved no exception. The Walsall Phosphor printing in a right marginal pair, one with value omitted and the other with 35p at right instead of left and both having a single central phosphor band instead of two side bands (one of 10 recorded pairs) sold for Euro2,500 (estimate Euro1,800).

Turning to eBay, FDC and booklets have been items that caught my attention. A 1944 Davitt and Parnell FDC which ticked all the boxes i.e. typed address and pictorial cover made £68. On the other hand I fail to see the merit in buying commemorative FDC which do not contain the full set.

continued at the bottom of page 17

QUERY CORNER

Query Corner being absent from the December issue, we start by dealing with the answers to the queries posed in the September 2008 issue. John Lennon, our invigilator, has generally been somewhat underwhelmed by the lack of responses. First the answers, such as we have -

1.08 Is the L mark Irish?

Best answer comes from non-member Howard Hughes (of the GBPS). He writes 'Firstly, it appears that the manuscript red '1' mark goes under the adhesive. Hence the adhesive, if it belongs was not applied in Ireland. If the '1' denotes paid in cash at Virginia then the adhesive could have been added for the redirection within England. The late use of the Maltese Cross is well documented in England and usually occurred at comparatively few small post towns that had not been issued with a Numeral Obliterator. In this case the letter was originally addressed to Gargrave near Skipton and, upon redirection, a Gargrave UDC has been applied, probably indicating that the redirected letter was posted at the small office located there. Unfortunately, no other example of the late use of the Maltese Cross at Gargrave has so far been recorded but I see no reason that this could not be the first. I am sure the 'L' mark is a London one.' Howard adds that very few examples of late uses of Maltese Crosses are known in Ireland although he does have Ballylongford dated in 1846.

2.08 What was the rate to India?

Several members have commented on this item. The conclusion, although no member was able to quote a definitive reference, is that the correct air mail to India rate in 1929 was 8d (up to ¼oz), comprising 2d postage and 6d air fee and in consequence the cover shown bearing the 9d O'Connell stamp was overfranked by 1d. Interestingly this cover caught the flight leaving London on 24 August 1929; the following week's flight flown by Hercules DH66 'City of Jerusalem' crashed at Jask and the substantial majority of the mail was lost.

We have two new queries:

1.09 Is the Frame brake consistent?



Tony Best has produced an example of the 1½d 4 line coil in which there is a frame break either side of the Crown (see previous column). He notes the reference in the 4 Kings Catalogue to N19 control plate 15 three years before overprinting and asks if other members have similar items and if it is possible that Harrison used stock from this plate for overprinting the coils?

2.09 Is it genuine?

Lesley Roberts has found a rather nice Fleet Post Office/ Bantry mark (22 Feb 1912) and asks 'Is it genuine?'



Your Editor has not seen this before but has no reason to doubt it. Can any member provide confirmation?

AUCTION WATCH – continued from page 16

A 1929 registered cover mailed on the first day of issue but with only the 2d and 3d values made, to me, a staggering £155. Definitive FDC are a different proposition where good condition and a clear readable datestamp are the priorities. A 2d orange overprint dated 17/2/22 sold for £104.

Definitive booklets of the map series always attract several bidders. Prices are still generally on the increase for those booklets issued prior to 1964. A 2/6d booklet SGB8 with edition number 33-50 sold for £105 and another (31-48) sold for £84.

An early letter dated 1798 sent from Sligo to Portadown with very poor straight line Sligo in black, but containing historical content of military action against the French during the Rebellion made £402. Presumably it was the history attached to the letter which achieved the price or did I miss something?

Finally back to the MdW auction. Always check your 'junk' – a junk box estimated at Euro 10 realised no less than Euro320!! Just what was in it?

MILESTONES – Hugh McGoldrick

Coach & Post Roads of Ireland – Part 5

Milestones are still to be found in several counties in Ireland on the old Post Riding and Mail Coach roads. They are usually sited on the left hand side of the road coming from the Dublin direction.

On the head of the milestone you should always find Dublin and the mileage exactly to that spot as measured by the Post Office Surveyor. Below is the mileage from the last town you passed through, and below that is the mileage to the next town ahead of you. Dublin is used as the base or centre spot from which all accumulative mileage is calculated. One point to note is that the mileages are in Irish miles.

