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An unusual franking to Zurich in 1897 with the stamps cancelled by the postmark of the Dublin & Belfast Railway Post Office - see 'Making the Mails Go Faster' on page 84

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EDITORIAL

I must begin with a thank you to those members who responded to my call for material to fill our Journal and in this issue you will find contributions from several members. Particular thanks go to those who have written to me; I should really say 'emailed me' for despite the fact that our hobby has been built up on man's need to communicate in writing with his fellow man, there is no doubt that newly laid personal letters have become as scarce as hen's teeth in the 21st century.

In this job, I have discovered that the traditional 'Letter to the Editor' has now become a few informal lines sent to me by e-mail which in a strange way has its blessings in that I can more easily adjust the letter into a size to fit the space available, so please keep the fingers dancing and keep on writing! The downside is that I never see any modern stamps actually used but judging by the quantities of new issues produced today I do ask if that is any great loss.

I am particularly grateful to our former president Jacques Renollaud for providing us with a three page article on a subject close to his heart and also to Jim Rankin for telling us more about a military camp close to his home both of which articles you will find in this edition.

I met with Swiss member Ronny Vogt at Stampex in Dublin last month. Ronny, who will be known to many of you, has kindly agreed to write a series of articles on his favourite subject of Airmails starting with the March 2014 issue. As a taster, Ronny has forwarded me scans of his collection of Irish destination 'Ballon Monté' mail – which I know to be just the tip of an iceberg of a very fine collection. Please see page 89. Incredibly, Ronny has located nearly 30 such covers from the siege of Paris in 1870-71 addressed into Ireland. I am looking forward to what else he has in store for us!

With no progress on our house move yet (I really must try harder but what does one do when there is all but no market?), I have been catching up on aspects of my own collection and as I write this I

have on my desk postmarks from the town sub post offices of Belfast. It is fascinating to see the growth of their number as the city has expanded. Town sub office postmarks are generally relatively harder to find as only parcels and registered mail are cancelled at these offices – perhaps a subject for a future article! What new topics have you been looking into now that the clocks have gone back and the nights are longer (presumably giving more time for philatelic activity!)?

I enjoyed Stampex and catching up with many old and new friends. Sadly I forgot to take my camera so no interviews have resulted this year! However what I had not discovered until I arrived in Dublin was that I was required to do some judging, mercifully being guided by an 'old pro' as to what is required of one. I enjoyed the task and the experience made me look harder at all the exhibits and ask such simple questions as 'What is this exhibitor trying to achieve? Is the aim possible? What does the exhibit add to our overall knowledge of philately? Is the exhibit too 'technical'? Is it a muddle? What interest might the exhibit have for non philatelists? etc etc. Indeed, acting as a judge has made me look more critically at my own collection. I suspect that over time, I have accumulated a lot of material that I will never ever do anything with. Probably, all that lot should go. But will it be of interest to others? I hope so and likewise hope that we can all be critical of our own collections. That does not mean there is a requirement to be perfect; far from it – collect what you like and what interests you. It is your collection! In any case, what is philatelic perfection? Because someone else has an item, this does not mean you have to have it. Above all, make sure the collecting experience is fun and most importantly stimulating. Enjoy it!!!

A Happy Christmas and the wish of lots of new discoveries in the New Year to you all.

Stan - 30 November 2013

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THE FRENCH IN IRELAND 1794 – 1801

WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

Jacques Renollaud

Our Former President, Jacques Renollaud has been researching the fate of French forces in Ireland during the Revolutionary Wars period and been searching for related correspondence particularly from prisoners. His article tells us what it might just be possible to find.

The British policy with regard to prisoners was that those captured and initially imprisoned in Ireland were to be moved to England ‘for the duration’.

The first to arrive were those French prisoners captured at the naval battle in the Atlantic in 1794 known in England as the “Glorious First of June 1794” or “Bataille du 13 Prairial an 2” or “Battle of Ushant” in France. The prisoners were initially landed at Derry and were subsequently imprisoned in Belfast (*Belfast News* October 3-8, 1794).

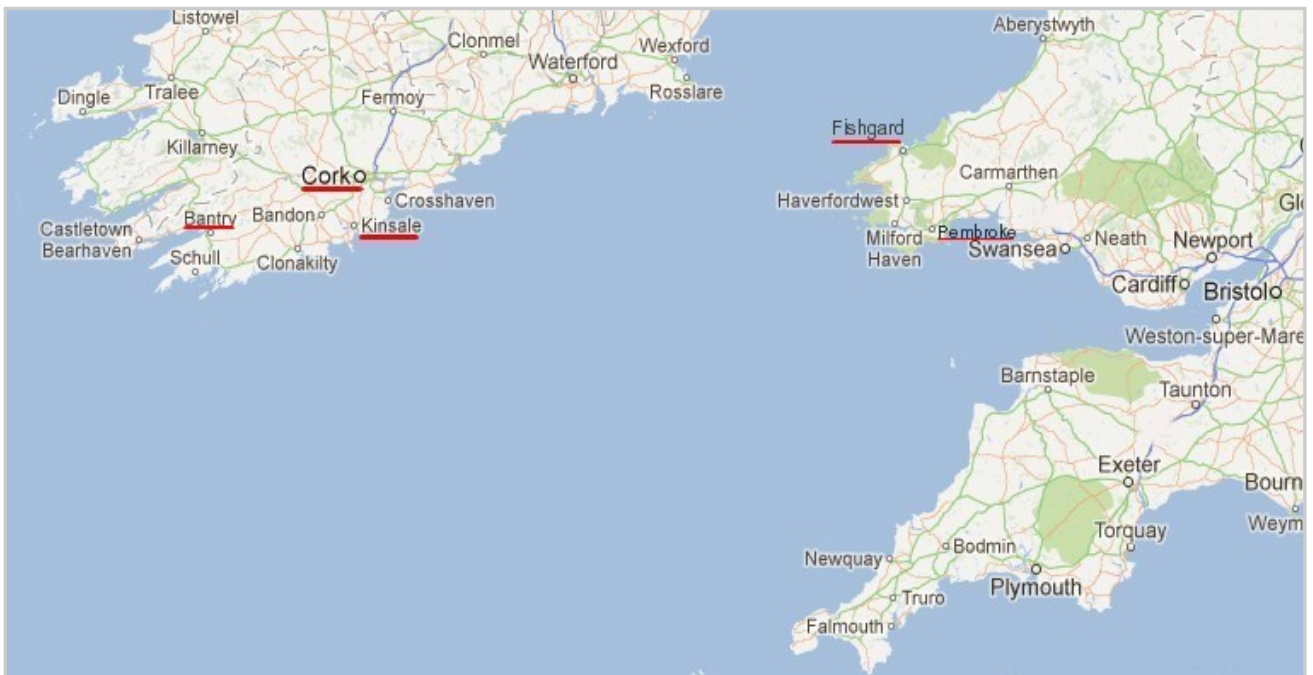
The first actual landing was on 21 December 1796 at Bantry Bay and those captured were taken to Kinsale and Cork prisons before being transferred to England.

Thomas James Walker mentions one other prison at Kinsale in Ireland, established in 1795. Ireland was in revolt and the French, who landed at Bantry Bay on 21 December 1796, were taken there and to Cork before transfer to prisons in England at Liverpool and Bristol. In fact the reference is to the use of Desmond Castle, known locally as the “French Prison” after the death of 54 mainly French sailors in a fire in 1747; it was then used as a prison for the town after 1791.

Two diversionary forces were planned to land in England. One led by William Tate an Irish American landed at Fishguard in Wales on 22 February 1797 with the aim of attacking Bristol. Due to bad weather and ill discipline this was halted and the French surrendered the next day. William Tate and his troops were imprisoned at Pembroke.



