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1927 COMPOSITE SETTING - see article on page 51 by Barry Cousins

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EDITORIAL

I began my last Editorial expressing disbelief that another 'collecting season' was behind us. I begin this by welcoming you to a 'New Season'. We will all have our own individual targets to take our collections forward over the next nine months or so and I wish you all success with your hobby.

In this issue we start with a significant article on the High Value Overprints from our Vice-President, Barry Cousins; more follows on the 'Post and Go' machines at Belfast; John Lennon takes the 'Beyond the Catalogues' series forward, Peter Wood begins looking at Cinderellas and we have a good variety of other contributions. This means that I have not, as suggested in our last issue, done anything more about Skeleton postmarks. In fact, although I asked for details of your Co Wicklow skeletons in our last issue, I have at the time of writing only had response from one member, hence any listing that might have been included would not have been up to the standard we should expect in Irish Philately. I will put down your lack of response to you all taking an extended summer break!! If we are to go forward on producing a comprehensive listing of Ireland's Skeleton Postmarks, it will need input from all who collect this type of postmark. I suspect that most of you have a few put away. I must say that by choosing Wicklow, I had assumed that I had chosen a relatively popular county but perhaps that is not the case. Please take a look at what you have and let me have details. As I have said before, Irish Philately is only as good as the input each of us can put in.

As I write this, I am just returned from a visit to Ireland and spent some time in the rural west. Ireland has, of course, experienced a traumatic period in the last two years and it is clear that the green light at the end of the tunnel is still a goodly distance away. The visit made me realise just how

much the Post Office has changed. The small rural offices, so dear to many our hearts are all but extinct, volumes are reducing by the day, particularly of stamped mail, deliveries may well be cut and An Post could find itself being regarded more of a courier service than a traditional universal postal service. An Post is not alone. At my own office, mail volumes have likewise reduced and I note that an ever higher proportion of our outgoing items are substantially larger than a collectible size, although to the annoyance of some of my colleagues, I do insist we continue to use stamps. It does make me wonder what the future holds for those that collect modern material. Stamped items will undoubtedly be much scarcer and to get decent sized collectable covers (ie: the traditional neat 6"x4" size) will require a combination of luck and much searching. Fine used stamps, of which there was an ample supply until the mid 1990s, are now all but impossible to find unless one is prepared to take 'cancelled to order' which to my mind rather loses the point; all very sad and a huge challenge to us.

I would welcome the thoughts of others. One side of me asks 'Are we wasting our time?' whilst the other says 'Thank goodness for what we have'. I suspect at the end of the day supply will balance demand and good clean material will always command a premium. Perhaps some interesting 'Letters to the Editor' on this theme may arrive in my mail box !

I conclude by expressing the hope that I will see as many of you as possible at Stampa in Dublin in October and as ever I will welcome your input – please keep those articles/ titbits etc rolling in to me for inclusion in our future issues. Enjoy the 'season'.

Stan – 31 August 2010

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Introduction

This topic was first covered by W.G. Meredith in his journal article, published in September 1967. The aim of his article being to provide an identification guide, but requesting 'comments and further hints from readers'.

Later articles by Cyril Dulin and Patrick Williams in September 1978 and September 1980, produced further information. However these articles mainly dealt with the dates associated with each issue and the number of sheets overprinted. The findings of Cyril and Patrick being supported by what is known as the 'Fay Letter', of the 9th August 1938.

So here I am over 40 years later re-opening the subject. The difference this time round being that I will introduce a new dimension to the identification process. This being to attempt a correlation between the Bradbury & Wilkinson printer's plates in use, in conjunction with the overprinted stamps. This article will focus on four 'Saorstat' issues using Bradbury plates, omitting reference to the later overprint issue (14T), which was applied to the re-engraved plates by Waterlow & Sons. The reason for this being that the identification process with this issue presents no problems to philatelists.

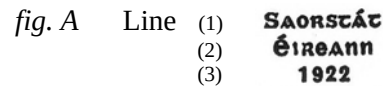
'Saorstat' High Value Issues

For reference purposes, these four issues are categorised as 9T, 11T, 12T and 13T and the overprinted stamps are attributed 'T' numbers, which are commonly used by philatelists.

- 1) Issue 9T
Stamps T59 2/6, T60 5/-, T61 10/-.
Overprint by Alexander Thom & Co. Ltd.
Release date December 1922.
- 2) Issue 11T
Stamps T66 2/6, T67 5/-, T68 10/-.
Overprint initially by the Government Printing House, Dublin Castle and from February 1926 by Somerset House.
Release date August 1925.
- 3) Issue 12T
Stamps T69 2/6, T70 5/-, T71 10/-.
This issue in the strictest terms is an extension of Issue 11T, details of which will follow, under section 3a.
Overprint by Somerset House.
Release dates May & June 1927.
- 4) Issue 13T
Stamps T72 2/6, T73 5/-, T74 10/-.
Overprint by Somerset House.
Release dates 2/6 value December 1927, 5/- & 10/- February 1928.

Overprint Characteristics

- 1a) Issue 9T (Thom) - T59, T60, T61
Overprint with shiny blue-black and dull black ink.
Overprint dimensions, from fig. A:
Line (1) 15mm. (2) 12.5mm. (3) 6mm.
Overall height 8.5mm.



The Thom overprint setting for this issue used two identical 4x5 stereos (each with 20 clichés), which were placed one above the other, enabling a full sheet of 40 stamps to be overprinted in one press operation.

- 2a) Issue 11T (Narrow Date) - T66, T67, T68
Overprint with glossy black ink.
Overprint dimensions, from fig A:
Line (1) 15mm. (2) 12.5mm. (3) 5mm.
Overall height 8.5mm.

The Government Printing House used an overprint setting made up of 20 clichés, which were arranged in five rows of four, each row being separated from the next by the space of one stamp row. To overprint a full sheet of 40 stamps it was therefore necessary to undertake two press passes. The first pass overprinting stamps in rows 2,4,6,8,10 and the second pass stamps in rows 1,3,5,7,9. When Somerset House assumed responsibility for the overprinting the same overprint setting arrangement, as used in Ireland was adopted.

- 3a) Issue 12T (Composite Date) - T69, T70, T71
Overprint with black ink.
Overprint dimensions, from fig. A:
Line (1) 15mm. (2) 12.5mm. (3) 5mm. or 6mm.
Overall height 8.5mm.

This series is an extension to the earlier overprint issue (11T) by Somerset House, however for philatelic purposes it will be taken as an issue. It arose as a result of wear to the clichés in the original all narrow date setting. Replacement clichés were supplied by Dublin Castle, to substitute the worn clichés. These replacements were however with a wide date configuration, as found with issue 9T.

The repaired overprint setting was first used to overprint the 5/- and 10/- values. With this setting six narrow date clichés were replaced with the wide date (6mm) clichés, which gave rise to 12 wide date variants in a full sheet. Following this, further replacements were made to the 20 cliché setting, which was finally used for the 2/6 value. This arrangement produced a total of 26 wide date overprints in a pane of 40 stamps.

As a result the repaired settings gave rise to composite pairs made up of both wide and narrow date combinations. In this issue a few sheets have been recorded (2/6 four sheets, 5/- one sheet) which do not demonstrate a repetition of the narrow and wide date overprints on alternate rows, these are termed 'abnormals'. With so few sheets having been recorded, they are rare. Whilst with the so called normal composite sheets, it is evident that the two pass press process continued to be used, this being evidenced with the repetition of either wide or narrow date variants on alternate rows, this factor is not replicated with the abnormal sheets.

One prognosis is that Somerset House may have undertaken trials, which produced these abnormal sheets using a full 40 cliché matrix, enabling a full sheet to be overprinted with one press operation. This process being formally adopted with the release of their next issue.

4a) Issue 13T (Wide Date) - T72, T73, T74.

Overprint with black ink.

Overprint dimensions, from fig. A:

Line (1) 15mm. (2) 12.5mm. (3) 6mm.

Overall height 8.5mm.

With this issue Somerset House introduced the process of overprinting a full sheet, with a 4x10 setting made up of 40 clichés. As a result of this process it appears that more pressure was applied, which results in the overprint being more intense and furthermore to a greater extent than with previous issues, showing in relief on the reverse of the stamps.

Another feature with this overprint is the frequent occurrence of a small ink dot between the 'S' and 'a' of 'Saorstát' on all values, see fig. B.



fig. B



T73

Bradbury Plates in use with each Issue

The listings highlighted in fig. C identify the recorded printer's plates in use with the four issues. In a few cases there is a possibility that some plates recorded with respective issues, may have been in use with other issues. However as their use has not been validated, they have not been listed, in this article.

The printer's plate numbers are as allocated by Bradbury Wilkinson.

The printing process adopted was to print a sheet made up of two panes, each pane having 40 stamps, in a 4x10 arrangement. The printer's sheets were then cut into a single pane format for Post Office use. This gives rise to what are termed left and right panes, which are identified in fig. C, with the suffix letters 'L' or 'R'.

VALUE	2/6		5/-		10/-	
ISSUE	REF.	B&W PLATE	REF.	B&W PLATE	REF.	B&W PLATE
9T	T59	-1R 2/4L&R 3/5L&R	T60	1/2L&R 3/4L	T61	1/3L&R 2/7L&R
11T	T66	-1L&R 2/4L&R 5/7L 6/8L	T67	3/4L&R 4/5L&R	T68	1/3R 2/7L&R
12T	T69	6/8L&R	T70	4/5L&R	T71	3/8L&R
13T	T72	6/8L&R 7/9L&R 9/11L&R	T73	4/5L&R 5/6L&R	T74	3/8L&R 4/9L&R

fig. C

Plate and Stamp Characteristics

The characteristics described in this section, are as applicable to single stamps. If blocks had been covered in this article and in particular marginal blocks then the scope of the identification process could have been broadened to include marginal guide and trim line dimensions and gutter measurements, between adjacent stamps. However the main objective of this article is to provide readers with a guide to identifying the four issues, with only single stamps to hand.