In Co. Meath, on the back road from Slane to Carrickmacross via Dunconrath, are milestones erected after 1831, at one mile intervals, they mark the change of route taken by the Dublin to Derry mail coach in that year. On the very top of all these milestones are the letters C.M. i.e: Co Meath. This means that the Grand Jury of Co Meath, a body similar to County Councils nowadays, in association with the Post Office, raised the money to repair the roads and bridges within the county. In this case they probably paid for the milestones to be cut, marked and erected on this route. This is likely to be the reason for the monogram on each milestone.

One Irish mile from Drumconrath, on the Slane side, the milestone reads:-

Dublin 32	Slane 10	Drumconrath 1
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Another example is the milestone built into the bridge at Mountbellew in Co. Galway. Cut into on the top is C.G (Co Galway). Again, the Grand Jury possibly bought and paid for this milestone marker. The stone is three sided. In the centre is Dublin to Mountbellew Bridge, 79 miles. The right side reads, Galway 23, Tuam 12, Dunmore 12. The left side reads, Athlone 20, Ballyforan 9, Ballinasloe 12. This mileage marker, in the bridge parapet, is unusually on the right hand side.

In Co. Fermanagh, one mile from Lisnaskea, there is a milestone, a flat stone, with markings on front face only. The top reads 70½ Dublin, 15½ Cavan, 10 Enniskillen.

On the Wattlebridge to Crum Castle to Lisnaskea road, a milestone was erected to mark the mileage change to 80½ miles from Dublin to Enniskillen;

In counties Antrim and Down, the milestones are different. One mile from Moira is a milestone, 2½

note Enniskillen's mileages are recorded at 79½, 80½ and 82.

In the town of Lisnaskea, there is a milestone with no markings, possibly because the British Government feared an invasion by the Germans during the two Great Wars and advised all local Authorities/Councils to either deface the mileage from the milestones, sign-posts etc. or else to lift and turn. This milestone may possibly have markings on it, if it were to be lifted and turned.

What are possibly two private milestones, not erected by the Post Office or Grand Jury, can be seen in the area of Crum Castle, possibly erected by the Earls of Erne as proprietors of Crum Castle.

In the south west part of Co. Fermanagh, on the present A32 Swanlinbar to Enniskillen road, there are 3 remaining milestones at Mullaghy, Drumshroohil and near the forestry entrance. All three are two sided to a point at the front. Located on the right hand side of the road, the first travelling north, reads on left side Swanlinbar 2¾, on the right side Enniskillen 7. The second reads, Swanlinbar 4¾, Florencecourt 1½, left side Enniskillen 5. The third reads Swanlinbar 6¾, Florencecourt 3½, Enniskillen 3. Also one mile from Enniskillen, on the A4, is a similar type milestone marked Sligo 30, Swanlinbar 8¾, Enniskillen 1. These four milestones, possibly dating from the late 1700's/early 1800's, were erected for Post Riders. The reasoning behind this is that the use of mileage marks and the necessity for showing the distance to Dublin commenced in 1808. So prior to this date, the starting point from Dublin was omitted – it was unnecessary!

Other changes occurred. For instance, in Co. Cavan on the Dublin to Enniskillen mail coach route via Kells, Virginia and Cavan crossing into Fermanagh at Wattlebridge, the old original stones were removed at some point and replaced with cut stone/concrete blocks to which was attached a cast iron plate (similar to those used on the railways), with the town names and mileages raised on same. Was this done in early 1900's or earlier and if so why was the English mileage not used? It should have been due to the Imperial Weights and Measure Act 1826. The old Irish mileage is shown on these cast iron plaques. The other change is Dublin is not mentioned on these replacement plaques.

sided, splayed to the front to a point and splayed from the top down to a mid point. It reads 'Moira I

mile' on the left side and 'Lisburn 6¾ mile' on the right side. The top splay reads 'Belfast 15'. (illustration at right) A similar stone can be found at Larne. No mention of Dublin is on either. Perhaps Dublin has been erased and Belfast added

Another feature you will find on some milestones is the sapper's mark. Like a turkey's claw, these are datum marks cut in the stone by the Royal Engineers during the Town Land Survey of Ireland during the 1830s to 1850s and subsequent surveys. On the Ordnance maps you will find a level which will give you the height above sea level to the level mark at the top of the claw. The Surveying Engineers never thought that anybody would ever need to remove these stones for dual carriageways, motorways, widening and suchlike.

