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Irish Philately

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The 'Roundstone Error' – see page 33

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EDITORIAL

When I accepted the position of Editor, I was uncertain as to the support I would get. There are, of course, certain members who I knew I could rely on and Brian Warren springs immediately to mind for once again he makes a huge contribution to this issue. Thank you Brian, and also for looking after printing and distribution in Dublin. Other help comes from the most unlikely of places. I have to thank our Swiss member Ronny Vogt for putting me in touch with Joaquin Kuhn, at that time, a non-philatelist professor at Toronto University who found himself renting a cottage in Co Galway during a year's sabbatical leave in 1975-6. His full story, well worth a read, can be found by searching out the web page at: <http://mystampstory.com/part1.html> Now, 33 years on, he has been kind enough to write a piece for us on his discovery and his article appears on page 33. I hope you will find it interesting.

Irish Philately is only as good as the material we can find for it and this is where each of us comes into play. We will all discuss our hobby, at least I hope we do, with our friends, family and colleagues, or even in the pub. Every so often you will get a response... 'My cousin served with the Irish forces in....' or 'I think there may be some old cards which you could look at....', or whatever. Follow up such tenuous leads you are given. You never know what it might add to your own collection and please, where appropriate, let it be known that the Editor of Irish Philately is looking for stories. All such introductions are welcomed.

Some amongst you will be horrified that this issue contains neither any 'Pre-stamp' or 'Overprint' material, two of the areas that are of interest to so much of our membership. The reason is simple; no one has provided me with such articles, although I am hopeful for our next issue. Your contribution will be appreciated! Space has also precluded me finishing off the article on Northern Irish registered mail started in the December issue

Members may however be interested to learn that at the end of April, I did get to Postal Heritage as the London Archives are now called. Information on postage rates beyond the basic weight steps is largely unavailable for the 1990s and beyond. It seems that no-one has had the foresight to save the information. Can any member help me? I shall also try elsewhere. In the meantime, remember to stick those leaflets you pick up at Post Offices (if you can still find one) safely into your 'long term miscellaneous' file. You never know when it will be needed.

This is, of course, a penalty of the computer age. We take all the masses of information available on the web for granted. Yet once the information is wiped off, however that may occur, it is all lost. Wise is the historian who makes sure he gets a hard copy at the time the information is current for later it may simply just not be available. Of course, the politically correct 'modernisers' will ask why we need non-current information. I think we all know better and what is more we will be thanked for preserving it a century from now.

The truth is that in recent years we have also sadly lost a huge and irreplaceable treasury of information with the deaths of many of our most knowledgeable members. The names of Cyril Dulin, Bill Kane, Keith Jamieson, Bill Fletcher and many others come to mind. It is up to us, the next generation, to make sure that the knowledge we have accumulated is recorded; that is why it is so important to be bold, put pen to paper and if you have the information please let it be recorded in Irish Philately.

Finally may I remind you that Graeme Murray will be working on the **1933 HOLY YEAR** issue for our next edition. Please let him have details of anything unusual you may have to G.Murray@Oilplus.co.uk

Stan 5 June 2009

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I began collecting in 1969 whilst still in my teens and joined the Dublin Stamp Society in the early 1970s. I was a young eager philatelist just starting out on the hobby. By Stampa '72, and with little to spend, I had decided to concentrate on the issues since decimalisation. Subsequently, I gradually worked my way back to the £.s.d. Gerl issues.

At the time, I read many learned articles on the modern GB definitives but nothing specialised had been published in relation to the new Gerl definitive series. Together with fellow IPC member, the late Eddie FitzGerald, I began to study the new definitives in detail and in 1979, thanks to Ian Whyte, we co-wrote a catalogue on *The Gerl Definitives* with subsequent updates published in *Irish Stamp News*.

Recently I looked through my various Gerl collections/displays and past auction catalogues

and I set out below details of some of the more interesting items which have come to my attention in the intervening 40 years.

The first problem for most collectors was the identification of the different paper/gum types on the unwatermarked decimal issues printed by the Revenue Stamping Branch. Details of the five types, as recorded in the main catalogues, were set out in part 2 of my Savings Stamps article as published in the last issue of the Journal (page 21). However, a fellow collector identified an alternative method some years ago, whereby marginal examples are placed on a lightbox (as used to view photographic negatives) or similar. You then view the paper fibres under 8-10 times magnification. The 'Type A' paper is readily distinguishable due to the cream paper and brown tinted gum. The patterns for the other four difficult types are illustrated and described below.

Unwatermarked Decimal Issues (Photogravure) – Papers & Gums

Type B

Front:

Crazy pattern of "veins" on a sandy background with no vertical lines as type D



Back:

Close vertical lines on a sandy background with a mesh appearance.



Type C

Front:

Same pattern of "veins" as seen on type B. No vertical lines as type D.



Back:

Same sandy background as both types B and D but no clear evidence of any vertical lines.



Type D

Front:

Thin vertical lines. Crazy pattern sometimes also seen as on types B and C but not as prominent as type E.



Back:

Clear vertical lines but mesh effect not as prominent as on type B.



Type E

Front:

A blending of "veins" as per types B and C plus vertical lines as per type D. Line sometimes faint.

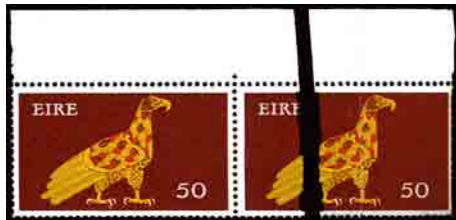


Back:

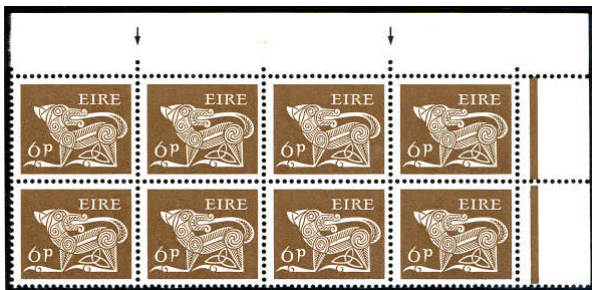
Similar to type D with sandy background and clear vertical lines.



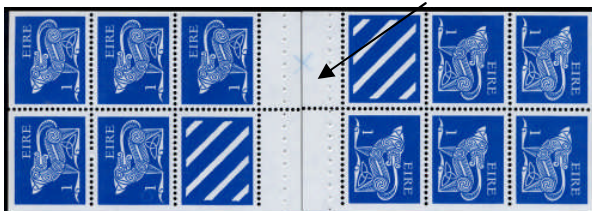
At this stage, a complete collection of the paper/gum types of the various sheet issues (pre and post decimal) would be difficult to accumulate in cylinder blocks – there is a total of approximately 180 blocks to collect but a singles or blocks of four collection is possible. All low/medium values also exist as gutter pairs and would make a most interesting collection as the central unprinted gutter helps the identification of the paper/gum types.



The most interesting new error to emerge ex. sheets was a paper mill join on the 50p unwatermarked Eagle high value with black defacing line (10 pairs known).



There is one perforation variety which I have never seen on any other definitive printing. Some sheets of the OCP/GA printing of the 6d are known with an extra perforation hole in every alternate column of the top margin. As I have never seen a complete sheet of the 6d value with this variety, I'm not sure if the same perforation format also appears in the bottom margin. I would be interested to hear from any member who might have a similar block from the bottom margin or, if a similar perforation format is known on any other sheet definitive.



The coils and booklet panes are more manageable to collect with few paper/gum variations and some interesting marginal markings on a number of the decimal booklet panes. These markings were illustrated in *The Gerl Definitives* but I have rarely seen them offered by dealers in the intervening years. I illustrate a pair each of the 5 x 1p + label and 5 x 7p + label booklet panes.



Similar markings in the form of a faint cross or heavy irregular smear also exist on the 6 x 2½p, 5 x 5p + label and 6 x 5p panes. The markings are not readily visible as they are at the edge of the binding. So if you have any unbroken booklets, why not check them now!



Position D4:
R2/2 – white spot
in geometric
pattern

There are a total of 44 booklets (4 columns of 11) from a set of master sheets. Two of the 40p and 70p decimal booklets were withheld due to unacceptable flaws on the 2p sheet. Positions A10 and D4 were the relevant positions. This was established when the complete uncut sheets were displayed at both the Cork and Stamp exhibitions.

A number of these 40p and 70p booklets with the varieties were unwittingly distributed. The cover of the booklet and the relevant pane were marked in blue crayon to ensure identification and removal of the booklet after make-up and guillotining. Position D4 came from the 40p booklet and is illustrated above.



Position A10:
R2/2 – Doubling
of E

The second flaw came from a further 2p pane from a 70p booklet. Neither flaw is spectacular and other varieties exist in the Gerl series which in my view are as prominent.



Miscut pane showing cylinder number.