This said, in connection with the 'Composite' issue, reference is made to stamps in pairs, as the fundamental feature of this issue, which used repaired overprint settings from issue 11T, is to have examples containing both wide and narrow date variants.

2/6d Value

Plate -1 L & R - Series (I)

- Worn/weakened panel above the 'AL' of 'HALF', see fig. D.
- Perfect 'R' in 'CROWN', see fig. D.
- Stamp height - Average 22.6mm. see fig. F. Range 22.4 to 22.75mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

Plate 2/4 L & R - Series (I)

- Worn/weakened panel above the 'AL' of 'HALF', see fig. D.
- Perfect 'R' in 'CROWN', see fig. D.
- Stamp height - Average 22.6mm. see fig. F. Range 22.4 to 22.75mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

fig.D



Worn/weakened panel over 'AL'
& Perfect 'R' in 'CROWN'

fig.E



Broken 'R' in 'CROWN'

fig.F



T66

Stamp height -
overall width
between outer
frame lines.

Example shown above clearly demonstrates that Issue 11T was overprinted using two press passes, as the overprint impression on the upper stamp is more intense than the lower stamp.

Plate 3/5 L & R - Series (I)

- Worn/weakened panel above the 'AL' of 'HALF', see fig. D.
- Perfect 'R' in 'CROWN', see fig. D.
- Stamp height - Average 22.75mm. see fig. F. Range 22.6 to 22.9mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

Plate 5/7 L - Series (II)

- Perfect 'R' in 'CROWN', see fig. D.
- Frequent occurrence of a break in the 'O' of 'CROWN' and/or the 'P' in 'POSTAGE'.
- Stamp height - Average 23.1mm. see fig. F. Range 23.0 to 23.2mm.
- Perforating from top fed sheets (PL)

Plate 6/8 L & R - Series (II)

- Broken 'R' in 'CROWN', see fig. E.
- Frequent occurrence of a break in the 'O' of 'CROWN' and/or the 'P' in 'POSTAGE'.
- Stamp height - Average 23.1mm. see fig. F. Range 23.0 to 23.2mm.
- Perforating from top fed sheets (PL)

Plate 7/9 L & R - Series (II)

- Broken 'R' in 'CROWN', see fig. E.
- Frequent occurrence of a break in the 'O' of 'CROWN' and/or the 'P' in 'POSTAGE'.
- Stamp height - Average 23.1mm. see fig. F. Range 23.0 to 23.2mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

Plate 9/11 L & R - Series (III)

- Perfect 'R' in 'CROWN', see fig. D.
- Stamp height - Average 23.1mm. see fig. F. Range 23.0 to 23.2mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

5/- Value

Plate 1/2 L & R - Series (I)

- Complete Visor in 'Britannia's' helmet. see fig. G.
- Stamp height - Average 22.6mm. see fig. F. Range 22.4 to 22.75mm. or as for Plate 3/4 .
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

Plate 3/4 L & R - Series (I)

- Broken Visor in 'Britannia's' helmet. see fig. H.
- Stamp height - Average 22.75mm. see fig. F. Range 22.6 to 22.9mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

Plate 4/5 L - Series (II)

- Broken Visor in 'Britannia's' helmet. see fig. H.
- Stamp height - Average 23.1mm. see fig. F. Range 23.0 to 23.2mm.
- Perforating from bottom (PU) & top (PL) fed sheets

Plate 4/5 R - Series (II)

- Broken Visor in 'Britannia's' helmet. see fig. H.
- Stamp height - Average 22.9mm. see fig. F. Range 22.7 to 23.0mm.
- Perforating from bottom (PU) & top (PL) fed sheets

Plate 5/6 L & R - Series (III)

- Broken Visor in 'Britannia's' helmet. see fig. H.
- Stamp height - Average 22.8mm. see fig. F. Range 22.7 to 22.9mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

Complete Visor



fig. G

Broken Visor



fig. H

10/- Value

Plate 1/3 L & R - Series (I)

- Broken 'S' in 'POSTAGE', see fig. I.
- Stamp height - Average 22.6mm.
see fig. F. Range 22.4 to 22.75mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

Plate 2/7 L & R - Series (I)

- Perfect 'S' in 'POSTAGE', see fig. J.
- Stamp height - Average 22.75mm.
see fig. F. Range 22.6 to 22.9mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

Plate 3/8 L - Series (II)

- Broken 'S' in 'POSTAGE', see fig. I.
- Stamp height - Average 23.1mm.
see fig. F. Range 23.0 to 23.2mm.
- Perforating from bottom (PU) & top (PL) fed sheets

Plate 3/8 R - Series (II)

- Broken 'S' in 'POSTAGE', see fig. I.
- Stamp height - Average 22.9mm.
see fig. F. Range 22.7 to 23.0mm.
- Perforating from bottom (PU) & top (PL) fed sheets

Plate 4/9 L & R - Series (III)

- Perfect 'S' in 'POSTAGE', see fig. J.
- Stamp height - Average 22.8mm.
see fig. F. Range 22.7 to 22.9mm.
- Perforating from bottom fed sheets (PU)

fig. I



Broken 'S' in 'POSTAGE'

fig. J



Perfect 'S' in 'POSTAGE'

Sheet Perforations

Printed sheets were either bottom or top fed into the perforator. With bottom fed sheets the perforations extend into the upper margins (PU) and for top fed sheets into the lower margins (PL).

For single stamps from Series (I) plates, if bottom fed, the stamp displays a wider gap in the upper left and right perforations. Stamps from Series (II) and (III) plates again if bottom fed, display a more even perforation spacing.

Single stamps from Series (II) plates, if top fed, the stamp displays a wider gap in the lower left and right perforations. Refer to fig K, for details.



fig.K

Consistent Plate Variants

It will be noted that with the basic stamp, consistent plate variants arise, which to recap for each value, is as follows :-

2/6 Perfect or Broken 'R' in 'CROWN'.

5/- Complete or Perfect Visor.

10/- Broken or Perfect 'S' in 'POSTAGE'.

It is the author's view that when referencing the overprinted high value stamps, philatelists should acknowledge these variants. This can be simply achieved by the addition of suffix letters, to the basic stamp reference, as follows :-

PR - Perfect 'R' or BR - Broken 'R'

CV - Complete Visor or BV - Broken Visor

BS - Broken 'S' or PS - Perfect 'S'

With the introduction of the suffix letters, taking overprinted stamp T66, as an example. If the stamp has a Perfect 'R', it arises from plates -/1, 2/4 or 5/7 and its reference will be T66PR. For the Broken 'R' variant arising from plate 6/8, the stamp reference will be T66BR.

Use of Overprint, Plate and Stamp Characteristics to Identify Stamps.

The example shown on the front cover of this journal is a block from a 'Composite' overprint setting by Somerset House. In philatelic terms the 'Composite' setting made up of both wide and narrow date clichés is referred to as Issue 12T and the overprinted 10/- value stamp is commonly known as T71.

The cover example displays narrow date overprints on stamps R1/1, R1/2, R2/1 & R2/2. Stamps from R3/1 & R3/2 display the wide date overprint. This is the typical arrangement for the normal composite setting, encountered with Issue 12T. This block also shows the variety, known as a 'needle eye accent over the é of éireann, on stamps R1/1 & R2/1.

Taking account of the stamp characteristics, the stamps display a broken 'S' and as highlighted above the stamp reference becomes T71BS and from the table, see fig. C., the only recorded printer's plate in use with this issue was 3/8.

Plate 3/8 Series (II) sheets were either top or bottom fed. The block displays no perforations in the top margin, as such it is a top fed (PL) example. By measuring the frame height, see fig.F, with a dimension of 23.0mm., it also possible to conclude that this block emanates from a left pane 'L'.

This process is relatively easy, however, I now take in isolation, from this block single stamps, one being from a wide date setting and one from a narrow date setting. Again using the characteristic parameters, I will attempt to identify the overprinted stamps, which in this case is a more involved task.



Wide date



Narrow date

Determining identity of the 'wide date' overprinted stamp, shown in fig. L.

- The date on line (3), measures 6mm. This being the case the stamp could be attributed to Issues 9T, 12T or 13T.
- The printer's plate, displays a Broken 'S' in 'POSTAGE', see fig I. As such this stamp could arise from plates 1/3 or 3/8. Plate 1/3 being in use with Issue 9T & 11T and 3/8 with Issue 12T & 13T.
- Lower perforation wider, therefore a top fed sheet (PL).
- Stamp height measurement is 23mm.
- Points c & d eliminate plate 1/3 and with a frame measurement of 23mm, its occurrence from a left 'L' pane is also determined.
- We are now left with two possibilities as to the identification, of this stamp. This being that it derives from either Issue 12T or 13T.
- The stamp displays no dot between the 'S' and 'a' of 'Saorstát' and secondly the overprint impression does not show in relief, when the stamp is viewed from the back.

Taking account of the final point g), this single stamp with a wide date is identified as T71BS, from sheets with the 'Composite' overprint setting (Issue 12T).

Determining identity of the 'narrow date' overprinted stamp, shown in fig. M.