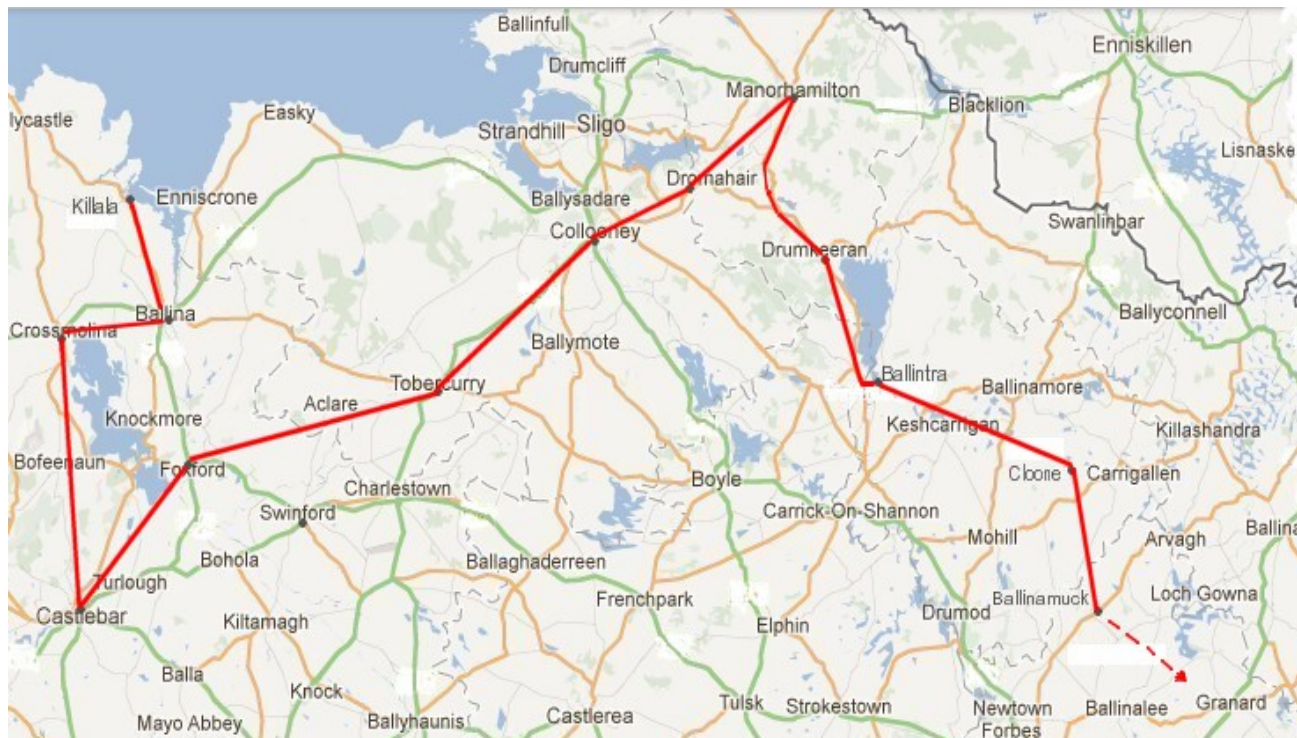
Kinsale prison – present day view of the entrance



The landings in the south of Ireland and Wales

The other led by General Humbert got ashore at Killala, Co. Mayo, in Ireland on 6 August 1798. With Irish rebels they routed English garrisons at Castlebar on 27 August and Collooney on 5 September but they were thoroughly defeated at the battle of Ballinamuck on 8 September. The surviving French forces were first sent to Dublin. Humbert and his officers remained at the 'Mail

Coach Hotel' Dawson Street on parole. Then all were transferred to Liverpool. After subsequent transfer of the officers from Liverpool to Lichfield, Humbert was released in exchange being sent via Hamburg. He was back to France on 26 October 1798. 'Generals' Fontaine and Sarrazin were released via Gravelines and arrived in France on 3 November the same year.



General Humbert's route to his final defeat at Ballinamuck in Co Longford

A final attempt to land in Ireland was the 'Mission Bompard', Ignoring the fact that Humbert had capitulated a few days earlier, Commodore Jean-Baptiste Bompard embarked 3000 men aboard the man of war, *Hoche*. Accompanied by seven frigates, *Immortalité*, *Loire*, *Ambuscade*, *Bellone*, *Coquille*, *Sémillante* and *Résolue* and a schooner, *la Biche*, he left Brest on September 16th, 1798. After multiple attempts to escape the squadron of Admiral Warren, confrontation took place off Tory Island to the north of Donegal. The French squadron was defeated, the captured ships suffering the following fates :-

The *Immortalité* and the *Loire* were sold and subsequently served in Royal Navy under their own names for many years. The *Hoche* and the *Ambuscade* were respectively renamed *HMS Donegal* and *HMS Ambuscade*, which in turn was renamed *Seine* in 1803. The *Coquille* was also due to be sold but an explosion on board in December 1798 killed 13 persons and totally destroyed the ship. The last two ships, the *Résolue* and the *Bellone*, were considered too old to be of service. They were nevertheless bought by the Royal Navy and were used as harbour ships at Plymouth.

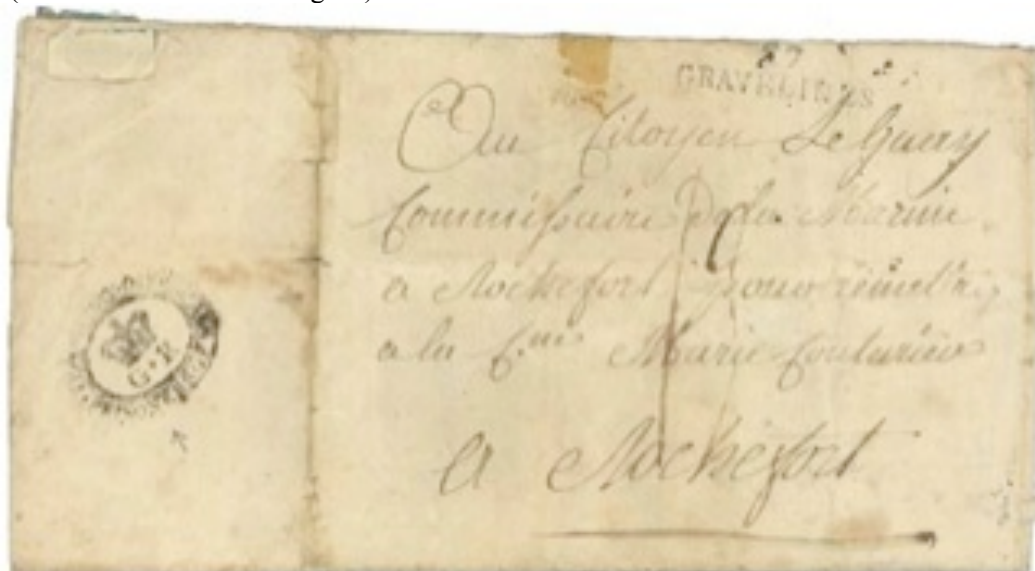
Bellone became the *HMS Proserpine* and *Résolue* the *HMS Resolute*.

As for prisoners, initially they were held in Carrickfergus Castle to the north of Belfast before their transfer in England where they were held at Portsmouth, Portchester or Forton (Lancashire). A large number left then Portsmouth by Parliamentary ships which repatriated them on Cherbourg, on the *Juno* on 8 December 1799 and *Susannah* on 11 December 1799 and later on the *Hope* on 13 May 1801, more following on 18 August. The remaining prisoners, who had not been exchanged, were returned home in the six week period following the Peace of Amiens (25 March 1802).

Few letters from these prisoners are known, and in fact none from Ireland. I have traced the following:- firstly a letter from Liverpool to Rochefort from a Captain on Humbert's staff on 31 May 1799 and secondly, one from Liverpool to Paris from a prisoner of war of the General Humbert army who landed at Killala Bay, dated 18 August of the same year.

I show both of these on the following page -

A letter from Liverpool to Rochefort dated 31st May 1799 from Captain Laroche, a member of General Humbert's staff. It was sent by coach to London where the Transport Office stamped it (I show an enlarged example of the Transport Office mark alongside) and put it on the Calais cartel. Contrary winds forced the ship to put in to Gravelines, 10 kilometres east of Calais where it was posted and charged 13 sous for the distance from Calais to Rochefort (between 120 and 150 leagues).



The letter from Captain Laroche who had been captured in Ireland



Alongside: A letter from Liverpool to Paris dated 18 August 1799 (1st Fructidor year 7) from a prisoner of war from General Humbert's army which had landed in Killala Bay in Ireland. It went by coach to the Transport Office London where it was stamped and sent on the Calais cartel. Posted at Calais it was sent under franchise as it was addressed to the 'Ministre de la Marine'. I show an extract below:-

*et j'ai été pour l'expédition
d'Irlande où j'ai été fait prisonnier,*

*et j'ai été pour l'expédition
d'Irlande où j'ai été fait prisonnier,*
'and I was on the expedition
to Ireland where I was taken prisoner'

References:

- Prisoners of War in Britain 1756 to 1815, Francis Abell
- L'expédition d'Irlande, de La Rochelle à Dublin, Bruno Roy-Henri
- The Northern Mariner / Le Marin du Nord, Vol ; VI, N° 4 – Prisoners of War and British Communities, 1793-1815, Patricia K. Crimmin
- 'BRITANNICA' Revue du Club Philatélique Franco-Britannique.
- Mail of French Prisoners of War in England, 1756-1815, Jacques Renollaud

SHANE'S PARK CAMP – RANDALSTOWN, Co ANTRIM

James M Rankin

When Britain declared war with Germany on the 4th August 1914 the military authorities established camps throughout Ireland to recruit and train young men to fight for King and Country. Shane's Park Camp was the fifth and largest military camp to be established in Ulster. Other camps were located at Antrim, Ballykinler, Clandeboye and Finner. About 80 acres of land was placed at the disposal of the military authorities by Lord O'Neill of Shane's Castle for the construction of the camp. The northern part of this area had been used as playing fields for the Randalstown football and hockey clubs. The only structure on the site at this time was an old wooden pavilion. The remaining area was in use as an 18 hole golf course which had been established in 1890.