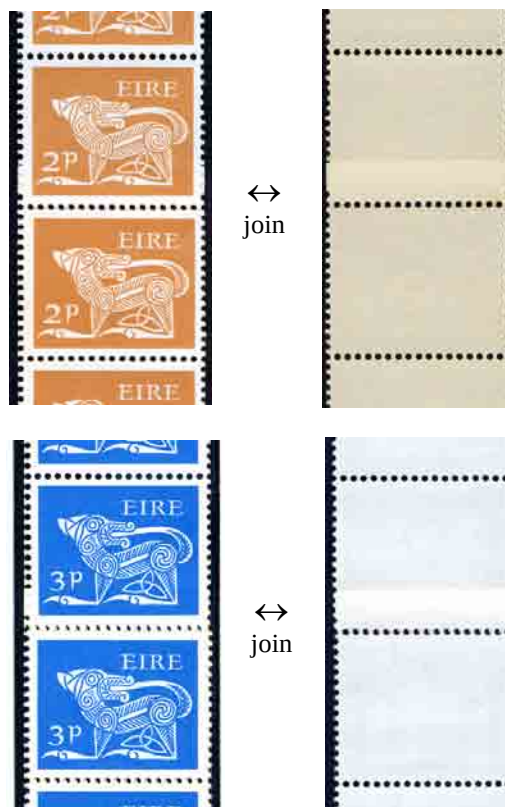
The most spectacular booklet error to add to your collection is a unique miscut 5 x 5p + label watermarked booklet pane from a 70p booklet. Due to a sheet fold prior to final trimming, the cylinder number appears in the uncut margin.



Pane with middle row imperforate.

Equally interesting is a further miscut 5 x 5p + label watermarked pane from a 40p booklet. The initial booklet found with this error had an extra row of 2 x 5p stamps plus label. It would appear that one row of the sheet was folded back on assembly, leaving all the panes one row misplaced. The

label now appears in the bottom instead of the top row and both the top and bottom edges are perforated whereas the middle row is imperforate. At least four complete booklets with the error plus one pane from an exploded booklet exist. In addition, a set of imperforate between pairs taken from a pane are also known. In theory, there must also have been 4 booklets from the bottom of the sheet with only one row of 5p stamps. Did any survive?



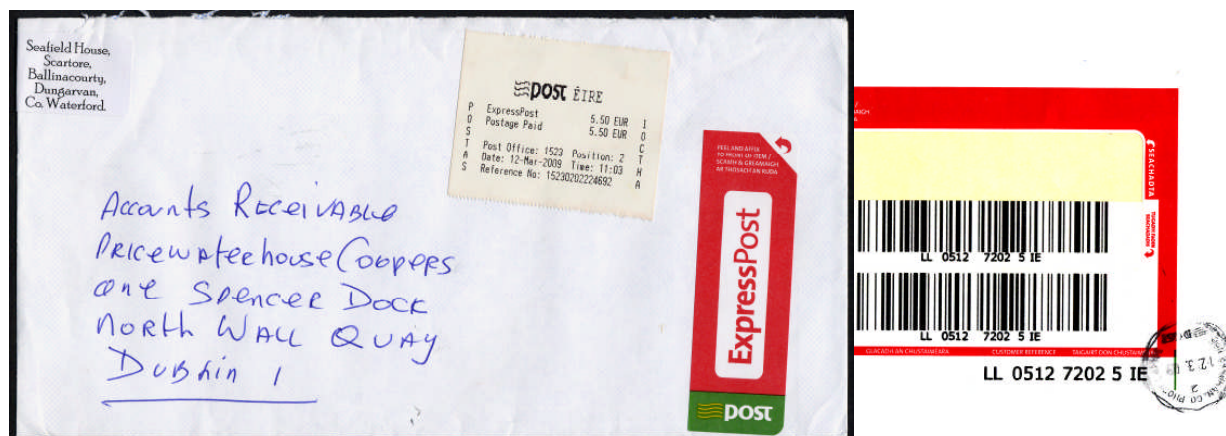
Turning to the coils the three £.s.d. values (1d, 2d and 3d) were made-up from specially printed sheets with PVA gum. There were 960 stamps in each roll with horizontal joins every 20th stamp – perf. 14 x 14¾ i.e. a different perforation than sheet or booklet issues.

However, one complete roll of 480 stamps (instead of 960) of both the 2d and 3d £.s.d. values was discovered in a collection in 1998. These rolls were made-up from normal sheets with vertical joins every 12th stamp – perf. 15 x 15 on Harrison paper with gum arabic (illustrated above). No similar roll of the 1d value is known. All strips from these two rolls bear the guarantee mark of H.-BOWEN BPP.

Acknowledgements to Roy Hamilton-Bowen and Pádraig O'Shea for providing information and illustrations for this article.

IRISH POSTAL RATES SINCE 2nd MARCH 2009 - Brian Warren

(Previous rates table was effective from 3rd March 2008)



Express cover posted on 12 March 2009 in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. As is normal, the computer generated counter label showing the new inland express rate paid of €5.50, was not cancelled. Unusually, the barcode label on the reverse was tied to the cover by the counter self-inking datestamp – illustrations are 50% normal size.

Express postal rates changed with effect from Monday 2nd March 2009. Shaded rates in the express table below (next page) were the only changes. The only other change was a small reduction in non-EU courier rates which are not included in the tables below. Apart from the

foregoing, all other rates remain unchanged. There was no announcement made by An Post advertising the changes other than the distribution of new rates leaflets to business users. The substantial increase in US express rates is worthy of especial note, a 1kg package increasing from €13.25 to €16.85.

Ireland (including N. Ireland)

Weight not over	Letter / Postcard	Large Envelope	Packet
100g	55c ¹	95c	€2.20
250g		€1.35	€2.70
500g		€1.90	€3.85
1kg		€3.00	€6.00
2kg (max)			€7.50

¹ A reduced 54c rate applies to meter Ceadúnas (PPI) mail – letters and postcards only.

Europe (including Great Britain)

Weight not over	Letter/ Postcard	Large Envelope	Packet
100g	82c	€1.50	€2.70
250g		€3.00	€3.50
500g		€4.25	€4.85
1kg			€7.50
2 kg (max)			€10.75

Rest of the World

Weight not over	Letter/ Postcard	Large Envelope	Packet
100g	82c	€1.50	€2.70
250g		€3.00	€3.50
500g		€4.25	€4.85
1kg			€10.40
2kg (max)			€16.60

REGISTRATION AND EXPRESS RATES

	All Categories of Mail (Letters / Large Envelopes / Packets)				
	Registration		Express		
Weight not over	Ireland	All Other Countries	Ireland	Europe (incl. GB)	USA
100g	€5.25	€4.35 plus postage	€5.50	€8.70	€8.70
250g	€5.75		€7.05	€9.60	€9.60
500g	€6.75		€8.35	€10.95	€10.95
1kg	€9.50		€10.45	€13.85	€16.85
2kg (max)	€12.00		€14.10	€17.20	€23.30

Registration Fees - Ireland (including N. Ireland): The fees payable are inclusive of postage and cover compensation up to a maximum of €320. Additional compensation up to €1,500 or €2,000 is available for an additional fee of €4.00 or €5.00 respectively.

Registration Fees - All Other Countries (including Great Britain): The compensation limit for Great Britain is €320, for Europe €150 and for all other countries €35.

Express - Ireland: The fee applies to all Irish destinations (including N. Ireland). Next working day delivery is guaranteed to Republic of Ireland addresses. A signature and insurance option is available for an additional €2.00 which gives compensation up to a maximum of €350 (i.e. greater than the basic compensation maximum for the inland registration service). This additional insurance option is only available in respect of mail to Republic of Ireland addresses. All items can be tracked via An Post's website and/or delivery can be confirmed by ringing Customer Services without extra charge ("Track and Trace").

Express Service – Overseas: This service is only available to Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United States of America. The separate USA rate was for an item weighing in

The fees payable are inclusive of postage and cover excess of 500g was introduced with this change in rates. The minimum envelope size acceptable to US destinations is C5. No signature or insurance option is available outside Ireland but the Track and Trace system also operates to these destinations.

In the June 2008 edition of the *Journal*, I stated that the Express service was re-introduced in April 2008. I have now ascertained by reference to the May/June 2008 of "*Business Post*", an information bulletin distributed by An Post that the service commenced on 9th April 2008.

Maximum dimensions of a Letter / Postcard: 235mm x 162mm x 5mm thickness (i.e. C5 size). (Also known as "POP" or Post Office Preferred Size). Above 100grms, the large envelope or packet rate applies.

Maximum dimensions of a Large Envelope: 400mm x 300mm x 25mm thickness (i.e. C4 size). (Also known as a "Flat").

Dimensions of a Packet: Items that exceed 400mm x 300mm x 25mm thickness. Maximum dimension is a combined length, width and depth of 900mm. No dimension can exceed 600mm

So far as I can trace no article on the subject of Northern Ireland's now withdrawn postbus service has appeared in print, hence it is important that something gets recorded before the information is lost. The following information has kindly been made available to me by Colin Peachey of the British Postmark Society. There is little doubt that Colin has as much knowledge on the subject of postbuses in Britain as any reasonable person needs to know.

It had long been argued that post office vans operating in rural areas to a generally fixed timetable, collecting mail from post offices and some rural pillar boxes could provide a passenger service. The principle had long been established in Continental Europe to good effect particularly with Switzerland's yellow postbuses attracting fame well beyond their home territory. Services in Germany and Austria also come to mind.