- The date on line (3) measures 5mm. This being the case the stamp could be attributed to either Issue 11T or 12T.
- The printer's plate displays a Broken 'S' in 'POSTAGE', see fig. I. As such the stamp could arise from plates 1/3 or 3/8. Issue possibilities remain as 11T or 12T.
- Lower perforation wider, therefore a top fed sheet (PL).
- Stamp height measurement is 23mm.
- Points c & d eliminate plate 1/3 and with a frame measurement of 23mm, its occurrence from a left 'L' pane is also determined.

Taking account of point e) this single stamp with a narrow date is identified as T71BS, from sheets with the 'Composite' overprint setting (Issue 12T).

This elimination process can be successfully applied to the majority of overprinted stamps arising from the four issues. The possibly exception being the identification single stamps for the 2/6 and 5/- values, with a narrow date setting, from either Issue 11T and 12T. As highlighted earlier in this article Issue 12T is basically an extension to Issue 11T, but with the overprint settings having damaged narrow date clichés, being replaced with wide date clichés. In these particular cases where the identification is subject to doubt, then wherever possible in the case of Issue 12T, composite blocks should be collected. With Issue 11T, in the case of 2/6 value examples with a Perfect 'R' in 'Crown' from plates -/1, 2/4 or 5/7 and for the 5/- value from plate 3/4, should be collected.

As a final consideration, if the stamps are still unidentifiable, then it is suggested that they be attributed to Issue 11T. The reason being that the estimated number of sheets overprinted with this issue amounted to circa 14,000, whereas as for Issue 12T the number reduces to circa 3,000. For the three values we are therefore talking of 560,000 versus 62,000 stamps with a narrow setting being overprinted, for these the two issues. This latter figure, whilst being an estimate is adjusted to exclude stamps, with a wide date overprint.

The author wishes to acknowledge the source of the measurement data, which was derived from Bryan Kearsley's publication titled - 'Discovering Seahorses'. This publication is considered as an important data base and is particularly relevant if more information is required, relating to the printing of the high value stamps. Finally if further information is required in connection with the Overprinted Issues, readers are welcome to refer to the author's Compendium, titled 'Overprinted Stamps of Ireland 1922 -1935', 2011 edition.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I was very interested in Brian Warren's article in the June issue on Post & Go Machines in Belfast. Below is some information which may be helpful concerning the start-up of the machines in October 2008.

Tuesday 14th October 2008:

I called at Belfast Bridge St about 12.30pm. The two machines were being worked on by three engineers who were clearly wrestling with some problem - all three making mobile phone calls at the one time. I asked them whether the machines would be working by 15 October. There was a definite 'No!' in reply. So I did not wait around.

Friday 17th October 2008:

Belfast is finally up and running; some observations: Machine 1 was live from about mid-day Thursday 16th October. Machine 2 was live from opening time today. I used Machine 2, that particular machine's 'first day'. Neither machine was able to accept Credit Cards at the time I used them - there was a printed notice on each machine saying so. (I had intended to use cash anyway, and there was no problem using notes and coins - change was given. I used Bank of England notes, to be safe, so I don't know if the machines take N. Ireland or Scottish notes.) '1L' and '1LL' Post on the Spot option produced Faststamp (Take Away) labels. 'A' Post on the Spot also produced Faststamp labels. A member of staff explained that this happens up to the end of the first weight step (100g and 20 g), but can be got round by putting something heavier on the scales.

There was no option for 2L or 2LL Faststamp. I attempted to process all the Post on the Spot items first. However, it would not allow more than 20 labels in one transaction. So there were 17 Post on the Spots in the first transaction (some of which came out as Faststamp). The remaining Post on the Spot and all the proper Faststamps were processed in one transaction (and would have amounted to more than 20!). I don't really understand that as the actual Post on the Spots are on individual labels while the Faststamps are on strips of 5. The Post on the Spot labels (*figs. 3 and 4 – next page*) have a Post By date of 15 October 2010. This confused me at first. However the date on the receipt is 14 October 2010, so the clock was obviously wrong. (*Ed: The machine calendar/clock must have read 14 October as you are allowed one day to use the stamp and the year designation was out by two years!*). It is not known for how long this continued before the error was corrected.

There was a scheduled software update while I was there. This took both machines off-line for about 10 minutes.

The update did NOT update the clock. The (very helpful) member of staff I spoke to said the machines were getting good use. Four other people used the other machine while I processed our material - a period of about 20 minutes. I also attach a scan of the 1st Class Faststamp. (*fig. 2 – next page*) obtained on 17 October 2008. The cancellation date is unclear but was 18 OCT 2008.

Regarding the previous experiment mentioned by Brian at the end of his article:

Monday 12 February 2007

I called at Bridge Street but Post & Go was not available. I spoke to a member of staff who was surprised I knew about Post & Go. He pointed to a large object on the floor, covered in bubble-wrap, and said that they were installing it later today (Monday), would trial it on Tuesday and go live on Wednesday.

Friday 16 February 2007

I posted some items at the Post Office in Bridge St., Belfast at 4.13pm using the Post & Go machine. The machine was in a prominent position near the entrance. A member of staff offered assistance. The procedure was fairly straightforward for anyone comfortable with a touch-screen. One thing I noticed was that you could not select a multiple. All items, even if identical had to be weighed and input separately, although at the end there was only one 'transaction'. In fact the items were not weighed separately. The member of staff kept the one envelope on the scales all the way through as it was obvious all were going to be at first weight step.

Two things occurred to me at that time.

1. This will only really be helpful to someone who is not sure what weight step the item to be posted is in. (and it has to be UK).
2. Someone with a lot of the same thing to post (e.g. a lot of identical Christmas cards) would find this a chore. Much quicker and easier to use stamps.

I attach a scan (*fig 1- next page*) of the receipt which can be compared with the one for the present set-up as shown by Brian but do not have any of the items I posted that day so am unable to enclose scans.

I hope this information is of some interest.

Jim Stothers
Greenisland Co Antrim

Illustrations are on the following page

Illustrations sent by Jim Stothers – see letter on previous page.

Post Office Ltd.
Your Receipt

Belfast Post Office
12/16 Bridge Street
Belfast City
Belfast
County Antrim

BT1 1LT

Date and Time: 16/02/2007 16:13
 Session Prefix: PAG-000320
 Terminal ID: 1
 Dest: UK
 Quantity: 4

Quantity: 1
 Weight: 0.004 kg
 Size: Letter
 1st Class: £0.32

Quantity: 1
 Weight: 0.004 kg
 Size: Letter
 1st Class: £0.32

Quantity: 1
 Weight: 0.004 kg
 Size: Letter
 1st Class: £0.32

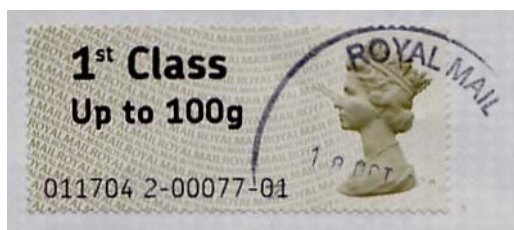
Quantity: 1
 Weight: 0.005 kg
 Size: Letter
 1st Class: £0.32

Total Cost of Service(s): £1.28
 Amount Paid: £1.28
 Change given: £0.00

For information regarding
 Royal Mail
 products and services
 contact us on
 08457 740 740
 or visit our web site at
 www.postoffice.co.uk

This is not a VAT receipt
 Thank You

fig. 1 above: fig. 2 below

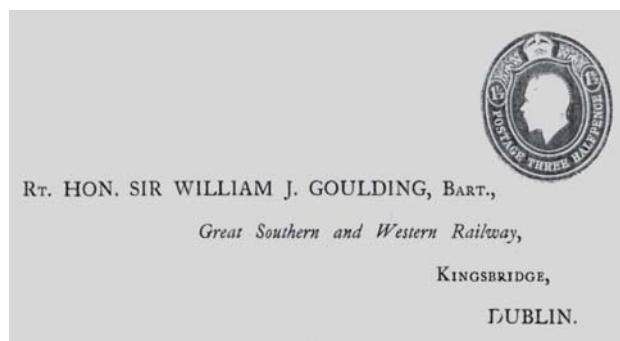


figs. 3 and 4

Editor's note: On this subject, see more information from Brian Warren on pages 58 and 59. Brian has also advised me that he will be updating the information on the equivalent machines in the Republic of Ireland in a separate article to be published in our December 2010 issue

A NEW STAMPED TO ORDER ITEM

George King



Collectors of Irish Stamped to Order Stationery will be familiar with the envelopes of the Great Northern Railway and also the Great Southern Railway, but what about the GSWR? I have recently located a GB STO envelope (Huggins and Baker ES53) 1½d red brown envelope which must date after 1918 as the stamp was registered on 30 May 1918.

George asks if this is a pre-transition envelope or was it a later item for use from GB only?. I think I can answer that one. The GSWR was merged into the GSR in 1925 and I am satisfied this dates the envelope to the initial (and only for the Southern counties) 1½d letter rate period, namely 3 June 1918 to 31 May 1920 – Ed.

POST & GO MACHINES AT BELFAST - UPDATE - Brian Warren

Since publication of my June article, I have received some further information from Jim Stothers (see Letter to the Editor on pages 56 & 57) and Vinay Patel, a collector of these stamps based in England, whom I met at London 2010. The notes below should be read in conjunction with Jim's letter.



fig. 1 - 1st class Faststamp from machine 2 with incorrect receipt date of 14 October 2010.

As Jim explains, the first Belfast machine did not come into operation until Thursday 16 February 2008 with machine 2 the following day Friday 17 February 2008. However, all receipts bear the incorrect date of 14 October 2010 (figs. 1 & 2) and the Post & Go labels the incorrect post by date of 15 October 2010 (fig. 2).

