



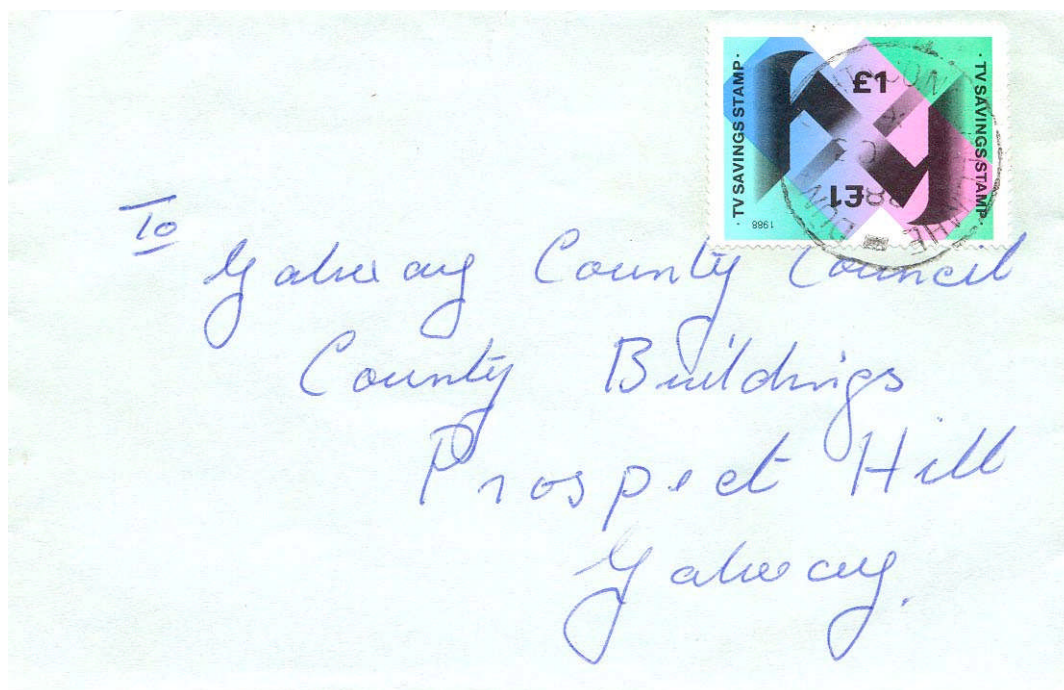
Volume  
2012

# Irish Philately

THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH PHILATELIC CIRCLE

[www.irishphil.com](http://www.irishphil.com)

Issue No: 4  
December



**An extraordinary (and improper) use of a Television Licence fee stamp at Eyrecourt in 1988**

**Brian Warren looks at these stamps on pages 86 to 90**

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## EDITORIAL

We welcome a new contributor in this issue, Bryan Kearsley, who has provided a thought provoking article on the subject of the Overprinted Seahorse Plate Numbers. Bryan has written what may well come to be regarded as the ultimate standard work on British Seahorses, 'Discovering Seahorses' (pub 2005) which, no doubt, is on the bookshelves of those of our members who specialise in the Irish Overprints. Bryan has kindly looked at the subject of Plate Numbers from an Irish perspective and his article is published exactly as received. I do look forward to input from those of you with a greater knowledge of the Overprints than myself as to how Bryan's discourse will change your collecting habits.

We have another intriguing article from the pen of long time member Ian Enlander, which, if his musings are correct, pose a considerable quandary for the postal history collectors amongst us. Our thanks must go to these gentlemen and indeed to all our other contributors, old and new.

I have however learnt one thing in the last couple of years. I always used to listen with disbelief when a new retiree announces after a few months of being at home 'I never know how I managed before I retired – I am busier now than I ever was'. Well – I am not quite retired but have now reached an 80% retired (or perhaps I should say 'retarded') condition and I, too, am amazed at how busy I find myself whether it be doing all those jobs around the house that should have been done years ago or just looking through what I have collected together after 40 years or so of collecting Irish Postal History. Over time we all collect a lot; some we treasure and fondly recall bidding at auction (apart from the effect on one's wallet), the thrill of mentally saying 'Yes! – got it' and then enjoying the satisfaction of having improved an area of one's collection or whatever. At other times, inevitably, one asks 'Why on earth did I buy that?'

It has been my lot to do a certain of that looking back over recent weeks and whilst there are cases when I do ask why I did acquire an item (probably because I knew no better!), I have had great pleasure looking again at the many 'old friends' that have been lying there, be it in albums or shoeboxes, for many a year. I do have to be thankful I started collecting when I did (and suspect that I am not alone), for today not only would the cost be greater but also I must have to ask if the material would be available. I look at the various more specialised auction lots that I have bought, material that comes to the market perhaps once in a generation; at the items I have variously picked up from dealers or in more recent years on e-Bay; at the commercial material from the 1970s and 80s, so ordinary at the time (for it was all I could afford at the time) but the equivalent hardly exists today; then there is my collection of the numeral postmarks which has been largely untouched for the last 10-15 years.

It is here that I must ask for your help, for I have determined that my project for 2013 will be to 'sort out' the numerals. Used from 1844 to c1895 at most offices with a few lingering on into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they represent a largely untouched field of Irish philately. Certainly their study should lead to a better understanding of the workings of the Post Office in Ireland during most of the reign of Queen Victoria. If I get it right, there ought to be a book at the end of it but I will need input from as many collectors as possible. If you do have a collection of these markings, I would ask that you contact me so that we can at the very least 'exchange notes'. I will keep you posted on the progress which, I hope, will at some point be interrupted by our prospective house move, it ever it happens!

It merely leaves me to wish you all a 'Happy Christmas' and good collecting in 2013 – may it be kind, peaceful and prosperous to us all whatever the state of our collections.

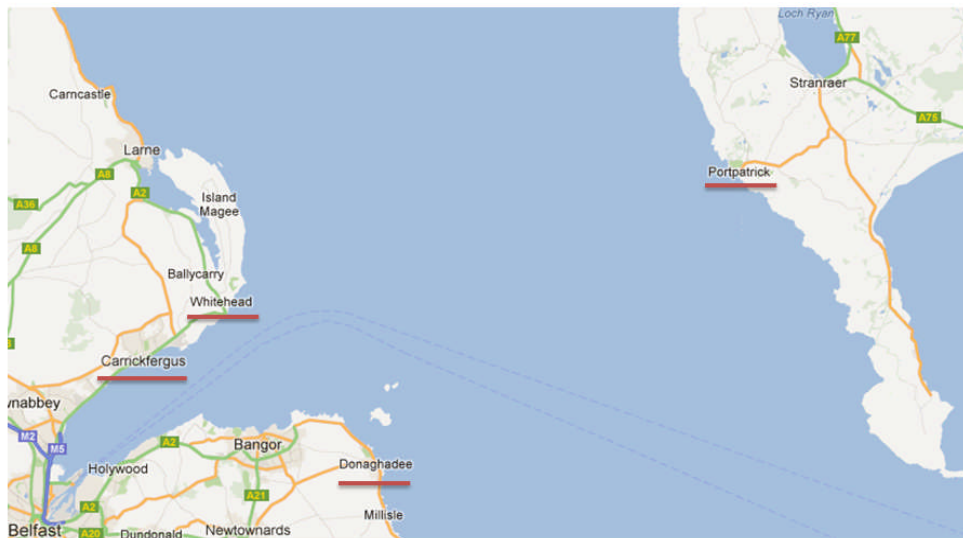
Stan - 22 November 2012

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# SCOTLAND to WHITEHEAD A PREVIOUSLY UNRECORDED MAIL PACKET ROUTE?

Ian Enlander



Whitehead is a small town on the north (Co. Antrim) side of the mouth of Belfast Lough – see main map above. Today it is mainly a commuter settlement but was, in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, a popular seaside resort. It is also where I live.

The town's earlier history is linked to the period of the Plantation of Ulster. The military actions associated with this settlement brought one Moses Hill to the Carrickfergus area in the 1570's. He became a significant figure in the area and by the early 1600's he was already Mayor of Carrickfergus and Member for Antrim in the Irish Parliament in 1613.



Fig. 1. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century map of Chichester Castle showing the pier.

Around this time Hill constructed a fortified residence for himself at Whitehead and, rather sycophantically, named it Castle Chichester (or Castle Chester) after the then Governor of Carrickfergus Sir Arthur Chichester. Until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century the castle was the nucleus of a

'considerable village or town'. A harbour or quay is recorded from this time, the remains of which are shown on early 19<sup>th</sup> century maps of the area (see Fig. 1). Remnants survived through to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, featuring on many local postcards of the time (see Fig. 2) but nothing could save it from local authority 'tidying up' and development of the promenade in the 1970's. Nothing now remains of this historical feature.



Fig 2. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcard of Whitehead showing remains of quay and position of castle in the now town. View looking approximately south-west.

It is likely that the earliest mention of a mail packet being established at Whitehead refers to this period. Writing in the 1840's James Boyle in his 'Parish of Island Magee 1830 – 1840' states that –

*"Upwards of 100 years ago a packet boat used to call at Castle Chichester from Scotland to discharge its cargo and deliver letters. A small boat used to attend the Parish to convey the letters to Belfast from Castle Chichester for which it received £100 per annum. At that time an agent resided at Castle Chichester."*

Whitehead was not serviced by a main road until the completion of the Carrickfergus – Larne coast road in 1854 so it is understandable that any onwards transfer of mail would be by small boat, whether to Belfast, or more likely to Carrickfergus.