The British Post Office eventually determined to try some 'experimental' services in rural areas, the first of which began operating in February 1967 from Llanidloes to Llangurig in mid-Wales. After a slow start (there were just four routes by the end of 1971) the number of services expanded rapidly and by the late 1980s postbuses operated in many areas of rural Britain, especially rural Wales and Scotland. In total, a peak of well over 100 services were operated throughout Britain from Sussex to Shetland. Eventually, Northern Ireland's turn came on 9 February 1993 when services were introduced in Co Fermanagh. The opening ceremony is recorded as having been attended by the local MP, Ken Magginis. The leaflet announcing the service is shown at fig 1.

There was just one vehicle, a Leyland DAF 400 series van with 14 seats with registration XXI 7400. The service operated Monday to Friday leaving Maguiresbridge post office at 2pm operating via Brookeborough, Creagh, Tempo, Garvary and Chanterhill (a town sub office) to reach Enniskillen head office at 3.10pm. The return service left Enniskillen at 5.05pm (omitting Creagh) reaching Maguiresbridge at 5.55pm from whence it returned to Enniskillen direct via Lisbellaw arriving at 6.15pm. The postbus's day was not over, for it then left Enniskillen again at 7pm to travel via Fivemiletown, Clogher, Augher and Moira (Co Down) to reach Belfast Airport at 8.50pm. The return service left the Airport at 9.05pm operating via Killead, Glenavy and Ballinderry (all Co Antrim) to reach Moira at 9.32pm and thence onwards by the same route to reach Enniskillen at 11.05pm.



fig 1

The service was subsidised by the Rural Development Council for Northern Ireland but even with that support, fares were not especially cheap. Brookeborough to Enniskillen was £1.70 single and the service from there to the Airport was a further £5.60 for a single journey. (1993 rates).

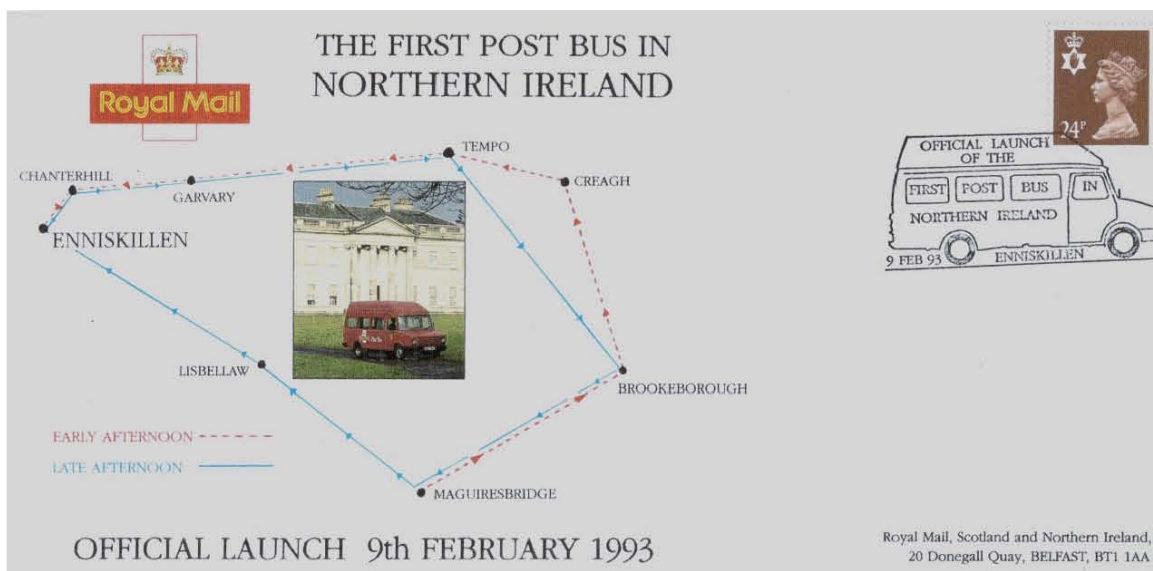
First day covers were produced by Royal Mail Northern Ireland (fig 2) and also privately (fig 3).

By June 1999, the vehicle had been changed to a LDV 'Convoy' also a 14 seater, registration XAZ 7905. However, the service was not long lived and the last day of operation is recorded as 29 December 2000. In recent years it has been Royal Mail's policy to terminate the postbus services as quickly as possible and at the time of writing (early May) less than 20 remain; none may exist a year from now as contracts come to an end.

I have no information with regard to carriage of mail on the postbus. It is presumed that mail was collected from all the sub offices passed en route in Co Fermanagh, possibly also from a few 'key' rural pillar boxes. All the rural offices on the route had

cancelled outgoing mail into the 1980s but I have not seen any of the postmarks on commercial mail during the period of postbus operation, hence, perhaps, mail was carried uncanceled into Enniskillen. I assume that the purpose of the journey to Belfast Airport was to take 'cross-channel' mail not only from Enniskillen but also the Clogher Valley towns and that would imply that

outgoing mail would still have been cancelled at Fivemiletown, Clogher and Augher during this period. Once again I have seen no examples. If any examples of mail addressed to Britain from these towns timed to fit in with the postbus can be found, it can reasonably be assumed that the items were actually carried on the postbus – seemingly simple little items but worthy of a search.



figs 2 and 3

Republic of Ireland

Colin has also provided a fleeting reference to a postbus service operating out of Ennis in Co Clare. He could provide no detail as to route, operating dates etc. Start date was probably in 1994, the original vehicle, a Ford, having registration 94-D-8771. By November 1999, a replacement Renault vehicle was in use, with registration 99-D-61453. I have not asked Ennis Post office for further information yet as I rather hope that one of our members will write to me with the full story (and even some illustrations perhaps!) – does anyone have it, please

POST OFFICE PAGE - KILRANE Co Wexford



Left: Postcard form c. 1900 showing Murphy's shop – general merchant and post office, Kilrane, Co Wexford.



A proof strike of the 1892 postmark

We have to thank non-member Maurice Barrett for much of the information in this month's visit to one of Ireland's long closed rural offices.

Most of us will have passed through Kilrane as we have driven off the ferry at Rosslare Harbour en route for Dublin, Cork or wherever, for Kilrane is just a mile from the 'Europort' at the first cross roads on one's journey north (or west). The hamlet was there long before the harbour was thought of at Rosslare, the office being opened in the latter part of 1873.

We do not know the name of the early postmasters. However, some years ago Maurice, a county Wexford native, was able to turn up some old records at the then Head Office at Wexford. We do know that one Annie Agnes Murphy (born 18 February 1877) was appointed on 1 April 1916. She was to remain in office until she resigned at the age of 81 on 13 May 1958. The records that Maurice obtained give no indication of her initial salary, nor of the increases she received save that we know her 1953 salary of £242pa was increased to £261pa in 1955 only to be reduced on 1 March 1958 to £232pa. At the time of her retirement Post Office records described her as a 'general merchant'. For her £232pa she kept her office open six days a week from 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 6.30pm, a 42½hour week, or about 8.6p (less than 10 eurocents) an hour.

Amongst those she had responsibility for was one Robert Furlong (born 5 June 1884). Mr Furlong had started working 12 hours a week as an 'AM' (does anyone know what stands for?) at the age of 13 in February 1898. His initial salary was 4/6d a week. By the time of his retirement on 26 February 1954 he was working 27 hours a week for which he

received a salary of £3/15/6d, this as an 'Auxiliary' on the Kilrane to 'Cottage' route. In fact he did not retire but rather his services were 'dispensed with' owing to continuing sick absence. One must hope the poor man was entitled to some form of pension. His replacement was one 'Purcell' born in September 1894. Like his predecessor he received an allowance of 3/6d a week in order that he might provide his own cycle – no Post Office vans then! Sadly for Mr Purcell his services, too, were 'dispensed with' in October 1956 following a review of rural posts.

Mrs Murphy was replaced by, it is assumed, her son John Celestine Murphy in February 1958 but the post office was clearly a sideline (and necessarily, his salary being just £252 per annum). The records describe him as a 'publican and general merchant'. John Murphy died on 10 March 1968 and shortly thereafter on 22 November 1968 the office was officially declared closed.

We have been able to locate these postmarks in operational use –



Respectively: recorded only for 1896: used 1923-1958 (proof book 20 March 1923); used 1959 to 1966 and assumed until closure (and a better impression welcomed!).

THE BUSY BIRO IN THE MARGIN OF ERRORS

THE 'ROUNDSTONE' 15p BICENTENARY MISSING COLOUR

Joaquin Kuhn

The postmistress in Roundstone habitually made good use of the margins of the sheets of stamps that she sold. She wrote her calculations in them. They provided notepaper of the most efficient kind: immediately useful for purchases, and then they were disposed of with the stamps when the stamps were sold. What matter if they seemed to disfigure the sheets in her stockbook? Of what interest could they be to anybody? In ordinary circumstances, these are merely rhetorical questions. But these numbers carried extraordinary significance on a certain day, and at least some of her personal numbers were not destined to vanish like this. Four sets of calculations on the margins of a single sheet of stamps will never go away. These four numerical signatures define a unique day in Irish postal history, infinitely more personal than the anonymously inserted handwritten accents on some of the 1922 overprints and surely unique among missing-colour error sheets anywhere in the world.