A large number of workmen started construction work in October 1914 and completed by the end of December. The huts had a wooden frame structure covered by corrugated iron sheeting, suspended wooden floors, wood burning stoves and electric lighting generated by the Old Bleach Linen Co. in Randalstown. The standard accommodation huts were 70 ft. by 20 ft. and each one designed to hold a platoon of 30 soldiers. A concert hall, canteens and stables, were also provided. A temporary platform was constructed on the railway line which ran alongside the northwestern edge of the camp near the entrance gate. The proximity of the railway line was one of the main reasons for selecting this site so that large numbers of troops could be easily transported to the shipping ports of Belfast, Londonderry and Dublin.

The first troops to arrive were from the 9th and 11th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers followed by the 14th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles (YCVs). All three battalions were formerly based at Finner Camp near Ballyshannon Co. Donegal. Their arrival in Randalstown on the 9th January 1915 was the start of a mass influx of troops to the camp. The 10th Battalion R.I.F arrived in May. By June 1915 over 4,000 troops were based there. The recruits based at Randalstown were from Counties Tyrone, Derry, Donegal and Fermanagh, along with the YCVs (Young Citizen Volunteers) from Belfast. Recruits from County Antrim were stationed at Clandeboye

Camp near Bangor Co. Down. The first troops left Randalstown in July 1915 for further training at Seaford, on the Sussex coast, before being shipped across to France and action at the Somme.

In February 1916 a Scottish Command Depot was established for the rehabilitative training of soldiers not fit enough to return to their unit. The Almeric Paget Military Massage Corps used several huts in the camp to provide the walking wounded with massage, hydrotherapy and electrotherapy treatment. The Ballymena Weekly Telegraph reported items of news from the camp and published photographs of sports days, boxing competitions, concerts, and groups of soldiers on parade. An interesting column appeared on the 18th March 1916 describing the good work done in the YMCA hut...***"It would be impossible to overestimate the value of the social and religious work carried on. Such work is always important in camp, but more so here with wounded men having so much spare time on their hands. The large hut is often overcrowded, and men find it difficult to find a place to write letters, etc. About 5,000 letters are written and posted in this hut every week. One day totalled 1,123, being a record in this camp. The association is now arranging to open other huts in the camp as 'quiet rooms', and for letter writing."***

The camp post office used two types of skeleton handstamp. The single ring type although quite common is difficult to obtain as a complete strike due to its large 34mm diameter. It's also rare to find examples used on envelopes as opposed to postcards. This handstamp has been recorded from 29th January 1915 to 11th February 1919. The 34mm double ring type is much rarer with only five examples recorded from 30th August 1919 to 22nd September 1919.

The records of the YMCA indicate that by the middle of May 1919, the numbers of troops in the camp were so low that the YMCA huts, which were used for post office business, were closed down. The secretary of the YMCA made an entry in his report book dated 16th July 1919...***"We have re-opened our huts at Randalstown - the work is again in full swing."*** Presumably during this closure of almost

two months, the single ring skeleton was replaced by the double ring skeleton due to the increasing number of troops coming back into the camp. It's not clear how many soldiers were in camp at this time, but by 11th December 1919, the secretary noted that...***"The YMCA work has been closed just about a week ago as the camp is practically empty."*** In theory at least the double ring skeleton could have been in use from mid-July to the beginning of December 1919 – just over four months.

On the 5th February 1918 the troopship 'SS Tuscania' was torpedoed by a German submarine seven miles north of Rathlin Island while en-route to France. Over 2,000 troops were on board with 210 lives lost. Records of the YMCA camp at Randalstown reported...***"for two or three days we had 1,200 to 1,400 American men from the torpedoed Tuscania in the camp. We supplied them with refreshments, cigarettes and stamps."***

The Military informed the YMCA that all of their huts throughout Ireland should ***"cease to function on the 1st October 1920"***. By the 27th October the YMCA hut at Randalstown Camp had been dismantled and transferred to Lurgan, Co. Armagh, where it was re-erected and used by the Association to continue its work.

Postcards written in the camp are plentiful. I show a selection of those depicting camp life on the next page. The earliest views of the camp were taken by local photographers Booth & Milner around February/March 1915. Miss Annie Booth with her assistant Miss Lizzie Milner lived at Main Street Randalstown. They had a successful portrait studio and produced many postcard views of the local area, but only three postcards of soldiers in the camp have been seen to date.

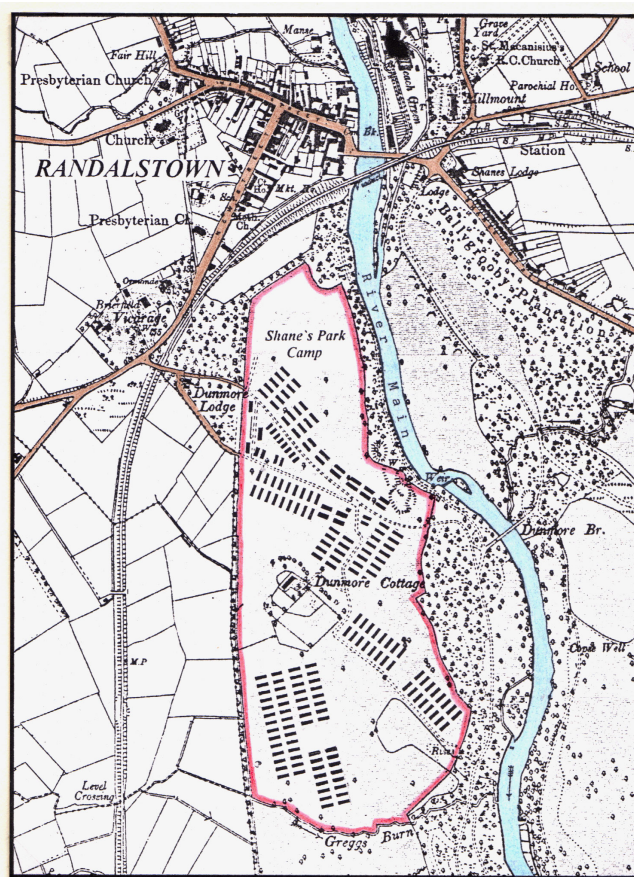
The photographer William A. Green produced a series of five black and white halftone printed postcards showing general views of the camp including the entrance gate and gate lodge. They were part of his 'WAGTAIL' series. Miss Darragh, a Stationer in Randalstown, published another series of Green's photographs in 1915. This set of cards, which were of much higher quality and sepia-toned, usually show large groups of soldiers standing outside their huts. Fourteen in this real photographic series of cards have been recorded to date.

The Belfast photographer George Kennedy was active in the camp from 1916-1917. As well as groups of Scottish soldiers, he produced a set of three postcards during a severe snowstorm which occurred at the beginning of April 1917.

A few postcards without any publisher or photographer's name exist of members of the Army Service Corps (ASC) in 1918. In total 32 commercially produced postcards of the camp have been recorded to date.

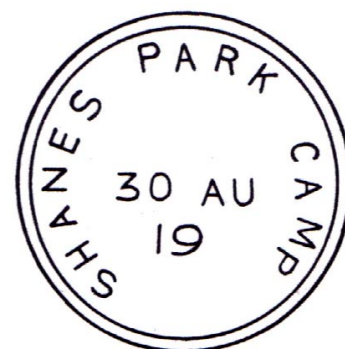
After the war, the camp site was still used as a golf course as well as other sporting activities. The northern part of the site was again used by the British Army during WW2. In 1973 a motorway was constructed bypassing Randalstown which passed through the middle of the old camp site. The nearby Dunmore Cottage was demolished. Today, the only trace of military activity are the bases of the WW2 Nissen huts and the only inhabitants on the site are Lord O'Neill's sheep!

Acknowledgements – Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (YMCA records), Ulster Folk & Transport Museum Cultra Co. Down (W.A. Green photographs) and the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland.





The first of the skeleton postmarks – recorded from January 1915 to February 1919.



The later of the two skeleton postmarks used at Shane's Park Camp and only recorded used in August and September 1919.

Illustrations: Top left – a general view of the camp – photograph by Booth & Milner.



Centre - 'A' company of the R.I.R. (Royal Irish Rifles). The wooden building behind was in fact the old sports pavilion originally on the site. Hut 15 was probably to the right of the photographer. The cyclists were the dispatch riders.

Below left - 'B' company of the R.I.R, 14th Battalion outside no 25 hut.

MAGUIRESBRIDGE – PENNY POST or RECEIVING HOUSE?

Des Quail



On 24 February 1831, Augustus Godby arrived at the GPO Dublin and took over from Edward Lees as Secretary of the Irish Post Office. He set about reforming the Irish Post Office to British standards. He found that all Post Offices, no matter how small, were full General Post Offices. The first step was to reduce all offices with an annual turnover of less than £100 but with revenue adequate to pay its own expenses to sub offices. Offices (and applications for new offices) with insufficient revenue were offered a service used in Britain since 1806 'Rural Penny Posts', thus becoming Receiving Houses with 1d charged for the conveyance of letters to and from the General Post Office.