Milestones survive in all parts of Ireland. Do look for them as you drive along the old coach roads, now so often by-passed and I would welcome further information.



Left: The charmingly situate milestone on the bridge at Mount Bellew in Co Galway.

This article is the last of the original series which Hugh has provided us with. However, the good news is that Hugh has kindly made available a full copy of his research notes and it is my intention that I shall extract detail from them in future editions to, at the very least, fill up some of those awkward corners which all editors find themselves left to fill. I know we all give our thanks to Hugh for his efforts. Ed.

Note: 1 Irish mile = 1.25 English miles or 2 kilometres approx.

IN THE NEXT EDITION

In the June issue it is intended that we include part two of "Northern Ireland – Registered Mail to the Republic 1984 – 2004" when I shall attempt to record the many system changes which took place after November 1993. Brian Warren hopes to include an article 'The Gerls – 25 years on' which will look back to the popular definitives that spanned decimalization. Graeme Murray will be dealing the 1932 Eucharistic issue (and welcomes YOUR input) and our President has sent me some notes on the mail routes to Ballymoney, pluswhatever else you send me. Please keep it coming!

Part 2 – The Decimal Issues

Decimal Period – Photogravure Issue



Fig. 8 – 10p gutter pair



Fig. 9 – 5p gutter block



*Fig. 10 - 5p Bull and 10p Salmon
on unwatermarked paper
cylinders IIII - both type C paper/gum*

Decimal currency was introduced on 15 February 1971 with continued use of the existing Bull and Salmon designs in the equivalent decimal values (5p and 10p).

There was a slight change in the Salmon design. The 2/- value had a small element of yellow to the left of the fish but this is not present on the 10p stamp (fig 8). Both values were probably printed in sheets of 200 split in two panes of 10 x 10 as per the small format decimal definitive stamps. The gutter format and the sheet markings on the 5p (fig. 9) confirm that the stamps were printed by the Revenue Stamping Branch.

I have only seen a cylinder strip for the 10p value (IIII) but would expect that numbers were also included on sheets of the 5p value. I have seen cylinder numbers on both values on the later unwatermarked printings (fig. 10).

At this time two different E watermarked papers were used when printing decimal definitive issues – one with regular PVA matt gum, the second with PVA shiny gum. Any examples seen to date have the later PVA shiny gum but I would expect that both should also exist with PVA matt gum. The E watermark is sideways on the 10p value.

Unwatermarked paper was introduced for both definitive and special/commemorative issues in 1972. Subsequent printings of the two savings stamps were printed on the same unwatermarked paper. The stamps continued to be photogravure printed by the Revenue Stamping Branch. Cylinder numbers IIII exist for both values as illustrated (fig. 10).

Initially, the unwatermarked paper during this period was Original Coated Paper (OCP) with dull PVA gum – known as type A. The OCP is creamy and gives a dark reaction under U.V. light (front).

This was replaced in 1974 by Fluorescent Coated Paper (FCP). The FCP is whiter and gives a brighter reaction under U.V. light.

	A	B	C	D	E
Type	Creamy Original Coated Paper (OCP) Heavy/Thick	White Fluorescent Coated Paper (FCP) Light/Thin			Brilliant White Fluorescent Coated Paper (FCP) Light/Thin
Gum	PVA dull with brown dye	PVA white	PVA with Dextrin (PVAD) with blue-green ribbed effect	PVAD with pale blue-green mottled effect	PVA whitish with slight blue tint
U.V. Effect					
- Front	Poor Fluorescence	Medium Fluorescence			Medium or Brilliant Fluorescence
- Back	Dark grey	White	Light grey	Varies	Light grey