It was an ordinary Monday morning in May 1976 for Carmel Keane, behind the post office counter in Roundstone, County Galway until I came in, asking to buy a new commemorative stamp to use on a letter to Canada. I needed a 15p stamp, the postage for transatlantic airmail. I had a particular commemorative in mind, the Irish commemoration of the American Bicentennial. I knew from the newspaper that there were to be four values and that the date of issue was May 17. She and I soon found that she had four sheets of a hundred stamps each, but only three with the denomination printed on the sheet and one with no silver inscription containing country of issue, occasion for the issue and value denomination. Thus began her personal markings on this sheet. First, she would write in the bottom margin the assumed value of the entire sheet, £15 (fig 1).

A few minutes later, in the upper right margin, as she made her first sale from this sheet, she made a column of numbers: 1.50, 28, 32, adding up to 2.10; these numbers stood for 10 of the undenominated stamps and 4 of the 7p and 4 of the 8p values. (fig 2 – next page) The 7p and 8p stamps in combination gave the transatlantic postage of 15p which I needed for a letter. Half an hour later, her third calculation was in the top margin above stamp 6, for 8 more stamps at 15p each. (fig 3 – next page).

Twenty-four hours later, the fourth and grandest *graffito* would be written in the lower right margin below the traffic lights alongside stamp 100, for my purchase on Tuesday of the remaining 79 stamps from this sheet. This was full-scale multiplication, 15×79 for a product of 11.85. (fig 1) The experience for each of us was one of innocent novelty, but if we had planned it, she could not have done anything more direct and definitive for the sake of establishing a valid over-the-post-office-counter purchase.



fig 1

Mrs. Keane had a stockbook for the stamps she sold. The Bicentenary sheets were already placed in it before I came in, but she had not examined the four sheets, each of a different value. When I asked for a 15p stamp, she leafed past the 7p, the 8p and the 9p. The fourth sheet looked complete in colour and had some print information on the vignette of Benjamin Franklin, but in truth the diagonally-placed Irish denomination and commemorative occasion were not there. I saw this immediately and looked again and it was still so. My breathing stopped as my heart and brain tried to register what I was seeing. I had seen what was not there. How much harder it is to see an absence rather than a presence. I pointed out to her that the silver printing was missing. The 9p stamp had an identical design with different colours, blue and ochre instead of red and blue, but with the Irish information printed in silver. The colour scheme on this commemorative was intended to evoke the red, white and blue of the American flag, which I readily recognized. But ironically, it was only the 15p stamp without silver that had a red, white and blue appearance.

The colours on the stamps of this issue are not standard shades. Various descriptions have been given – the stamp is described by the Irish Post Office as ‘red, blue and silver (in *Postage Stamps of Ireland 1922-1982*). Scott uses the same colours (in a different order), Gibbons use ‘light rose-red, grey-blue and silver’, whilst MacDonnell Whyte take a more simplistic approach using the single word ‘Multicoloured’.



fig 2

For the record the other stamps in the set were: 7p blue, red and silver; 8p blue, red and silver; 9p blue, orange and silver.

The comparator of the identically designed 9p stamp was immediately at hand, and as I inspected the undenominated sheet more carefully, I saw what had happened. The individual coloured rectangles that register actual printing and proper placement usually called ‘traffic lights’ in the lower right margin were printed only in red and blue and where the silver rectangle should have been there was only blank space.

I had never seen such a thing, nor had the postmistress. Looking at what was objectively the same thing, however, each of us saw something

completely different. I saw a post office product that might be more than postage, a sheet with a difference and possibly a philatelic object. She saw a problem, a sheet of stamps which did not inform her what to charge for them. It was also clear to me that the individual stamps were intended to be the 15p value. Because I had come in specifically for a 15p stamp, she said that she would sell these stamps for 15p, even though no value was printed on them. I pondered briefly how many I would buy.



fig 3

Just to know, I asked her what the entire sheet would cost, because I could not avoid thinking about buying the whole sheet then and there. My head was buzzing as I tried to think logically about the situation. In practically any other post office in the whole world, the stamps would have been taken off the counter immediately when the clerk became aware of the printing error, I would have had no more than a quick glimpse and that would have been it, with a lingering sense of lost opportunity. But there we stood in Roundstone in slow deliberation, looking at this fine new sheet of commemoratives that had just been delivered that morning. It was not my place to educate her, considering how little real information I brought to this moment. I had a hunch, but it was insubstantial and even seemed a little foolish. My subsequent actions show my essential conservatism; my hesitation seemed to me prudence. Seasoned philatelists would have a different reaction.

Mrs. Keane was thoughtful and methodical. She thought with her biro in her hand. We calculated the number of stamps on the sheet. Nothing can be more

convenient than decimal arrangements, and this was the classic one of 10 x 10. The answer was obvious: a hundred stamps at 15p apiece would be 15 pounds. It must have struck her as extremely odd that anyone would want to buy a whole sheet of defective stamps. Our previous relationship had been proper but not exactly warm. Because I was a professor living in the former schoolteacher's house on the side of the mountain, I had a reputation of being somewhat different from the run of tourists who only pass through, and quite different from the residents of Roundstone whose destinies are tied to their places in that village. What she did next was beyond my imagining. She carefully wrote £15 in the margin below the ninth stamp in the bottom row, position 99 as it is now called. I gathered that the convenient margins of sheets of stamps were her regular notepad for numerical calculations. This suspicion would be confirmed several times in the immediate future.

If I had asked her to sign her name on the sheet as proof of my purchase, she would probably have grown suspicious of my motives. At that point I had no motives that I would not share with her. My cognition was different from hers I was experiencing recognition as well as cognition. I recognized that the difference might have implications beyond the obvious one of defectiveness. Her writing on the sheet was spontaneous and, as I later realized, customary. If I had asked her not to write on the sheet, she would have thought me offbase in such a request. Why should she not write on the sheets of stamps? The margins were virtual notepads waiting for inscriptions. People usually tore away the margins when they used the stamps. The margins were useless paper waiting to become waste paper.

Her £15 inscription made the cost of the whole sheet too apparent and my heart sank, although I hardly expected a discount for a defective product. I did not want to spend £15 of money that was already very tight in the household. I decided that I could afford ten stamps and I asked for the upper right corner. My purpose in coming to the post office that morning had been twofold: immediate use for an outgoing letter, as well as to buy the new stamps in the 15p value, for later use on transatlantic airmail letters. Given the unexpected turn of the last few minutes, I realized that I was not ready to use one of these misprinted stamps for an utterly practical purpose, so I asked Mrs. Keane to sell me four 7p stamps and four 8p stamps to reach the needed amount of 15p postage. Her busy biro turned to the margin of the pane of 10 that I was buying. Alongside position 20 (row 2, stamp 10) she wrote down a column to be added: 1.50 (for the ten 15p

stamps), 28 (for the four 7p stamps), and 32 (for the four 8p stamps), for a total of 2.10. I paid her for the stamps in three values, put a single 7p and 8p stamp on the letter I had come in to mail, and left the post office with a corner pane of 10 stamps and the equivalent of an official handwritten receipt in the margin.

I next went to the newsagents to get the daily Irish Times, but the papers that day hadn't come in. I was mentally preoccupied with what had happened in the post office, and I remembered the phenomenon of first day covers.

This day, May 17, 1976, was the day of issue and it would happen only once. So my speculative side took another step forward. I would buy 3 envelopes, address them to myself in Canada, and put a 15p misprint on each envelope. I went back to the post office, where Mrs. Keane may have wondered why I had returned. I told her that I would like to buy three more 15p stamps for letters that I was sending that day and asked her if she would cancel them with a Roundstone postmark instead of letting them be canceled in Galway or Dublin. She knew from German tourists that they often stamped letters and asked her for a Roundstone postmark. She knew what that request was about and she did it. I had addressed the three envelopes to myself in a suburb of Toronto and with three more stamps from the sheet, licked them and put them in place. She canceled the stamps carefully and showed them to me from across the counter. I let them go without further thought. I decided as well to buy five more stamps from the sheet. Now her calculation had to be for eight stamps at 15p each. The margin was at hand for her biro and she did a tiny multiplication above stamp 6 on the sheet '15 multiplied by 8, yielding 1.20'. Her upper margin was slowly shrinking as I was buying her stamps. I felt good at what I had done, and that come what might, I was a player in whatever the game should be.

The statistics at that point were: me with 15 mint misprints, three on envelopes on the day of issue; 82 left in the post office for my Roundstone neighbours to buy.

