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That Was The Year That Was – 2009

Brian Warren



The Irish Times – 'A' plate and imprint blocks of Ireland's first diamond shaped stamp



An Post – 25 Years – Self-adhesive booklet pane

THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS - 2009

by Brian Warren

Note that illustrations of single stamps, pairs and postmarks (except IMPs) are full size; illustrations of IMPs, blocks and strips, booklets, covers and stationery items are reproduced at between 40% and 75% of full size.

There were no increases in postal rates during 2009.

SPECIAL AND COMMEMORATIVE ISSUES

The 2009 programme, comprising 30 regular gummed stamps, 15 self-adhesive stamps ex rolls, 5 miniature sheets and 6 booklets, was issued over 21 release dates at a total cost of €85.71. All counter regular gummed issues were in sheetlet format – the total cost of all 26 sheetlets was €251.66.

The 2008 totals of 37 regular gummed stamps, 6 miniature sheets and 6 booklets were issued over 23 release dates at a total cost of €86.00. All regular gummed issues were in sheetlet format – the total cost of all 33 sheetlets was €291.30.

The major cost continues to be booklets – €47.75 for 6 booklets as compared to €41.25 for 6 booklets in 2008 and €57.85 for 7 booklets in 2007.

Single stamps continue to be issued to mark a broader spectrum of subjects and events. There were 14 single stamp issues in 2009, the same number as in 2008, as compared to 15 in 2007, 13 in 2006, 2 in 2005 and 8 in 2004. Wedding and European Dog show stamps are excluded in these totals as they were only available in self-adhesive booklets.

Date of Issue	Description		Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
23 Jan	Wedding stamp (self-adhesive)	- Booklet	€5.50	10 x 55c stamps (one design)		13½ x 13¼	ISSP
23 Jan	Chinese Year of the Ox	- Sheet issue	82c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
	- Miniature sheet (with phosphor)		€2.34	3 x 82c	CCP3	14¾ x 14	ISSP
23 Jan	Louis Braille (200th Birth Anniversary)		55c	1A/1B	CCP3	14¼ x 14¼	ISSP
19 Feb	St. Patrick's Day - St. Patrick climbs Croagh Patrick		82c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
6 Mar	Greetings stamps (self-adhesive)	- Booklet	€5.50	10 x 55c stamps (two designs)		13 x 13½	ISSP
20 Mar	Charles Darwin – Birth Bicentenary	- Portrait	82c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13½ x 13½	ISSP
24 Mar	John Millington Synge – Death Centenary						
	- The Playboy of the Western World		55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾	ISSP
27 Mar	The Irish Times – 150th Anniversary	- Clock	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13¾ x 13¾	ISSP
3 Apr	An Post – 25 Years (self-adhesive)	- Booklet	€5.50	Booklet of 10 different designs		14 x 14	Ashton Potter
		- Boxed roll	55c	€55 per box of 100 (ten designs)		11 x 11¼	Ashton Potter
24 Apr	Francis Bacon – Birth Bicentenary	- Self portrait	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13½ x 13½	ISSP
	- Miniature sheet (studio)		82c	single 82c stamp with phos.	CCP3	13½ x 13½	ISSP

(Table continued on next page)

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
30 Apr	ITGWU Centenary	- James Larkin	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13¼ x 13¼ ISSP
8 May	Volvo Ocean Race	- Green Dragon	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¾ x 14 ISSP
	- Miniature sheet (various yachts)		€3.00	single €3 stamp (with phos.)	CCP3	14¾ x 14 ISSP
15 May	Europa (49th issue)	- Crab Nebula	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13¼ x 13¼ ISSP
	- Jets from a Brown Dwarf		82c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13¼ x 13¼ ISSP
15 May	50 Years of CEPT	- Logo, postbox and telephone dial	82c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13¼ x 13¼ ISSP
21 May	European Dog Show	- Booklet (self-adhesive)	€5.50	10 x 55c (one design)		13¼ x 13½ ISSP
16 June	Kilkenny City Status (400th Anniversary)	- Kilkenny Castle	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13½ x 13½ ISSP
26 June	Anthony Trollope	- Portrait	82c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¾ ISSP

(Table continued on next page)

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
						
						
15 July	Birrell Land Act (Centenary)	- Augustine Birrell	82c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13¼ x 13¼ ISSP
14 Aug	Classical Composers	- Handel	55c	Se-tenant 1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	13 x 13¼ ISSP
		- Mozart	55c			
		- Chopin	82c			
		- Haydn	82c			
		- Miniature sheet	€2.74			
		- Prestige booklet	€12.00	Four panes – see below	CCP3	13 x 13¼ ISSP
28 Aug	Guinness Brewery (250th Anniversary)	- Arthur Guinness	82c	1A1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¼ ISSP
4 Sept	Ulster Plantation (400th Anniversary)	- Cartouche (Irish inscription)	55c	Se-tenant 1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¼ x 14 ISSP
		- Cartouche (English inscription)	55c			
18 Sept	Modern Irish Playwrights	- Brian Friel	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¼ x 14 ISSP
		- Frank McGuinness	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¼ x 14 ISSP
		- Tom Murphy	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¼ x 14 ISSP
16 Oct	Fauna & Flora (Dragonflies)	- Irish Bluet	55c	Se-tenant 1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14 x 14¼ ISSP
		- Large Red Damselfly	55c			
		- Four-spotted Chaser	82c			
		- Banded Demoiselle	95c			
				Miniature sheet (phosphor)	CCP3	13¼ x 13¼ ISSP
6 Nov	Christmas	- The Nativity	55c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¼ x 14 ISSP
(39th Issue)		- The Annunciation	82c	1A1A1A1A/1B1B1B1B	CCP3	14¼ x 14 ISSP
		- Booklet (The Virgin and Child)	€13.75	26 x 55c i.e. one free stamp		11 x 11¼ SEP Sprint

Printers and Sheet Format: All stamps were litho printed by Irish Security Stamp Printing Limited (ISSP), the US based firm Ashton-Potter (USA) Limited or the Australian firm SEP SPrint.



Top margin of Guinness Brewery issue showing plate numbers and colour controls

The majority of sheet issues continue to be issued in 16-stamp (4 x 4) sheetlet format with both "A" and "B" sheets. The plate numbers are located in the left margin beside row 1 and the colour controls in the right margin beside row 1. The imprint is in the bottom margin under the first stamp in the last row. The bottom right corner is blank.

Details, in both English and Irish, about the particular issue are included across the top margin. This layout applies to both horizontal and vertical format designs. All sheetlets have an imperforate top margin, all other margins being perforated. Any variation in the above format for an individual issue is referred to below and/or in the table above. All stamps have a phosphor frame unless otherwise stated. All stamps bear the year imprint at the foot of the stamp.

First Day Covers: Blank FDCs cost €1 (2008: €1). Special covers and pictorial cancels were available for all issues. A cardboard presentation box of all 29 (2008: 31) first day covers for special and commemorative issues of 2009, including the five miniature sheets, was available from 27 November. The price of €80 (2008: €80) compares with a cost of €66.96 (2008: €69.05) if bought as individual covers.



Wedding Booklet (4th Issue):

This year's design features a pair of gold wedding bands displayed against a simulated parchment background bearing a definition of the word "Love".

The booklet is in self-adhesive format and incorporates ten stamps set out in one pane, folded twice, containing two rows of five stamps.



The stamp measures 37mm x 26mm. The cover of the booklet features the same design as the stamp. A pair of self-adhesives with plain backing was available from the philatelic bureau. The surrounding white margin of this loose pair is slightly larger than if the equivalent pair of stamps was cut from a booklet.



Chinese Year of the Ox: The sheet stamp features a stylised depiction of an ox.



The miniature sheet contains three stamps of the same design. The border of the miniature sheet has the text "Year of the Pig" and "Happy New Year" in English, Chinese and Irish. A different cover was produced for the miniature sheet, but the first day cancel was the same as for the sheet issue.