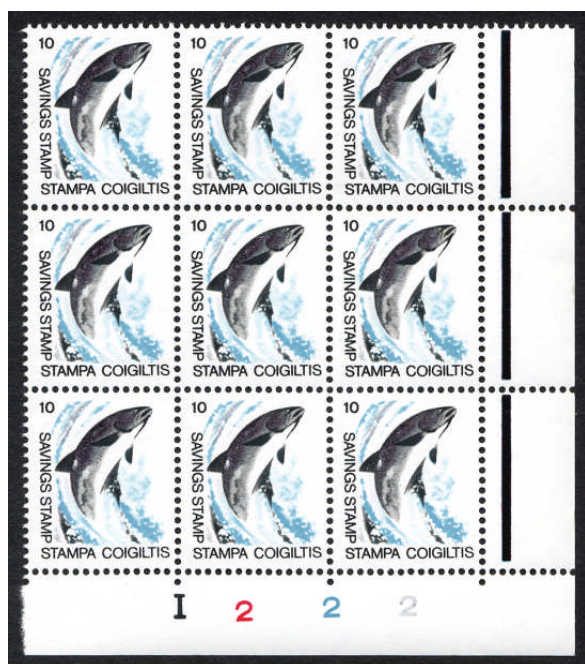


Fig 11 - 10p Salmon on unwatermarked paper - cylinders I222 - type E paper/gum

Four different gums were used during the period 1974 to 1980 in printing the Gerl definitive stamps and, in theory, they could all exist on the Savings Stamps. However, given the lesser need for savings stamps, I doubt if all four combinations exist – known as types B to E. The five unwatermarked

combinations and all the identifying factors are set out in the table above. I have only noted two unwatermarked paper/gum combinations on the 5p Bull and three on the 10p Salmon as follows:-

Unwatermarked Paper/Gum Combinations Noted	
5p Bull	10p Salmon
Type C	Type A
Type D	Type C
	Type E

I admit that these paper/gum combinations are not "everybody's cup of tea" and that it can sometimes be well nigh impossible to differentiate between types unless you have at least a marginal block of four stamps. It is usually best to compare with known blocks from the Gerl definitive series.

The only cylinder changes noted appeared on the 10p value as illustrated (fig. 11). This block is on the later type E paper and bears the combination I222.

Although there was a rapid inflation during the 1970's, I'm unaware of any change in the savings stamp rate. The P.O. Guides for 1971, 1977 and 1982¹ all refer to 5p and 10p savings stamps. A savings booklet could hold up to 40 of the 5p stamps (*fig. 12 on back page*). The stamps could be either be exchanged for cash (minimum 50p) or, used to buy a savings certificate (£1) or, open a deposit account or, make a deposit to an existing account. A separate card held 10 of the 10p stamps which could be used in a similar manner except they could not be cashed. Interestingly, the 1971 Guide also refers to a scheme whereby forms (not cards) were available to which 10 x 1p postage stamps could be affixed. A completed 10p form could then be used to deposit 10p to an existing deposit account or be exchanged for one 10p or two 5p savings stamps. I have not seen such a form.

The inland letter rate was 10p during the period 1 April 1977 to 31 July 1979. Sometimes both 10p postage and saving stamps were held in the same section of counter books and the 10p savings stamp was sold in error for use as a postage stamp. As a result, envelopes with the 10p savings stamp used as postage can be seen genuinely used during this period.

The 1977 and 1982 Guides also referred to the use of 10p Savings Stamps towards the payment of T.V. Licence fees. The 10p stamps had to be affixed to special cards available at any post office. This appears to indicate that this card was separate from the card used for Savings Bank purposes. I cannot recall the use of such cards and, in any case due to inflation, by the early 1980's ordinary £1 postage stamps were being used in special savings booklets for the purpose of saving for either the payment of a T.V. Licence Fee or, until 1984, the payment of Telephone Accounts. Separate booklets were used for each scheme. The payment of Telephone Accounts in this manner came to an end following the split of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs into An Post and Telecom Éireann (now Eircom). An Post continued to collect the T.V. Licence fees on behalf of RTE.

I would be interested in seeing any of the other savings cards or booklets referred to above.