The earliest post by date for machine 2 should have been 18 February 2008 (i.e. installation date of 17 February 2008 plus 1 day). All illustrations provided by Jim and Vinay are from machine 2 but as far as I'm aware the same date error occurred with machine 1. It is not known when the software was altered to correct both the day and year date errors. Note the Faststamps do not include a date.



fig. 2 - Large 1st class letter Post & Go label with incorrect post by date of 15 October 2010 and matching receipt with incorrect date of 14 October 2010.

The printer of the both the Faststamp and Post & Go rolls is Walsall Security Printers. There are 1,000 stamps in the Faststamp rolls and 1,500 labels (with preprinted security print at left) on the Post & Go rolls. The absence of the Post Office logo on top of receipts, as illustrated in my previous article, appears to be a fairly regular software error.

In Britain, stocks of old type 1 rolls with rounded corners have been used with the new type 3 barcode printing. This variety is not known from Belfast.

By the time members read this article, a new type of label should be in operation. Royal Mail are introducing a new set of pictorial Post & Go labels featuring Garden Birds on 17 September 2010 at 30 of Post & Go locations including Belfast. Further details can be found on the website – <http://postagelabelsuk.com/>

Initial Post & Go Machine

As outlined by Jim, the first type of machine manufactured by Fujitsu was installed during the week commencing Monday 12 February 2007. This first machine was due to be trialled on Tuesday 13 February 2007 and to go live on Wednesday 14 February 2007 but as labels with a date of 13 February 2007 exist (*fig 3*), I presume the machine did go live on that day unless this machine also had an initial date error. During a subsequent visit by Jim, machine 2 was installed on 27 February 2007.



fig. 3 – 2nd and 1st class labels obtained on 13 February and 16 February 2007.

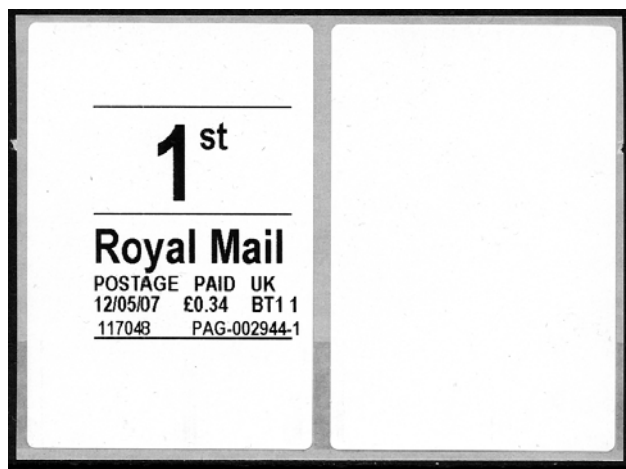


fig. 4 – 1st class label obtained on 12 May 2007 with blank attached.

The reference number on the February labels show the presumed machine location reference of 130212 whereas later labels printed on 12 May 2007 (*fig 4*) bear the number of 11708. You will also note that this later label has a blank label attached. It is not known if this was a processing error at the time but it did not occur when Jim was obtaining his labels on 16 February 2007. The overall design is similar in layout to the Horizon machine labels printed at post office counters. The large receipt (*fig. 5*) does not include the Post Office reference but the session/transaction reference matches the number printed on the 1st class stamp shown above.

Post Office Ltd.
Your Receipt

Belfast Post Office
12/16 Bridge Street
Belfast City
Belfast
County Antrim

BT1 1LT

Date and Time:	12/05/2007 12:55
Session Prefix:	PAG-002944
Terminal ID:	1
Dest:	UK
Quantity:	1
Quantity:	1
Weight:	0.019 kg
Size:	Letter
1st Class:	£0.34
Total Cost of Service(s):	£0.34
Amount Paid:	£0.40
Change given:	£0.06

For information regarding
Royal Mail
products and services
contact us on
08457 740 740
or visit our web site at
www.postoffice.co.uk

This is not a VAT receipt
Thank You

fig. 5 – Receipt for 1st class label transaction.

You will also note that the receipt (*fig. 5*) records the total amount paid and the change given.

Post Office® Post & Go:

- Send 1st & 2nd class letters, large letters and packets to anywhere in the UK or Northern Ireland
- Quick and simple to use
- Easy payment methods
- Deposit items in a secure drop box

*fig. 6 – Extract from Royal Mail leaflet
Note separate reference to Northern Ireland.*

All transactions required you to place an envelope or packet on the machine's weighing scales and it was limited to letters, large letters and packets to UK addresses (*fig. 6*). It is not known for sure when these machines were taken out of service but they were probably in use until replaced by the Wincor Nixdorf machines in October 2008.

IRELAND'S NEW POSTAL MUSEUM – John Lennon

Like many others, I did not think I would live to see the day when we had a Post Museum in Ireland. Most of them were right but, luckily for me, I was wrong. Congratulations to An Post, and especially Stephen Ferguson (Curator), for their achievement. I do hope it will be much visited and we can build on what has been achieved.

The museum is at the GPO in O'Connell Street, Dublin. Though the display has been aimed at the general public, as it should be, stamp collectors and postal historians will find it well worth a visit too. There is a 2Euro entry charge which disappointed me at first, but now I think is a good idea and visitors' comments heard have been positive. It is important to create revenue which will hopefully enable the Museum to go forward. The way in is through the Philatelic Shop where the tickets are sold. An 1855 Ashworth pillar box is placed here and letters posted in it get a special handstamp.

There are four sections in the museum:

1. 'Art of the Stamp'
2. 'The Post in Ireland'
3. 'The 1916 Rising'.
4. 'Communications and Transport'

The first section has pull-out frames showing items from the Bern Collection (UPU), Irish Stamps and copies of items in the Leinster Collection of the National Museum. The Irish Stamps include replicas of the imperforate registration sheets of the 1d map and 10/- St. Patrick definitives and some unadopted 1920s designs for the high values. Some real gems are in a wall mounted display. The Master Plate of the 2d map used for making the printing plates, dated 27/9/1922; a printing plate of the 3d cross, dated 21/2/55; a 6x5 Saorstát stereo, the transfer roller of the 1/5 airmail and two surprising finds – the engraved die for a 1/4- airmail and a cylinder with 18 impressions of a 2½d map stamp, arranged in two rows of nine with jubilee lines between each stamp, both horizontally and vertically.

Another case has the printing plate for the Dollard 2d engraved essay and a single die for the Valdivia essay. There are three screens in this area. One is a design-a-stamp 'game' and another has every Irish stamp issued up to the fashion designers. The third, wall mounted, has a presentation of the story behind the stamp.

The next section gives a short history of the Post in Ireland and displays a c1800 blunderbuss with "No 2 Dublin Mail" engraved on it and also **NO SURRENDER** around the muzzle. An 18th century

Surveyor's seal and an 1816 GPO Accountant's office candle holder are here too. A marvellous model of the GPO, as it was in the Mail Coach days, is surmounted by a screen which shows four short presentations. These are on The GPO pre-1818; The Lees Family; Francis Johnston (GPO Architect) and the history of the present GPO. Then there are panels on nine post-people from Capt Skinner, packet boat skipper, to Billy Boyle, recently retired Kerry postman. The window alcoves include, a writing desk of about 100 years ago, with a screen inserted to show letters and cards from 1729 (Swift) with interesting contents, a manual telephone exchange on which interviews can be heard and a rural shop post counter. Pre and post 1922 postman's uniforms are also displayed.

At the end of the room is the 1916 area. The Proclamation that used to be in the shop is mounted here and then there is a 3D audiovisual acting of the goings-on in the Telegraph room upstairs in the GPO on Easter Monday. This feature takes a lot of space and I did feel that it might have been better utilised.

The fourth section is in a mini TPO sorting carriage with a large screen with four topics on offer. These are 'Mail Boats', 'The TPO', 'An Post in the Rural Community' and 'An Post in the 21st century'. This last shows the operation of the Athlone Mails Centre and I found it very informative as when I visited all I saw was casings!

To get full benefit from a visit one should allow plenty of time and one hour plus would not be amiss. To do a virtual tour and see the layout, visit www.anpost.ie/AnPost/History+and+Heritage/Museum/



The entrance to the museum within the GPO

Courtesy of Stephen Ferguson and An Post a picture of the inside of the Museum is on the back page

NEW CONSTITUTION ISSUES 1937 and 1958 - John Lennon

The Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed on 6th December 1921, was ratified by the Dáil (by a narrow margin) on 7th January 1922. It was effectively the first Irish Constitution and took precedence over the actual October 1922 Constitution if there was a conflict. It contained a lot of disagreeable elements which caused a big division in Ireland and resulted in a Civil War.

Bit by bit the Free State government changed their Constitution and it deviated more and more from the Treaty. When Fianna Fáil came into power, in 1932, they removed the Oath of Allegiance, one of the main grievances. In 1936 the office of Governor-General was abolished, and all references to the King removed. There had been about 25 amendments when it was decided a new Constitution was needed and this was put to the people on 1st July 1937, with 56% in favour. It would come into effect on 29th December 1937.

A member of the American Philatelic Society (and producer of Irish FDCs) in Waterford, Charles Bourke, wrote to Oscar Traynor, Minister for P&T, on 16th August 1937. Interest in Irish stamps in the United States had died down for want of new issues and the philatelic press there had made a lot of the fact that the Irish Free State was the only British Dominion or Colony that hadn't joined in the Coronation omnibus issue. A stamp celebrating the new Constitution would be a good opportunity to tell the world "about the great strides being made in the new Ireland". The US had announced there would be a stamp in honour of the 150th anniversary of their Constitution. He finished his letter with a PS "It is over three years since we had a new stamp here."