Louis Braille: Louis Braille was born in France and lost his sight at an early age. While at the Royal Institution for Blind Youth in Paris, he was introduced to Sonography, a writing system developed by Charles Barbier. Aged about 12, he spent the next three years simplifying this system and created the system that now bears his name.

The stamp features an eye created with a series of dots representing Braille as a system that extends the senses through the organisation of a minimal form. "Éire" and "55c" are reproduced in Braille on the stamp which, as a result, is printed on heavier than normal 130gm weight paper. The stamp measures 38mm x 41mm and was issued in three rows of four stamps. The top margin of complete sheetlets bears the wording "Louis Braille (1809 -1852)" in English and in imitation Braille type printing rather than Irish (see illustration on back page).

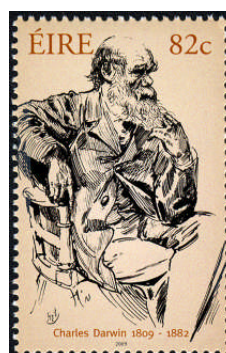
This is the second Irish stamp to incorporate Braille. The first issue was the 48c stamp to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind issued in 2006.



St. Patrick's Day: The stamp design is based on an original painting by Margaret Clarke entitled "St. Patrick climbs Croagh Patrick". The Irish only inscription in the top margin of the sheetlet reads "Lá Fhéile Pádraig".

Greetings Booklet: The booklet was issued in the usual format with 5 x 2 designs. The two designs show the fun and enjoyment associated with sending and receiving traditional festive greetings through the post. One stamp shows a little girl, assisted by her father, posting a card; the other shows the happy recipient.

The booklet is in self-adhesive format and incorporates ten stamps plus ten labels set out in one pane, folded twice, containing two rows of five stamps and five labels. The labels do not have die-cut perforations but are cut with straight edges. Each stamp measures 25mm x 30mm. A pair of self-adhesives ex booklet complete with plain backing was available from the philatelic bureau.



Charles Darwin (Birth Bicentenary): The stamp features a pen and ink drawing of Darwin by Wexford born artist Harry Furniss (1854-1925) which is held in the National Portrait Gallery in London. The stamp measures 45mm x 29mm. Various postcards are available from the National Portrait Gallery depicting Darwin. The sheetlet contained three rows of four stamps.



John Millington Synge (Death Centenary):

The stamp features a scene, illustrated by Seán Keating, from his most famous work "The Playboy of the Western World". A 4p stamp was issued by the Irish Post Office in 1971 to mark his birth centenary.



The Irish Times (150th Anniversary): The Irish Times is considered to be Ireland's "paper of record" and was founded in 1859. The iconic Irish Times clock as shown on the stamp was first erected in the early 1900s on its Westmoreland Street building and was subsequently moved to its D'Olier Street premises. "D'Olier Street" became a synonym for "The Irish Times", which in turn became personified as "The Old Lady of D'Olier Street". In October 2006, the paper relocated from its historical home on D'Olier Street to a new building on the corner of Tara Street/Townsend Street, only two hundred metres away. The clock is now positioned in nearby Townsend Street.

This was Ireland's first diamond-shaped stamp and measures 36mm x 36mm. Although diamond-shaped in design, the stamps were printed in regular sheetlet format with the plate numbers located in the normal position in the left margin opposite R1. The colour controls are in the bottom right margin under stamp 4 and the imprint is in the small square at the bottom left corner of the sheet (as illustrated on front

cover). The remaining top right corner has elements of the English and Irish inscriptions. Both 'A' and 'B' sheetlets have an imperforate right margin and perforated left and bottom margins. The top margin is partially imperforate with only two lines of vertical perforation running in line with the left and right margins (see illustrations on front cover). An inscription "150th Anniversary of the Irish Times" appears in the right margin and the Irish equivalent "Cothrom 150 Bliain an Irish Times" in the top margin.

This unusual perforation format was to ensure that no lines of perforation ran through either the English or Irish inscriptions.



An Post (25 Years): To mark An Post's Silver Jubilee, ten self-adhesive stamps were issued in both booklet and roll format. The inscriptions on each stamp are placed on a silver background.

The ten designs illustrate the integral relationship between An Post and the people of Ireland and feature (1) Girl writing letter; (2) Woman posting letter in street postbox; (3) Postman collecting mail from street postbox; (4) Customer at post office counter; (5) An Post van and truck at Mails Centre (probably Dublin); (6) Inside of a Culler Facer machine; (7) High capacity trolley; (8) Postman delivering mail at business premises; (9) the An Post sponsored Seán Kelly cycling team; and (10) GPO Dublin.

I have been able to identify the two postboxes shown on the stamps. The postbox in stamp 2 is a large 'A' size Edward VII box with short door located on Merrion Square West, Dublin 2. The postbox on stamp 3 is a large 'A' size Edward VII pillar box with full length door located at the corner of North Frederick Street/Gardiner Row, Dublin 1.

The fold-over booklet contains the ten designs in two rows of five stamps. The stamps are in the same small size format (20mm x 23.5mm) as the NVI definitive booklet issued in late 2008 and were printed by the same firm (Ashton Potter USA).



The rolls of 100 stamps are reeled vertically (top feed) with no joins and commence with a small white label which measures 25mm x 17mm. The stamps in the rolls are in the usual larger size format and measure 25mm x 30mm. There are five small labels in the roll, each with the same three-line wording in black, "See reverse / for quantity / remaining". The numbers 100, 80, 60, 40 and 20 are printed on the

reverse of the respective labels. These numbers can be positioned at either left or right. The size of the numerals also differs in size from roll to roll (see illustrations). The outside of the roll has a long narrow self-adhesive restraining strip – 101mm x 8mm. There are a total of 11 differently numbered restraining strips (1 to 11). The box illustrates the GPO Dublin. There is no reference to a printer on the box and there are no numbers on the bottom flaps. Strips of stamps cut from complete rolls were available from the bureau. The set of ten stamps was usually cut into two strips of five.

On both booklet and roll stamps, the phosphor is applied in the form of a rectangular box over the silver element of the design at the top of each stamp. This caused phosphor recognition problems at Mail Centres and, as a result, approximately 1 in 3 covers bearing stamps from this issue were delivered uncanceled. Boxed rolls and booklets of this issue replaced the equivalent definitive rolls and booklets in most post offices between April 2009 and early December 2009. The booklets were also sold in stamp machines.



Francis Bacon (Birth Bicentenary): The sheet stamp features a self-portrait of the Dublin-born artist dating from 1969. After his death in 1992, his studio was relocated piece by piece from 7 Reece Mews, London to The Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin. The stamp measures 41mm x 26mm and was issued in three rows of four stamps. The miniature sheet shows a photograph of the studio as seen from the door. The 82c stamp within the sheet shows a photograph of the open door taken from outside the studio.

A different first day cover was produced for the miniature sheet, but the first day cancel was the same as for the sheet issue. Unfortunately, there are no postcards available from the Gallery depicting the studio or the self-portrait. Other cards are available featuring a number of Bacon's works together with an actual photograph of the artist.



Irish Transport & General Workers Union (Centenary): James Larkin (1876-1947) was born to Irish parents in Liverpool. In January 1907, Larkin undertook his first task on behalf of the trade union movement in Ireland, when he arrived in

Belfast to organise the city's dock workers for the Liverpool-based National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL). Tensions regarding leadership arose between Larkin and NUDL general secretary James Sexton which gave rise to the establishment of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) when Irish delegates decided to establish an "Irish Union".



The stamp shows an image of James ('Big Jim') Larkin based on a photograph of him addressing a crowd on Dublin's O'Connell Street, shortly after his return from America in 1923. He is standing above a small crowd of men, with his arms raised. This pose was adapted by sculptor Oisín Kelly for his statue of Larkin which was erected on O'Connell Street in 1977. Over this is superimposed the "Starry Plough" representing the Irish labour movement. The stamp is in a square format and measures 36mm x 36mm. James Larkin's birth centenary was commemorated with two Irish stamps (7p and 11p) in 1976.