Change of Value and Design – Litho Printings

The Savings Stamp Scheme was updated in the 1980's. A new 50p savings stamp was introduced sometime post 1982 which incorporated a stylised acorn. The first loose leaf Post Office Guide issued in 1992 states that the "50p Cyril the Squirrel Savings Stamp" was now the only savings stamp now on sale. The reference to "Cyril the Squirrel"

refers to the accompanying Savings Card (S51C) which featured "Cyril the Squirrel" saving his acorns. The card held 20 stamps (£10). The same savings/encashment rules as per the 5p issue applied. However, by the mid 1990's, I'm aware that you could not exchange stamps for cash.

One member has a record of first buying this stamp in 1987 and also has a dated example for 7 February 1990 (*fig. 13 on back page*). However, the stamp could have been issued any time between 1982 (the date of the last P.O. Guide referring to 5p and 10p stamps) and 1987. Perhaps it was issued following the establishment of An Post in January 1984. The stamp introduced a new security feature – a yellow phosphor overlay was added to the green section of the acorn. Two different papers have been noted – the same as used on definitives.

The first paper is a Chalk Coated Paper (CCP) produced by Harrison & Sons Limited which is white (CCP1). The coated side has a bright appearance under ultra-violet light. The paper is gummed with Poly Vinyl Alcohol Gum with Dextrin added (PVAD) which has a slight mottled-green effect. The second paper (also CCP) has a more creamy appearance (CCP3) and was produced by Coated Papers Limited (CPL) with PVA gum. It has a dark effect under U.V. light.

The stamp continued on sale until 31 December 2001 and the changeover to the Euro. Shade variations exist (*fig. 14 on back page*). As far as I can recall, the sheet layout was 10 x 10 with no gutters or any marginal markings but given the long period of use – at least fifteen years – there may have been variations. The stamp is an offset-litho issue and was probably printed by Irish Security Stamp Printing Limited who, by 1982, was printing the full range of Irish definitive stamps. Another possibility is that De La Rue Smurfit Limited may have been responsible for at least the earlier printings given they were responsible for the initial printings of T.V. Licence Savings Stamps. They also included a phosphor overlay and were first introduced in 1986. The T.V. Licence Savings Stamps will be the subject of a separate article in the *Journal*.

¹ *The 1971, 1977 and 1982 P.O. Guides were the only Guides issued during this period. The 1982 Guide was the last Guide issued in bound form and also the last available for sale to the general public.*

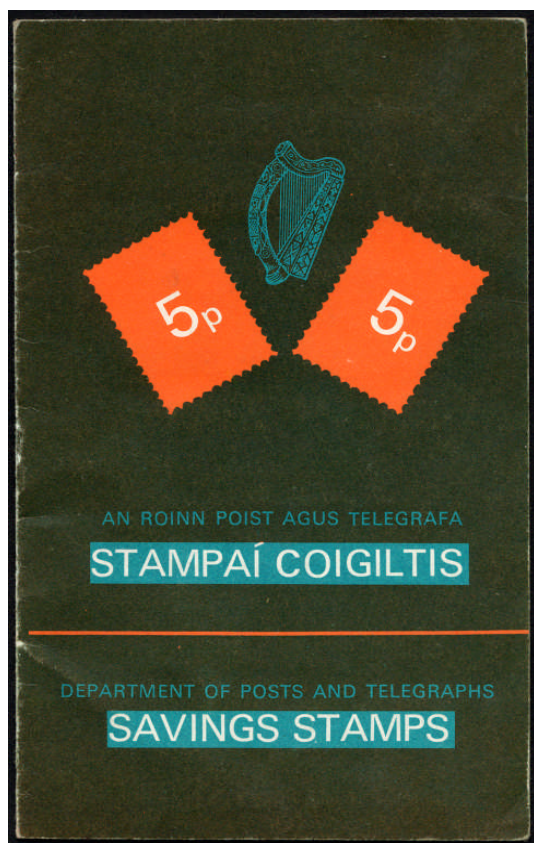


Fig. 12 - Front page of Savings Booklet dated 2/75 and completed inside page with ten 5p savings stamps



Fig 13 - 50p used as postage



Fig. 14 – Corner blocks of 50p Acorn stamp – light shade (left) and dark (right)