In chapter 15 of the Handbook of Irish Philately (Feldman/ Kane) No 330 MAGUIRESBRIDGE P.P. is classified as a Penny Post handstamp. It is a mystery why Maguiresbridge was issued with a Penny Post handstamp, used for some two years, whilst a 'Receiver' to the Lisnaskea Penny Post.

I show above a 1844 (June 7) cover from Maguiresbridge to Dublin with a 1d red imperforate lettered KC tied by the Lisnaskea Maltese Cross in black and showing a black MAGUIRESBRIDGE/ P.P. mark denoting origin. Maguiresbridge was then a Receiving House for the Lisnaskea Penny Post. The cover is backstamped in blue-green LISNASKEA JU 7 1844 and in red a Dublin mark IM JU 8 44 this being the arrival datestamp. The Penny Post marking is anomalous as it is the sub office handstamp that includes the designation 'Penny Post'. Maguiresbridge had previously used a framed 'No 1' handstamp 1834-40 and by 1848 was using a different handstamp reading MAGUIRESBRIDGE.

This type MAGUIRESBRIDGE P.P. receiver was used only in 1844-45 and this example is perhaps the best of the 4 or 5 examples yet recorded. I wish to thank John Lennon and David MacDonnell for the information necessary to complete this article.



An example of the No 1 of the Lisnaskea Penny Post applied at Maguiresbridge (1834)

THE STAMP THAT NEVER WAS – ST PATRICK’S DAY 1952 - John Lennon

We are accustomed now to the annual St. Patrick’s Day stamp. We nearly had one fifty years earlier but it just became one of the issues that did not come to fruition. The Holy Year stamps were issued in September 1950. It was over two years before the next issue (Thomas Moore) appeared. It was not for want of suggestions which continued coming in. Among these were for the anniversaries of James Joyce, St. Columbanus, Michael Balfe, Barry Sullivan, Henry Flood, Thomas Moore, Charles Lever, Gerald Griffin, US President McKinley, Battles of Aughrim and Kinsale, 1922 Treaty and First Transatlantic Flight. Some of these have since been commemorated.

Most of these suggestions did not result in a file and only appear in a list, with no record as to who proposed them or even if they were given any consideration. However, there is a file for a St. Patrick’s Day issue in 1952 which contains some interesting material which may be of interest as it explains the noticeable change in the production of our stamps in the 1950s.

On 30 October 1951 P.S. Murray of the Secretary’s Office in the Dept. of Posts and Telegraphs wrote to ‘The G.C.S.’. *‘Please explore the possibility of having a special stamp issued for St. Patrick’s Day, 1952. An tAire (The Minister) will provide the design but the engraving must be undertaken by Bickel of Switzerland. The stamp should be produced by the photogravure process – if possible in this country’.*

The Minister was Erskine Childers, in his first ministerial role, appointed by DeValera in June after his return to Government. Childers seems to have been knowledgeable about stamps and as will be seen, had strong views on them. One of the Assistant Secretaries in P&T, James Scannell, was in the Irish Philatelic Society and may have advised him.

Murray had a discussion with J. Drum, Revenue’s Deputy Director of Stamping, who stated that the minimum time required to produce and distribute a stamp would be about six months and there was no firm in the country equipped for the production of stamps in photogravure. Murray sent a note to Assistant Secretary Purcell *‘I understand that An tAire now favours the production of the proposed stamp by Browne and Nolan (De La Rue Section) by the Recess process. Should we go ahead on that understanding?’* Later *‘An tAire is now satisfied that a stamp could not be produced by St. Patrick’s Day and we need not pursue it.’* was added.

The Minister did not let the topic die there and in mid November he sent a long letter to the Secretary and two Assistant Secretaries in the Department headed *‘The provision of a new series of Stamps’*; *‘Following are my final observations and recommendations in regard to the Stamp issue which, as I have already indicated, should be completely changed as soon as possible.’*

Having listed three methods of printing stamps (recess, rotorgravure, letter-press), he gave his choices in order of preference:-

1. *The idea would be to recess print all stamps in the offices of Messrs. Browne & Nolan; to have three or four denominations rotorgravured including some commemorative issues and in particular a four colour stamp reproducing the P in “Propter” to be found in the book of Kells to be used in the formulation of the word St. Patrick for stamps to be issued on St. Patrick’s Day. This stamp will have to be rotorgravured. If we are to have Thomas Moore commemorated, the printing will have to be done by the recess process and I will be satisfied with no other.*

2. *We could recess print the higher values, print one or two in rotorgravure and letter-press print the lower values. Browne & Nolan stated that if we give them a contract for recess printing they will make an offer to lend, sell or otherwise provide us with modern letter-press printing machinery for stamps. We should make every effort to avoid using our existing machines.*

3. *Plan 2 could be adopted using our old machines in whole or in part. I am not in favour of this plan.*

He then asked for estimates to be procured from Browne & Nolan for different scenarios and *‘a letter should be addressed to Courvoisier (printers in Switzerland) asking them to indicate the cost of providing stamps in four colours on the basis of the Angola stamps, also stamps of one, two or three colours. Mr. Karl Bickel should be asked to submit prices for engraving a block for use by Browne & Nolan, indicating the cost of each trial block and giving different estimates according to whether or not he was supplied with a sketch, photograph or picture, or whether he was simply asked to provide a design himself on a motif given to him. He should be asked to indicate any reduction for more than one subject given simultaneously. I should add in this connection that we received so much help from the Swiss Authorities that I would wish to give Mr. Bickel some work even if it was only in connection with one stamp’*

His next focus was on the designs for stamps: *'The Stamp Design Committee should be reconvened, as a steering group. Ideas for new issues as distinct from designs, i.e. Round Towers, Shamrocks, Dublin Airport, Religious motifs, etc. should be sent to Mr. Purcell. Possible symbolic ideas such as St. Gall and the Bear, St. Columkille and the White Horse or the Crane, should be sought from The Folk Commission'.*

The Minister was not short of ideas: *'I would very much like to adopt the Swiss principle of having two commemorative issues every year sold at extra values, the proceeds to be given to worthwhile objects. I would like to ascertain whether it is legally possible to sell stamps, the supplement to be devoted to charitable objects. If we could produce really interesting commemorative issues, the philatelic sales alone would be of great assistance. I fully believe the St. Patrick's Day stamp would have a large sale throughout the world because of its unique character. So far as I know there has never been a copy of an illuminated letter from a manuscript in a stamp in several colours'.*

Implicit in this memorandum is the urgent necessity for presenting to Finance a request for the changing of the Stamp Issue 'in the usual form' (ie: the definitives). *'The fact should be stated quite baldly that our stamps are among the worst in Europe. Stamps are now part of national propaganda work. Most countries change the entire stamp issue every ten years and some countries more often'.*

He wanted *'to ascertain from Dr. Stafford Johnson if the sales of a large St. Patrick's Day stamp would be very great indeed'.* and went on -

'I have asked for the prices of German recess printing machines. Enquiries might be invited for letter-press printing machines to compare Browne & Nolan's offer with our own costings.

I do not want to have ever to order a fresh issue of Stamps using our present machinery. There is no need to use water-marked paper and the quality of the paper should be examined with a view to revision. Our present stamps do not even tear easily. Nothing will deter me from this view and I would ask the officers of the Department not to spend their valuable time in suggesting that we ever again use our machinery for new types of stamps'.

The Minister discussed the matter with Dr Stafford Johnson on the telephone, the latter then writing *'I have examined the illuminated 'P' . . . I would suggest that to reduce such a design to stamp size would be probably ineffective'.*



The 'P'

The doctor went on: *'The colouring in several places would be reduced to mere dots and I doubt if the result would be pleasing or worth the cost of production. I reluctantly came to the conclusion that this particular attempt to get away from our hitherto rather monotonous designs was not likely to succeed'.* He then encouraged the use of the recess engraving process for future issues.

Murray wrote to the Minister in May 1952 *'It is understood you do not now wish to proceed with the suggested production of a special stamp for issue on St. Patrick's Day, 1953, and wish to have a stamp for the 150th anniversary of the execution of Robert Emmet'.*

However, the Minister wasn't done yet! *'Please submit to Government leave to produce two commemorative stamps. One for St. Patrick's in 3 colours from the Book of Kells, 1/4d and 3½d and the Robert Emmet 2½d, 3d as indicated already. The St. Patrick stamp to be out before St. Patrick's Day but to be sold during an Tostal'.*

Revenue were asked to investigate the possibility and cost of a three colour stamp representing the 'P' from the Book of Kells. At the end of August, Drum produced a detailed report giving estimates and opinions from Waterlow, Harrisons and De La Rue, concluding with it would be extremely difficult to retain the full quality of the details and to capture and register correctly the colours by any of the three processes.