Volvo Ocean Race: The Volvo Ocean Race is the world's premier professional yachting race. This year the yachts came to Ireland for the first time, with a stopover in Galway between 23 May and 6 June. The stamps are based on original paintings by Vincent Killowry. Both the 55c sheet stamp and the 82c stamp within the miniature sheet feature the Chinese/Irish entry "Green Dragon".



The stamp in the miniature sheet measures 22mm x 43.5mm. The other seven yachts in the race are also illustrated on the miniature sheet and are (left to right) Team Russia, Ericsson Racing Team - Ericsson 3 (or 4)*, Puma Ocean Racing, Telefonica Blue, Delta Lloyd, Ericsson Racing Team - Ericsson 4 (or 3)*, Telefonica Black. Ericsson 4 was the eventual overall winner with the Green Dragon entry finishing fifth. Such was the success of the Galway stopover that it will be the final port of call for the next race in 2011/12.

Separate first day covers were available for the sheet set and miniature sheet. The same cancellation was used on both covers. A pair of signed prints was also available at a cost of €55 featuring reproductions of both paintings. Each print has the appropriate stamp affixed and is cancelled with the pictorial first day cancel. The miniature sheet print, although it features the full painting, only has the 82c stamp taken from the sheet attached to the print.

* Both Ericsson teams have the same sail and hull colours.



Europa: As 2009 is the UNESCO International Year of Astronomy, Astronomy was chosen as this year's theme. Both Europa values were printed in the normal ten-stamp format for Europa issues (5 rows of 2 stamps with illustrative side panel). The plate numbers are included in the usual top left corner of the sheet.

The printer's imprint is also in the left margin, to the left of row 4. Top, left and bottom margins are perforated. There are no colour controls on the sheets. The illustrated right margin is imperforate. The bilingual inscription giving details of the issue is in the bottom right corner. The stamp is in a square format and measures 36mm x 36mm.



50 Years of CEPT: The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administration (CEPT) was formed on 26 June 2009 and Europa stamps with the CEPT symbol were first issued in 1960. Ireland was one of the nineteen founding members. Following the split of postal and telecommunications operations in most administrations, CEPT became an organisation concentrating on overall policy-making and regulation. A new body, PostEurop was created in 1993, to represent public postal operators and optimise postal operations in Europe. This body has rapidly expanded due to the break-up of Eastern Europe and now has a total of 48 members. As a result, a new stylised EUROPA has replaced the CEPT symbol on the annual Europa stamps, commencing with the 1993 releases. The 82c stamp issued by An Post to mark the 50th anniversary is in a square format and measures 36mm x 36mm. To illustrate the dual nature of CEPT's work, the stamp incorporates an old fashioned telephone dial and the top half of a wallbox with P7T cipher.



European Dog Show: The stamp features a specially commissioned photograph by Harry Weir of Abberann Conan, an Irish Glenn of Imaal Terrier and Best of Breed at Cruft's for the last three years. This year the European Dog Show was held in Ireland for the first time. The show was held in the RDS from 30 May to 1 June. The fold-over self-adhesive booklet contains five rows of two stamps, each measuring 26mm x 37mm. The same dog is illustrated on the cover of the booklet.



Kilkenny – 400th Anniversary of City Status: Kilkenny was granted city status by James I in 1609. The stamp shows Kilkenny Castle in an original illustration by Roger O'Reilly, as seen from the quays, with

St. John's Bridge also in view. The first day cover features an illustration of High Street in Kilkenny. The stamp measures 45mm x 28mm and was issued in four rows of three stamps.



Anthony Trollope: The stamp is based on an albumen print of Anthony Trollope held by the National Portrait Gallery in London and created by Julia Margaret Cameron in 1864. Before he found fame as a writer, Anthony Trollope worked for the Post Office during the period 1834 to 1867. He moved to Ireland in 1841 and became Assistant Surveyor for the Southern District in 1844. Subsequently, he was based in the Channel Islands and is credited with introducing pillar boxes to the British Isles. It is difficult to understand why the stamp was issued this year apart from the fact that Trollope left Ireland for good in 1859. The stamp measures 30mm x 41mm. The English only inscription in the top margin reads "Anthony Trollope".



Centenary of the Birrell Land Act of 1909: The Birrell Land Act, also known as the Irish Land Act 1909, was introduced 100 years ago to reduce congestion on the land of Ireland. Augustine Birrell, Chief

Secretary for Ireland, brought in the 1909 Act, which provided £100 million for land purchase, to be paid back at 3.25% interest over 68 years. The stamp features a watercolour painting of Augustine Birrell by Sir Leslie Ward, published by Vanity Fair on 18 January 1906. The stamp measures 30mm x 51.5mm and was issued in three rows of four.

Classical Composers: It is difficult to understand why this set was issued as, except for George Frederic Handel who died in 1759 and Joseph Haydn who died in 1809, there is no other relevant anniversary this year. The sheet stamps for each value are set out in both horizontal and vertical se-tenant format.



Plate block of 82c 'A' sheet showing phosphor layout

The phosphor frame is applied across each pair of designs and, as a result, each individual stamp only has phosphor on three sides. This applies to both the 55c and 82c values – see illustration of the 82c plate block. Due to the horizontal and vertical se-tenant format, this results in two separately identifiable stamps for each design, i.e. each 55c and 82c stamp has the phosphor at either top, left and bottom or at top, right and bottom. Although this phosphor format has been used on se-tenant designs before, this is the first set whereby it has been used in combination with a combined horizontal and vertical se-tenant stamp format.

The miniature sheet contains one of each stamp set out in a block of four which is imperforate at top and left. The phosphor frame is applied across each pair of designs in the same format as the sheet stamps. The 55c Mozart stamp is imperforate at top and left, the 55c Handel at top and the 82c Haydn at left. The 82c Chopin stamp is fully perforated. A separate first day cover was available for the miniature sheet.



Pane 1 from the Prestige Booklet

The four illustrated panes in the prestige booklet each contain a similar block of four stamps with imperforate right margin. This gives two further partially imperforate stamps – 55c Handel and 82c Chopin both imperforate at right. The four panes contain the same se-

tenant block, but the musical score illustrated on each pane differs as follows:-

- Pane 1: Mozart's Twelfth Mass (published 1884);
- Pane 2: Handel's original composition - L'Allegro, il Penseroso (published 1739);
- Pane 3: Haydn's original composition – Messe No. 1 in B flat Major (published 1802); and
- Pane 4: Nocturne by Chopin Op. 15 (The Wreath you Wove) with words by Thomas Moore (published 1879).

The phosphor frame format differs from the sheet and miniature sheet issues in that all individual stamps have a complete phosphor frame (see illustration of pane 1). The panes are rouletted at left and are stitched into the booklet covers. The booklet is sold for €12.00 although the face value of the stamps is only €10.96.

The combination of different phosphor frame formats and imperforate margins gives a total of 15 different individual stamps for this issue – 8 x 55c plus 7 x 82c.



Guinness Brewery (250th Anniversary): The stamp is based on an 18th-century portrait of Arthur Guinness. The stamp measures 24mm x 54mm and was issued in three rows of four. A number of Guinness associated cards are commercially available but, unfortunately, no card was available featuring the same portrait, which would have made a nice maximum card. I illustrate a card which reproduces a Guinness bottle label complete with the signature of Arthur Guinness. The same signature is included in the stamp design.



Ulster Plantation (400th Anniversary): Both stamps show a cartouche, or decorated frame, which was a feature of maps in the times of the Ulster plantation. The two 55c stamps were set out in se-tenant format both horizontally and vertically within the sheet.



Modern Irish Playwrights: Each stamp features an original portrait by James Hanley RHA against the background of a theatre curtain. All three 55c stamps were issued in separate sheetlets. All three playwrights live in Ireland.



Fauna and Flora (Dragonflies): The two 55c stamps were set out in se-tenant format both horizontally and vertically within the sheet.