He sent a memorandum, recommending the issue, to the members of the Executive Council for a decision at their next meeting. By return he got a letter from the Minister for Finance complaining about the artist's fee of £50, stating that £25 was enough. However, this time he succeeded in keeping the fee at £50 and the issue was authorised on 28th September.

The Selection Committee was the same as for the GAA issue three years before. Invitations were sent out to 23 artists on 12th October to submit drawings by 18th. 24 drawings were received and a short list of seven – George Atkinson, Harry Kernoff, M. McGonnigal, Richard King, M. McGoldrick, A. Molloy and Lily Williams were asked to submit completed drawings before 5pm on 25th October. On 30th, the Committee sent their unanimous recommendation of design No.1 of R.J.King. Two

days later the Minister wrote to the secretary of the Committee "Design C2 by Mr. R.J. King has been approved of by the Executive Council as being the nearest approach to a stamp which would in their opinion commemorate the coming into operation of the Constitution of Eire."

When the Post Office representative on the Committee, H. E. Fay, saw this he realised there could be trouble and he wrote to the Minister suggesting he write to the three artists on the Committee individually and inform them of this decision, which he did. Jack B. Yeats, Chairman, was not happy and wrote back "Only one design was authorised for submission to the Executive Council".

New Constitution Commemorative Stamps		
	300 000	100 000
	lb.	oz.
Solour Essays submitted		
Estimated from Lake	230 lb.	
Pearl Green	210 "	
Ruby	22 "	35 000 lb.
Sepia	82 "	12 000 "
Ligate	59 "	90 000 "

Mr. H. E. Fay, Please show position of ink stock in relation to stamp essays submitted in connection with new stamps to commemorate the Constitution.

Fig. 1 Ink supplies in stock

Five colour essays of the 2d value were sent to the GPO on 24th November. These were sent to the Minister, followed by a report on the stock of ink for each colour. He opted for ruby and had "no doubt that every effort will be made to secure the necessary supply of ink".

The report above ended by naming the Selection Committee "which selected the stamp." J. McDonnell was Secretary to the Committee. He received a letter from Jack B. Yeats pointing out that, as it wasn't their chosen design, this was incorrect and "as Chairman of the Committee it is my duty to ask you to kindly have this misstatement corrected." A correction was published on 21st December.

The stamps were issued on Constitution Day, 29th December 1937, despite the Executive Council (which now became the Government) being told in September that it would take six months to produce.

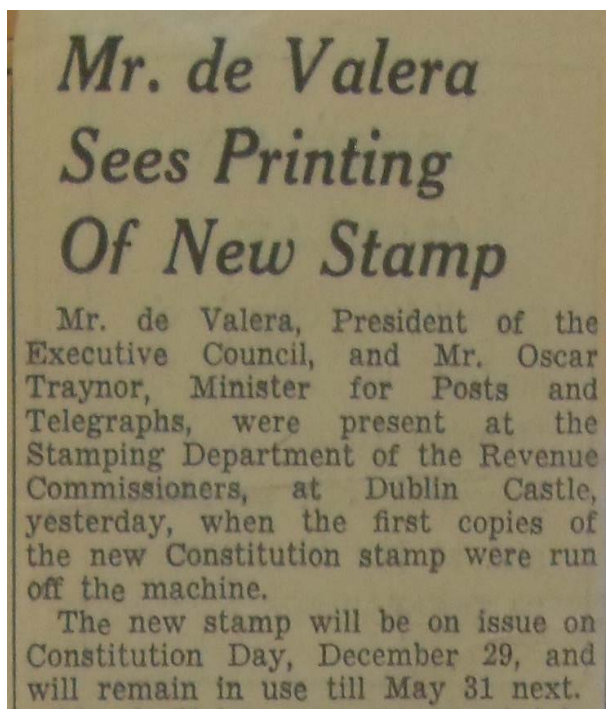


Fig 2. *The Irish Press*. 8th December 1937

21 YEARS LATER and DEV DECIDES

Frank Aiken, Minister for External Affairs, was one of the Fianna Fáil TDs for County Louth and was due to attend their local Convention on 30th March 1958. A few days before, he learned that one of the motions to be proposed was *"That this Convention suggests that the Minister for P&T take the necessary steps to issue a postage stamp to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the enactment of our Constitution and also recommends that a stamp be issued to commemorate St. Brigid."* He sought briefing from the Minister for P&T, who was not enthusiastic about the idea.

Stamp production was a complicated and lengthy process and resources were limited. Only a small number of the suggestions received could be adopted. So far a 25th anniversary was the earliest marked and the Constitution had already been marked with a stamp in 1937. As for St. Brigid, it wasn't any significant anniversary and, if you did it for one of the numerous fifth and sixth century saints, well, God knows where it would end!

However, at its meeting on 20th May, the Government decided that the anniversary should be marked by a stamp. As they understood time was short, they suggested overprinting the 1937 issue.

The Revenue Commissioners were asked to cost two options.

1. Overprint the 1937 stamps in denominations 3d and 1/3 or 3d and 5d. and

2. Using recess process, base design on 1937 stamp with 1937 and 1958 or reference to anniversary incorporated in the design.

On 24th June, the costings were 1.- £935 and 2.- £5,000 approx. For option 1 new plates would be required as the 1937 ones were too worn. For security and balance of design, overprinting was not recommended except in extreme and unavoidable cases. Revenue thought there should be a completely new design for which the costs would be similar to those given above and they pointed out that there was no provision for this issue in the year's Estimate.

Early in July, the minister for P&T received a long memorandum from his Department with a covering note *"In the special circumstances of the case it is considered the best course to take is to seek a direction from the Taoiseach in the matter."* This suggests it was Dev who decided there should be a stamp issued – the Constitution was his 'baby'.

The memorandum contains some interesting comments and opinions.

"... the (1937) design was not of high artistic standard." It pointed out later that the Government had overruled the Selection Committee in the design used.

"... the most we could hope for (from philatelic sales) would be somewhere between £2,500 and £3,000."

"over the years we have been subjected to much unfavourable criticism regarding the standard of production and design of our postage stamps. Latterly, we have gone a good way towards silencing the critics by printing nearly all our special stamps by the recess process."

"... the question of obtaining a suitably artistic symbolic design. This has been our bugbear since we started getting out commemorative stamps in 1929. Our foremost artists are portrait painters and, whatever may be the reason for it, Irish artists appear to fall down in the creative field. In the early years we tried competitions open to all and sundry and the results were lamentable. Then we invited selected Irish artists to submit designs. This approach was little more successful than the original one and latterly we have resorted, whenever the subject lends itself to it, to basing designs on photographs or portraits. This has got over the difficulty of symbolism."

The Taoiseach was asked, on 9th July, which course of action he considered should be adopted. He replied that none of the courses proposed should be used but that the 1937 issue should be reproduced, without any alteration, but in different colours, printed by letter-press.

He later agreed that the 2d, the printed paper rate, should be changed to 5d for foreign mail. Finance sanctioned the expenditure on 18th August and the production process began. Three months later, on 12th November, five colour essays were sent to the GPO. Not being happy with these, three more were requested and six days later the colours selected were Rembrandt brown for 3d and green for 5d.

On 9th December, Revenue sent *"The six hundred black and white prints of the stamp design required to complete your publicity arrangements. These have been numbered 1 to 600 for control purposes."* Were these prints taken from the plate (5 sheets) or photographs?

These stamps were issued on 29th December and the seven designated First Day offices serviced 16,188 covers (610 from abroad).

Margaret Pearse, writing from St. Enda's near Rathfarnham, complained on 12th January 1959 that she couldn't get the new stamp locally and she had received nine letters that day and only one of them bore the Constitution stamp. An investigation found that her local Postmaster hadn't requisitioned any. As a result of this the policy was changed and subsequently every post office was sent a supply of new issues.

There are no illustrations in either the 1937 or 1958 files in the National Archives.

A VERY OBVIOUS FORGERY - Editor and some thoughts on nasty items

I have discovered that one of the joys of editing is that one can within reason put into Irish Philately more or less what one likes and pursue one's own campaigns. One of the reasons that I collect Ireland is that for the most part it is philatelically 'clean'. By that, I mean that forgeries are comparatively rare and the number of covers that have been 'tampered with' is relatively small. Of course we have all seen a few naughty items in our time and specifically I draw your attention to the last part of Erinman's article in this issue. There are a goodly number of countries where one has to look with extreme caution at anything that might be considered rare, particular overprints and postmarks on stamps commonly found mint, but rarely used. I am also conscious that we have a number of new members, including several from outside Britain and Ireland – they are of course very welcome but I suspect they may have not had the opportunity to study Irish Postal History in as much depth as they would wish. I do urge them to take care when buying anything offered as unusual – always check the catalogues but also consider the integrity of the seller.

Another joy, as editor, is that members send items to me from time which go into my reserve pile and I alone, until you our members decide I am out of order, can determine when I use them, hence I must apologise to the member who sent me the item shown alongside as I cannot recall who sent it or when. Where it emanates from I have no idea, beyond apparently being of North American origin. It is an obvious forgery in every sense. No cover of the period could ever have warranted a postage cost of £5, the 2/6d stamp of the time being all but being unknown on cover. The address is wrong; anyone writing from Ireland would have added 'United States'. The corner lettering on the stamp is wrong. The word 'Paid' would not have been added at this

time and although the postmark is close to that in use at College Green at this date, a Dublin <186> diamond would have been used to cancel the stamp at this time. All wrong in every sense!