The rest of the day had adventures of its own but the focus here is on the marginal calculations. Perhaps inevitably, I was at the post office on Tuesday morning, curious and at the same time anxious. At the post office, Monday sales of the new stamps had been unaggressive, to put it accurately. There had been exactly one buyer: a summer resident of Roundstone, a retired lady lawyer from New Jersey, had bought and used one of the misprints on a letter to the U.S. and had purchased two singles just to have them. She knew from the postmistress what I had done and what the extent of my purchases had

been. Given that it was only the middle of May, long before the regular tourist season started, as yet there would have been no visitors writing to the U.S. or Canada. Some of the residents of Roundstone had relatives abroad, but there appeared to be no great demand for airmail postage that day. I had settled the issue for myself: I would buy however many were left and would undertake to learn what I could about Irish stamps and Irish stamp collecting. Mrs. Keane took out her stockbook and laid the sheet before me. There were almost as many stamps as I had left there the day before. Seventy-nine stamps were on the sheet and I seemed to be the only person around who was interested in them. More quickly than the day before, I made my request and she complied with it. There was nothing more to discuss. Her last marginal calculation was her grandest. One does not mentally multiply 79×15 with ease. She reached across the sheet to the remaining margin nearest me and wrote out her multiplication. These figures are the most elaborate: 15×79 , with 395 in the first row below, the product of 5×79 , and 790 in the second row below, the product of 1×79 , yielding 11.85 as the amount owed. She filled the whole margin alongside position 100, but without touching the perforations or the traffic lights.

The writings in the margins settled the legitimacy of my purchase beyond question. My preoccupation so far in this article has been to deal with the matter; what did the figures refer to? A further question invites attention which might not even occur to most people: 'why are the calculations all written at different angles?' Answer: they were written from different positions for reasons that are most interesting to me. Here the changing dynamic between me and Mrs. Keane is part of the answer. When she wrote the first figure of £15, we were looking at the sheet from either side of the counter, across it but leaning forward side by side, her right shoulder to my left shoulder. Because the obvious significant omission of colour was in the traffic lights, the bottom of the sheet was where our close inspection took place. She turned the sheet a quarter turn to the left, so that the traffic lights were close to my scrutiny, and the lower margin of the sheet was at her right hand with its pen. For no reason except perhaps not to write over the cylinder block numbers alongside position 100, she wrote an elegant £15 in the margin alongside position 99. Her number script is almost meditative: the long pound sign is more artistic than mundane. It is almost a numerical signature. We gazed at the sheet before us, like chess players contemplating an elegant gaming board of a hundred rectangles. She and I and another post office customer, a local Church of Ireland deacon, were the only persons ever to see the sheet

of errors in its entirety. A kind of game was beginning, but Carmel Keane would not be one of the players. The moves in the game would be made in Dublin, Philadelphia, Geneva, Toronto and finally in Dublin.

When I hesitated at buying the whole sheet for £15 and chose rather to buy a block of 10, she shifted the sheet back to her position behind the counter and wrote a column of 3 numbers that added up to 2.10. This was written alongside position 20, just prior to her separating the upper right corner pane of 10 stamps. We were no longer contemplating the sheet together; we were redefining ourselves as clerk and customer. I only saw her calculations upside down. But they were on the margin of the stamps I was buying, so they were like a handwritten receipt.

Hardly a half hour later, I returned to the post office to buy 3 more stamps to use on envelopes I had addressed to myself in Canada. A new transaction was in the offing. I first asked for 3 stamps, which she separated from the interior (positions 28, 38 and 48), leaving margin position 8 and 18 below it on the sheet. Then I added a request for 5 more mint stamps, for which she separated a whole column of positions 7, 17, 27, 37 and 47, taking positions 8 and 18 from the sheet at the same time. Working now at the top of the sheet, since the right side of the top quarter of the sheet was now detached and gone, she did her calculation in the margin atop position 6, again from her point of view. Eight stamps at 15p apiece for £1.20. Again I saw her calculations upside down.

When I left the post office, I had with me the block with her marginal markings from the first separation. Her second and third sets of calculations were still on the sheet in the post office. Her fourth and final marginal marking would occur the next day, when I asked to buy the 79 remaining stamps. This was a considerably more formal transaction, since each of us was now in quite unfamiliar territory. She had an unreported defective sheet which she had sold without consultation. I was buying a much greater quantity of stamps than I would have any practical use for. The formality was reflected in our positions at the counter. This time I had the sheet facing me, with the bottom nearest to me. Mrs. Keane had to reach to the edge of the sheet farthest from her, in this case the bottom margin, and although I was seeing the stamps right side up, her calculations alongside position 100 were upside down to me. Five rows of calculations produced results of 11.85 as the amount owed. If either of us had known fully what we were doing, we would not have been doing it. Her reaching across the sheet and writing in the last blank space of what was now

my corner has a palpability to it that may be compared to a frozen move in a game of chess. She was moving her pawn (her pen) to what was her KR8, but to me it was KR1 and I was capturing all the pieces by taking possession of the whole board. She had the pen, but I was acquiring the paper itself, and the 79 postage rectangles were uniformly facing in my direction, on my side. Mrs. Keane and I were assuming mental attitudes which were reflected in our physical positions. We were no longer side by side, we were face to face.

There was some small talk, nervous enough from her, that these stamps might be worth something more than their unspecified face value. The final grace of this stage, however, was her request to get one of these stamps for her daughter, who she said had a collection of each new issue. No handwritten receipt, no formality here. I paid her 15p each for 79 stamps, £11.85. She paid me 15p for one of them. For £11.70 then, I had 78 to add to my ambiguous collection of the 18 I had acquired the day before. That would be the last transaction ever at the post office price.

The present interlude had a future that neither of us could guess. In the large world, the residue of stamp collecting is often unexpected hostility, as most inheritors of stamp collections know. The playful game was over. The serious game would begin later that morning as I began my well-intended but amateurish effort to find out what I had bought. Although I might be finished with her, Mrs. Keane was not yet finished with me, as she changed her hats of employment. She who was the postmistress was also the village telephone switchboard operator

and telegraph taker. If I made a telephone call from Roundstone, she would have to place the call and could quietly listen in. If I received a telegraph at my residence, its message would be delivered to me in her handwriting. I recognized my loss of confidentiality and placed my inquiries by telephone from nearby exchanges. I would next see Mrs. Keane's penmanship a week later on the telegram from the Dublin stamp dealer ordering me, in the imperative language of telegraphy, 'Do not break sheet stop Please phone me immediately' After this, she could not help being curious, but she was understandably cool toward me. I can only imagine her reaction the morning she read the headlines in the papers: 'Big Stamps Bonanza. A sheet of 100 new imperfect stamps, which slipped past scrutineers at Dublin Castle, could fetch £5,000' (Sunday Independent) and '100 15p stamps may be worth £5,000 due to printing error' (Irish Times).

Anyone looking at these marginal positions of the errors will be surprised to see four separate sets of numbers, all in the same hand but from different positions. It seems unimaginable that a whole sheet of errors should have carried such unselfconscious and mundane markings, but it happened, and it settled instantly any questions of validity or propriety. Even the government official in charge of printing stamps, Mr. James Sheehy, studied this handwriting more closely than the misprints themselves when the sheet was presented to him in Dublin Castle. He said, 'I can't see any reason to reclaim these. I can honestly say that this got by us', and in saying so, authenticated the error as no stamp error is likely to have been authenticated before or since.



Mrs Keane's Post Office at Roundstone taken c1990

INTERVIEW – JOHN LENNON



When in Dublin for the IPC AGM your editor took the opportunity to visit our former President, John Lennon at his home in Dundrum, south Dublin. This is what he told me:-

SC *How did it all start?*

JL Mumps! I was confined to home and bored to tears. I was six at the time. My father worked for the Department of External Affairs and brought the stamps off their mail back home with him. I recall lots of US \$1 and \$5 values and then there were the Irish high value stamps – they went out on the diplomatic bags, back came the bags, out they went again with another layer of stamps on the labels. Layer upon layer of the 2/6d, 5/- and 10/- values were soaked off. I soon learnt to barter – the 10/- values fine used were worth 1/3d each at the Mint Stamp Company and I finished up with a ‘free’ collection of overprints. My father started me off and soon I had a good collection – that was in the early 1950s. 1956 saw my father sent to Paris as Third Secretary and I went off to boarding school. That created an opportunity for ‘tidying up’ for there were plenty of 1/3d commemoratives on the lads parcels to be had. But Ireland did not issue so many stamps in those days (*mercifully – Ed*) so I became interested in British stamps. I recall my grandfather who worked at the Castle bringing home a Victorian cover and I found a new interest in British stamps used in Ireland but I had no source in those days for any more. 1965 and I found myself in an art shop next to Greene’s Bookshop in Clare Street – they had a sideline with some stamps on cards at 1d each – some good stamps too. It was there I met an ‘old character’ Arthur Stokes. He had retired from a bank and I was to discover he was Secretary of the Irish Philatelic Society – a very useful introduction for he persuaded me to come to a meeting. Soon I was to become a life member – one of the best bargains I ever got!

What were you doing by that time?

I was still a student at UCD, studying engineering at the annex in Merrion Street ‘College of Science’. I recall my first IPS meeting in 1966; there were several young people there. Lionel Dawson was the ‘top collector’ in Ireland in those days. His collection of India was famous but I found him a bit snooty and aloof, for he had no time for mere stamp collectors. It was there I first met Fred Dixon. It was at that period that postal history took over. I still have a full collection of Irish stamps though, and I can recall visiting a Trinity student at Rathfarnham by the name of David Feldman and buying some good overprints from him. He also had some covers he knew little about; he wanted 10/- each. That was just as I was leaving college and I pushed the boat out and never regretted the purchase. That helped push me further into postal history.

I think your work has helped develop that?