The miniature sheet contains a single 95c (with phosphor frame) which measures 60mm x 26mm. Separate first day covers were available for the sheet set and miniature sheet. The same cancellation was used on both covers.

Christmas: The two gummed stamps both feature images from the Gospel Book from the monastery of Gamaghiel, Khizan held by the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin Castle. They form part of the Library's Armenian Collection and date from approximately 1451. The self-adhesive stamp is based on a painting by the Flemish artist Simon Bening. Painted around 1530, this image of the Virgin and Child comes from the Rosarium of Philip II, a prayer book that once belonged to the King of Spain. This painting is also held by the Chester Beatty Library. Designs from the Chester Beatty Library have featured on previous Christmas stamps in 1995 (3 designs) and 2006 (1 design).



The booklet is similar to previous Christmas booklet issues in layout and contains 26 x 55c stamps, giving one free stamp per booklet. The 26 stamps are set out in one pane, folded six times, containing two columns of 13 stamps, all with phosphor frame. Each stamp measures 25mm x 30mm. A pair of self-adhesives ex booklet complete with normal backing was available from the philatelic bureau.

A special stamp machine was installed inside the GPO Dublin for the period mid-November to early January. As well as selling the two definitive booklets, the Christmas booklet was also available. This larger machine differed from the equivalent definitive only version in that it accepted notes as well as coins and like the other machines gave change (in coin).

YEAR PACK AND YEAR BOOK

27 November - Year Pack: The Year Pack contains one each of the special and commemorative stamps issued during 2009, including pairs of the Wedding, Greetings, European Dog Show and Christmas self-adhesive stamps (all with plain backing except

for the Christmas issue) and a complete An Post – 25 Years self-adhesive booklet, but excluding all other booklets and miniature sheets – a total of 48 (2008: 45) stamps with a face value of €29.64 (2008: €27.64). Cost €35 (2008: €35).

27 November - Year Book: The bilingual book contains one each of the special and commemorative stamps issued during 2009, including both regular gummed and self-adhesive stamps and all miniature sheets. The self-adhesive sets comprise pairs of the Wedding, Greetings, European Dog Show and Christmas stamps and the two coil strips making up the ten-stamp An Post - 25 Years

issue (all with plain backing except for the Christmas issue). Note that the Year Book contains the larger sized coil stamps from the An Post issue whereas the Year Pack contains the smaller format booklet stamps.

A total of 48 stamps plus 5 miniature sheets with a face value of €39.61 (2008: €40.53) is pre-mounted in the year book. Total printing of 2,500 standard copies (2008: 2,500) and 150 (2008: 150) leather-bound editions. Cost of standard edition: €60 (2008: €60). The leather-bound edition costs €215 (2008: €195).

No individual presentation packs were issued this year.

DEFINITIVES – WILD FLOWERS OF IRELAND

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Plate Numbers/Notes	Perforation	Printer
					
30 Jan	€55 Coil roll – Reprint - Boxed roll (self-adhesive)	55c	€55 per box of 100 stamps (one design)	11 x 11¼	Ashton Potter
7 Aug	International Booklet (self-adhesive – small format)	€8.20	10 x 82c Sea aster	13¾ x 14	Ashton Potter
16 Oct	National Booklet (self-adhesive – small format)	€5.50	10 x 55c Large-flowered Butterwort	14 x 14	Ashton Potter



Energi Print



Ashton-Potter

€55 Self-adhesive Roll: A new printing was released to counters in the GPO Dublin on Friday 30 January. The new rolls were printed by Ashton Potter USA, although there is no reference to them on the box or the reverse of

the backing strip. The Large-flowered Butterwort design is much darker, with the flower element purple in colour as compared to different shades of violet-blue for all previous printings. However, the more distinguishing feature is that the overall design is approximately 1mm smaller all round. As a result, the lettering on the right edge extends to the stem of the flower on the new printing (as illustrated). Surplus paper removed.

The perforation size of 11 x 11¼ differs from the previous printing by Energi Print (10/08) which measured 11¼ x 11½ but is the same as the earlier SEP printing (9/07). The phosphor frame is approximately ½ mm wider as compared to the Energi Print stamp.



The rolls of 100 stamps are reeled vertically (top feed) with no joins and commence with a small white label which measures 25mm x 17mm. There are five labels in the roll, each with the same three-line wording in black, "See reverse / for quantity / remaining".

The numbers 100, 80, 60, 40 and 20 are printed on the reverse of the respective labels. These numbers can be positioned at either left (as illustrated above) or right. The outside of the roll has a long narrow self-adhesive restraining strip – 101mm x 8mm; the only boxes seen by me to date have either the number "1" or "4" printed on the bottom of this strip but presumably there are 11 different numbers as per the An Post – 25 Years issue mentioned earlier in this article. The box has the same layout and wording as previous printings but the colours, particularly the green, are much darker. There are no numbers printed on the bottom flaps.

The coils went off-sale during the period April to early December 2009 and replaced by the An Post - 25 Years issue. They are now back on sale.

Self-adhesive Booklets – Australian Printings with Large Format Stamps: I noted printings of both the €5.50 (Large-flowered Butterwort design) and €8.20 self-adhesive booklets with a much brighter phosphor not reported in prior articles – November 2008 in the case of the €5.50 booklet and February 2009 in the case of the €8.20 booklet.

€8.20 Self-adhesive Booklet: A new printing of the self-adhesive €8.20 booklet by Ashton-Potter (USA) Limited was released on 7 August 2009. The booklet is on thinner card as compared to the initial Australian printing and matches the smaller stamp format in the €5.50 NVI booklet issued in December 2008 and printed by the US firm.

The stamps are set out in two rows of five stamps in the smaller 20mm x 23.5mm format. The booklet still has two folds and the space saved by the smaller stamp size enables the airmail labels to be printed on the same side as the stamps. Although the small format 82c is a visually different stamp, no special first day facilities were provided. A pair of self-adhesives ex booklet, complete with normal backing, is available from the philatelic bureau.



€5.50 Self-adhesive Booklet: A new printing of the self-adhesive €5.50 booklet by Ashton-Potter (USA) Limited was released on the opening day of Stamp. The previous NVI stamp featuring the Yellow Horned Poppy has been replaced by the usual 55c Large-flowered Butterwort design. The stamps are set out in two rows of five stamps in the smaller 20mm x 23.5mm format.

Like the 82c value, the small-format 55c is a visually different stamp but no first day facilities were provided by the bureau. A pair of self-adhesives ex booklet, complete with normal backing, is available from the philatelic bureau.

There was no reference to the new booklet in the Dragonflies/Christmas issue of *The Collector* or the first issue of 2010.

POSTAL STATIONERY

Date of Issue	Description		Cost	Note	Printer
					
22 July	GPO Postcards (new set)	- Set of six	€1.50	per card – postage paid	
25 Sept	Culture Night at the GPO	- Postcard	no charge	with 82c self-adhesive definitive	An Post Print & Design



GPO Postcards: A set of six new postcards was put on sale at the bureau counter on 22 July. The cards are similar to the set issued in 2003 and withdrawn in 2006.

The cards depict the GPO and some of the events associated with the building: (a) Current front view of GPO; (b) Statue of Cuchulain, legendary warrior of Irish mythology – the statue by Oliver Sheppard dates from 1911 but was later adopted as a memorial to the 1916 Rising and placed in the GPO. Unlike the 2002 issue, the statue is reproduced correctly and is now facing the right way; (c) The 1916 Proclamation – one of the few surviving originals is now on display in the philatelic office in the GPO; (d) View of interior of GPO during the 1916 Easter Rising – seven of the commemorative stamps issued in 1966 featuring the signatories of the Proclamation are superimposed on the picture; (e) An 1829 view of Nelson's Pillar (destroyed in 1966) and the GPO Portico; and (f) The GPO in ruins after the 1916 Rebellion. Designs (a), (e) and (f) are completely new.