So what does all this tell us. There are a lot of clues there. When buying covers make sure all the postmarks tie in with one another: look very closely at any that appear to be too good, ensure they have not been 'helped' or have been added at a later date (a favourite hobby in India and elsewhere); is the paper/ envelope/ ink right for period; does the amount of wear look right; does the stamp(s) belong and have any stamps been lost in transit; have any registration/ airmail/ censor labels been lost or added? In truth I have seen very few forged Irish covers, but there is no harm in being alert in this age when our home printers are now light years ahead of what the most sophisticated commercial printers could produce as little as 30 years ago.

And as for the stamps, check for obvious faults, hidden tears, thins and the like, but above all take care with overprint and surcharge errors and they can be forged. Has anything been rubbed away or added? Is the postmark right and contemporaneous? Good luck in your buying but always apply the 'Caveat emptor' rule and take care. There are some nasties out there – even from 'clean' Ireland.

L.E. DAWSON F.R.P.S.L., R.D.P. (c1900-1976)

A short biography by Héloïse Mitchell



Lionel Edward Dawson was a civil engineer who spent most, if not all, of his professional career in India. His parents and siblings were living in Ardmore, near Youghal, Co. Cork between 1911 and 1921, but it cannot be established how long before and after those dates they resided there. It is almost certain that he himself was born there. A leading authority on the early stamps of India and the Feudatory States, Dawson also had outstanding collections of Nepal and Portuguese India.

He was President of the Irish Philatelic Society from 1948 to 1957, and also the Librarian, and used to entertain the members with his beautifully hand-written displays. He exhibited at most of the internationals that took place during the 1950s and 60s and always obtained a Gold (*I like this concept – Ed*)

Awards and Achievements

- Gold at London 1950
- Gold at Oslo in 1954
- Gold at Stockholm in 1955
- Gold at London 1960
- His display of the Feudatory States was awarded the Tilleard Medal in 1955.
- In 1957 he received the Diamond Jubilee Plaque of the Philatelic Society of India.
- Also in 1957, he was awarded the Medal of the Collectors Club of New York.
- A Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society of London
- The second Irish signatory of the British Roll of Distinguished Philatelists at the Blackpool Congress in 1961

Publications

- *Specialised Catalogue of Early Lithographs 1854-55* (with Smythies, 1933)
- *Jammu and Kashmir Simplified* (with Smythies, 1937)
- *The Postage Stamps of Nepal* (with Smythies, *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 1945)
- *The Postage Stamps of Nepal* (with Smythies and Haverbeck)
- *The One Anna and Two Anna Postage Stamps of India 1854-55* (1948), which received the Royal Philatelic Society's Crawford Medal in 1950 and was his most important work
- *Nepal* (with Smythies and Haverbeck, 1952)
- *Nepal: the Postage Stamps of 1881 to 1906* (*SG Stamp Monthly*, March & April 1957)

Dawson was Editor of the *Philatelic Journal of India*, first published in 1897, from 1934-1944. He nurtured this monthly publication produced by the Philatelic Society of India (founded in March 1897) by contributing many valuable research articles during the years of his editorship.

His numerous articles on all aspects of India were published in *The London Philatelist* and the *Collectors Club Philatelist* in the 1930s and 40s.

On 8 April 1965 Dawson travelled from Dublin to London to attend the India Study Circle's display to the Royal Philatelic Society of London. He was the major contributor! Not long afterwards, he decided to find a new home for his philatelic treasures, and in 1966 all his collections were sold under the hammer.

Dawson, perhaps the last of the great researchers into Indian philately, died in May 1976.



Indian stamps issued on 27 March 1997 to commemorate the centenary of the Society, one of which shows the Philatelic Journal of India

MY FAVOURITE ITEM - John Frazer



A number of items come together in the cover shown above – a combination of the following:-

- My interest in the 1798 rebellion
- My interest in the family name Frazer (Fraser)
- My general interest in Irish Postal History

These three interests come together when a Scottish regiment, known as the Fraser Fencibles, was sent to Ireland.

The Fraser Fencibles were 'raised' in Scotland. The Fencibles served 'at home' which included Ireland but they did not serve abroad. A number of Fencible Regiments were raised for service in Ireland due to the unrest which gave rise to the 1798 Rebellion and the activities of the United Irishmen.

The French supported the Rebellion by sending a supporting army which landed at Killala, Co Mayo in August 1798.

After some small engagements with the British Army, the first major engagement was at Castlebar at which the French were successful and the British army hastily retreated towards Athlone. A number of British Regiments later returned to Co Mayo following the French defeat at Ballinamuck in September 1798, one such being the Fraser Fencibles, a number of whose members lost their lives.

Subsequently a memorial was erected within the precincts of the Church of Ireland church at The Mall in Castlebar.

Some readers may well wonder what all this has to do with Irish postal history. The answer, as shown in the cover above, lies in the camp followers and in particular a female member of the Fraser Clan who was in the habit of writing to Scotland and took advantage of the 'Soldiers Privileges' of reduced postal charges of One Penny and was able to get Regimental Officers, also family members to endorse each letter as a 'Soldier's Letter' thus avoiding the proper postal charge.

Editor's note: John has sent me a copy of the contents of the letter written at Westport dated 3 Decr (sic) 1798 which reads, inter alia:-

'We arrived here Thursday last from Dublin where we were for twelve days which I spent happily...we stopt (sic) at Tuam (which is our Regt headquarters) two or three days and were very happy. It is 30 Irish miles from this town.... we are just now in lodgings as the barracks are repairing, getting the rooms painted. They are on the top of a hill just above the town, they are the finest in Ireland except one, which is the Dublin ones.... My father commands about ninety men here and a party at a place called Lanesborough where the rebels were once in great force. I hope we will remain here for some months as it is a very pleasant place and cheap living. The inhabitants are remarkably fond of the soldiers and very attentive to the officers.'

A sub office was opened at Drumcask in 1899 under the control of Belturbet Head Office, J Ross being appointed postmaster. Mail was delivered from Swanlinbar 3 miles distant, an allowance being given to the postmaster of Swanlinbar for delivery. A wall letter box was also provided in Aughaweenaugh township.

Mr Ross was replaced as postmaster by Michael Cassidy in October 1907 who served until his death in March 1937. On 1 May in that year Bridget McGovern was appointed and she served as postmistress until her retirement on 12 February 1970 when the office closed.

On the reduction of Belturbet to sub office status in 1920, Enniskillen in Co Fermanagh became the Head Office, although Belturbet remained the postal address. However partition in 1922 meant a further change of Head Office to Cavan.

The area has always been sparsely populated, yet when Drumcask closed a replacement location was sought and on 11 December 1970 an office was opened at Altachullion some two miles to the west (in an even remoter spot – the photograph at right giving some idea of the sparse population in the area). Anne Dolan acted as postmistress until she retired in November 1979.

Anxious to ensure service in the area an office was opened at Altinure roughly midway between the two former sites on 15 November 1979, Ita McGuire serving as postmistress. The office was reduced to an agency (or post point) on 26 May 2003. For paying pensions and selling a small volume of stamps the rewards were minimal and the agency ceased on 27 February 2004.

Over 100 years, the three post offices that served this west Cavan rural community saw most of their customers lost to emigration to America, Britain and elsewhere. Like many other rural offices throughout Ireland, the office has been unable to compete with the onset of technology, the mobile phone, e-mails, telephone banking and electronic payments by debit and credit card. The loss of such offices, with their friendly postmaster/mistress, has been a blow to the rural communities, particularly the older generation for whom the inability to learn how to use modern technology can lead to a sense of hopelessness but in the words of a 90+ year old former postman in rural Tipperary to your editor only last month 'It has all changed today, but 'tis better, much better, now, so long as you have the folk to look after you'.



The former office at Drumcask - September 2007



The former office at Altachullion – September 2007



Postmarks from these offices are all scarce. Above is that of Drumcask as shown in the proof book on issue. This remained in use (or very similar) until at least 1922. The only other mark seen from Drumcask is a standard single ring 30mm reading DRUIM CÁSG CO AN CHABHAIN dated 18 XII 67 with thick bar at base (my type SR16) – example not fit to reproduce.

I have not recorded any postmark from Altachullion (Alt an Chuileann) and it therefore becomes **THE EDITOR'S CHALLENGE** for this edition for you to find one with a prize to follow for the first copy sent to me. Please let me hear from you!

The only postmark noted from Altinure is shown above and is assumed to have remained in use until closure in 2003.

INTERVIEW – PETER WOOD

Peter Wood will be known to many of you as a Past President of the Circle, and his superb collection of "Troubles & Transition" material (1900-30). Your editor found him searching for new material at STAMPA last October.

SC – Peter, I have always seen you as being a Londoner, so what took you to collecting Ireland?