The actual dates over which the packet functioned are not clear but certainly one Robert Brice is recorded as being appointed as an agent for Lord Chichester in 1669 and his family would become agents for the Castle Quay mail packet. It is thought that the mail packet station closed around 1740 when ‘trade was diverted to Donaghadee’.

Any attempt to understand the role of Whitehead as a mail packet station has to be viewed in the wider context of the Scottish – Irish posts through the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The relevant locations are highlighted on the map on the previous page. As early as 1616 a Royal Warrant attempted to limit all passage of people and goods between Co.’s Down and Wigtownshire and Ayrshire (The Ards and the Rhins of Galloway) to the ports of Portpatrick and Donaghadee with the latter harbour being rebuilt in 1626 (and improved again in 1640).

By 1717 the Post Office took over the Portpatrick – Donaghadee route and operated it for some 40 years. The significance of the route was still evident in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with an annual mail of some 300,000 letters passing through Donaghadee while Belfast merchants were continually clamouring for investment in the harbours, boats and road network servicing these ports.

So we are left asking the question why Whitehead featured as a mail packet station at all? With no definite evidence it is likely that its significance lay in its proximity to Carrickfergus. Carrickfergus was probably the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important port in Ulster (after Londonderry), reflecting the importance of trade with Scotland and the fact that Belfast was only beginning to emerge as a significant town. This was shown in an assessment of accounts of Ulster ports by the Surveyor General of Customs in 1637, where Carrickfergus’s position was confirmed. Indeed what is now Belfast Lough was at this time and even until to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, called Carrickfergus Bay.

But then again, Carrickfergus has had a harbour since at least the Norman period, shown as a significant feature on a map of 1560 and the landing place of ‘King Billy’ (William of Orange) in 1690. Possibly access to Carrickfergus Harbour was limited by tide (the inner, older, harbour, does dry out at low water even today) while the Whitehead Quay may have been accessible irrespective of tidal state. A slightly later map from 1567 suggests a

large area of sand within the Carrickfergus Harbour so silting may have been a problem.

Another possibility is that the Whitehead packet was established at a time when Carrickfergus was not under ‘stable’ control. Through the middle years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (1641 – 1689) possession of the town changed hands, at times being held by English, Scottish, Parliamentary, Royalist or Jacobite forces (an excellent example of the rapid changes of fortune in these turbulent times) or the town was threatened as part of the general civil strife, although these periods were typically of short duration. With the arrival of the Williamite forces in 1689 under Schomberg, the town was taken for the Crown and so should have provided a safe location for any mail packet in this area.

It is of course possible that the ‘Whitehead mail packet’ simply refers to a ‘stop over’ by any boat on the Portpatrick - Donaghadee route to discharge post for the Carrickfergus area.

If mail was handled at Whitehead/Carrickfergus through the early 18<sup>th</sup> century especially, from when a significant amount of postal material survives, it would be of interest to know if any incoming or outgoing Scottish/Irish mail has been noted that carries any reference to this route. The recent review of Irish Ship Letters by Malcolm Ray-Smith in *Irish Philately*, documents 2 ship letter marks for Carrickfergus but these dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The best that could be hoped for would be a written direction on the face of a letter with ‘via Whitehead’. ‘Via Portpatrick’ could equally apply to the Donaghadee route.

I would be very interested to hear if members know any more about this route/stop over, especially if they have evidence of its use.

Many thanks to Whitehead’s acclaimed local historian Paddy O’Donnell who provided me with key information on this issue.

#### References:-

N.I Public Record Office. Parish of Island Magee 1830 -1840 Island Magee Parish Box 11 Antrim XI by James Boyle 1840.

O'Donnell, P J. Whitehead: the Town with No Streets. 1998.

Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland. Parishes of County Antrim III 1833, 1835, 1839 - 40 Larne and Island Magee Vol.10. Edited by Angelique Day and Patrick McWilliams. The Institute of Irish Studies. The Queen's University of Belfast.



# TIME TO DITCH THOSE IRISH SEAHORSE PLATE NUMBERS

Bryan Kearsley FRPSL

## A Convenient Invention

The Philatelic plate numbers, held so dear by many Irish collectors and catalogue editors, have been around ever since they were first conjured up by Beaumont and Stanton some fifty five years ago with the publication of their 'Postage Stamps of Great Britain, Part 4'.

Over time, many of their brief plate descriptions have turned out to be inaccurate and their measurements too general or imprecise to be meaningful.

## Later Research

It was left to Johan Rehnberg, in the mid '90s, to fill in some of the missing details on the plates he identified. He not only described most of their re-entries, but included more precise measurements of their marginal markings. Even so, that still left another fifteen 'Irish' Seahorse plates unrecorded.

## No Historical Significance

As a contrivance, it is hardly surprising to learn that these philatelic numbers hold no historical significance, whatsoever. Their numbering bears no relationship to those assigned to the official plates. Nor do they provide any clues to the order in which Bradbury produced them. Take, for instance, 2s 6d philatelic plate 6A. In reality, it was not the sixth plate but the first one Bradbury made. And there are a host of other similar instances. Even the distinction they drew between 'A' (dot) and 'B' (no dot) plates is incorrect. Although most of their dots were smaller and may not have featured above *every* impression, the 'B' plates did carry them, nevertheless.

## Emergence of Official Plate Nos.

To be fair, at neither time, did anyone know how many plates Bradbury produced nor the official numbers they were given. In fact, it was only seven years ago that this information was first revealed in the book 'Discovering Seahorses'.

By identifying those philatelic plates that carry the same re-entries/flaws *and* marginal markings as those found on the official plates, has enabled a direct link to be established between the two. As a first step towards encouraging devotees of the old philatelic numbers to adopt the official ones, I have shown opposite the essential links that exist.

## Linking Irish Seahorse Plates to Official Ones

### BRADBURY SEAHORSE PLATES

|              | <u>IRISH</u> | <u>OFFICIAL</u>  |
|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| <b>2s 6d</b> | 2A           | 2/4 R (State 1)  |
|              | 3A           | 3/5 L (State 2)  |
|              | 5A           | 3/5 R (State 2)  |
|              | 6A           | -/1 L (State 2)  |
|              | 7A           | -/1 R (State 3)  |
|              | 8A           | 2/4 L (State 1)  |
|              | 9A           | -/1 L (State 3)  |
|              | 11A          | -/1 R (State 2)  |
|              | 12A          | 2/4 L (State 2)  |
|              | 13A          | 3/5 R (State 2)  |
|              | 1B           | 5/7 R            |
|              | 2B           | 8/10 L           |
|              | 3B           | 5/7 L            |
|              | 4B           | 6/8 L            |
| <b>5s</b>    | 2A           | 1/2 L            |
|              | 3A           | 4/5 L            |
|              | 4A           | 1/2 R            |
|              | 5A           | 1/2 R same as 4A |
|              | 1B           | 5/6 L (State 2)  |
|              | 2B           | 4/5 R            |
|              | 3B           | 5/6 R (State 1)  |
|              | 4B           | 5/6 L (State 1)  |
|              | 2A           | 2/7 L            |
|              | 5A           | 1/3 L            |
| <b>10s</b>   | 6A           | 3/8 R            |
|              | 7A           | 3/8 R same as 6A |
|              | 8B           | 2/7 R            |

### UNRECORDED PLATES

with Irish Overprints

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| <b>2s 6d</b> | 6/8 R            |
|              | 7/9 L & R        |
|              | 8/10 R           |
|              | 9/11 L & R       |
|              | 10/12 & or 11/13 |
| <b>5s</b>    | 3/4 L & R        |
|              | 5/6 R (State 2)  |
| <b>10s</b>   | 1/3 R            |
|              | 3/8 L            |
|              | 4/9 L or R       |

NOTE: 'L' and 'R' refer to the left and right panes from Bradbury's double-pane plates.

## Bradbury Differed

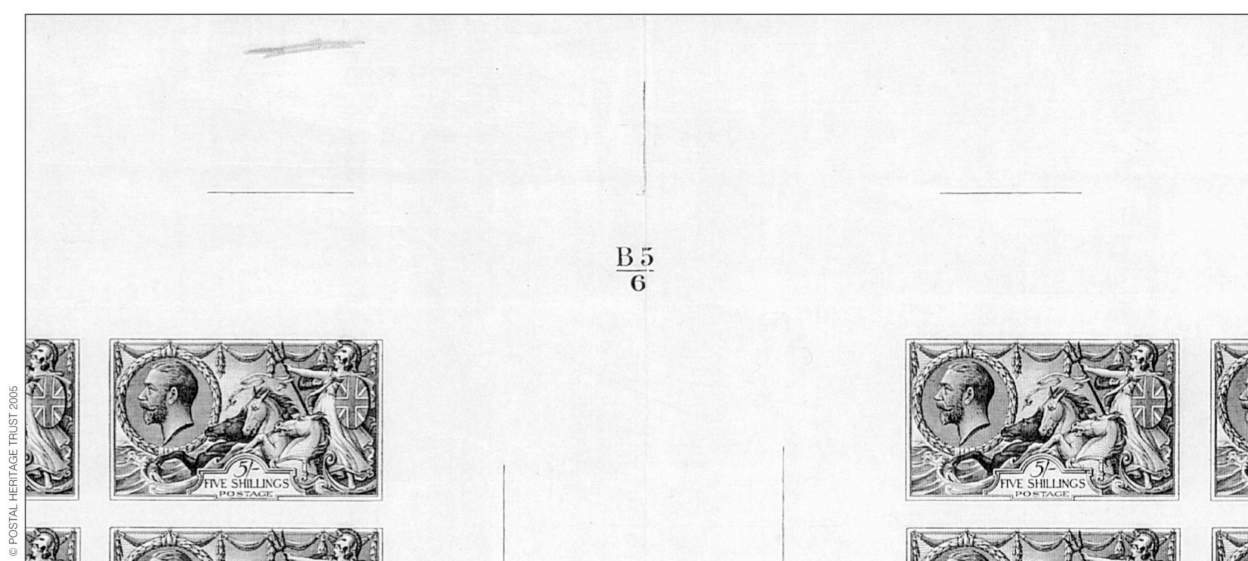
Unlike the previous Seahorse printers (Waterlow & Layton and De La Rue), Bradbury used only rotary presses. This required their plates to be bent, which had the effect of stretching the height of the stamp's image by around 0.5mm to between 22.6 to 22.75mm. Bradbury also used double-pane plates, twice the size of their predecessors, which consisted of eighty stamps, forty to each pane.