Each card has an imprinted postage paid stamp and airmail label. The stamp features a reduced version of the 75th Anniversary of the Easter Rising stamp issued in 1991. This is the same imprinted stamp as on the 2002 set but it is larger and the words Postage Paid/Postas

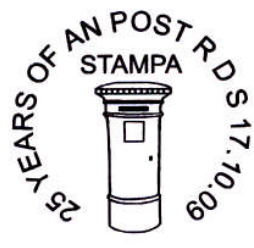
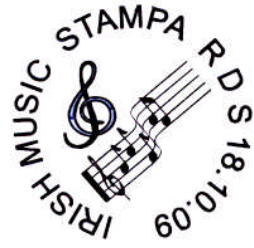
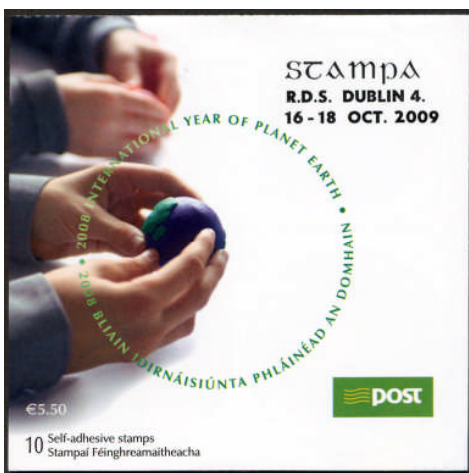
íochta have been repositioned on the card. The absence of a barcode, the larger revised stamp imprint and the 2009 copyright notice identify all cards as a new printing. All cards can be purchased separately.

Culture Night at the GPO: Dublin's fourth Culture Night took place on 25 September. An Post hosted an event in the GPO from 6pm to 10pm which included a talk on the historic pictures and the Proclamation in the Philatelic Bureau. A special card was given out free to all who visited the GPO on the night.

All postcards were gone by 9pm. This was the second year that An Post opened the GPO for Culture Night and produced a postcard for the event. It is in large format, measuring 210mm x 148mm, and the obverse shows an illustration of the GPO which differs from the design used last year.

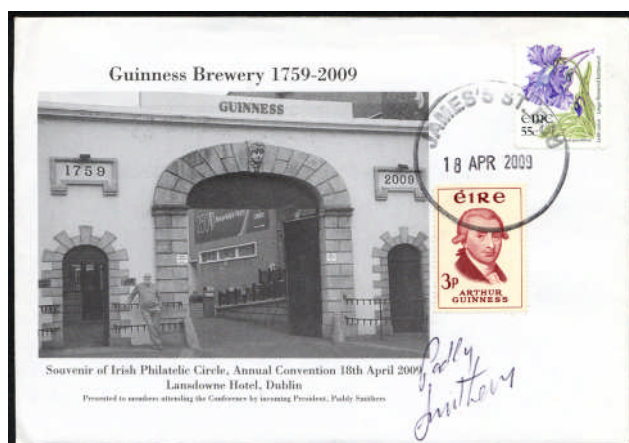
An ordinary 82c definitive self-adhesive stamp (small format ex booklet) was affixed to each card. A number of collectors did manage to obtain mint cards and attached labels from the Postal Service Centre machine in the GPO (see below) for use on the cards. No special cancellation was provided.

EXHIBITION AND SOCIETY SOUVENIRS AND POSTMARKS

Date of Issue	Description	Cost	Numbers/Notes	Paper	Perforation	Printer
	  					
	 					
18 Apr	Irish Philatelic Circle	- illustrated cover	- #	with DMC postmark (see note below)		IPC
	(Annual General Meeting)	- illustrated cover	- #	with James St. postmark (see note below)		IPC
19 Apr	Stampania 2009	- Irish Times sheetlet with o/p	€12.00	* 600 printed	CCP3	13¼ x 13¼ Mahons
		- illustrated cover	€4.00	# with special postmark		DSS
29 Sept	Stampa 2009 (Members' Souvenirs)					
	- International Year of the Planet Earth booklet (2008)		1,200 overprinted			Mahons
	- Fauna and Flora (Fungi) miniature sheet (2008)	€20.00	* 1,200 overprinted	CCP3	14 x 14¾	Mahons
	- Irish Music (Part 2) miniature sheet (2008)			CCP3	13½ x 13½	Mahons
	- Year of the Ox miniature sheet (2009)			CCP3	14¼ x 14	Mahons
29 Sept	Stampa 2009 (Public Souvenir)					
	- Volvo Ocean Race miniature sheet (2009)	€5.00	* 1,500 overprinted	CCP3	14¼ x 14	Mahons
21 Nov	Cork Stamp & Coin Exhibition	- Booklet	€3.00	# 350 printed		CPS
	- Dragonflies miniature sheet with overprint	€5.00	* 1,000 overprinted	CCP3	13¼ x 13¼	Mahons
	-illustrated cover	€1.00	#			CPS
* : The production and overprinting (if applicable) of all miniature sheets and booklets marked with an asterisk above were arranged by the organisers of each show. Overprinting was with the permission of An Post.						
# : The covers were produced by the relevant Society as indicated; the Cork booklet printing was arranged by the Cork Philatelic Society.						
None of the items listed above were sold by An Post.						



Irish Philatelic Circle (Annual General Meeting): The Circle held their annual general meeting in the Lansdowne Hotel, Pembroke Road, Dublin 4 on Saturday 18 April. A special cover featuring the Circle's logo with a line through it representing the Spire in O'Connell Street was presented to all members attending the meeting (50 produced). Each cover was cancelled with a CDS postmark used at the Dublin Mails Centre.

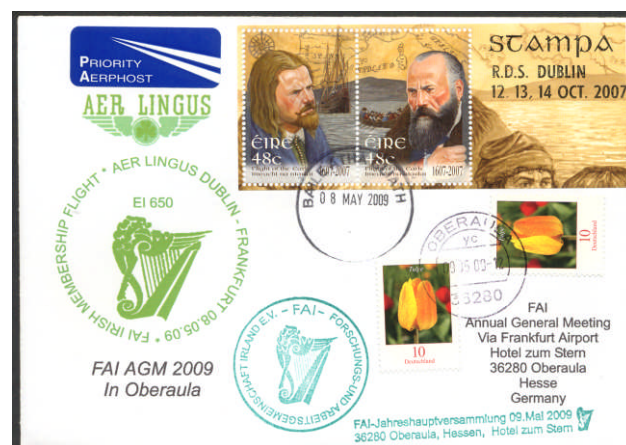


The incoming president, Paddy Smithers, presented members with an additional cover featuring a picture of him outside the main entrance of the Guinness Brewery in James Street, Dublin 8. The President had worked in the brewery before his retirement. The brewery is 250 years old this year and a stamp was issued by An Post on 28 August to mark the event. The cover was cancelled with a James's Street DSU (Delivery Services Unit) datestamp.

Stampania 2009: This annual show was held at the RDS in Dublin on Sunday 19 April. The Irish Times sheetlet was overprinted by the organisers for the show and all the sheetlets were numbered. An Post was in attendance and provided a special postmark which incorporated an illustration of Liberty Hall in Dublin. A special illustrated cover provided by the Dublin Stamp Society also showing the

building was available serviced with the special postmark. The postmark was designed by John Mullen.

Liberty Hall is the headquarters of the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU). It was completed in 1965 and was formerly the tallest building in Ireland at 59m high. Windsor House in Belfast at 80m is currently the tallest, with Liberty Hall ranking 8th. It is more historically significant in its earlier form, as the headquarters of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union early in the 20th century, and as that of the Irish Citizen Army.



Outward cover flown to FAI agm at Oberaula



Return flight cover cancelled at Frankfurt Airport

FAI – Annual General Meeting: A number of Irish-based members travelled to Germany for the meeting held in Oberaula on 9 May 2009. Special covers were flown to/from Frankfurt and each member attending the meeting was given an outward bound cover cancelled in Dublin with a receiving CDS applied at Oberaula post office and special FAI cachets.