It was 1967 when I joined ESB as a junior shift engineer. Some years later, I recall passing a skip in the yard, a bag was open, full of stamps, modern stamps on cover – a gold mine! I made it my business to get to know the guys in the mail room – you can guess the rest! In 1977 a stamp was issued for the 50th anniversary of ESB and they produced their own First Day Cover. Somebody important at ESB had been forgotten and missed out on getting a cover. The guys in the mail room told me; I was able to contact Con Buckley at the Philatelic Bureau and arrange for a supply of FDCs. That improved my standing in the mail room no end. Then I played soccer with the man in charge of petty cash and soon had access to the postage dues. ESB was one of the best sources for modern Irish material in the country and I was just in time for the events of 1978-79 in the Post Office (*strike etc – Ed*)

I have always thought that Limerick was your main collecting area.

Yes – I’ve built that up over the years. When I started no-one else was, to my knowledge ‘doing’ Limerick. My collection comprises both the City and the County. I’ve got a Limerick Ship Letter but cannot find a 4d post item (*late 1839 to early 1840 – Ed*) yet I’ve got an item paid at 3d in the period which is technically far rarer. It’s a gaping hole in my collection! Building up a county collection means one is never finished and new items are still cropping up, even after 20 years or so. My grandfather was at one time a post office supervisor at Dundalk so I am also making a start on a collection of Co Louth material. And, of course, I still get the modern material from ESB; there are not the volumes of stamps that there used to be and

particularly the commemoratives don't arrive in the quantities that they did in the past, nor is there the variety in the postmarks but even so, some interesting items still pop up on a reasonably regular basis. To think, for years, I could have blacked out the whole of Ireland if I'd wanted to but the night shifts were far too valuable to me for going through the treasures that arrived on the ESB mail!

Do you collect anything else?

Not these days. I used to do the Netherlands but these days I am 100% Irish plus a bit of local history. It keeps me well amused with more than enough to do.

Your family, John?

My father was from the Dundalk/ Crossmaglen (Crois Mac Lionáin in Irish) area, right on the border. However I am Dublin born and bred and have always lived in the City. Niamh and I were married in 1974; we met at a party. The poor girl has become a postal history widow. Postal History takes up so much room around the house. Envelopes are the bane of her life and it is worse since the children have left home. I'm just about retired now; I get called in from time to time but less and less. I can't say I miss it all that much.

Your ambitions?

My main ambition has to be for a Postal Museum in Dublin. It is so overdue! There is some possible light at the end of the tunnel at present but were there before some years ago only for that light to be extinguished. For my collection, I would like to win a Gold at Stampa. I've been awarded a Vermeil but the Limerick collection is probably too parochial to win Gold. Postal History is not a collection of postmarks but done properly is real history (*so true – Ed*). In their way the medals are not that important, nice as they are to receive. Then I want to put together an article about the Post Office in Ireland between 1635 to 1660. There was an edict of Charles I in 1635 to set up a Post Office and Evan Vaughan was originally sent to Dublin in 1637, but did he get anywhere before the Cromwellian period? Cromwell needed a postal system and that is when the records start. I'm not an academic. I want to try to get back to original sources; so much of history is based on flimsy evidence. That said, the greatest pleasure I get out of collecting is the people I meet with whom I can exchange knowledge and material and that is why the Irish Philatelic Circle is so worthwhile for me (*and I hope for us all – Ed*).

***** QUERY CORNER *****

1.09 Is the Frame break consistent?

We have two answers:-

Patrick Williams writes: 'The break in the top frame of the 1½d illustrated in the SG Specialised catalogue (12th ed.) listed as N18n occurring on R20/2 and attributed to SG Plate 15b associated with Control N19 is more pronounced than the one found by Tony best. Plate 15b is not listed as used with a control of a later date than N19. However the SG plate numbers are not the official numbers and the latter *may* be a more reliable guide to date of use. For example the PENCEF plates, namely (SG) 12b and 29 are 15b and 14 in the official list. It is not beyond possibility that Harrison took plate 15b for a special printing for coil use or, as Tony Best suggests, used old stock. There appears to be some discrepancy in the amount of damage between the SG illustration and Tony's scan. Since plate 15b is not listed with a 1922 or later control, it is unlikely that it will prove possible to prove that Tony's frame break is from plate 15b – an interesting find and a 'new' variety if another can be found.'

David MacDonnell emails: 'Always beware of these on coil stamps. A small amount of moisture results in the stamps partially adhering within the roll, so that when the roll is unwound, the gum of the stamp on top takes off a sliver of the surface of the stamp below. Result – apparent new variety.'

Can anyone produce another example to enable a more certain conclusion to be reached?

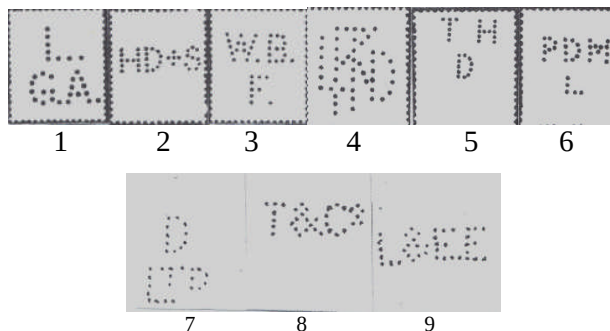
2.09 Is the postmark genuine?

We have response from two members. Michael Murphy sees no reason as to why the postmark is not genuine whilst David MacDonnell is sceptical. Once again we need further examples to prove the item is 'kosher'.

We have one new item from Tony Best:-

3.09 The following perfins are unidentified.

These are all on overprint stamps. The last three have apparently not been recorded previously. Can anyone identify the users? Answers by numbers please !!



I look forward to a positive deluge of answers - Ed

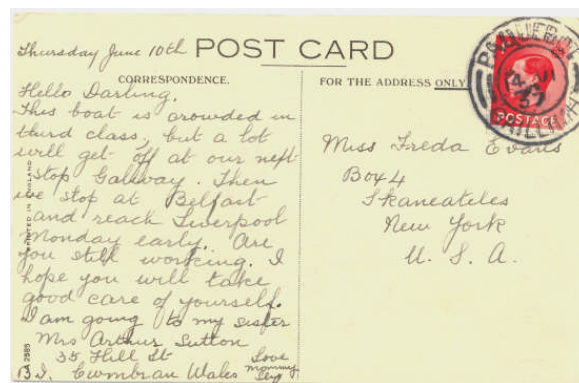
VOLVO OCEAN RACE – GALWAY 2009 - John Mullen

The 23rd of May 2009 saw the Volvo Ocean Race arrive in Galway to begin its Irish stage, this coinciding with the Galway Festival. Strictly we should call it the Volvo Ocean Race 2008-09 for it had begun at Alicante, Spain on 11 October 2008, arriving at Galway via Cape Town, Kochi (Cochin), Singapore, Qingdao (Tsingtao), Rio de Janeiro and Boston. Some years ago I became aware that Galway had a Paquebot handstamp and as a result I prepared some covers and sent these to the Main Post Office in Galway. This produced a pleasant result, all my covers being returned to me with the Galway Paquebôt handstamp for 24 May – illustrated below. My return envelope also received a green Galway handstamp, illustrated alongside, ‘An Post Delivery Services Unit, Galway, Co.

Galway’ (there is no longer any outgoing mail cancelled at Galway, following ‘centralisation’ - Ed). Thus, this was a most productive venture. My covers also carry a ‘Green Dragon’ cachet of my own design; the ‘Green Dragon’ being the Irish boat which reached Galway in third place and represents co-operation between Ireland and China. (a very nice design too, I might add – Ed)



I had not previously seen the Galway Paquebôt mark which appears on John’s covers; it caused me turn up what I can add on the subject (below). The Paquebôt Cachet has been seen for 1931 and 1932. The datestamp has been recorded from 1934 and was still at the Head Office in March 1992. (Ed)



The card notes that many will get off at Galway as the cruise goes on to Belfast and Liverpool.