Traditionally, recess printing had been done using dampened paper. But Bradbury's innovative approach to stamp production had, by early 1926, perfected the technique of printing on dry paper. Adopting this method had the advantage of eliminating the variation in paper shrinkage and overcoming the problem of perforation centering,

but it also brought about a further increase to the height of their stamps to around 23mm.

## Plate Numbering

When it came to numbering their plates, again, Bradbury differed. With the sole exception of the first 2s 6d and 10s plates, all the others were identified by two fractional numbers, prefixed by the letter 'B'. The top one refers to the number in the denomination set, while the second relates to the number in the series of plates struck. So, the 2s 6d plate with the number B 3/5 is the third 2s 6d plate, but also the fifth Seahorse plate made by the firm. (For some unfathomable reason, the system changed in 1924 when the 5s plate B 3/4 was made. It was neither the third 5s plate, nor the fourth they had made. From then on, both numbers increased sequentially.)



5s Bradbury Wilkinson plate numbers (in this case B5/6) appeared in the margin between the two stamp panes.

## Irish Overprinting

For the newly created Irish Free State, supplies of Seahorse sheets were sent by registered mail to the Irish Post Office at Dublin Castle, who arranged for their overprinting to be carried out by two local printers (Dollard and Thom) until 1925, when it reverted to the Government's own printing works at Dublin Castle. It was only at the insistence of the British Post Office that the entire operation was returned to Somerset House from the beginning of 1926.

## Ordering Frequency

To begin with, quantities sought by the Irish Post Office Stores Department were only sufficient to last about four to six weeks. Gradually this changed and at the time of Somerset House's involvement, orders were enough to satisfy demand

for the next six months to a year. That was until the early part of 1931, when no further requests were made for the next two and a half years.

The most likely explanation for this unexpected turn of events was the negative impact the Great Depression had on all commercial and governmental activities. In Great Britain, usage of high value stamps fell by as much as a third. There is no reason to believe that the Free State was not similarly affected. During this lull, the Irish continued to survive off the surplus stock they had accumulated in more buoyant times. It was left until the early months of 1934 before any replenishments were called for. Shortly afterwards, supplies of the Re-engraved issue (overprinted by Harrison's) began and continued until the last request was despatched to Dublin in June 1937; some three months before the Irish high value stamps made their belated appearance.

## Quality Printed and Plates Used

During their long contract period (1918-33), Bradbury printed over 71.5 million Seahorse stamps using some 42 individual plates to do so. Of these, up to 38 featured Irish overprints on some 3.25 million stamps.

## Identifying Bradbury's Plate Series

Fortunately, there are certain traits that help to distinguish the various plates they made. Conveniently, they fall into three distinct Series; each one possessing its own characteristics. These came in the form of constant flaws affecting part of

the printed image and when combined with the changes to the height of their stamps and to the widths of either the top or bottom perforation teeth, it is possible to identify the Series from which *individual* stamps originated.

In the two tables shown below and on the next page, you can see how the constant flaws to the 2s 6d value tablet change with each Series. Similar flaws are to be found on the other two denominations, most of these being well known to Irish collectors.

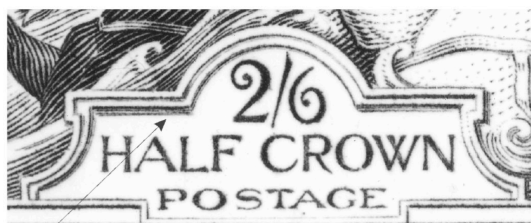
| Identifying 2s 6d Official Plates Numbers (Series I to III) |                                     |               |                                                |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BRADBURY                                                    | Plate Nos                           |               | Average Stamp Height and Perf. Characteristics |                                                                   |
| SERIES I<br>(1919-25)<br>Damp Printing                      | -/1                                 | States 1 & 2  | 22.6 mm                                        | Wide top perf.<br>– similar to De La Rue                          |
|                                                             | 2/4                                 | States 1† & 2 | 22.6 mm                                        |                                                                   |
|                                                             | 3/5                                 | States 1 & 2  | 22.75 mm                                       |                                                                   |
|                                                             | -/1                                 | State 3       | 22.75 mm                                       |                                                                   |
|                                                             | † incl. Ribbed paper (State 1 only) |               |                                                |                                                                   |
| SERIES II<br>(1926-30)<br>Dry Printing                      | 5/7                                 |               | 23.1 mm                                        | Top fed through perforation machine – slightly wider bottom perf. |
|                                                             | 6/8                                 |               | 23.1 – 22.9 mm                                 |                                                                   |
|                                                             | 7/9                                 |               | 22.9 mm                                        | Even perms                                                        |
|                                                             | 8/10                                |               |                                                |                                                                   |
| SERIES III<br>(1930-34)<br>Dry Printing                     | 9/11                                |               | 22.9 mm                                        | Even perms; Faint hairlines; Guide dots rarely visible            |
|                                                             | 10/12                               |               |                                                |                                                                   |
|                                                             | 11/13                               |               |                                                |                                                                   |

### SERIES I



Weakened frame-line above 'AL' of 'HALF'.

### SERIES II



Strengthened frame-line

Broken letters of 'CROWN' and 'POSTAGE'



All plates

Plates

Plate 7/9 L & R

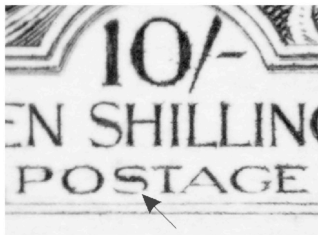
Plate 8/10 L & R

### SERIES III



Value tablet frame-lines and letters are complete; only some faint vertical hair-lines and a dot to the right of the letter 'N' of 'CROWN' are visible.

### Identifying the 5s and 10s Official Plate Numbers (Series I to III)

| BRADBURY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 5s                                                                     | 10s                                | Average Stamp Height                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SERIES I (1919–25)<br>Damp Printing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1/2† Complete Visor<br>3/4 Broken Visor<br><i>† incl. Ribbed paper</i> | 1/3 Broken 'S'<br>2/7 Complete 'S' | 22.6–22.75 mm<br>Wide top perf. similar to<br>De La Rue              |
| SERIES II (1926–29/30)<br>Dry Printing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 4/5 Broken Visor                                                       | 3/8 Broken 'S'                     | 23.1–22.9 mm<br>Slightly wider bottom perf.<br>(Top fed sheets only) |
| SERIES III (1929/30–34)<br>Dry Printing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 5/6 Broken Visor<br>States 1 & 2                                       | 4/9 Complete 'S'                   | 22.9 mm<br>Even perfs; Faint hairlines;<br>Guide dots rarely visible |
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>5s – Broken visor line, except<br/>on the first plate.</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>10s – Broken 'S' of 'POSTAGE'.</p> </div> </div> |                                                                        |                                    |                                                                      |
| <p><b>Note:</b> Those wishing to view illustrations of all re-entries and other flaws, including the measurements of their distinctive marginal markings found on the Bradbury plates shown, will need to refer to the book <i>Discovering Seahorses</i>, pages 85–221. (Copies of this book can be obtained from Mike Jackson at <a href="mailto:mike@mjpublishings.com">mike@mjpublishings.com</a>)</p>                                            |                                                                        |                                    |                                                                      |

### Plates used by various overprints

Extensive research\* conducted over the last twelve years or so, has helped to identify which of those Bradbury plates carried each of the different types of Irish Overprints used over their twelve year period (1922–1934), ending with the introduction of the Re-engraved issue. These are shown below and on the next page:

### BRADBURY PLATES USED FOR IRISH OVERPRINTS

| Irish Overprints                                                                                                                         | <u>2s 6d</u>                                                                           | <u>5s</u>                        | <u>10s</u>                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Dollard – Rialtas</b><br><b>(from 17 Feb 1922)</b>                                                                                    | 2/4 L & R (State 1)<br>L (State 2)                                                     | 1/2 L & R<br>inc. 'ribbed' paper | 1/3 L & R                  |
| <b>Thom – Rialtas</b><br><b>(from 17 Oct 1922)</b>                                                                                       | 2/4 L States 1 & 2<br>3/5 R State 1                                                    | 1/2 L & R                        | 1/3 L & R                  |
| <b>Thom – Saorstat</b><br><b>(from 21 Dec 1922)</b>                                                                                      | -/1 R State 2<br>L & R State 3<br>2/4 R State 1<br>L State 2<br>3/5 L & R States 1 & 2 | 1/2 L & R<br><br>3/4 L           | 1/3 L & R<br><br>2/7 L & R |
| <b>Dublin Castle</b><br><b>(from Aug 1925) - Saorstat</b><br><b>&amp; (narrow)</b><br><b>Somerset House</b><br><b>(from 26 May 1927)</b> | -/1 L & R States 2 & 3<br>2/4 L & R State 1<br>5/7 L & R?<br>6/8 L & R                 | 3/4 L & R<br>4/5 L & R           | 1/3 R<br>2/7 L & R         |



## BRADBURY PLATES USED FOR IRISH OVERPRINTS

| Irish Overprints                                                          | <u>2s 6d</u>                                                                | <u>5s</u>                           | <u>10s</u>                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Somerset House - Saorstát</b><br><b>(from 26 May 1927) (composite)</b> | 6/8 L & R                                                                   | 4/5 L & R                           | 3/8 L & R                                   |
| <b>Somerset House - Saorstát</b><br><b>(from 9 Dec 1927) (wide)</b>       | 6/8 L & R<br>7/9 L & R<br>8/10 L & R<br>9/11 L & R<br>10/12? & or<br>11/13? | 4/5 L & R<br>5/6 L & R States 1 & 2 | 1/3 R?<br>2/7 R?<br>3/8 L & R<br>4/9 L or R |

\* Collections examined:-

British Postal Museum   Patrick Williams  
Irish Post Office   Canon J Brennan  
Dr Cyril Dulin   plus numerous auctions,  
Bill Fletcher   inc. MacDonnell Whyte  
Johan Rehnberg   and David Feldman

? Reported, but not seen by author.