Stampa 2009: The various souvenirs as listed were posted to members in advance with certain members receiving them on 29 September. The three-line overprint in black reads "STAMPA/R.D.S. Dublin 4. / 16 -18 OCT. 2009". I am aware of at least one overprinted Planet Earth booklet with a double overprint. The membership fee was reduced by €5 this year to €20. The three special cancels available, and the related stamp issues, were as follows:-

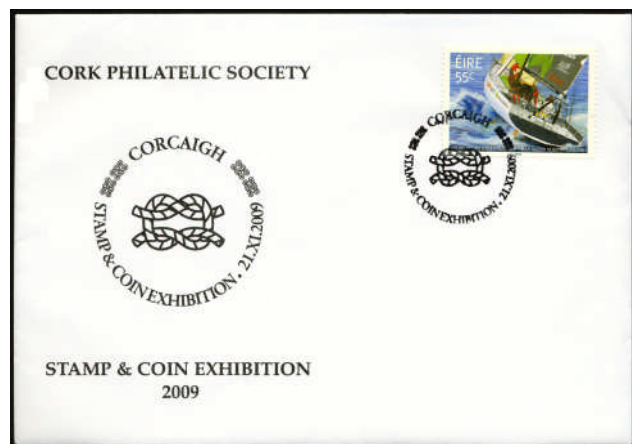
16 October: Dragonfly (Fauna and Flora - Dragonflies issue released on opening day of show);

17 October: Postbox (25 Years of An Post);

18 October: Music Note and Score (Music issue of 2008).

Unlike most Stampa postmarks of recent years, the designs were original and were NOT based on the equivalent first day cancel for the stamps on the same theme. All postmarks were designed by John Mullen. There was no official cover.

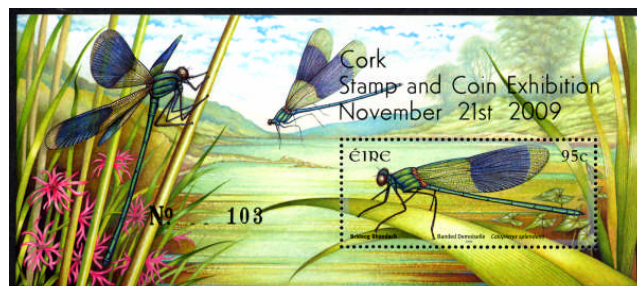
The Awards Dinner was held in the Lansdowne Hotel, Pembroke Road, Dublin 4 on 17 October. The A5 menu was designed and printed by the author and features photographs of the two Dublin postboxes featured on this year's stamp issue marking 25 Years of An Post. A 55c self-adhesive stamp from same set (ex coil roll) was affixed to each menu and cancelled with the 17 October postmark showing a postbox; 109 menus produced (see illustration on back page).



Cork Stamp and Coin Exhibition: The Cork Philatelic Society, in association with Raven Stamps, held their annual show in the Imperial Hotel, Cork. The show took place despite the

occurrence of widespread flooding in Cork city during that weekend.

The Society issued their normal numbered booklet souvenir containing a marginal pair of the 55c Volvo Ocean Race stamps. They also produced a numbered illustrated cover, and a special postmark was available from An Post. Serviced covers were sold by the Society at the show for €1.00.



Raven Stamps produced the Dragonflies miniature sheet overprinted in black. The three line-overprint reads "Cork/Stamp and Coin Exhibition/November 21st 2009". In addition, a small number of the miniature sheets were produced with the same overprint in red and distributed to standholders.

OTHER SPECIAL POSTMARKS



Ireland / Peoples' Republic of China Diplomatic Relations:



A special cancellation in use on 22 June marked the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Ireland and the People's Republic of China.



Transatlantic Flight Anniversaries: Two aerophilatelic postmarks were organised by the Irish Airmail Society. The first cancel, in use on 15 June at Clifden, marked the 90th anniversary of the first non-stop direct transatlantic flight by Alcock and Brown. To mark this milestone in history, the Clifden Chamber of Commerce organised the Connemara Airshow over the weekend of 12-14 June.

The second cancel, dated 30 June, marked the 70th anniversary of the first commercial flight between Newfoundland and Foynes and was used in connection with a week-long festival in Foynes commencing on 6 July.

The Irish Airmail Society organised various special covers/cards which were flown to/from Newfoundland in connection with the foregoing aero anniversaries.



Cover carried on Waterford balloon flight – signed by the pilot

Irish Hot Air Ballooning Championship: A special postmark was produced to commemorate the 39th annual Irish Hot Air Ballooning Championship which took place in Waterford from 20 to 25 September. A number of different covers were carried by Balloon during the event which is the longest running National Hot Air Ballooning Championship in the world.

All four postmarks listed above were designed by fellow member John Mullen.

SLOGANS USED ON INTEGRATED MAIL PROCESSORS (IMPs)

(Illustrations of IMP postmarks are reduced)

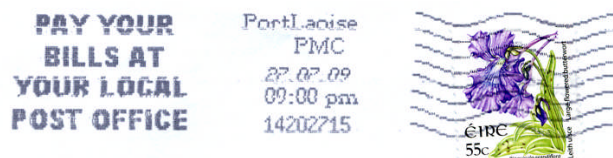
Eleven new slogans were used for the first time in 2009 as compared to eight slogans in 2008. These and other repeated slogans were in use at the Athlone Mails Centre (AMC), Cork Mails Centre (CMC), the Dublin Mails Centre (DMC) and the Portlaoise Mails Centre (PMC). The earliest known dates for a new or repeated slogan are recorded, although slogans were not necessarily introduced at all Mail Centres on the same date. Apart from IMP 96X, IMP 99X and IMP 101A, all slogans were used at all Mail Centres. DMC continues to exclude the time within the postmark whereas PMC always indicates the time. AMC and CMC have never normally included the time. PMC machines continue to give the best impressions.



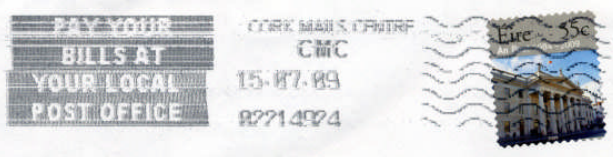
IMP 95 used at AMC on 12 February 2009

IMP 95 – CONTROL WHAT / YOU PAY WITH / BILLPAY AT THE / POST OFFICE

First noted on 13 January 2009.



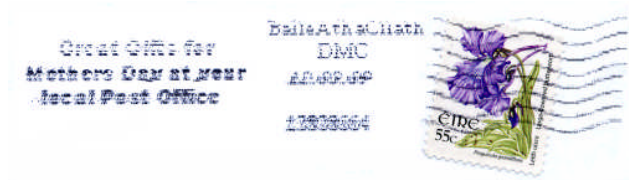
IMP 96 used at PMC1 on 27 February 2009



IMP 96X used at CMC on 15 July 2009

IMP 96/96X - PAY YOUR / BILLS AT / YOUR LOCAL / POST OFFICE

Introduced during February and March 2009 at all mail centres, with the exception of AMC and CMC which continued to use IMP 95 up until late April. The slogan was re-used from mid-July for several months until the introduction of IMP 102. Used with Íochta at AMC on 21 July 2009 and CMC on 24 July 2009. At CMC the slogan was first used in reverse (white on black) on 15 July 2009 (IMP 96X). By 22 July 2009 the slogan had reversed to the more usual version.



IMP 97 used at DMC1 on 12 March 2009 (first day)



IMP 97 used at AMC on 19 March 2009 (last day)

IMP 97 – Great Gifts for / Mothers Day at your / local Post Office

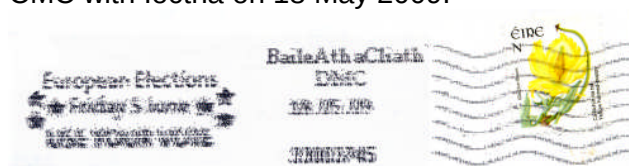
This slogan was used at all mail centres for one week only commencing on 12 March 2009 but also known used at DMC on 29 March 2009. Mothers' Day was on Sunday 22 March 2009. IMP 96 was re-introduced after the 19 March. Also used at CMC with Íochta on 16 March 2009.