The report was sent to the Minister on 17th September, by Murray, with his opinion *that its results may prove so disappointing as to constitute a costly experiment. . . Stafford Johnson expressed a similar viewpoint. In all the circumstances, it is recommended that the proposal be not proceeded with'.* Marked: *'Noted EC 11/11/52'.* File closed.

So, no stamp appeared for St Patrick's Day and the original definitives of 1922-23 were to survive for another 16 years!

MAKING THE MAIL GO FASTER – Part V - Editor

In our March issue, I referred to the advent of the railway and the fact that, within days of each line being opened, mail was immediately transferred from coach to train, travelling, as had been the case in the days of the mail coach, under the protection of a mail guard. Initially, the mail merely travelled on the train but as early as 1838 limited sorting had commenced en route in England and it was inevitable that Ireland's first Travelling Post Office (TPO) would follow in course of time.

I have a reprint of Bradshaw's Railway Guide for 1850, which shows at the head of the column for several trains on the main lines, the magic word 'Mail'. This merely meant, certainly initially, that the train carried mail, under guard but as yet there was no sorting carried out en route although clearly the guard would have performed some limited sorting of bags and bundles of letters for intermediate stations along the line.

The story of the individual TPOs is summarized in the 'TPO Bible' (*The Travelling Post Offices of Great Britain & Ireland* by Harold S Wilson, published in 1996) and I have no wish to duplicate that work in this series of articles. Wilson notes the advent of the first TPO or RPO (Railway Post Office) as it was called at that time between Dublin and Cork commencing on 1 January 1855 on the night service. He tells us that just one clerk travelled with the mail and with the only light being, one assumes from a swinging oil lantern, it is hard to imagine a great deal of sorting taking place en route, particularly as this clerk had to prepare bags to be delivered by apparatus at a number of intermediate stations along the way and likewise deal with mail received from the apparatus. For those not familiar with the word 'apparatus' in this sense, I should explain that we are referring to the lineside contraption that enabled mail to be deposited into a net and collected off a pole as the train passed without stopping, the last of which, I believe, remained in service until the mid 1960s. It must have been a tough and unless he was accompanied by a guard, lonely job. The 1850 timetable shows the Dublin to Cork mail train taking eight and a half hours to complete its journey; it would have been little quicker by 1855 but nevertheless a significant improvement on the 20 hours taken by the mail coach some 15 years earlier.

Yet, the mail coach took some years to die completely. I took a quick check of the 1862 Circulation map of Ireland, a copy of the original being held at 'Archives' in London. The railway had not quite yet taken the world over. Still shown in operation was a mail carrying stage coach from

Longford to Sligo (the parallel railway opening later that year) and a handful of extant mail coaches, the principal of which were Clones to Omagh, via Monaghan, Rathdrum to Wexford, via Gorey (this route finally being replaced by the railway throughout in 1874) and Maryborough to Waterford, this apparently duplicating the railway south of Kilkenny (opened 1848), the more direct but now closed railway via Abbeyleix not being opened until 1865. Nevertheless, by the mid 1860s virtually all mail in Ireland sent over a distance of 20 miles, anywhere other than in the rural west, was travelling most of its journey by train at speeds much greater than had been the case 20 years earlier.

Before going into the detail of Ireland's TPO network, I will take one route and look at how much the service improved with the coming of the railway and have chosen the Dublin to Belfast service, linking Ireland's two major cities.

In 1840, the mail coach left Belfast at 5am arriving in Dublin at 5pm that same evening. The London 'Night Mail' left Dublin at 10.50pm, the Irish mail contract having been switched from Holyhead to Liverpool the previous year. With the opening of the London and Birmingham railway, providing a through railway service in England, a transit time of 22½ hours was achieved between Dublin and London. Various authors have written on the subject of the 'Irish Mails' and once again I do not want to repeat has been written elsewhere. However, to summarize, in the year in which postage stamps were first used, an item posted at 3pm on a Monday afternoon in Belfast should have been delivered in London on the Thursday morning.

My 1850 'Bradshaw' tells me that the railway was not yet complete between Belfast and Dublin; the difficulty of bridging the Boyne at Drogheda meant that it was not until 1855 that the direct railway line, as we know it today, was completed between the two cities. Thus the mail left by rail for Armagh at 7.30am and was then carried overland via Castleblayney to Drogheda with arrival in Dublin at 3.20pm. The steamer sailed from Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire) at 7.30pm with arrival in London at 1pm the following day, the Chester to Holyhead railway, having opened throughout in March 1850. Thus our letter posted on the close of business on Monday would now be delivered in London on the Wednesday afternoon.

Steady improvement took place both in Ireland with the completion of the bridge at Drogheda, providing more reliable and thereby shorter connection times, also at sea with improved steamers and in England

with improved track, new engines and the like so that by 1887, the Belfast business would have ensured its letter would have connected into the 3.30pm mail train which was due at Amiens Street Station in Dublin at 6.30pm. With swift transit across the city, it would have left Kingstown at 7.25pm, arrived in London at 6.15am the following morning and have been delivered on the morning of the day after posting in London, a service that the postal authorities struggle to match today. To take matters a stage further, connection would have been made in London with the Continental Day Mail giving arrival in Paris at 5.41pm and a theoretical evening delivery in that city within 30 hours of posting assuming such a service existed.

What is more, our letter would have been sorted on the train.

Sorting had in fact started on the Dublin-Belfast service in 1868, the earliest postmark known being for September of that year. It must have been at this time or shortly thereafter that the numeral cancellation <190> was allocated to the service, the earliest record of which I have being in July 1874. Below (fig 1) I show an example of the cancellation used to cancel the stamp on an item sent from Moneymore (Co Derry) to Dublin on 22 July 1874. (As an aside, numerals in the 490s are also recorded as having been sent to the TPOs but the only example I have seen is that of <495> on a single stamp giving no clue as to allocation.)

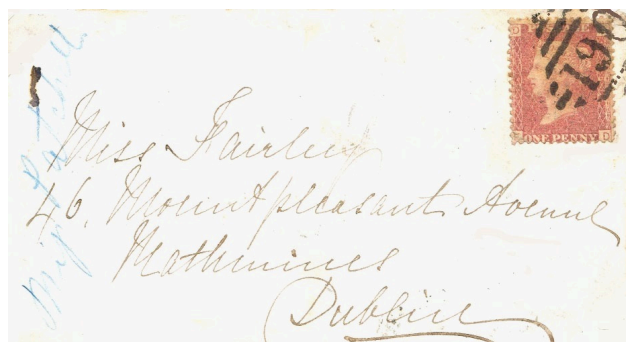


fig 1

Many different circular postmarks are known from the years 1868, inscribed Dublin & Belfast/ R.P.O. – some having added dots/ no dots etc. Wilson shows these (his types 1019-1032) and also the subsequent, post c1898 marks with T.P.O. substituted for R.P.O. (types 1033-1036). These are normally found on the back of envelopes indicating sorting en route. In fact much mail addressed into Belfast in the later Victorian period was clearly walk sorted, making life easier for the delivery postmen and of course, leading to quicker delivery.

Some mail was cancelled en route but limited primarily to items posted directly on to the train for which a late fee payment was required. I show on

the front cover an example from 1897 bearing the TPO postmark the item being addressed to Zürich and franked at 7½d which was correct for a triple weight letter at this time. I suspect and usually for the age, as the item does not appear to have contained a thick 'bundle', the poster regarded the item as seriously urgent and thus it was overstamped to cover whatever late fee etc might apply.



fig 2



fig 3

I show two further items above, an item to Wales (fig 2) on which a ½d extra postage has been added to cover the late fee and to Switzerland in 1906 (fig 3) stamped at 3d which covers 2½d postage and, once again, the extra ½d for the late fee. The postmark on the upper item shows the legend RPO whilst by 1906 (and not showing in the scan) the lettering at the bottom would have read TPO. Note also the word 'UP' shown above the date in the lower item. From about 1900 most Irish TPO marks were 'directional', UP being towards Dublin, so we know the item originated from Drogheda (last stop before Dublin) or north thereof.

In our next issue, I shall look at how the mail went faster as a result of the introduction of TPOs on other lines in Ireland.

STAMPS MAY LOOK THE SAME - BUT ARE THEY ?

PART 2 - 'ULSTER SAYS NO'

Barry Cousins



fig 1

In Part 1, the author undertook a comparative analysis of stamps, which whilst being classified as the same in catalogues, displayed significant differences when subjected to further checking.

In this second analysis, the author reviews stamps with slogan overprints used on covers. These stamps were overprinted with Unionist slogans for political purposes.

It should be stressed that defaced stamps of this kind were deemed to be illegal for postal use, which if intercepted by the postal authorities were levied with a charge of 23p.

It is further stated by the author that defaced stamps are not recognized as philatelic items and at best should be treated as either 'labels' or 'cinderellas'.

However, this all said, the following analysis focuses on two part covers in which the basic defaced stamps and overprints appear to be the same but are they?