Part 3 – Euro Currency Issues

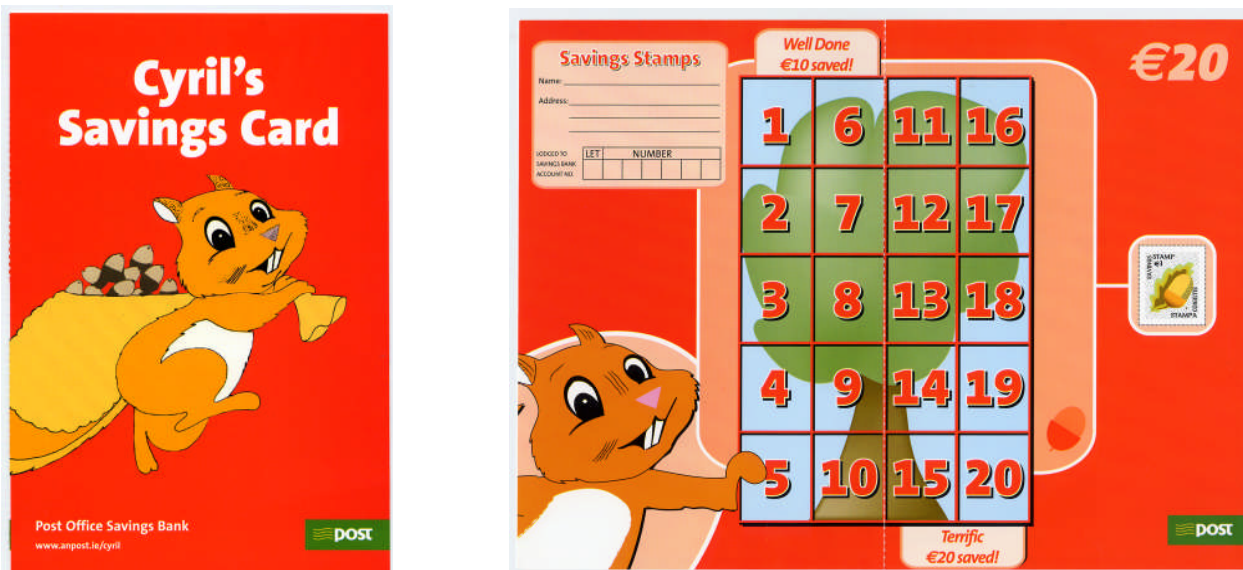


fig. 15 - Current Savings Card for €1 Savings stamp – front and inside – both reduced approx 50%



fig 16 - €1stamp

2002 saw the start of a new philatelic era with the introduction of the euro currency (€1 = IR£0.787564). The design remained the same complete with phosphor overlay but the denomination was now €1 (fig. 16). The stamp was issued in sheets of 100 (10 x 10) with no marginal markings. There has been no change in the design in the intervening years to 2008.

The current fold over savings card (fig. 15) is red in colour and contains spaces for 20 stamps. A similar card includes a reference to An Post's sponsorship of the Special Olympics in 2002. This was probably the first "euro" savings card. I have also noted a similar card in green – release date unknown. The only difference, apart from change in the colour, is that two sides of the front cover have a white border.

As with the IR£ issue, completed cards can be used either to open a new Savings Bank account, make a deposit to an existing account or purchase a Savings Certificate or Bond.

In conclusion, I would like to thank David MacDonnell, Tony Finn, John Greer, John Lennon, John Mullen and Karl Winkelmann who all contributed information and/or illustrations for this series of articles. Now it's over to you - can you answer some of the queries I raised and perhaps provide examples of any of the missing material for illustration in a future article.

I am currently working on completing an article on Television Licence Savings Stamps and would welcome scans/details of any stamps or savings cards held by members. Please e-mail any details to me at bmwarren@eircom.net

IN OUR NEXT EDITION

The article above concludes Brian's look at Irish Savings Bank stamps; however in our next edition he gallantly starts work on Irish postboxes. We also have some notes on what is believed to be a censorship office in Cork and if space permits the story of the card that went from Limerick to Tibet plus, as ever, whatever you send me – please keep it flowing!

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS 1932 - co-ordinated by Graeme Murray

Part three of 'Beyond the Catalogues'

A set of two stamps was issued on 12 May 1932 to commemorate the 31st Eucharistic Congress, due to be held from 21 to 26 June in Dublin. This particular Congress commemorated the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland and, like all such Congresses, posed a showcase for global Catholicism.

From the much fêted arrival of the Papal Legate, Cardinal Lorenzo Lauri at the beginning of Congress week, to the incredible scenes of devotion at the Papal Mass in Phoenix Park six days later, few efforts were spared by the Irish Government and the organisers. Many large temporary structures were erected (e.g. elaborate shrines, mainly in tenement areas of the city) and many souvenir objects were available.

The event also saw the use of cutting-edge technology such as skywriting, the largest PA system in the world and spectacular lighting effects. The event culminated with a live papal broadcast from Rome on Sunday 26 June to the Irish people, and was universally considered to be an outstanding success.

The Constitution of the Irish Free State (as stipulated by the 1921 Treaty) expressly forbade the new Irish Government from giving precedence to any one faith over the other, particularly as regards legislation. The Eucharistic Congress can therefore be seen as an important mark on the road that would lead to the new Irish Constitution of 1937.

This legislative position helped determine the approach taken by the Minister for P&T following a request for a stamp by the Eucharistic Congress Organisation Committee (ECOM). Some time after the request of 7 July 1930, the Minister expressed his concern to the Executive Council (as the Cabinet was then called) that other religions might object. Whilst the Catholic Emancipation issue of 1929 was for an event of national importance, the Eucharistic Congress was exclusively a religious event, but of international importance.

The Executive Council (EC) duly authorised the request, subject to conditions the Minister might think desirable, and the matter became public when the Irish Independent reported on 12 February 1931 that a stamp issue was being considered.

On 24 July 1931 the director of ECOM wrote to the Secretary, GPO to find out what decision had been arrived at. The ECOM opined "that the stamp should run through all the series, ½d, 1d, 1½d, 2d,

etc." On 24 September 1931 ECOM was informed that "it had been decided to issue a stamp".

Towards the end of October the design began to be considered: on 24 October 1931 the secretary to the P&T sent a memo to the Minister; "... the Congress Committee do not desire to be consulted in the selection of a design . . . the Eucharistic badge which was designed by the Archbishop has received universal approval and I think that this design ...would, with some modification of detail, make a satisfactory design for a postage stamp... (Added in margin in pen is "The Archbishop thinks it the best thing ever designed"- fig 1.)

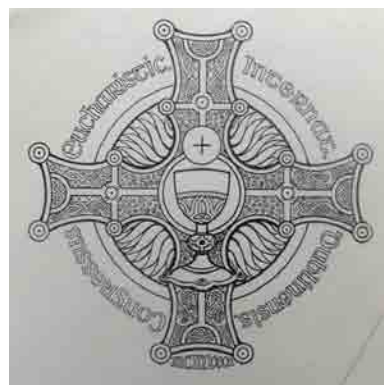


fig 1 The Congress Crest designed by the Archbishop.

"I suggest that Mr. George Atkinson RHA, who designed the RDS stamp for a fee of £25, should again be employed at the same fee. Normally the issue would be confined to only one denomination - that of minimum letter rate - but as the proposed design closely resembles that of the present 3d stamp it will be advisable to include that denomination also in the new issue." A week later the secretary was informed that "His Grace agrees to the use of the Congress Crest on the proposed stamp".

A report was sent to the EC on 3 November 1931 suggesting that the new stamps should be issued as early as possible after 1 April 1932 and remain on sale until after the closure of the Congress.

The Director of Stamping estimated that the cost of production for two denominations would be £350, including the proposed artist's fee of £25 and, based on past experience of special issues, that the increase in Revenue from the proposed issue will not be less than £2,000 (*implying philatelic sales of c100,000 sets – Ed*).

The Irishman's Diary in The Irish Times of 2nd November remarked that there were rumours of three issues in 1932 - Eucharistic Congress, St. Patrick's landing and Tailteann Games which would

be exploiting stamp collectors. (What would they think of today?)

The Minister P&T was informed on 24th November that the design submitted was unsatisfactory. The ECOM was told "The details of the Crest are too intricate for satisfactory reproduction in a stamp". In December the Minister set up a committee which invited three artists to submit designs.

George Atkinson submitted 3, Maurice MacGonigal 2 and Michael Healy 4. George Atkinson suggested that the background of the stamp be primrose yellow, the papal colour, with the 2d in black and cardinal red for the 3d and he duly submitted various colour trials (*figs 2, 3 and 4 – back page*).

This suggestion was passed from the EC to the Department of P&T. They did investigate using coloured paper but dropped the idea when they found the colouring would have to be done before gumming.

Ultimately, one of George Atkinson's was accepted by the Archbishop but with a change of wording: 'DUBLINENSIS' was to be replaced by 'INTERNATIONALIS'. (*figs 5 and 6 – this page*)

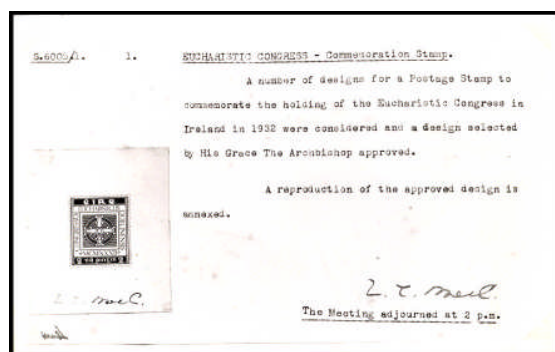


fig 5 Notification of the Archbishop's approval.

On 22/3/32 the secretary of the department of P&T was notified by the Revenue Commission that the cost of the dies and plates required for the two rates of postage, 2d & 3d, would be:-

	£	s	d
Engraving original dies, two rollers and working dies	60	0	0
3 Plates 240 set 2d}			
2 Plates 240 set 3d}	137	10	0
Miscellaneous expenditure	7	10	0
Total	£205	0	0

The expenditure was sanctioned on 6/4/1932 by the Department of Finance.

A letter from A. S. Roberts of the Revenue, Stamping Branch to Mr. Percy Blake, Dept P&T on 20th April (only 3 weeks before issue!) reads "Today Mr. O'Hegarty has approved of the use of the present 2d and 3d Postage colours for the above

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stamps and I shall be obliged if you will be good enough to arrange for the issue of Warrants for the necessary supplies and instruct your Stores Branch to provide the paper from the last making."