Note: 'L' & 'R' refer to the left and right panes from Bradbury's double-pane plates.

### Time to Ditch those Philatelic Numbers

Now collectors have all the information needed to convert effortlessly to the official plate numbers, no purpose is served by persisting with the old and irrelevant philatelic ones.

If Stanley Gibbons can adopt the official numbers in their most recent specialised (13<sup>th</sup> Edition) catalogue, surely the time has come for others to follow suit. For clarity's sake, let us hope so.



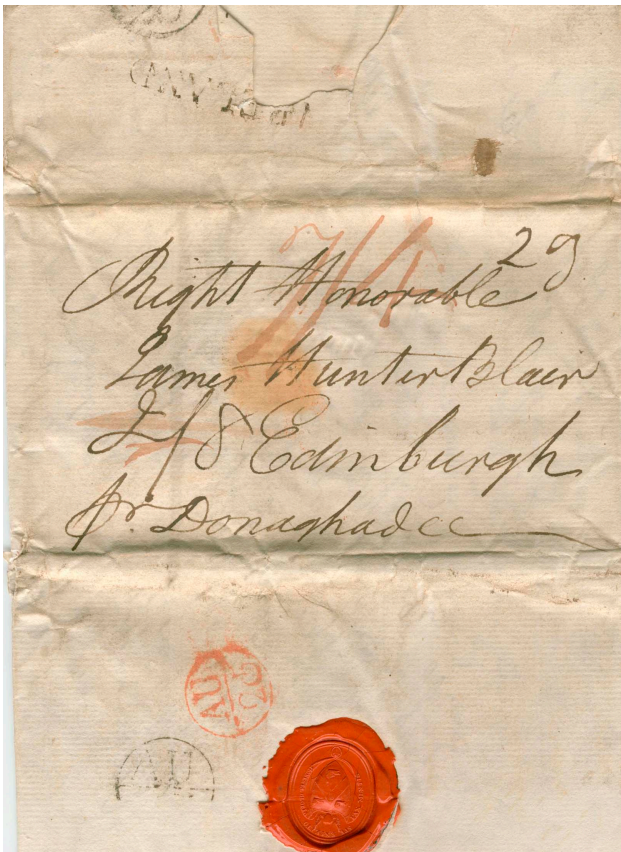
An example of the Bradbury 10/- Plate 3/8 Left, top fed sheet with composite overprint

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I was most interested to read your article in the September issue of Irish Philately about express mail in Ireland.

It prompted me to look at my eighteenth century Irish letters (I collect amongst other things both express mail and mail crossing the Irish Sea in the pre-stamp era) and I thought your readers might be interested in this letter which was written in Dublin on 19 and 20 August 1785 by William Forbes to James Hunter Blair in Scotland. It was carried to Edinburgh at the high cost of 7/4d due to the attachment of a newspaper to the written contents. On arrival it was struck with the scarce "IRELAND" hand-stamp in black and Edinburgh "Bishop Mark" for 25 August.



The letter itself refers to the febrile state of Dublin during a period of heated debates in the Irish House of Commons over the appropriateness of proposed increases in taxes to contribute to the management of British possessions overseas in a quid pro quo for better conditions of trade with Britain and its colonies.

Extracts read:

*"I wrote to you the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. from a room a blaze of illumination. The last night past over however without any material disturbance; a few windows only were broken, of obnoxious persons....."*

*In the discussion of Monday in the House of Commons a keen altercation took place between Mr Fitzgibbon, the Attorney General, and Mr Curran, a lawyer. The consequence was a duel next morning between the two gentlemen when, after exchanging a shot apiece without any mischief, the seconds interposed and the matter was made up.....*

*I was prevented from dispatching this letter last night by returning late from a sailing party in the Bay of Dublin. Yesterday, Mr Perry, Speaker of the House of Commons, resigned his chair. The administration have put up Mr Foster, the Chancellor of the Exchequer as his successor and the Opposition support Mr Ponsonby (who has been wavering on this late occasion) with a view of detaching him & his party from government.*

*Above one hundred & fifty expresses went from the Post Office last night & this morning, all over the country, in consequence of their demele."*

So it would seem that, in 1785 at least, there was indeed a system operated by the Irish Post Office for sending out urgent mail by dedicated rider.

I do not have any Irish letters that I can identify as having been sent by express but I do have an English example sent from Berwick to Alnwick in Northumberland on 20 September 1787. The wrapper is endorsed "By Express / 6 o'clock Thursday Evg. / 20 Sepr. 1787 and "Paid 12s/3d – Boy 1s/-".

The Post Office in England and Wales offered an express service at that date by riders using "upmost Diligence and Expedition" with each item recorded on a waybill showing the time of receipt and dispatch from every staging post on its route. Charges included a payment of 6d to the Post Boy for each stage as "Encouragement for him to perform his Duty" plus a mileage charge, set between August 1785 and June 1790 at 4½d per mile. I do not know whether prepayment was required or not. This item was carried two stages so the Post Boy was due a shilling.

The way the English charges are set out is very similar to the arrangements quoted from the Dublin Directory in your article. My guess would be that the reference to "6d per stage for the horn" refers not to a second person but to the Post Boy himself and that the Irish system was very similar to the one over the water.

It would be most interesting to see if other readers can throw more light on how the express service worked in eighteenth century Ireland – and especially if they know of any letters using the service, particularly if the charges are apparent!

Yours etc

Julian Tweed  
Neston, Cheshire



## BEYOND THE CATALOGUES - THE YOUNG IRELAND ISSUE of 1945

John Lennon

The Young Ireland Movement had its origins in the Trinity College Historical Society, founded in 1839, which elected Thomas Davis as its President in 1840. Two years later he and two others, all in their late twenties, started The Nation newspaper. The term 'Young Ireland' was used to describe them in disparaging terms.

The Cuala Press was set up in Churchtown, near Dundrum, in 1908, during the Gaelic Revival period. It was run by the Yeats family with the two girls, Lilly and Lolly, printing books and Broadsheets with illustrations and poems by their brothers, Jack and William and many others.

Mrs W.B. Yeats met Patrick Little, Minister for P&T, in October 1942 and suggested that an airmail card be printed to commemorate Thomas Davis and The Nation. She then submitted her proposal in writing. Cuala would print 5,000 cards at 2/6 each *"to be released for posting to the United States by the last Air Mail before Christmas."* She enclosed a specimen card (fig 1) and three 'rough drawings' by Victor Brown which could be used (fig 2).



Fig.1 Suggested Air Mail Card



Fig. 2 One of Victor Brown's "rough drawings"

In a memo to the Secretary of the Dept., the Minister thought it would *"be more proper for the PO to obtain say, 20,000 cards bearing a specially printed design and slogan and sell these over the counter at ½d each with the necessary stamps (Air*

*Mail or ordinary post) in the same manner as letter-cards."*

The Secretary discussed it with Bulmer Hobson, Revenue Stamping Branch (RSB), who said the Cuala proposal *"couldn't be entertained, on account of the risks involved in misuse of dies."* Prepared cards could be submitted to the Stamping Department for the imprint of the Postage Stamp (1½d). *"It is understood that supplies of cardboard suitable for postcards is not now available for the replacement of PO stock. In fact when existing stocks (100,000 or six weeks supply) are used up no further supplies will be available."* 16<sup>th</sup> November (!) would be the latest date for the acceptance of Air Mail for America, giving just over two weeks which would most likely be not enough time.

In his report to the Minister, the Secretary added in manuscript *"The proper time for a Davis Commemoration will be 1945, the anniversary (sic) of his death, and I would suggest that we should provisionally decide to issue a special stamp in that year."* Mrs Yeats was informed that it was not possible to comply with her request.

### Airmail Stamps Conceived.

Lennox Robinson, of the Abbey Theatre, scribbled a short note to the Secretary, P&T, in July 1944. *"Dear P.S. (O'Hegarty) Jonathan Swift will be dead 200 years October 1945 what about a stamp? Lennox"*

In an internal memo, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 'P.S.' wrote that when putting forward the case for the Davis stamp, Swift should also be suggested and the two stamps could be issued at the same time.