Stamp Characteristics – figure 1

- 1p GB definitive, SG reference X844

Stamp printed by Harrison & Sons, using fluorescent coated paper (FCP) with two phosphor bands

- 17p Northern Ireland definitive, SG reference NI 43Ea

Stamp printed by Questa, using advanced coated paper (ACP) with all over phosphor, Printing type II, which displays the 'Crown' with clear outlines, large pearls which are underlined by a strong white line and with a solid background behind the emblem.

Stamp Characteristics – figure 2

- 1p GB definitive, SG reference X846



fig 2

Stamp printed by Harrison & Sons, using phosphor coated paper (PCP).

- 17p Northern Ireland definitive, SG reference NI 43

Stamp printed by Questa, using advanced coated paper (ACP) with all over phosphor, Printing type I, which displays the 'Crown' with all pearls individually drawn but with a screened background behind the emblem.

Overprint Characteristics – figures 1 and 2

- All stamps display the Belfast script slogan 'Ulster Says No', with a small font size similar to Arial bold.

However, this is not the end of the story. On closer examination, it is apparent that the overall height of the slogan overprint found on both the 1p and 17p stamps differ between figures 1 and 2.

The stamps shown in figure 1 display a slogan overprint, with a height of 10.2mm, whereas in figure 2, the overall height increases to 11.8mm.

It is interesting to note that height variations are also to be found with the three other slogan overprint type styles, which are known as the Antrim, Armagh and Londonderry scripts.

The background to the occurrence of the different overprint sizes are presently unknown to the author and therefore open up a further avenue for research.

The variations in overprint sizes were first evaluated by the author in 2010. If further information on the subject matter is required, please feel free to contact the author for details.

Your editor confesses to knowing nothing about these items and has taken the liberty of suggesting to Barry that he might care to let us have a synopsis of the various 'scripts' for a future issue of Irish Philately – Ed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Belfast Late Fees

Prompted by the editor's article "Making the Mail go Faster, part IV" in the September issue, I thought readers might be interested in two Belfast late fee items from my collection – and possibly add more information about the second one.

The first is an example of the boxed "Late Fee / Paid" used on a cover to Dobcross in Manchester posted on 28 October 1873 and delivered the following day. A late fee of 1d has been paid. The reverse flap shows the embossed arms of the Ulster Banking Company.

The second is a use of the hexagonal (not "octagonal"!) date-stamp used on a cover to Lille posted on 24 October 1897, where amazingly it seems to have arrived on the 25th. An extra fee of ½d has been paid in addition to 2½d basic overseas postage. The attractive vignette shows the Grand Central Hotel where presumably the sender was staying.

As with all the examples of the hexagonal mark that I have recorded (between 1897 and 1906, including the one illustrated in the September article) the posting date was a Sunday and the time shown 2pm. It would appear that Belfast had special arrangements for Sunday posting involving the payment of a fee. In London, Sunday posting boxes were provided in various locations from 1892 with a fee of ½d for inland letters and 1d for overseas.

Can any member give more details of the working of the Belfast service and the period over which it operated?

Yours etc
Julian Tweed
Cheshire UK

(Alan Kane has also written me advising of use in January 1907 and I have also located a note referring to use on 25 January 1914 – *Ed*)

Dear Editor,

Ahascragh

I was interested to see the reproduction of the Ahascragh postmarks in Michael Hartnett's article in the September 2013 issue of Irish Philately (pages 68 & 69). Some of you may know that a few years back, with Richard Luettiken of Hamburg, I started to make a study of the actual usage of the 'Rare Coil', Dd4Cii / SG74b / Sc68b, the 2d map with

imperforate sides. I came across at least two used at Ahascragh with the Ath Eascragh postmark : xx MY 36 and 3 JU 36

Ahascragh / Ath Eascragh is in SE Galway near Ballinasloe and just 8 km from the nearest Roscommon border and I wondered how and why it came to be used in this small town. We note from Michael Hartnett's article that it has a present population of 250 but in pre-famine times a population of "5205 of which 851 reside in the town". Michael's article tells us that Ahascragh office opened in 1809, nearly 50 years before the recognised Famine times, and significantly as a Head Office confirming the status of the town.

The latest perceived knowledge is that the Rare Coil was issued for and used in stamp dispensing machines (note: not stamp vending machines) and as in the third* and latest 'on-cover' example discovered, emanating from Clongowes Wood College at Clane 5 km north of Naas, Co Kildare (hence Naas postmark cancellation), were apparently usually used at educational or religious establishments as well as commercial environments. That begs the question: Why did these establishments use stamp-dispensing machines rather than have franking machines? Was the amount of mail insufficient to not warrant a franking machine?

But with Ahascragh, the question is: Who or what local organisation used the Rare Coil in the 1930s ? The only religious establishment that I could think of was Esker, Co Galway, noted for its annual mission. However a check showed that this Esker was near Athenry in SW Galway, and about 35 km from Ahascragh near Ballinasloe.

Esker, Athenry has been a monastic site since the sixteenth century. It was first inhabited by the Dominicans, who escaped from the Abbey in Athenry during a time of persecution. They left Esker in the eighteen sixties, and it became the diocesan seminary for Clonfert diocese. The Redemptorist order moved there in 1901, and since then have served the people of the locality and also, through their missions and novenas, the whole of the west of Ireland.

Back to Michael Hartnett's article and under 1923 we see that a canceller in Irish was introduced "*Ath Eascrach – meaning 'Ford of the Esker'*". **Yes, Esker once more - is this a coincidence?** In 1938 the cancel was changed to *Ath Eascrach Cuan*, meaning Cuan's Ford of the Esker. The Patron saint of the Ahascragh is Saint Cuan whose death is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters in 788 A.D. The Annals also mention the battle of

Ahascragh in 1307 between the English forces and O'Kelly Chieftains.

* Note that above I say "third" 'on-cover' example. The latest is of course that on the Clongowes Wood card auctioned by David MacDonnell. The previous was the example on a cover from *The Catholic Young Mens Association of Wexford* discovered by Ian Whyte in 1993. However, many do not realise that the first known example on cover was owned by our Past President Michael Leonard (RIP), having been sent in July 1936 from Dublin to his mother in Sligo. Michael later told me how the cover would not fit in the

available space on his display page so to fit he cut the cover down to a piece with a stamp and full machine cancel. A bit like cutting down a Rembrandt to fit the frame! This piece was auctioned by Grosvenor Auctions in London in 2001.

There are many questions above. Can any member provide some or all of the answers?

Yours etc
Tony Cassidy
Ennis, Co Clare

FOYLE STREET, LONDONDERRY

Editor's notes: The small piece in our last issue on the above has led to correspondence from both John Frazer and Rod Greer as to location etc. John notes that Foyle Street runs parallel to the river and the Head Office in Derry is at the north end of the street. He has sent me a detailed archive map dated 1904 which shows no sub post office (or Receiving House) in Foyle Street but a 'Canadian Packet Office' and wonders if it 'doubled-up' providing postal facilities. Rod's view is that the Foyle Street office was merely a Telegraph Office. He has checked the *Londonderry Sentinel* and reports 'The Magnetic Telegraph Office (officer in charge Mr J. Joyce) was originally located in a semi-underground room in Shipquay St.' The British Government took over the telegraph companies in February 1870 and 'Mr Joyce and his staff moved into an upper room of the Castle Street Post Office shortly thereafter'. Rod notes that the main Post Office along with the telegraph staff was relocated to the new Head Post Office in Custom House Street in use from late 1876 and officially opened in 1877. Rod notes a GNR(I) Railway Office on Foyle Street (shown in the maps of 1849 and 1856) and that subsequently a 'City' railway Goods Depot received building plan approval in 1875 and was opened in 1877 and wonders if the postmark emanated from there. Your editor then looked at the information he was passed by the late Tony Graham shortly before his death in 1998. Tony reports that the *Londonderry Journal* noted the poor condition and facilities of the Post

Office, then at Castle Street, in December 1873 and confirms that the new 'Government Offices' (which included the Post Office) were opened at Custom House Street on 27 September 1876 and then goes on to note 'The PO has been in the same building ever since. Because of the local geography, the steep hill and the removal of the PO from the upper part of the town around the Diamond, a new sub PO opened (Bishop St. Sub PO) at the N.W. corner of the Diamond'. Your editor's guess is that the Foyle Street office was established as a telegraph office, at which perhaps some postal business was conducted, after the take over of the telegraph companies in February 1870, to provide a facility for the businesses in that part of the town adjacent to the river but was closed when the new office at Custom House Street was opened, full postal facilities now being provided in the lower part of the town. As an aside, we noted in our last issue the opening of the TSO at Bishop Street on 1 September 1876 fitting in neatly with the other available information. And to confirm the source of the known Foyle Street postmarks as emanating from 'rescued' telegram forms, I have located reference to a further copy on a 1/- 'cut out' from a telegram form dated 14 August 1872; thus, we now have three known examples all dated between 14 and 19 August 1872, that belonging to Florence McCarthy shown in our September issue being by far the most attractive discovered to date.