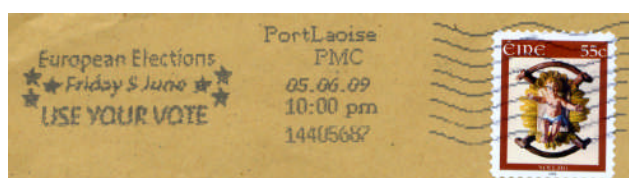
IMP 98 used at DMC1 on 30 April 2009 (first day)

IMP 98 – ENJOY A LUXURY / BREAK FOR €99 / WHEN YOU PAY A / BILL AT YOUR / POST OFFICE

This was first recorded in use at DMC1 on 30 April 2009 replacing IMP 96. Known used at CMC with Íochta on 18 May 2009.



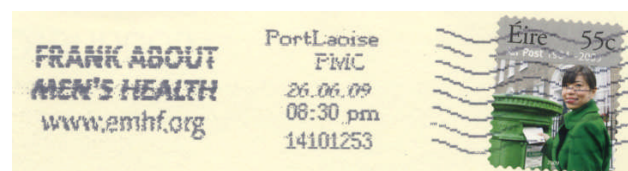
IMP 99 used at DMC3 on 18 May 2009 (first day)



IMP 99 used at PMC on 5 June 2009 (the day of the election)

IMP 99/99X – European Elections / Friday 5 June / USE YOUR VOTE

This was first recorded in use at DMC1, DMC3 and PMC3 on 18 May 2009 but was first used in reverse (IMP 99X) at AMC on 15 May 2009.



IMP 100 used at PMC1 on 26 June 2009

IMP 100 – FRANK ABOUT / MEN'S HEALTH / www.emhf.org

This slogan was introduced at DMC on 12 June 2009 and at all other locations on 10 June 2009.

It was linked with International Men's Health Week from 15 to 21 June. The website address in the slogan refers to The European Mens' Health Forum. The slogan was used at CMC and on some DMC machines up to and including 2 July.



IMP 100 used at PMC1 on 13 July 2009

IMP 101 – FEELYSTONE / www.feelystone.com / Granite Worktops

It was first seen on some machines at DMC on 1 July and at AMC on 2 July. It was in use at CMC by at least 6 July but likely earlier. Also used with Íochta at CMC on 7 July 2009.



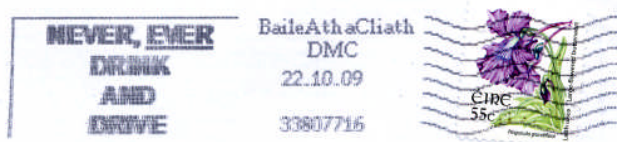
This was the first use of a commercial slogan for some time and was used at all locations. The company's website can be accessed at <http://www.feelystone.com>



IMP101A used at AMC on 7 July 2009

IMP 101A – FEELYSTONE / www.feelystone.com / Granite Worktops

A similar slogan to IMP 100 was used at Athlone Mails Centre. The AMC version had a line to the top and left of the slogan and therefore gave the appearance of being partially boxed.



IMP 102 used at DMC3 on 22 October 2009



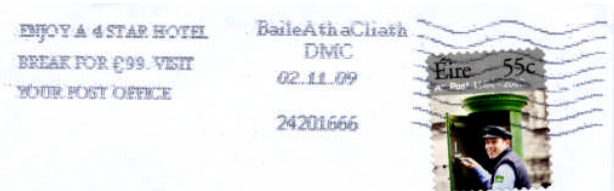
IMP 102 used at CMC on 23 October 2009

IMP 102 - NEVER, EVER / DRINK / AND / DRIVE

First used at DMC 1, DMC 3, PMC and AMC on 12 October 2009. Note the slogan is boxed on two sides and differs from IMP 90 used in 2008. Last used at AMC on 27 October 2009. Subsequently re-used for a period over Christmas 2009 and last noted in use at DMC and PMC on 4 January 2010. Also used at AMC with Íochta on 21 October 2009.



IMP 103 used at PMC2 on 6 November 2009
(Note the tag number is missing)

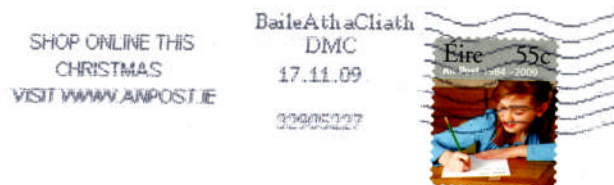


IMP 103 used at DMC2 on 2 November 2009

IMP 103 - ENJOY A 4 STAR HOTEL / BREAK FOR €99. VISIT / YOUR POST OFFICE

First used at DMC on 27 October 2009. Last reported use was on 16 November 2009.

An Post announced in the Feb/Mar 2010 issue of their internal publication *Postnews* that they intend to invest €27 million over the next three years in replacing current mail processing equipment at DMC and PMC. This expenditure will also include extending the PMC and upgrading OCR systems at all four mail centres. It will be interesting to see if this will result in changes in the layout and quality of the IMP postmarks.



IMP 104 used at DMC3 on 17 November 2009 (first day)

IMP 104 - SHOP ONLINE THIS / CHRISTMAS / VISIT WWW.ANPOST.IE

First recorded in use at DMC 3 on 17 November 2009 and last recorded used on 2 December 2009.

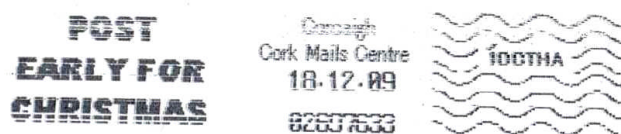
Reuse of Other Slogans



IMP 92 used at DMC3 in error on 24 November 2009

IMP 92 - SCIENCE WEEK / 9 – 16 November 2008 / www.scienceweek.ie

This IMP slogan, originally used from 24 October 2008, was re-used, in error, at DMC 3 on 24 November 2009. Science Week ran from 8 to 15 November in 2009.



IMP 93 with Íochta used at CMC on 18 December 2009

IMP 93 - POST EARLY / FOR / CHRISTMAS

This IMP slogan was re-used in 2009 from 3 December 2009 (DMC and PMC), and at least 7 December 2009 (CMC) and at least 8 December 2009 (AMC). Latest recorded date of usage was 20 December 2009. In addition, this IMP slogan was used at CMC with Íochta – see illustration above.

BAUMANN MACHINES



Baumann Machine with unboxed postmark used at DMC on 4 December 2009

The only use of the Baumann unboxed postmark at DMC was during December 2009.