The Secretary sent a formal letter to the Minister on 14<sup>th</sup> September, noting that two important anniversaries would occur the next year, Davis and Swift, which might fitly be marked by stamps. *"Davis could go on the ½d and 2½d and Swift on the 1d and 3d. . . . Mrs Yeats suggested a Davis Air Mail stamp in 1942 and the question of a distinct Air Mail Stamp may be ripe for consideration next year. We most certainly should have Air Mail stamps if the Rineanna Airport continues to be used for American traffic, as I have no doubt it will."*

There is no hint as to why the Swift stamp was dropped but a week later the Minister instructed the Secretary to prepare only for a Davis issue. When one of the original proponents of a Swift stamp enquired about it, in January 1945, he was told that

the Davis issue had been decided on and there could not be another special issue.

### 6d Rate “to make money”

RSB estimated the cost of Plates and Dies for one denomination at £200 and for two at £325. The Minister was asked whether it should be in one or two denominations with a recommendation that ½d and 2½d be selected. He replied on 9<sup>th</sup> October in a one sentence letter: *“I think 2½d and 6d (to make money) would be best, and I think we should emphasise the idea that the stamp is to commemorate Davis, Mitchel and the Young Ireland Movement.”*

The issue was sanctioned by the Government on 31<sup>st</sup> October and six days later the Minister was officially informed of this by the Secretary P&T. *“It is recommended that the central figure of the design be a portrait of Thomas Davis and that Sean O'Sullivan be commissioned to execute the drawing. The Hamilton stamp, which is regarded on all sides as our best stamp, shows the degree to which he has mastered the very difficult art of designing for stamps.”*

The Minister replied *“It has been decided in the case of this stamp for a design of a symbolic nature conveying the idea of the Young Ireland Movement – the advertisement to be carefully prepared in order to indicate the full significance to the competitors.”*

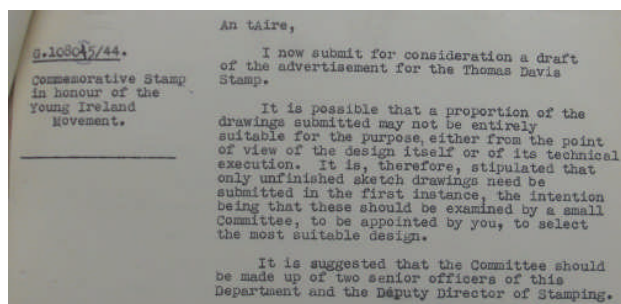


Fig 3. 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. 1944 Secretary P&T to Minister

A draft advertisement was sent to the Minister for approval. There appears to have been a conflict between the Minister and the Secretary as to the subject of the stamp issue, exemplified by the accompanying letter. (fig. 3) He added *“Preference will be given to a comprehensive design suggesting the spirit of the Young Ireland Movement as a whole.”* He also wrote at the bottom of the letter *“. . . the actual committee to examine & advise minister had better be members of the general public.”* The three names he proposed were J. Brennan (of Brennan Insurances), A.E. Jones (an architect) and Sean O'Sullivan (artist). There is no reason given for this decision but Joseph Brennan was President of the Irish Philatelic Society and

Alfred Jones was chairman of the committee, which had recently put on a Stamp Exhibition in the National Museum. It was noted in the margin in pencil *“Brennan & Jones already have agreed to act”*. I suspect they were seated with the Minister at the Exhibition Dinner and had a good chat with him!

The file on this issue is titled “Young Ireland Stamp” and when Post Offices were requesting stamps they were to use the same heading but Bulmer Hobson, RSB, always used “Thomas Davis”. Many letters using one title were replied to using the other.

The advertisement was placed in newspapers from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> December and designs were to be received not later than 21<sup>st</sup> January 1945.

The advisory committee was asked to attend in Leinster House on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> January (“as the Dáil will be in session”), but Sean O'Sullivan cried off the day before.

Only four of the 121 designs received were regarded of sufficient merit to warrant further consideration. Two (figs 4 and 5) were by Richard King, one of which he was asked to modify and it was then accepted by the Minister on 14<sup>th</sup> February. The next day, the incomplete drawing was shown to RSB who asked for the solid background to be broken up, which King, reluctantly, agreed to do and the completed drawing met with their approval on 19<sup>th</sup>.



Fig 4. One of Richard King's designs

When Hobson returned it with a photo print in stamp size to the Secretary P&T he wrote *“While it is not the type of drawing suitable for making a good stamp it presents no technical difficulty either for the engraver or for the printer.”*

On 27<sup>th</sup>, RSB were told to proceed with procuring the necessary dies and plates. At the end of May it was realised that 16<sup>th</sup> September was a Sunday so the date of issue was changed to 15<sup>th</sup> and a draft publicity release was prepared. In it the artist was



stated to have based his design on Samuel Ferguson's 'Lament for Thomas Davis' which contained ". . . in every fresh ploughed field beholding the sowers striding free, Scattering broadside forth the corn in golden plenty . . ."



Fig 5. Another of King's designs

The warrant to release the watermarked paper and to print the stamps was issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> August but the colours were not selected until 8<sup>th</sup>. Because the 6d was replacing the 6d Sword of Light definitive, used by Revenue on Agreements, it had to be in Double Fugitive Purple on coated watermarked paper. Blue was picked for the 2½d. The draft publicity said that the paper was of Irish manufacture but this was crossed out and did not appear in the final version.

It had been announced that the stamps would be on sale for six months. On 18<sup>th</sup> January 1946, the Head of Stores wrote to the Secretary "Sufficient quantities were ordered to meet normal requirements for six months, including the heavy Christmas demands. Issues of the 6d stamps for the past 4 months have, however, increased by approximately 20% over the 1944 figures and in the circumstances the present stock is almost exhausted. 500 sheets of each rate had been set aside for philatelic purposes and he proposed taking 300 of these to prolong their sale. This was deemed not desirable and he was asked for his views on having further supplies printed. The 500 philatelic sheets would last only ten days. The 6d stock was exhausted on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and the definitive was being issued. RSB would take at least three weeks to deliver new supplies and "views supplementary warrants for comparatively small quantities with disfavour on the grounds that they interfere with planned production. All their machines are at present employed on urgent work."

Warrants were placed for additional supplies on 25<sup>th</sup> January and RSB undertook to expedite delivery. On 22<sup>th</sup> March, the Minister decided that the Young Ireland stamps should remain on sale until 15<sup>th</sup> September, when the Davitt and Parnell stamps

were due to be issued, and the necessary stocks should be provided. On 29<sup>th</sup> March, Stores reported that the 2½d stock was exhausted and definitives would have to be issued until fresh supplies came to hand. "That is 2 or 3 weeks time" noted in margin. Warrants for further supplies of both values were placed.

Stock of watermarked paper was 950,000 sheets and normal annual consumption was 500,000 sheets. The double size Davitt and Parnell issue required 200,000 sheets. "This is regarded as fairly satisfactory at present but the position as regards future supplies is still governed by emergency conditions. Recently when we invited tenders for 57 tons we were able to get an offer for 12 tons only". The third printing went ahead and the stamps remained on sale until September 1946. At the end of October, Stores reported that 30,000 sheets of the 2½d remained in stock and added "As the position of watermarked paper continues to be acute it is suggested for consideration that opportunity should be taken of the increased issue of stamps for the Christmas pressure to distribute these 30,000 sheets. (These sheets represent approximately a quarter of a ton of watermarked paper)."

This caused some embarrassment and Stores were asked to explain how this came about. They replied "The practice of issuing commemorative stamps to run for a prescribed period has always been a source of trouble to this Branch" (Branch) "It would save considerable trouble and wastage of Watermarked Paper if it were made a general practice to allow stocks of Commemorative Stamps to run out in ordinary course even if the prescribed period were thus extended." The 30,000 sheets represented about 5 weeks consumption.

The Secretary felt that in the circumstances it was undesirable to destroy these sheets and wrote to the Minister for his authority to issue them, pointing out that no objections had been received from philatelists when the six months were extended to twelve (which does not appear to have been officially announced). He agreed and Stores were instructed, on 28<sup>th</sup> November, to go ahead and distribute the Young Ireland stamps along with the Davitt and Parnell stamps.

King used 'buidean' (crowd) in his drawings but 'gluaiseacht' (movement) was in the final design.

The illustrations in this article have been copied from material in the National Archives, Dublin and the use thereof is acknowledged with thanks.

## TELEVISION LICENCE SAVINGS STAMPS - Brian Warren

The first reference to the use of savings stamps for the purpose of paying for the annual Irish television licence is in the 1977 edition of *Eolaí an Phoist* (Post Office Guide)<sup>1</sup>. The scheme at the time provided for the use of ordinary 10p savings stamps which could be affixed to special cards available at post offices. I must admit I was never aware of such a scheme at the time. It is not entirely clear from the entry in the Guide as to whether there was a special card for this purpose or, whether the ordinary savings card doubled up for this purpose. At the time, a monochrome licence cost IR£18.50 and a colour licence IR£31.00<sup>2</sup>.

The same entry appears in the 1982 Guide by which time the licence costs had increased to IR£27 and IR£45 respectively. These rates had applied since 1 December 1980.