To complete the page, I show some other Londonderry sub office postmarks which have come my way:-



A TASTER FROM RONNY VOGT

Following from the editorial on page 74: An example from Ronny's outstanding collection showing two Ballon Monté covers sent by Balloon out of Paris on 30 September 1870 during the siege. Ronny hopes to show us further examples of Irish Airmail material in our March and subsequent issues.

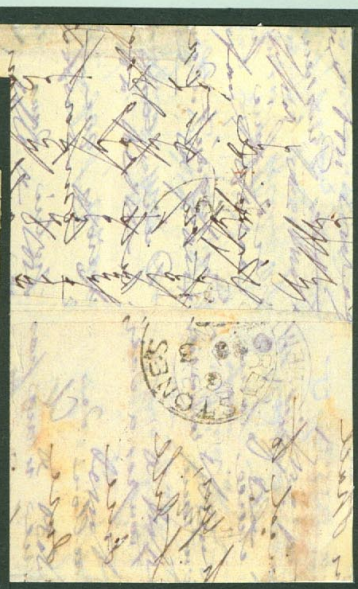
September 30, 1870

Departure: Usine à Gaz, Paris, on September 30, 1870, at 9.30 a.m.
 Landing: St. Denis de Monroval, near Dreux (Eure-et-Loir), to the West of Paris, at 11.50 a.m., covering a distance of 81 km
 Aeronaut: Gaston Tissandier, no passengers
 Mails: 80 kg of mails and freight, 3 carrier pigeons
 Flight history: While overflying the Prussian camps at Versailles, Gaston Tissandier dropped 10'000 propaganda leaflets.

Posted Paris, Rue St-Lazare, on September 29, 1870, carried on September 30 with the Ballon Monté "**CELESTE**" and forwarded to Dalkey, Dublin. **KINGSTOWN** and **DALKEY** arrival postmarks of October 14.



Posted Paris, Rue St-Lazare, on September 29, 1870, carried on September 30 with the Ballon Monté "**CELESTE**" and forwarded to Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow. **GREYSTONES** arrival postmark of October 3.



(100% copy of backstamp)

THE POST OFFICE WHERE THREE COUNTIES MEET

Mike Hackett

This article first appeared in Post News (An Post's internal staff 'Paper') in June-July 2004 and is reproduced with the kind permission of current editor Marian Joyce.

A bullet lodged in the frame of a doorway is a sure reminder of a narrow escape that a postmaster had during a robbery in West Limerick some years ago. However, The Naughtons who ran the Post Office at Mount Collins took it all in their stride. No stray bullet was going to upset their routine.

Mount Collins is located where the three counties of Cork, Kerry and Limerick meet. Serving customers from three counties required special diplomatic skills to maintain good business relations. One had to appear neutral, particularly when the All-Ireland Championship started every year! Having a choice of team to follow, you could change to another team when your favourites were beaten. You can imagine having three chances of success in both hurling and football. A dream for many fans!

Good old-fashioned country practices applied in that place, like a man keeping his pension on his head (under his cap!) was accepted behaviour. Likewise a farmer buying a bull licence for five shillings in the Post Office while the inspector of animals was examining the bull outside the front door!

The history of Mount Collins Post Office can be traced back to when daily deliveries of mail were made by post boys on horseback and only delivered to the 'authorities' and 'people of importance'. The 1886 Postal Directory of Munster lists a woman named Mrs Leahy as a grocer in Mount Collins and we know that she was also the Postmistress. Known locally as 'Mama Leahy' she was born in 1830 and married Maurice Leahy of Knocknagoshel. They had a daughter Hannah and when Denis Naughton from Roscommon came as a member of the R.I.C. (Royal Irish Constabulary) to Mount Collins in 1891, he met and married her. As members of the R.I.C. were forbidden to have family connections in the area of their station, the newly married couple had to move to Tipperary. They returned in 1910 when Mama Leahy's failing health warranted full-time family support. This forced Denis to retire from the R.I.C. and he then became Postmaster of Mount Collins until 1926.

An old character, Jackie-Jack Tom Lenihan, remembers collection his grandfather's pension at the Post Office from Hannah Leahy. He also remembers the big grocery shop and buying a half-quarter (two ounces) of Clarke's Perfect Plug tobacco for his grandfather at one shilling and threepence.



Denis and Hannah Leahy Naughton. Denis became Postmaster in 1911 when he retired from the R.I.C. and served until his death in 1926.

Jackie also mentions the two postmen in the early twentieth century – Paddy 'the Post' Brosnan and Jack Murt Sheehan. Paddy collected the post at Brosna and brought it on foot to Mount Collins where a group of people usually waited for letters, especially from America. Paddy 'the Post' progressed to a bicycle after some years walking and once fell off it and had to be brought to hospital in Newcastlewest on an ambulance known as a 'buggy' which was drawn by a horse.

Denis and Hannah Naughton had a son Maurice, a tailor and he married red haired Joan Keane from Brosna in 1929. Maurice was Postmaster from 1926 until he died suddenly in 1953. Then his widow managed until she too died suddenly in 1960. Their son Patrick took over the reins and ran the Post Office for over forty years. Patrick married Noreen Keane (another redhead) and they have a family of four – the fifth generation to grow up in Mount Collins Post Office.

One Children's Allowance morning Patrick and Noreen were checking the newly arrived money remittance in the kitchen. With them was their little grandson and their very small dog. Suddenly, two men with masks ran in with a gun demanding the money. Reactions from the residents were very slow and Noreen even told them to 'give it over' as their physique resemble two neighbours and she thought they were playing a trick on her!

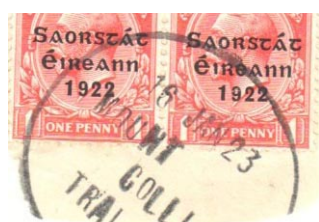


Patrick and Noreen Naughton at Mount Collins Post Office

The little dog barked cheekily adding more ridicule to the situation. Then when the little boy started to cry, Noreen told him not to be afraid because the gun was only a toy. Seemingly this was the last straw for one of the robbers because with a loud bang he fired a shot towards the doorway. They then grabbed some money and made off.

Later when detectives were examining the scene they came across the bullet lodged in the frame of the door and nearby on the ground found the spent brass shell. Despite Noreen's best efforts to turn the situation into a pantomime, the robbers and the gun had been real!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to being given permission to reprint the above, we have a good excuse to turn Mount Collins into our featured Post Office in this issue. The detail I have for the office is: Opening date 1881/2: post town and Head Office - Limerick. In 1895, Abbeyfeale RSO became the post town. Mount Collins was upgraded to being a Money Order and Savings Bank Office, also handling Telegrams, c1961. The office situated just a few yards inside County Limerick was closed c2008. A selection of postmarks follows:-



The above item from 1923, a 'rubber skeleton' is interesting as it shows the office of control as Tral(ee). The post town at this time was Abbeyfeale which is believed to have always come under the control of Limerick and thus this may be a rare example of the mail routing being other than via the office of control. More information required!



1950 (rubber) and 1981 steel (this introduced c1953) and below a registered item from 1993 with label



Rubber postmarks in use in 1927 and 1938



THE BITS AND PIECES PAGE

To begin: two photographs of our late President Bill Kane which have come into the possession of H  lo  se Mitchell.



Bill as a telegram messenger boy c1924



Bill as a professional musician c1960. Newer members may well not be aware that music was for many years, perhaps more of Bill's life than philately. Bill's biography, by H  lo  se, appeared in the September 2012 edition. Ed.

A FUN ITEM



The above item addressed to the wonderfully named Sligo solicitors, Messrs Argue and Phibbs, came into my possession recently. The firm survived in Sligo for many years and needless to say, more information can be found on the internet than there is room to print it here. What is the most amusing address on any cover you might have? Ed.

CINDERELLAS PART 12 – A CORRECTION

To finish: Peter Wood has advised me of a correction notified to him by Florida based member Barney Clancy (Irish Philately gets everywhere!):

The Erin go Bragh label shown on page 72 of the September issue as illustration P12 can be found in red or green but NOT blue. The only reference to a blue version was in the 1972 Hibernian catalogue, a reference now removed, the supposed blue possibly being a faded example of the green version.

Peter goes on to note that an example of the red version was in the recent Feldman auction which, without seeking to steal Erinman's thunder (see page 94), was estimated at Euro500 and sold for Euro1,100. A green example was also in the sale fetching Euro1,200. Incidentally, should it be Eur500, Euro500 or 500euro(s)? – I'm so glad we stick to our Guernsey pounds in our island! Ed.