POSTAL SERVICE CENTRES – see notes on following page

Location	Phosphor Type			Location ref. on stamp	Earliest Date Known (Y = 3 bars yellow) (D = 3 bars dull)	Date ref. on stamp
	Yellow Frame	3 Bars Yellow	3 Bars Dull			
Bureau	x	x	-	0250001	21 July 2008 (note 1)	A203
Dublin Airport	-	x	-	4567123	6 October 2008	A280
GPO Dublin	x	-	-	9801001	21 July 2008	A203
GPO Dublin 1 – Reinstated	-	x	x	9801001	27 August 2009 (Y) By 25 Sept. 2009 (D)	B239
Dublin Airport	-	x	x	9802001	By 30 Oct. 2008 (Y) July 2009 (D)	(note 2)
Blanchardstown Shopping Centre	-	x	x	9803001	4 November 2008 (Y) July 2009 (D)	A309
The Square Shopping Centre, Tallaght, Dublin 24	-	x	x	9804001	17 October 2008 (Y) July 2009 (D)	A291
Merrion Shopping Centre, Dublin 4	-	x	x	9805001	22 October 2008 (Y) By 28 Oct. 2009 (D)	A296
Greystones Shopping Centre	-	x	x	9806001	By December 2008 (Y) July 2009 (D)	(note 3)
Dunnes Stores, Patrick Street, Cork	-	x	?	9807001	3 September 2009 (note 4)	B246
University College Cork	-	?	x	9808001	2 June 2009 (D)	B153
Cornelscourt Shopping Centre, Dublin 18 (Dunnes at checkouts)	-	x	x	9809001	29 July 2009 (D) December 2009 (Y)	B210
Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre (Marine Road), Co. Dublin (Basement floor, beside lifts)	-	x	x	9810001	29 July 2009 (D) By January 2010 (Y)	B210
Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford	-	?	x	9811001	30 July 2009 (D)	B211
Scotch Hall Shopping Centre, Drogheda, Co. Louth (1st Floor, Customer Service Desk)	-	?	x	9812001	4 August 2009 (D)	B216
The Marshes Shopping Centre, Dundalk, Co Louth (beside Pennys)	-	?	x	9813001	4 August 2009 (D)	B216
Temple Bar, Dublin 2 (Centra store)	-	x	x	9814001	14 September 2009 (D) By December 2009 (Y)	B257
Charlestown Shopping Centre, St. Margarets Road, Dublin 11 (Dunnes entrance)	-	x	x	9815001	11 August 2009 (D) By December 2009 (Y)	B223
St James Hospital, Dublin 8 (Inside main entrance)	-	x	x	9816001	13 August 2009 (D) By December 2009 (Y)	B225
eBay European HQ, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15	-	-	x	9807001	6 August 2009 (D) (note 5)	B218
Sligo (Tesco – O'Connell St.)	-	x	x	9818001	19 August 2009 (D) By February 2010 (Y)	B231
Ennis Shopping Centre (Tesco)	-	x	?	9819001	19 August 2009 (Y)	B231
Pavilion Shopping Centre, Swords, Co. Dublin (near Customer Service Desk beyond Easons)	-	x	-	9820001	9 September 2009	B252
St. Stephens Green Shopping Centre, Dublin 2 (Ground Floor)	-	x	x	9821001	26 October 2009 (D) February 2010 (Y)	B299
Jervis Shopping Centre, Dublin 1	-	x	x	9822001	10 December 2009 (D) March 2010 (Y)	B344
Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, Dublin 22	-	x	-	9823001	17 December 2009	B351
McDonagh Junction Shopping Centre, Kilkenny	-	?	?	9827001	21 January 2010	C021

Notes:

- 1 The yellow phosphor printing was first seen on covers sold at Stampa 2008 (10 October). Mint copies available from Bureau counter since November 2008. All still dated A203 = 21 July 2008.
- 2 The change in number occurred sometime between 20 October and 30 October 2008.
- 3 17 November 2008 is the date provided by An Post. However, as reported in my 2008 article, I visited the Greystones Shopping Centre at 1pm on the day and the machine was not on site. I was informed by the local supermarket manager that a further electrical circuit had yet to be installed before the machine could be set up.
- 4 The machine is located within Dunnes Stores and was put in place on 3 September 2009 (B246) approximately, a week before the revamped Dunnes Stores was open to the general public on 10 September 2009 (B253).
- 5 The machine located at the eBay H.Q. is for staff use only and is not accessible to the general public.

The introduction of machines continued apace during 2009, including the re-installation of the GPO Dublin machine. To date, there are a total of 24 machines. As will be noted from the listing, the location numbers for all machines installed during 2009 are in sequence with the known dates of first use as provided by An Post. However, with the installation of the Kilkenny machine in 2010, there are now three numbers missing (924001/925001/9826001).

I have yet to obtain examples of labels from the Kilkenny machine to determine the type of phosphor used at this location. As recently announced by the philatelic bureau in *The Collector*, An Post are about to introduce the use of the same postage labels at a number of post office counters during 2010. Perhaps they will have been assigned the missing location numbers referred to above.

For a period from early March 2009, all machines dispensed all values/combinations as single labels. It was no longer possible to obtain strips of 2, 3, 4 or 5 labels as heretofore. All machines had reverted to dispensing strips of labels by at least mid July, by which time it was also possible to make payment by Laser debit card or by Visa credit card with a minimum

transaction of €5. In the case of the Tallaght machine, there is also a minimum transaction amount of €2 for cash transactions.

Also since mid-July, a new type of phosphor has been introduced. The revised dull white phosphor is much weaker and the centre and right hand bars are narrower when viewed under a UV lamp. The original bright yellow bars measured 2mm/2.5mm/2.9mm (left/centre/right) respectively whereas the new dull phosphor bars all measure 2mm. However, by the end of the year, a number of machines had reverted to dispensing labels with the original yellow phosphor bars. A number of machines not revisited may now dispense labels with yellow phosphor as indicated by a question mark in the listing (?). The machines located at Patrick St., Cork and at Ennis may originally have dispensed dull phosphor labels. I'm not aware of why An Post uses two types of phosphor or who prints the labels.

The original postboxes beside the machines at Tallaght (as reported last year), Dublin Airport and Merrion have been replaced with larger boxes which enable the posting of large packets and small parcels. All new locations have the larger boxes. The eBay and GPO locations have no special box.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

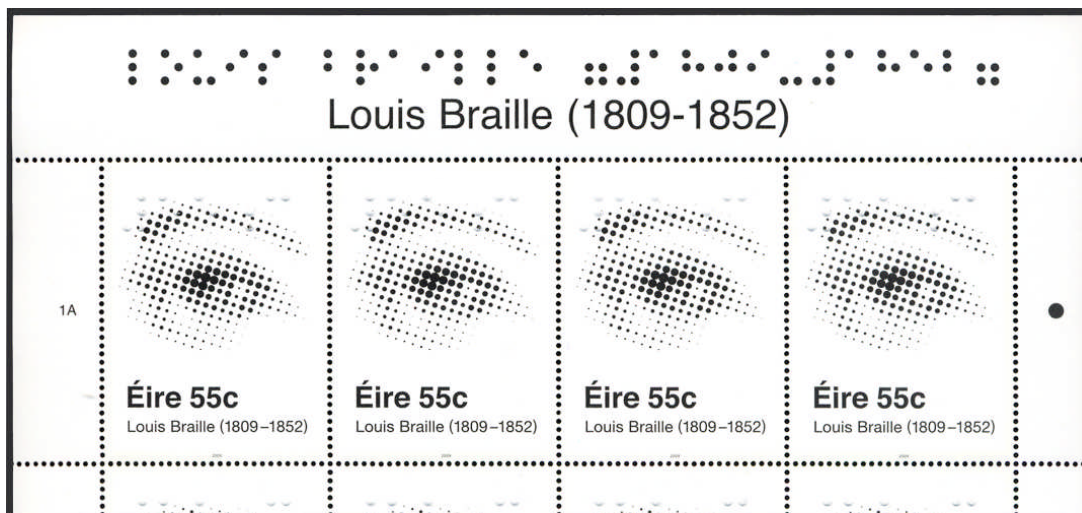
16 October: The Irish Postbox – Silent Servant and Symbol of the State: The well illustrated book tells the story of how the cast-iron postbox became such a vital part of Post Office infrastructure. The book is an excellent introduction to the subject and is the fourth book written by Stephen Ferguson, who is Assistant Secretary of An Post. The book covers a topic which is close to my heart being a member of the Letter Box Study Group. The book retails at €9.95.

December – An Post Christmas Card: I have not seen the 2009 An Post Christmas card.

December – Santa Christmas Envelope: The envelope design first introduced in 2008 was repeated this year.

December – An Post 2010 Calendar:

An Post produced an unusual calendar which incorporated a tear off postcard for each two month period. The page for January and February was the most interesting in that it incorporates a reproduction of all ten stamps from the An Post – 25 years issue. The cards are NOT postpaid.



Louise Braille issue showing imitation Braille writing in top margin.



ITGWU issue maximum card showing Jim Larkin's statue in O'Connell Street.,

Stampa awards dinner menu with matching postbox postmark of 17 October.



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