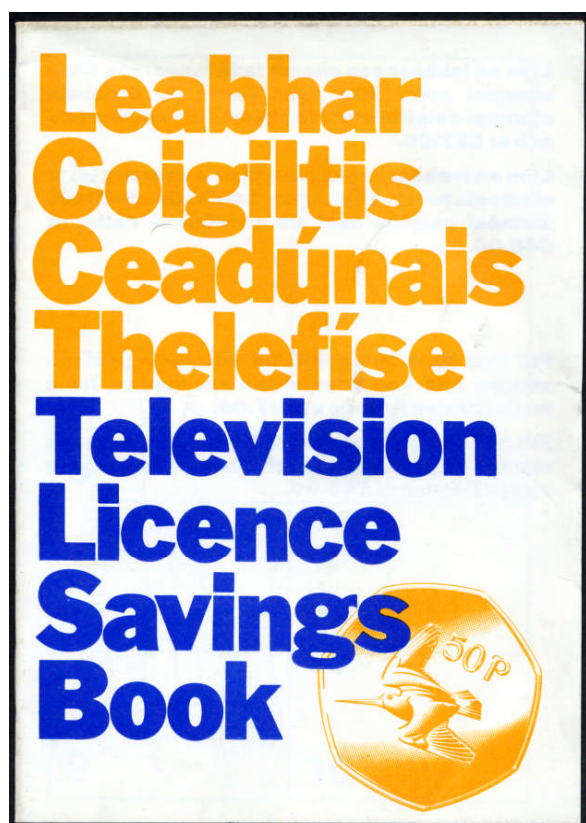


fig. 1

At some time prior to 1984, the rapid inflation in the cost of a licence resulted in the use of ordinary 50p postage stamps rather than 10p savings stamps. Given the reference to savings stamps in the 1982 Guide, I suspect the use of postage stamps may have introduced sometime during 1982/83 given that I have a Savings Book (fig. 1) which refers to the use

of 50p postage stamps which also refers to the licence fees introduced in December 1980 and the next fee increase was on 1st April 1983 when the rates increased to £34 and IR£52 respectively.

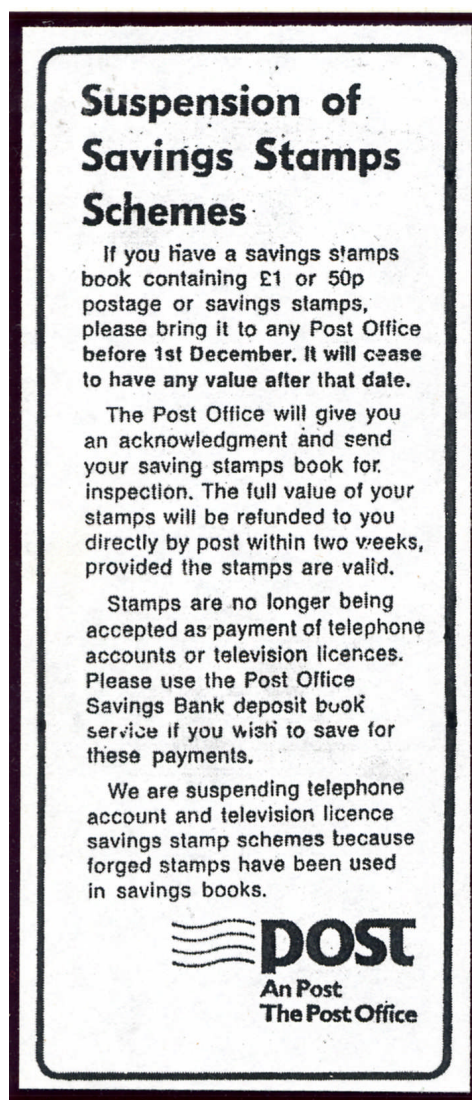


fig. 2

At some stage, the use of both 10p savings and 50p postage stamps was replaced by £1 postage stamps but I have not been able to source a Savings Book which refers to £1 stamps.

However, in November 1984 the scheme was suspended and the then £1 postage stamp in the Architecture Definitives series showing Cahir Castle was withdrawn – see newspaper notice (fig. 2). The notice took account that savings books/cards with either 50p, £1 or saving stamps could still be in circulation. The reason for the withdrawal of the savings scheme was the availability of forged £1 stamps at a discount which were used illegally in connection with the T.V. Licence Savings Scheme.





*fig. 5 - 2nd printing – imperforate pane of 20 stamps*



*fig. 3 – Genuine stamp*



*fig. 4 – Forgery (1st printing)  
stuck down on part of Savings Book page*

The initial printing of the £1 forgery was line perf. 12 x 12 as compared to the comb perf. 14 x 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> on the genuine stamp. Paper and colours do not match and the overall image is not as sharp and as well defined as on the genuine stamp (*figs. 3 and 4*). This stamp is only known stuck down on a Savings Book page.



*fig 6 – Forgery (2nd printing)*

A second printing (*figs. 5 and 6*) of the forgery of better quality is found from sheets of 40 stamps split into two panes of 20 (4 rows of 5) with margins all round and no marginal markings other than a small line in the top left margin. The paper is thin and transparent and very cream in colour as compared to the genuine stamp. The line perforation was altered to 15 x 15. This printing is known used as illustrated on the next page (*fig. 7*). Imperforate examples (*figs. 5 and 8*) in a very light shade are known to exist. Finally, I understand that imperforate gutter pairs taken from the complete sheets of 40 stamps are known to exist but I have not seen examples.





fig 7. – 2nd printing  
Used on large packet from Saggart, Co. Dublin



fig. 8 – Forgery imperforate pair

The Cahir Castle £1 postage stamp was replaced the following year (1985) with the Killarney Cathedral design but this could not be used for the savings scheme.

The savings scheme was re-introduced during 1986 with the introduction of two special licence £1 and £5 stamps which were printed by De La Rue Smurfit Ltd. (figs. 9 and 10).

All illustrations of blocks and Savings Books covers are reduced by between 25% and 50%.

I wish to thank Anthony Finn and John Mullen who for the use of some of the items illustrated in this article.



fig. 9

Each stamp has the year of issue (1986) included as shown above (fig. 9).

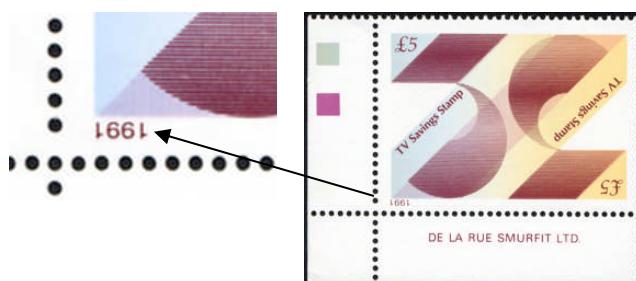


fig. 10

Although I purchased stamps on an ongoing basis during the years 1987 to 1988, all £1 stamps continued to include the year date "1986". However, a 1991 printing of the £5 does exist (fig. 10). Other printings though may exist.

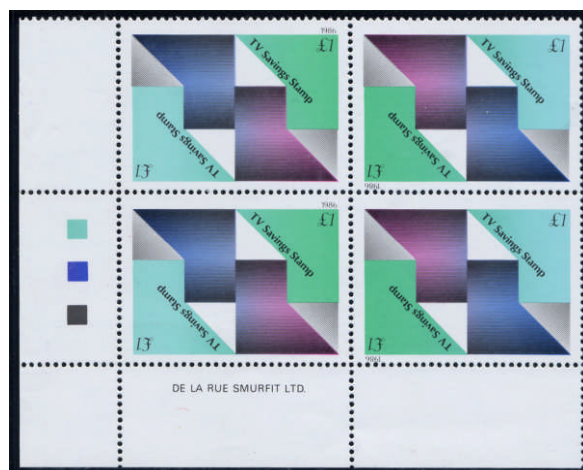


fig. 11

Both the designs and the sheet layout for both values incorporated a tête-beche arrangement (fig. 11). A note in Iris an Phoist at the time of issue stated that Head Post Offices were to be given ultra-violet lamps to aid checking of returned stamps. This was because both values now incorporated a yellow

phosphor security overprint of the word "POST" repeating to form a square in the case of the £1 value and two triangles in the case of the £5 stamp. They were the first Irish stamps to incorporate phosphor.

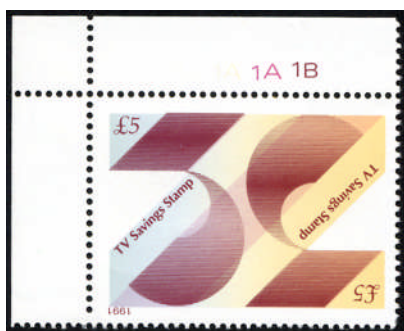


fig. 12 – note first 1A (pale yellow) is very feint.

Both values had colour checks in the bottom of the left margin, printer's imprint in the bottom margin at left and plate numbers in the top margin at left. The £5 has three plate numbers 1A1A1B (fig. 12). I do not have any record of the plate numbers on the £1 value and would presume that the combination 1A1A1A also exists on the £5.

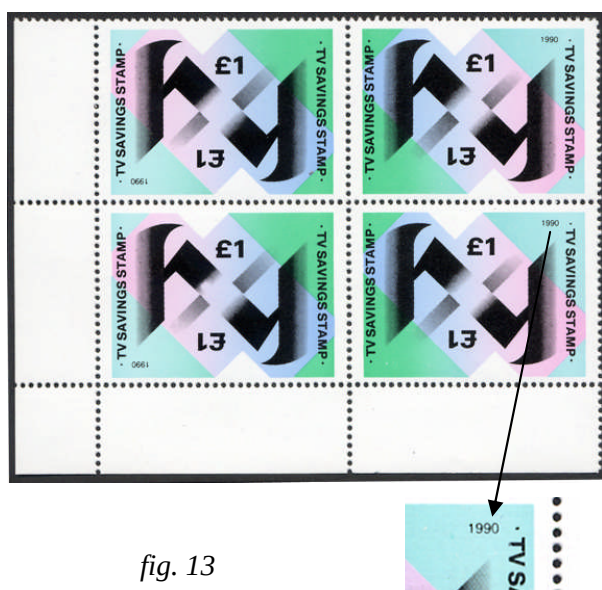


fig. 13

A new £1 value in a new tête-beche design (also with phosphor) appeared in 1988 (see commercial use illustrated on front cover and fig. 13) and the £5 went off-sale at some time presumably after or during 1991. There were no marginal markings on the new £1 sheets and thus the printer is unknown. The same tête-beche sheet arrangement continued with the new design. In the case of the revised design, the year imprint on each stamp was updated in subsequent years. Stamps with year dates of 1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998 and 1999 are known – a selection is shown in fig. 14.