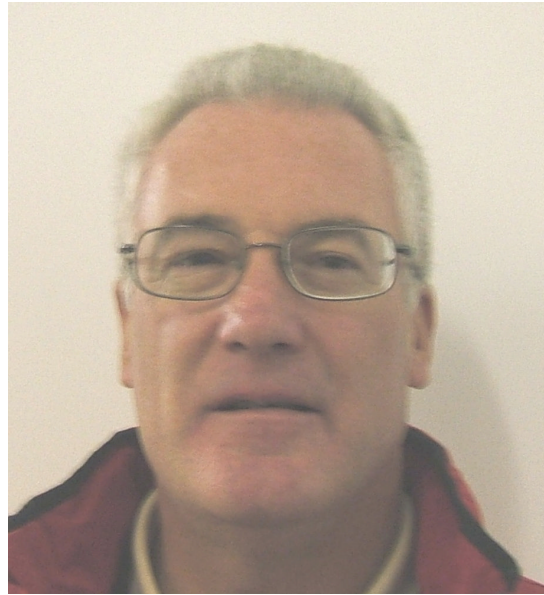
PW- Wrong! English, yes, but born in Lancashire and brought up in Nottingham, it was work that brought me to London in the early 1970s, this after university at Hull. As with so many of us, Ireland came by accident. I have to thank my primary school teacher, a Miss Rae, for getting me collecting. She made us collect labels off a product – I can't remember what it was – and we sent the labels away and got some stamps back. All the class did it, we started swapping and I was soon into collecting – all thanks to Miss Rae; (I do wonder what became of her!) Next, my father got out his old schoolboy album to show me and that got him collecting again. Then he joined the Nottingham Stamp Club and took their exchange packet. He is still active in Philately and has only recently disposed of his main collection which was Japan.

So you were a keen schoolboy collector?

Very much so! It was in my father's stamp club packets that I saw my first Irish overprints. I was absolutely fascinated as an 11 year old at the sight of English stamps overprinted in a foreign language and priced at a few "old pennies" each – comfortably within my pocket money limits. I recall winning a schoolboy competition with a collection of slogan postmarks. The judges found them novel but sadly I had cut out from the envelopes some items that should have stayed intact. Stamps took a backseat through my teenage and university years. I maintained a vague background interest but it was well into the 1980s before I really got going again. I soon found myself collecting European countries, Scandinavia, Germany, Turkey and all. Too much in fact!

And Irish?

The Irish were very much there and soon I found it was the area of main concentration. I joined the IPC, went to a London meeting and appreciated the enthusiasm of members like Keith Jamieson and George Ithell, both sadly no longer with us. I was made very welcome, there was lots of interest, lots for me to learn and this of course encouraged me further. It was the start of what has effectively become a lifetime mission!



You were working, of course?

I'd joined British Telecom straight from university as a Finance Executive Officer. BT was still a part of the Post Office then. As a part of the induction process there were various visits. I chose the Mount Pleasant Sorting Office and the Post Office Underground Railway as well as Telecommunications locations. I was summoned by my boss and asked to explain why I had chosen as I had. He was not amused and the result was that I found myself banned from future visits to Post Office premises! Not a good start. Hence, to my regret, my working career was totally devoid of collecting opportunities.

Peter, I've always associated your collection with the 'Transition Period'. How did that start?

I'd been collecting postmarks and postal history in general. I had managed to get a lot at Bournemouth Auctions, a huge rag bag of Irish material, including a very nice 1916 emergency cancellation. That really got me going away from stamps. It was that year that Cyril Dulin displayed at Stampex in London; it was possibly his first exhibition. It was fascinating but my first thought on seeing what he had presented was that I might as well give up there and then! Fortunately, I didn't. I thought about what he had done and realised that I had to collect differently. My postmark collection was by type and it was clear that for an exhibit I needed to change to collecting only within the wider Transition time period. To fill two frames at Stampex (my then target) I also needed to go back to about 1900 and have nothing beyond about 1930.

And you exhibited?

Yes, indeed. That was in the early 1990s. The initial feedback was very helpful. Jane Moubray (well known to collectors of Great Britain used in Ireland) was one of the judges and showed me how I could improve on what I had. So many judges were discouraging but this was the reverse. Exhibiting is just as much a question of what to leave out as what to put in. It is not the same as collecting. I was collecting the Transition material at the same time as Cyril but he was also studying archives whilst I was only looking at my own material and what others showed me. I had a lot to learn.

But learn you did!

I've looked at all aspects of Transition postal history including official and military mail, postmarks, postage due items, postal stationery, in fact everything I could lay my hands on. I built up my own theories and was pleased to find that I had generally been on the right lines when Cyril's book on the Transition came out. Cyril is seen as the 'Father of the Transition' but I believe it was actually Bill Kane who suggested the subject to Cyril. The interest in the Transition has led me on to other things, particularly Cinderellas and Political Labels. Over the years the collection has developed and I am still finding new material. I have also enjoyed reading about the history of the period – Philately is a wonderful learning tool.

No regrets about your choice of collecting area?

Absolutely none. Ireland has been a very happy, if accidental, choice. I have on occasion thought I should collect something else. Perhaps I will at some future date but for now I often find that other people's displays have an Irish connection. That has led me on creating a Thematic display on the topic of 'It's an Irish World'.

And a little about your life beyond stamps.

A very happy bachelor. Without the family ties, I find I have more time for the hobby and to be truthful more funds available. BT were good enough to retire me early in 2002 on generous terms and life is kind. I live in West London, enjoy the London stamp scene and am a member of several societies. I acted as Secretary of IPC following Keith Jamieson in the rôle and was later honoured to act as the Circle's President.

Will you continue to concentrate on Ireland?

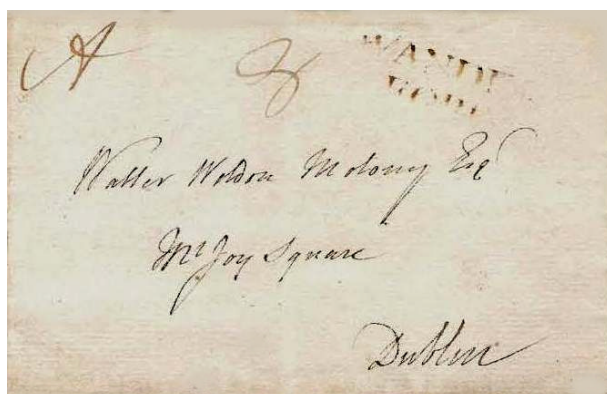
I think so. There are many aspects I have only just touched on as yet and others I have virtually ignored. I have moved more into ephemera as well thereby drifting into the 'Open Class' for exhibiting. I put in an exhibit 'The Road to Independence' at Stampex in the UK last year. I'm also looking at railway material, tickets, parcel labels etc. There is much to be done and I would also welcome having a go at preparing a comprehensive listing of Irish Cinderella material.

Thank you, Peter; you clearly have much work in front of you!

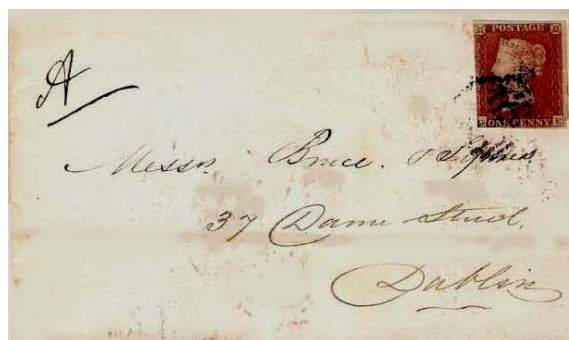
MORE ON THE ALPHABET

A note from Eddy Dalton

In John Lennon's article in the September 2008 issue he showed a cover of 1794 with 'A' endorsed at left. We know that four men were employed at the Alphabet office in 1809-10 but I suspect that the 'A' was actually put on a clerk in the General Letter Office. The cover below dated 1801 shows that the same man had responsibility in both 1794 and 1801.



In his article John also asks for details of any items after 1850. I am able to show an item from Cork to Dublin dated 1854. This is the latest I have recorded.



AUCTION WATCH - Erinman

First, let me revert to the Landry sale which I noted in the last edition. I expressed surprise at some of the very low prices realised, but now understand that part of the reason may well be that Boston was blanketed by a blizzard on the day of the sale which meant a number of potential bidders could not be present. In consequence it is unrealistic to treat the prices achieved as a fair market guide.

Meanwhile, MacDonnell Whyte Ltd. held their most recent public auction on 5th June 2010 in Dublin and as usual many choice and desirable items went under the hammer.

Undoubtedly one of the most popular of the definitive issues is the Irish birds series. On offer was an unmounted mint marginal pair of the 1998 Birds 35p Stonechat Walsall printing, with value omitted together with the 35 at right instead of left. The pair also shows the phosphor at centre and only 10 examples are known to exist. Estimated at 2000euro the item sold for 2800euro. Another rare and possibly unique item for sale, a 1999 birds 30p blackbird phosphor ex vertical coil error imperforate used on commercial cover dated 3 XI 2000 soared well above the conservative estimate of 750euro to go under the hammer for 2000euro.

Choice Postal History items are always in demand. A "1798 outer lettersheet to Waterford with London JA/3/98cds, showing on face both ms Ship Letter and "8" in the same ink and noted as having originated at Canterbury" made 1150 euro against pre sale estimate of 800euro. It is suggested the 8d charge is made up of 5d to London, 1d Ship Letter rate plus 2d Inland Irish for one post stage. This is the only example of this routing recorded and may have originated through bad weather. In similar vein, a 1839 entire from China to London, landed at Cork and treated as an India Letter "with framed INDIALETTER/COVE in black, charged 1/7/1/2d. to include the Welsh halfpenny but sent via Dublin instead, rated as 4d. India Letter +13d.inland + 2d.Waterford packet+ 1/2d Welsh Wheel Tax." Estimated at 300euro the item sold for 550euro. Also featured on the back of the catalogue, an 1840 entire sent from the USA to London via the ship "Nemesis", "landed in Ireland and with COVE/SHIP-LETTER with matching COVE/JA 11/1840cds, the first day of the Uniform Ship Rate and thus rated "8" to include both maritime and inland postage, subsequently redirected c/o Forwarding Agents in Southampton for onward transmission to Madeira." Estimated at 1500euro the item made a well deserved 3300euro.