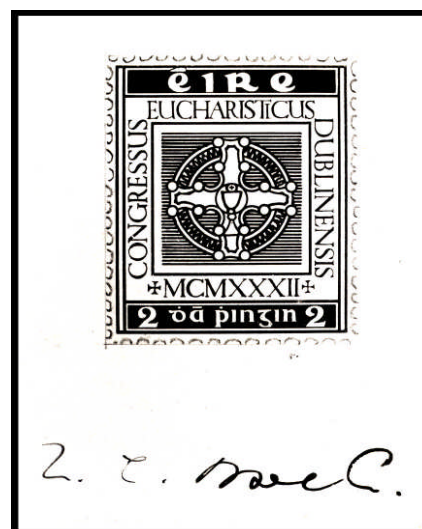


fig 6 Photographic essay, signed by His Eminence John Charles McQuaid, of the approved Atkinson design prior to wording change.



fig 7 FDCs, signed by George Atkinson, posted on the ferry to Holyhead.

On 12/5/1932 the Irish Press reported that 70,000 sheets of 240 of the 2d and 3,000 sheets of the 3d were to be released. "The ordinary stamps of those values will be withdrawn from circulation from

today, except in the case of stamp books which cannot be withdrawn owing to the advertising rights involved." On 10/6/1932 the Department of Foreign Affairs dispatched two sets in blocks of four - one set for the Pope and the other to H.M. the King "in accordance with the standing arrangement". The Department of Education also sent one set in blocks of four for the National Museum.

The sheets were printed in two panes of 120 (10x12) with gutter margins. 15,807,475 of the 2d and 867,475 of the 3d were actually issued. Two varieties are listed in Hibernia; 2d - 'dot in S' position 1/9 (fig 8) and 3d - 'break in tablet line', position unlisted (fig 9 - back page).

An examination of 3 sheets of the 2d in the GPO archives showed no sign of the 'dot after s' but this merely shows the archives do not have examples of each of the three printing plates. There was, however, a large dot in the cross in the same position (fig 8).

Another unlisted variety is a break in an inner frame line under the R in Eire (fig 10 - back page)

A series of six postcards was produced, of which five are shown here together with a card showing Benediction on O'Connell Bridge:-



Other illustrations are shown on the back cover in order to take advantage of the colour printing which is available to us.



fig 8 'Dot after s' and dot in cross - both 1/9

The 2d also has two distinct shades, caused either by a variation in the thickness of paper or a difference in the ink mix.

Other unlisted 2d varieties (not necessarily constant) include; 13/7, large dot after 1st 's' in Congressus, 15/5, break in tablet line under 1st E in Eire, 16/8, break in tablet line under R in Eire.

AUCTION WATCH - 'Erinman'

The Grosvenor auction on 26th March had an interesting section of Ireland with many items exceeding the upper estimate. Highlight of the sale was a 1931-40 2s booklet, edition 37-13 described as "all panes inverted, trimmed perfs. on two sides, otherwise fine and very fresh". SG SB1, catalogued at £3000, made a hammer price of £2200 (plus premium) against an upper estimate of £1500. The popularity of early Irish booklets was further underlined with a 1946 2s booklet, edition 28-46 (SG SB6) achieving the upper estimate of £600 and a 1946-1947 2s booklet, edition 29-46 (SG SB7) making £250.

Perhaps optimistically estimated at £800-£900 (plus 5% import tax) an example of the 1922-34 grey green perf 15 x imperf (SG 74b) described as "fine used with NAS NA RIOGH/14 AP /36 cds failed to find a buyer.

Forerunners were eagerly bid over. Mint marginal blocks of four of 1914 Home Rule 1d Hibernia, 1d Redmond and 1d Harp made £880 (+ buyers premium and import tax) against an upper estimate of £700. A collection of 70 items including singles of the above as well a se-tenant pair of Manchester Martyrs and 1916 Erie Puist set sold for £750 (upper estimate £700).

The anomalies of bidding at auction are illustrated by the following two results. The first of two lots of a mint set of Thom overprints in shiny blue-black (SG 44-46) sold for £600 (upper estimate £500). The very next lot, similar in condition to the above made only £420 (lower estimate £450).

A choice marginal unmounted block of four 3d violet (SG 57a) containing the variety "no accent" went for £150 + import tax against an upper estimate of £120. Described as "2s6d wide date in a complete mint sheet (4 x 10), one stamp showing circumflex accent (R9/2), all but 4 unmounted, few minor tone spots, some split and buckled perfs" SG86a made its upper estimate of £600.

SG 99-101, 1935 re-engraved set in unmounted mint condition sold for £350 (cat £375+) against an estimate of £240-£260, this a set on which I have previously commented.

Another Grosvenor auction held on 7th May 2009 had only two Irish lots. The outstanding item was one of only 14 recorded examples of the 1987 Christmas 21p showing variety gold omitted. This unmounted mint example, from the left of the sheet and with Hamilton-Bowen certificate (2008) went under the hammer for £1200 against an estimate of £1200 to £1500.

The quality of items appearing on the internet auction house eBay has dropped markedly in recent months. Changes to eBay tariffs, has resulted in a plethora of mundane offerings and especially irritating is a daily re-listing of items from a Polish seller. Thankfully sellers can be removed from searches which in this case can be a hundred or more items. (*you must tell us how to do this!* – Ed)

Some items which have made some good realisations have illustrated the scarcity of early air mail postal history. A cover carried on the New York to Rome record flight attempt by Pond and Sabelli which crashed at Lahinch with clear 15/4/34 postmark made £209.

Several covers recording various Zeppelin flights to South America have made good prices – viz: Seventh South American flight Dublin to Rio dated 12/9.33 £428; Second South American flight 01/Jun/33 £331; Third South American flight 14th April 1932 £345; Fourth South American flight 26th April 1932 with arrival date stamp 5th May 1932 £305; First South American flight Dublin to Rio 4th May 1933 to 10th May 1933 £337; Similarly a 1934 Zeppelin cover from Rio to Belfast made £192.

Overprint FDC's do not appear very often. On offer were two covers with written addresses with clear 17th February 1922 date stamps. Thom 1 1/2d (SG 10) sold for £97 and Thom 2d Die 1 (SG 12) with a few rust spots £47. Both results, in my opinion, were slightly disappointing. Illustrated FDC's with typed addresses of pre 1960 issues have previously been noted in this column. A 1950 Holy Year FDC made a healthy £49.

An early purple boxed 67 x 14mm Saor Ó Scrúóú (exempt from Censorship) cover dated 1940 made a good £35. Such examples do not come along very often.

Unmounted mint marginal blocks of 4 of the first definitive series (SE monogram watermark) are becoming scarcer to find. Not surprisingly the 1/- value (SG82) in this condition fetched £89.

On a more disturbing topic, I noted two items for sale which, contrary to eBay policy, were clearly marked as fake and should have therefore been withdrawn from sale. This concerned 8 copies of what was stated to be 5/- Saorstát overprint SG65 and one copy of a 10/- Rialtas overprint that was listed as Scott 79 (SG85) but which is clearly an error. All copies of the 5/- value were purchased by a well known American collector for a few pounds. The question is can the word "FAKE" which is stamped on the reverse be removed?



fig 2 Two of Atkinson's unaccepted designs

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File ref: NAI, D/Communications, G 10137/32.

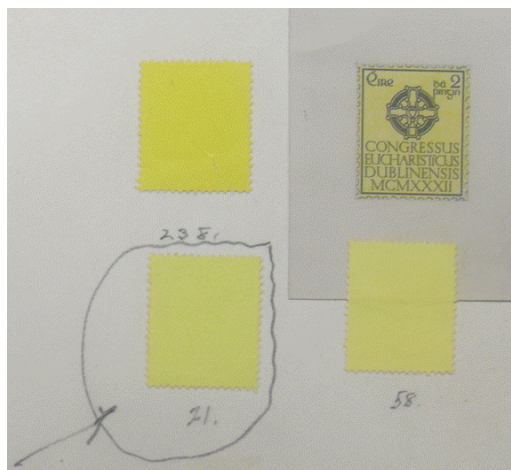


fig 3 Unaccepted Atkinson design with paper colour trial

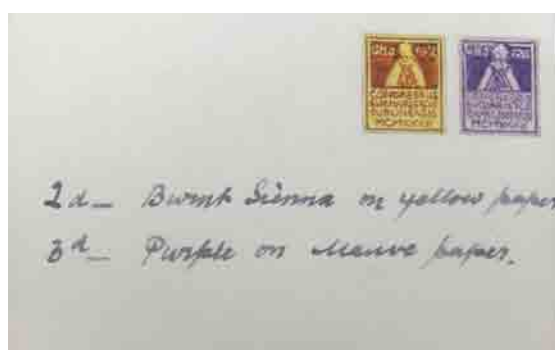


fig 4 - The 4 colour trial illustrations submitted by Atkinson. Each 'stamp' is individually done, stamp-size, in watercolour



left - fig 9 'Break in tablet' over 'n' of 'pin' (?/9).
(top left stamp)



fig 10 'Break in frame' under R of Eire.

With thanks to Paul Baines, Andrew Ballard, John Lennon, John Mullen and Peter Wood without whose contributions this article could not have been written. GM 1.6.09