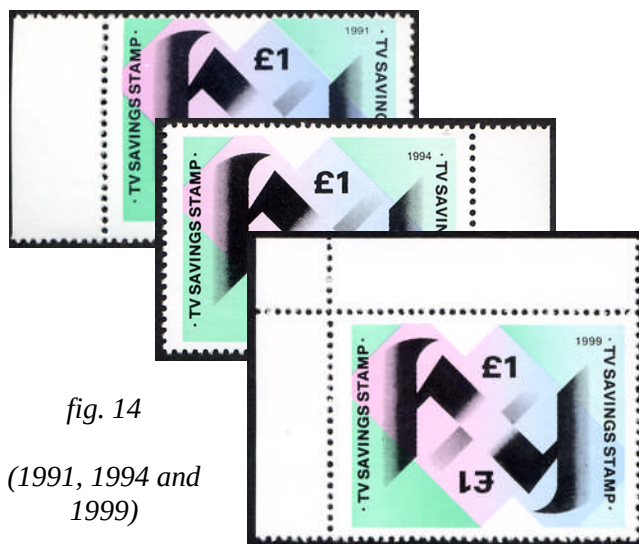


fig. 14

(1991, 1994 and 1999)

I suspect that stamps with other years including 2000 or 2001 may also exist. Note as compared to the 1990 printing (fig. 13), the 1988 stamp shown on the front cover and all stamps for the years from 1991 onwards (fig. 14) have the inner pink and blue colours reversed. Why the change? I also do not have any Saving Books for the period 1986 to 2001.



fig. 15



fig. 16

The tête-beche design/layout and use of phosphor continued as before. Commercial use also known as illustrated above (fig. 16).

The changeover to the euro on 1 January 2002 saw the introduction of a new €2 stamp (fig. 15). There was no year imprint on this stamp and once again there were no marginal markings.





fig. 17

The new Savings Book (fig. 17) had a total of 10 pages which could hold a total of 80 x €2 stamps. The colour licence fee was now €107 (monochrome €84).

The final change occurred in August/September 2005 with the replacement in of the €2 stamp with a new €4 value (fig 18). The year imprint re-appeared but any purchases in the intervening years up to September 2012 still have the year "2005".

The tête-beche design/layout and use of phosphor continued. There are no marginal markings and a full sheet contains 50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps). I suspect all previous issues since 1986 were also made-up in the same format. Can any member confirm?

*The author would be interested in obtaining details/scans/copies of any other printings or Savings Book covers not referred to in this article to include in a future update. I can be contacted either via the editor or at [brian.warren2@upcmail.ie](mailto:brian.warren2@upcmail.ie).*



fig.18



fig. 19

The Savings Book (fig. 19) contains a total of 6 pages with spaces for a total of 48 x €4 stamps. The current fee is €160<sup>3</sup>. This stamp and book continues in use as of November 2012.

<sup>1</sup> See under "Savings Stamps", page 88.

<sup>2</sup> See under "Licences", page 11. This rate had applied since 1 April 1977. A complete list of T.V. licence rates can be found on Wikipedia together with links to the legal Statutory Instruments introducing same.

<sup>3</sup> Separate monochrome and colour fees were abolished on 1 January 2003.



## MAKING THE MAIL GO FASTER - EXPRESS MAIL IN IRELAND part II

Editor

In our last issue, I looked at 'express' mail in its broadest context from earliest times into the 1840s reaching the 'FROM TO' marks used at Dublin in the first decade of stamped mail. Member Julian Tweed has kindly shown me how to use the index of past issues properly and reminded me that Dr Brian de Burca and A T Sedgley wrote on the subject in our Journal in September 1976. Before moving on, it is therefore appropriate that we pause for a while and consider their article.

In that article the authors state, in relation to these marks, that they have no record of a Late Fee being paid. I assume they were anticipating a marking on the cover to the effect 'Late Fee Paid'. Likewise, I have never seen any such marking either manuscript or by means of a stamp prior to the mid 1850s. The view expressed in the article was that these marks were applied to the item on top of a bundle and in a couple of cases they note the indentation on the item of a piece of string securing the bundle. They go on to note seeing 10 of the 'FROM TO' marks in red and 9 in black and further note that none has been seen for certain months – a fact which does not surprise me in such a small sample. I am always hesitant in doubting the work of others so before expounding further, alongside I append a consolidated table showing the 19 items recorded in 1976 and adding to that my own findings and those of Julian Tweed – showing destinations in each case. It is interesting to see that, perhaps inevitably, some of 'their' covers have found their way both our collections. More importantly, what can we learn from this listing, a listing which I am sure is nowhere near comprehensive.

With the exception of two 1845 items in red, no item with the FROM TO mark struck in red is recorded prior to December 1846. No item is seen struck in black after that date save one to Edinburgh in 1848. Alternatively it can be seen, with the exception of the 3.30 to 4.30pm mark and two other examples in December 1846, red is always used up to 7pm and black was used for the rest of the day. I am not sure what this tells and I would invite members to let me have their theories.

Another fact of note is that up to 5.45pm all the recorded items are to English addresses; thereafter all are within Ireland, save three to Scotland and two 'late in the day' English items in 1843. It needs a member with access to the various almanacs to look at coach times and see what that tells us. One might also query why so many are to Birmingham – easy,

### FROM TO markings - a revised summary:-

| Times (all PM) | Colour | Date     | Destination    |
|----------------|--------|----------|----------------|
| 3.00 to 3.30   | black  | 1843     | ?              |
| 3.30 to 4.30   | black  | 18.2.41  | London         |
|                | black  | 5.7.43   | London         |
| 5.00 to 5.30   | red    | 2.12.46  | Birmingham     |
|                | red    | 11.12.46 | Birmingham     |
|                | red    | 2.3.47   | Birmingham     |
|                | red    | 8.3.47   | Gloucester     |
|                | red    | 10.4.47  | London         |
| 5.00 to 5.45   | black  | 4.12.46  | Birmingham     |
|                | red    | 17.5.47  | London         |
| 5.30 to 5.45   | black  | 1.12.46  | Birmingham*    |
|                | red    | 14.7.47  | Exeter         |
| 6.00 to 6.15   | red    | 13.3.50  | Thurles        |
|                | red    | 17.2.52  | Maryborough    |
| 6.00 to 7.00   | red    | 2.5.45   | Drogheda       |
|                | red    | 8.4.45   | Drumsna        |
|                | red    | 5.12.46  | Dundalk        |
|                | black  | 13.9.45  | Ennis          |
| 7.00 to 7.30   | black  | 19.4.45  | Drumsna        |
|                | black  | 8.5.48   | Edinburgh      |
| 7.00 to 8.00   | black  | 31.5.41  | ?              |
|                | black  | 29.1.42  | Edinburgh      |
|                | black  | 14.4.42  | Waterford      |
|                | black  | 16.4.42  | Stewartstown   |
|                | black  | 19.4.42  | Carlow         |
|                | black  | 19.4.?   | ? (ex Dixon)** |
| 7.30 to 7.45   | black  | 1847     | ?              |
| 8.00 to 8.30   | black  | 15.2.41  | Greenock       |
|                | black  | 7.7.43   | London         |
|                | black  | 30.1.44  | Youghal        |
| 9.30 to 9.45   | black  | 4.3.43   | London         |

\* noted as red in 1976 article

\*\* possibly the same as item above

all are within a short period, from the same correspondence, clearly from a sender who was in the habit of paying a late fee!

This leaves unanswered the question as to whether the marks were struck on the top of a bundle or they represented payment of a late fee charge. With one exception, all examples I have been able to examine show delivery on the following day (see below); I think this proves that a late fee must have been paid in each case and reverting to all the items to Birmingham, I cannot believe that each of these was the top item in a bundle.....but just suppose the letters were sorted into drop-off order. The mail coach passed through Birmingham en route to London hence a Birmingham item was more likely to be at the top of the pile. A mere supposition!

Are we any further on? To be truthful I am unsure beyond establishing to one's reasonable satisfaction that a Late Fee was paid on each of these items.

The one item that failed to achieve next day delivery? (see above) – it was the 9.30 to 9.45pm item (I have not examined the London item dated 7.7.1843). The railway did not run beyond Chester at this time, so this is hardly surprising.

Enough of these marks! What I do think we have established to our satisfaction is that there was a Late Fee system in use at Dublin in the 1840s and that it was used, if perhaps somewhat spasmodically. If you know more, please tell me!



The first actual marking incorporating the wording 'Late Fee' that I have been able to record is shown on the item alongside dated May 1855. The fee was 6d, paid so as to ensure that the item travelled on the night Wexford mail coach, which left the GPO at 9pm, arriving at Enniscorthy at 7.15am the following morning. I have a similar item dated April 1859, addressed to Ashford, Co Wicklow (also on the Wexford mail coach route) and David MacDonnell has shown me this mark on a December 1858 item from Dublin to Killala, Co Mayo. On this item the Late Fee marking is struck in green; on the 1859 item it is in black. These are examples of items posted at the end of the mail coach era and correspondents were clearly happy to pay the extra 6d for next day delivery. Surprisingly this marking has only been seen on items on which a 6d late fee was paid.