In the overprints section on offer was a 1/2d. green mint Harrison 3 line vertical coil pair (SG67) with coil join, the top stamp showing part U23 control perf. This previously unrecorded item sold for 2600euro against a conservative pre sale estimate of 1250euro. A rare example of the 5/-wide date (SG84) from the composite setting tied to piece with Dublin cds 5OC27, four months prior to the appearance of the "all wide" 5/- in February 1928 sold for 700euro against a pre sale estimate of 500euro.

An unmounted mint complete set 1/2d. to 1/- of the 1922 SE watermark definitive series made 270euro against an estimate of 200euro.

Coil leaders/ends are eagerly fought over. A 1934 2d.imperf x 14 experimental coil coil leader T £4/0/4d' with pair attached by perf 8 join, went for 1900euro (estimate 1000euro). Similarly, vertical coil ends of the 2d. and 3d Gerl definitive with gum Arabic and each with 16 stamps including coil join attached from the single rolls known to have survived, sold for 1300euro and 1350euro against pre sale estimates of 750euro for each value.

In the commemorative section on offer was a possibly unique FDC of the 1938 Father Mathew 2d. with inverted comma variety of row 2 stamp 2. tied by a Clonakilty cds 1 V11 38 (Estimate - 750euro).



figs 1 and 2 – see page 72 for continuation

CINDERELLA STAMPS OF IRELAND - An incomplete introduction (Part 1)

Peter Wood

When our Editor suggested a series of articles about Cinderella stamps of Ireland, I was happy to do so but now the time has come to face the tricky issue of just what is a “Cinderella”?

In the broadest sense perhaps the best starting point is the definition of the Cinderella Stamp Club, which describes itself as ‘...an association of philatelists... whose interests lie in local stamps, telegraph stamps, railway stamps, revenues/fiscals, forgeries, bogus and phantom issues, Christmas, Red Cross, TB and other charity seals, registration labels, advertisement and exhibition labels and many other items - all of which are the so-called “Cinderellas” of Philately’.

As an aside I draw your attention to and commend the final category “many other items”!

It will be appreciated that certain of those categories have been enthusiastically collected over the years and have been written up and catalogued in varying degrees of completeness. Railway stamps and Revenues certainly fall into that class. If members wish it, I may, at a later date, return to those categories and as it is not my intention to re-invent the wheel where a catalogue or article already exists I will refer to it while perhaps starting discussion of other less-travelled byways.

So while bearing the overall coverage of the Cinderella Stamp Club in mind the term “Cinderella Stamp” is more generally applied to ephemeral labels such as exhibition, patriotic, charity and advertising labels. At various times such labels have been used to fasten or decorate envelopes and attach to letterheads with the intention of encouraging tourism, advertising goods or products, raising funds for charity, publicising or acting as souvenirs for exhibitions, shows or other events and various other purposes.

The following will be *excluded*:

- Political labels - these form a distinct field of study in the case of Ireland and many are well documented.
- Christmas Seals - these are a distinct subject and a good listing appeared in the *Revealer* some time ago.
- Bogus and Fantasy stamps
- Strike Post stamps
- Trading stamps
- Railway and Bus letter and parcel stamps
- Charity lapel flags

I make no apology for the fact that many of the items listed will be, initially at least, simply those of my

own collection. One of the intentions is that others will let us know about their holdings and we can start to create a more comprehensive listing of what is out there.

The Cinderella Stamp Club Handbook No. 8 is a catalogue of such items, being titled “Great Britain Commemorative Labels, pre-1950” by Chris Chatfield (it does include some Irish items before partition and some Northern Irish).

To adopt the same terminology and so remain consistent I will define what I am starting with as

Irish Commemorative labels - (Year Dated)

Probably the best known of these are those of the Royal Dublin Society for the **Dublin Horse Show** and Spring Show. The earliest I am aware of is for the Dublin Horse Show of 1919. With a gap between 1940 to 1945 when, presumably the event was not held, each year saw a label of a different design until 1947. It should be noted that in 1936 the circular grey label did NOT show the year, simply being inscribed “August 4,5,6,7,& 8”.

From 1948 until 1960 a small range of designs were each used in several years. A completely different design appeared for 1961. It was in black and white with the head of a horse looming large over the R.D.S. Buildings! Presumably this was not looked upon favourably and the period from 1963 until 1972 was another era of a different design of similar format each year. The years 1973 to 1980 were characterised by not only different designs but also different lettering types. From that point I have no record of labels until those of 1998 to 2001 where they were of a horizontal format, half a picture and half details of what was now the “Kerrygold Horse Show”. Perhaps others have seen them from the 1981 to 1997 period? On an envelope from the R.D.S. in 2004 there is a handstamped cachet advertising the “Dublin Horse Show” which I interpret as replacing the labels some 80+ years after their introduction.

Moving on to the labels for the **Spring Show** my earliest is for 1924 - do they exist prior to that? Back to 1919 or 1920 would seem likely given that 1919 is the earliest date seen for the earliest Horse Show. From 1924 until 1940 there was a different design each year. In the case of the Spring Show, again resuming in 1946 after the Emergency, from 1946 until 1971 there was a standard design being the arms of the R.D.S. in different colours in different years overprinted by the words “Spring Show and Industries Fair” and the dates for the year. Then for

1972-4 a similar but borderless version and finally(?) 1975-78 simple lettering labels. I have no record of any for the event since then. Did the event, in fact, continue? (*I understand there is now an annual Spring Ideal Home Show at the RDS – Ed*)

There is a complication to be mentioned here in regard to both Horse Show and Spring Show labels. For some years and perhaps all years there are two versions of each label. One includes the words “Visit our Stand” while the other does not, although it may include another message such as “Excursions from all parts” or “Special Attractions Daily”.

I would be interested to receive fellow collectors listings and be pleased to combine same to provide a comprehensive report in a future edition of *Irish Philately*.

Moving to Belfast I now mention labels for the **Balmoral Show** of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society. The earliest I am aware of is 1932 and then every year until 1939. After the Second World War the first year I am aware of is 1952, from when they continued to 1973. Do they exist between 1946 and 1951 or later then 1973?

As an introduction to the next instalment and labels that appear in only one or very few years there is the intermediate case of **Munster Agricultural Society**, which mention the Agricultural Show and Industrial Exhibition, Cork. These appeared over a period of nine years at least.

The earliest I have is for 1924 and latest 1933, but I should say I do not know that labels exist for every year between those dates. As with the R.D.S. Horse Show and Spring Show, some years, at least, have two versions one of which bears the message “Visit our Stand”.

(to be continued)

The illustrations are on the next page.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

In our December issue we hope to have a biography of the late FE (Fred) Dixon provided by Héloïse Mitchell, Post and Go machines at Dublin, an update from Brian Warren, the history of Manorhamilton Post Office (Co Leitrim), Questions and Answers (provided you send me some!) and the skeletons of County Wicklow – for which I need your input please. Copy date is 10 November.

AUCTION WATCH (continued from page 69)

This item sold for 1750euro. Another possibly unique item is an example of the 1941 Rising Provisional 2d orange with error 1916 missing with also part of the second and third lines missing dated April 1941 cds. The item sold for 1900euro against a pre sale estimate of 1200euro.

Early Irish booklets are always in demand. An example of the 1931 2/- Booklet serial no.2 estimated at 1800euro sold for 2700euro. Similarly 1935 2/- Booklet serial no.9 against an estimate of 1500euro made 2000euro. High prices were also made by a 1937 2/- Booklet serial no.12 which sold for 2900euro (estimate 1800euro) and 1938 2/- Booklet serial no.15 selling for 3000euro (estimate 1800euro).

A seldom seen 1954 4/- booklet serial 37 advertisers voucher copy with each stamp having a triangular punch cancel went under the hammer for 370euro against a 250euro estimate. These results indicate that the market for choice, rare and quality items continues to be very healthy. (continued on page 71)

The Postage Due section contained a couple of notable items: A 1922 cover from Canada to Dublin with British 1d. postage due and 1/2d. green Dollard overprint used to collect underpaid letter charge dated 20 MR 22. (*fig 1 page 69*). A very scarce combination has resulted. The item sold for 1250euro against a pre sale estimate of 1000euro. (Illustration below). The use of British Block Cypher watermarked Postage dues in Ireland has been much debated. Evidence has been produced to show that only the 2d.value could possibly have been issued. However following the recent discovery of the 3d. value, on offer now was a marginal block of 16 of the British 1924 4d. Block Cypher watermark. tied to piece by PARCEL OFFICE DUBLIN cancellation. Estimated at 350euro the item sold for 380euro.

Ebay has generally been poor and when buying on Ebay one should always be aware of the caveat ‘all that glitters is not gold’. A UK seller well known for buying poor quality items and adding their own overprints, may be turning her attention to Ireland. Although in the small print of the item description there is a note about the items being fake. Ebay ignored their own rules that the word “fake” or something similar should be put on the back of the item and the sale was allowed. On sale were two items to catch the gullible, hinged mint 1½d.and 6d. Saorstat overprints with the added word specimen copied from the Gibbons catalogue. (*fig 2 page 69*). These are shown below and are completely bogus - **BEWARE!!**

Illustrations to Cinderella article on pages 70 and 71 - most illustrations slightly reduced

Dublin Horse Show



1925 with and without 'Visit our Stand' 1954 and 1956 – same design different years The 1962 design



The 1963 label 1923 and (right) 1928 labels - same design – different colours 2000 Kerrygold label

Dublin Spring Show



The 1929 and 1958 labels both with and without 'Visit our Stand'

Balmoral and Munster Shows



Balmoral labels for 1932 and 1933 and the Munster labels of 1924 and 1931, the latter with 'Visit our Stand'