I propose to move forward in our next issue and discuss the effect of the railway on 'making the mail go faster'. Their coming echoed far beyond the demise of the mail coach and gave rise to some interesting postmarks as mail circulation was changed to meet the opportunities presented by the Iron Horse.

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## DANGEROUS 'SPECIMENS'



David MacDonnell has drawn my attention to examples of Specimen overprints recently offered on e-Bay. The vendor, based in the UK, is 'greatproductsgreatservice'. David's view is that these may well be forgeries and great care should be taken. His view is that the dotted outline to the printing of the 'overprint' is a clear indication that a high quality modern printer has been used.

An example is shown alongside and an enlargement below, this clearly showing the dotted impression of the 'overprint'.



I do urge all members to exercise extreme caution in the purchase of such items and suggest you do not do so without a Certificate.

Perhaps the vendor is not aware as to the status of the items he is offering; however I do find it concerning that his e-Bay listings are 'private'. As ever, you are urged to buy on e-Bay with great care. - Ed.



## AUCTION WATCH - Erinman

The most important sale of Irish material in the last quarter was the David Feldman sale held in Geneva between 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012 which contained significant sections of both Irish postal history and of overprints.

In general a substantial number of postal history items remained unsold and of those that did attract bidders saw the lots sold near to estimate.

One lot that did attract interest was described as "1829 Entire sent registered to Dublin at 2s8d rate then forwarded to Athboy at 3s6d rate, with a fine strike of the "T.OFF / POSTAGE to DUBLIN / NOT PAID" boxed hs, Dublin "REGISTER'D" cds, "GRAIG / 58" mileage mark and two strikes of the "E" code Inspector's crown covering the original rate, framed ds on reverse, minor faults not detracting from this attractive and rare cover". The item (*fig 1*) sold for 850euro against a pre-sale estimate of 500euro.



*fig 1*

The overprints section attracted much more interest with many fine and scarce lots going under the hammer.

A 1922 Dollard half crown described as "2s6d Chocolate-brown, top right corner marginal mint block of six, bottom block of four mint never hinged, showing NISSEN RE-ENTRY (R1/3), plus SHORT THIRD LINE on (R1/4) & (R2/4)" sold for 400 euro against an estimate of 200euro. In similar vein a complete Dollard used set 2/6d to 10/- set "each neatly tied on small neat fragments by complete WICKLOW / 17.FE.22 first day cancels, 10s showing MAJOR RE-ENTRY (R1/1)" complete with an accompanying MacDonnell 2005 expertising certificate also doubled its estimate going under the hammer for 800euro.

A possibly unique set of the 1925 Saorstat narrow date overprint in used blocks of four each "superbly struck twice by BAILE ATHA CLIATH / 9 NO 26 cds" made 2200euro (estimate 1200 euro) (*fig 2*) whilst an unmounted mint set in never hinged blocks

of four with "some gum creases" sold for 4200euro (estimate 3000euro).



*fig 2 (T66 fine used block of four)*

A complete set of the 1927-28 Saorstat wide date overprint in mint unmounted marginal corner blocks of four hinged in the margin only sold for 1200 euro against the pre-sale estimate of 600euro.

In what were mixed results based on pre-sale estimates a mint example of the 1935 10/- Waterlow re-engraved with double overprint (*fig 3*), one of only three known, sold under estimate at 3600euro (estimate 5000euro).



*(fig 3)*

Estimated at 8000euro and described as "1922-23 Thom 3-line overprint on 1d Red in right marginal vertical block of six with position 15/12 showing the famous accent error, with original 't' missing and inserted by hand and a tiny dot at top and MISSING ACCENT ON 'a,' mint og, margins reattached otherwise very fine and very rare, one of only two such examples known" remained unsold (*fig 4*).



*(fig 4)*



## CINDERELLA STAMPS OF IRELAND - An incomplete introduction (Part 10)

Peter Wood

### Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes 'Stamps'.

The Irish Hospitals' first Sweepstakes was held on the Manchester Handicap of 1930. First prize of £204,764 was won by a Belfast man, who had sold shares to two other Belfast residents and a half-share to bookmakers Ladbrokes. The second prize went to Vancouver, Canada and the third to Worksop, England. Operated by Hospitals Trust Limited, the Sweepstakes gave rise to a number of collectible items. While outside the Cinderella field for most, the collection of Irish Hospital Sweepstake Tickets can be undertaken and completion would be very challenging. The early years in particular are very attractive and actually state that their printing is of the quality of postage stamps - this being a confirmation of a genuine ticket (*fig 4*). However, I will limit this article to the 'Souvenir Stamps'.

#### Set 1 - Brown Borders.

Grey with brown borders.

A notice appeared in the *Philatelic Magazine* of October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1937 advertising "New Irish Souvenir Stamps" (*fig 1 below*), a specimen sheet of 24 being available free of charge by applying to 28 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin, Irish Free State. From the illustration this was the 'brown borders' set which are numbered from 1 to 24 and when complete could be set up to receive 50 Virginian Cigarettes.



By the nature of this offer the "sheets of 24" do not include all 24 stamps, on each sheet some numbers are missing whilst others are duplicated. Some innocent fun can be had by the modern collector by trying to complete the set! If on the other hand an intact sheet is seen the combination of "missing and doubled" can be noted along with the name and address given to submit your set which themselves differ on many sheets. These addresses were offices of the Sweepstake organisation once they had expanded from the original headquarters at 13 Earlsfort Terrace. Many of the names appear to be genuine senior officials of the organisation. A complete sheet is shown as *fig 2* on the next page.

The labels themselves mainly show either a Draw scene or a show one of the Pageants which were associated with Draws from 1933 to the Derby of 1937 - reinforcing an assumed issue date of Autumn 1937. Others in the set show founders R.J Duggan (1) and J. McGrath (24), Chairman of the Associated Hospitals Board, Viscount Powerscourt (23), The National Maternity Hospital, Holles St., Dublin (9) and a picture of the aircraft "The Irish Swoop" (13) which had been intended to compete in the London - Melbourne race of 1934.

#### Set 2 - Green Borders.

Grey with green borders.

The same designs are used for a 'Green borders' set numbered F1 to F24 but here there is no offer of Virginian Cigarettes and no addresses on the sheet. Was this a later issue or does the "F" preceding the number stand for foreign - so that those outside the British Isles would not be able to give rise to international postage costs for sending packs of 50 cigarettes!

#### Set 3 - Souvenir of Beauty.

Brown with green borders.

This set was probably issued in the autumn of 1938 as the last draw mentioned is that for the Derby of that year (*fig 3*).

The labels mainly show Goddesses, Queens or Princesses from Irish mythology or pre-history wearing costumes and jewellery based on designs in the National Museum. The models were presumably staff of the sweepstakes who took roles in the many pageants presented as part of the draw events. There are also labels showing a nurse, a Kerry colleen and bride. This time all sheets contain the same 20 labels, however there are a variety of names and addresses given for one to request more labels.





fig 2 – reduced by about 15%

Why this complication to the printing should have been added is a mystery to me. My only theory is that it meant that many “innocent” letters to these addresses would pass through the postal services of countries such as Canada, U.S.A. and the United Kingdom. Those post offices could not then assume that ALL mail sent to those addresses was illegal – gambling in various forms being such in a number of countries at the time.

It is of interest to note that these portraits were also used on the sweepstake tickets of this period.

#### Set 4 - Silver Jubilee Souvenir.

Blue with brown borders.

The Cesarewitch of 1938 was the twenty-fifth sweepstake and is celebrated by this set of 20 labels showing scenes from that draw and pageant. However the description on the reverse of one stamp mentions how many prizes have been drawn “up to and including the Grand National of 1939” so it seems likely they were issued in mid-1939. Once again every sheet consists of the same stamps and yet there are various names and address versions.





fig 3 – Goddesses, Queens and Princesses – only the bottom row shown

If any collectors would care to let me have details of any sheets in their possession I would be pleased to collate a list of what exists - either to issue to those individuals or publish in *Irish Philately* if it is thought to be a suitable subject (*yes please!* – Ed).

In recent years two books about the Sweep have appeared, one is an academic study the other a more journalistic approach.

‘The Irish Sweep - A History of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake, 1930-87’ by Marie Coleman, University College Dublin Press 2009 (ISBN: 978-1-906359-41-6) and ‘The Greatest Bleeding Hearts Racket in the World’ by Damian Corless, Gill & Macmillan, 2010 (ISBN: 978-0-7171-4669-7)

A final note on the subject; It is appropriate to give mention the Australian Postal Forgeries of the late 1930s relating to the sweepstakes. A group of Irishmen were attempting to sell forged Sweepstake tickets in Australia, sending them through the post. As a part of the swindle and to avoid suspicion attached to the purchase of a huge quantity of the then current 1d stamps they forged those as well! These are sought after by collectors of Australia who know them as “The Irish Gang Forgeries”

TO BE CONTINUED



fig 4 – a ticket from the original draw of November 1930 printed by Dollard

I have been fortunate to have received several articles for this issue which has meant that several of our more regular features are missing from this issue – Post Office Page, Questions (hence no Answers) and Favourite Items all being absent. That does not mean I will have enough to fill our March 2013 issue hence I do ask that over the Christmas/ New Year break you do some digging and find some items to tell us about or simply ask ‘What is this?’ – hopefully someone will be able to help us! I look forward to hearing from you early in the New Year – Ed,