TWEETINGS FROM TYRONE - with thanks to the late Tony Graham

Shortly before his untimely death in late 1998, Tony Graham sent me copies of many of his notes. The notes covered anything and everything to do with Northern Ireland post offices, particularly around the Belfast area. Tony was not afeared to enter any office, whether it be in Loyalist Shankill or Republican South Armagh and seek out the history of the office and obtain copies of the postmarks. He was also a great reader and must have searched through almost everything written in the local papers of the Province from the earliest editions for anything in any way related to the history of the Post Office. One day back in 1996 he set to reading the Tyrone Chronicle for the years 1857 to 1868 and this is some of what he found:-

4 Dec 1857 A sub Post Office is to be opened at Artigarvan, 3 miles from Strabane; Mr James Siggerson is to be the Postmaster.

29 Jan 1858 Thomas Harkin is appointed Postmaster of Omagh. The Post Office is to be removed to the building beside his mother's hotel, the Abercorn Arms.

3 Dec 1858 A sub Post Office has recently been opened at Baronscourt for the convenience of the residents of that neighbourhood. (*see below right*)

4 Mar 1859 There is now an extended town post delivery in Omagh.

26 Aug 1859 John McNickle, the Omagh-Gortin postman, who carried the post for the last 28 years has recently been transferred to Mountjoy with a reduction in his pay. There was a protest made at this 'injustice' (*by whom is not recorded*).

28 Oct 1859 A sub post office has been established at Glenhull, distant about 8 miles from Gortin, the Head Office. The messenger on this round will pass through the village of Roosky. All letters must be addressed Glenhull, Gortin.

18 Nov 1859 Extra mails (*ie: dispatches*) will be made at Fintona.

30 Dec 1859 A money order office is opened at Dromore. The control of Castlederg is transferred from Strabane and Newtownstewart. That of Moneymore from Dungannon to Belfast.

20 Jan 1860 Mr A Trollope is transferred from Ireland North to England East as PO Surveyor.

2 Mar 1860 There was an incident involving the Newtownstewart to Drumquin mail car (*annoyingly what it was has not been recorded*).

6 Jul 1860 A money order office has been opened at Drumquin

23 Sep 1860 Ballygawley Post Office is to be reduced to a sub office under Aughnacloy with effect from 1 October.

30 Nov 1860 New postal arrangements are noted at Flurrybridge, Loughbrickland, Dromore (Down), and Hillsborough (*all Co Down – but no doubt of interest to the residents of Tyrone?*) all these places being reduced to sub offices and extra mails would be arriving at Omagh by train.

31 Mar 1862 Omagh's Post Office Savings Bank branch has recorded 25 deposits totalling £300 since it opened on 3 February

27 Jun 1862 Fintona Post Office has been vacant for 4 weeks (*ie: without a postmaster – presumably someone was sent from elsewhere as a temporary*). John Graham appointed new postmaster.

11 Jan 1867 Lislip Post Office has suffered in the recent blizzard. Postmaster John McFarland provided refuge for 45 people stranded between Omagh and Gortin

22 May 1868 Plumbridge Postmaster John McLaughlin has died. His wife took over on 19 May.

11 Dec 1868 Samuel McFarland has resigned as Postmaster at Gortin. John Bennett appointed to replace.



The reverse of an item passing through the office at Baronscourt, from Windsor to the Marchioness of Abercorn in January 1859, some eight weeks after its opening. The Abercorn (Hamilton) family still own and live at Baronscourt, an estate of over 3,000 acres but the office closed in 1976.

AUCTION WATCH - Erinman

The David Feldman auction held in Geneva on 24 and 25 September 2013 has been the main attraction of the recent weeks. The auction contained many scarce and choice items of Irish philately. The prices realised once again showed the market to be most buoyant for items in choice and fine condition.

The booklet section contained several rare items including 1938-41 2s booklet 'Maguire & Paterson's Matches', serial no. 22-40. This very fine and very rare item sold for an amazing 7000 euro against a pre-sale estimate of just 800euro. Similarly an example of 1938-41 2s booklet 'Vauxhall', serial no. 17-38, realised 2400 euro (estimate 700euro) and an incomplete 1940 2s booklet 'Maguire & Paterson's Matches', serial no. 23-40, with only one complete pane included being the 1d with advertisements, sold for 2600 euro against pre-sale estimate of 500euro.

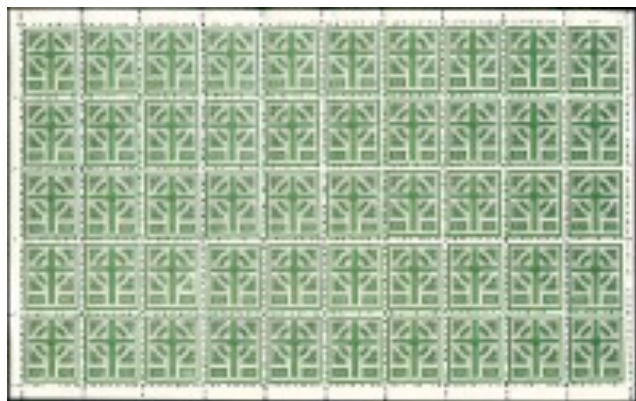
A cover (below) with 1922 2d Thom overprint postmarked with the straight line temporary Foulksmill canceller addressed to Dublin realised 550euro (estimate 200euro).



An unusual usage of the '1976 Bi-Centenary 15p showing missing silver variety, pos. R8/No.8, neatly tied on registered cover' made 1100euro against pre-sale estimate of 400euro.

Another example of a variety on cover, namely a 1d Red Dollard overprint, comprising two singles both showing inverted overprint, neatly tied on cover by Learn Irish slogan postmark, sent within Dublin, realised 1200euro (estimate 800euro).

A sheet (shown at the top of the next column) described as '1907-16 Sinn Fein Propaganda Labels: Celtic Cross in green & black complete mint sheet of 50, mostly unmounted mint showing all the selvage present, fresh, very fine & an extremely rare complete sheet' went under the hammer for 1700euro.



However, a part sheet, described as '1907-16 Sinn Féin Propaganda Labels: Woman & Harp design, showing narrow crown, perf. 11¼, mint sheetlet of 25, fresh & very fine for this elusive multiple', perhaps disappointingly, sold for 460euro against pre-sale estimate of 500euro (*a single of which 'stamp' shows as illustration P17 in the 'Cinderella' article on page 95 of this edition - Ed*).

Overprints always find ready buyers. A mint bottom marginal block of four of the 10/- 1935 re-engraved issue, with the bottom right stamp showing missing t, bottom two stamps unmounted mint realised 1700euro against an estimate of 1000euro.

I always enjoy seeing clearly used examples of the overprint varieties and it was inevitable that my eye was caught by a very scarce example (below) of the 1/- bistre-brown Thom three line overprint (HIB T58), left sheet marginal single, showing the missing accent variety tied on parcel fragment with what for me is an acceptable parcel type postmark, with added map definitive 1½d pair (defective). This made a very healthy 6500 euro (about £6,600 including the buyer's premium!) against the pre-sale estimate of 4000euro and thus, I fear, well beyond the pocket of most of our readers.



CINDERELLA STAMPS OF IRELAND - An incomplete introduction (Part 13)

Peter Wood

continued from the September 2013 issue -

1907 - 1916 Sinn Fein

These labels have been written about in 'Irish Philately' by the late Bill Fletcher, who was a long time member of the Circle. I refer you to his articles (see *Irish Philately*, June 1992 etc - Ed) for the background to the issue and plating details. The two designs were firstly of a Celtic Cross and secondly a figure of Hibernia. Initially they were often placed alongside the postage stamps.

This practice was the cause of the British Post Office notice of 21 July, 1908 forbidding the use of 'labels with the appearance of Postage stamps' being placed on the address side of envelopes. Henceforth the correct place for labels was to be on the reverse of envelopes - perhaps used as a seal, as had been done during the Victorian era.

1907 printing, perf 11 or roulette (*fig P15*)

Celtic Cross, Blue and black on white

Hibernia, green, yellow and black on white (*fig P16*)
(tete-beche variety of the Hibernia stamps exists)



fig P15



fig P16

1916 printing, perf 11 or roulette

Celtic Cross, Bluish green and black on white
(a narrower cross version exists)

Hibernia - as before but taller crown, fatter hound



(fig P17)

I also take this opportunity of showing a piece with both sorts of label taken from a cover (*fig P18*) and a card with label (*fig P19*) in the next column.



fig P18



fig P18

Against Home Rule:

"Red Hand/UVF" and "Patriots" labels.

In 1912, perhaps in response, the Anti-Home Rule movement produced labels and the publicity stressed that they were not to be used on the address side of envelopes. There were two designs. 'Patriots maintain the Union' printed by Harrison & Sons. *Fig P19* below shows 'postally correct' usage on the reverse (slightly cut down). It is of interest that in later years when they required a label to use for trials connected with the production of coils or booklet stamps for the British Post Office they re-used this design with the 'Patriots.....' message replaced by their own name (*fig P20*). Good business - the Unionists had paid for the original die! The second design in red shows the Red Hand of Ulster with inscription 'U.V.F. - for God and Ulster' (there are two versions, inscribed respectively, 'East Down' and 'South Belfast' - *figs P21 and P22*)



fig P19



fig P20



fig P21



fig P22

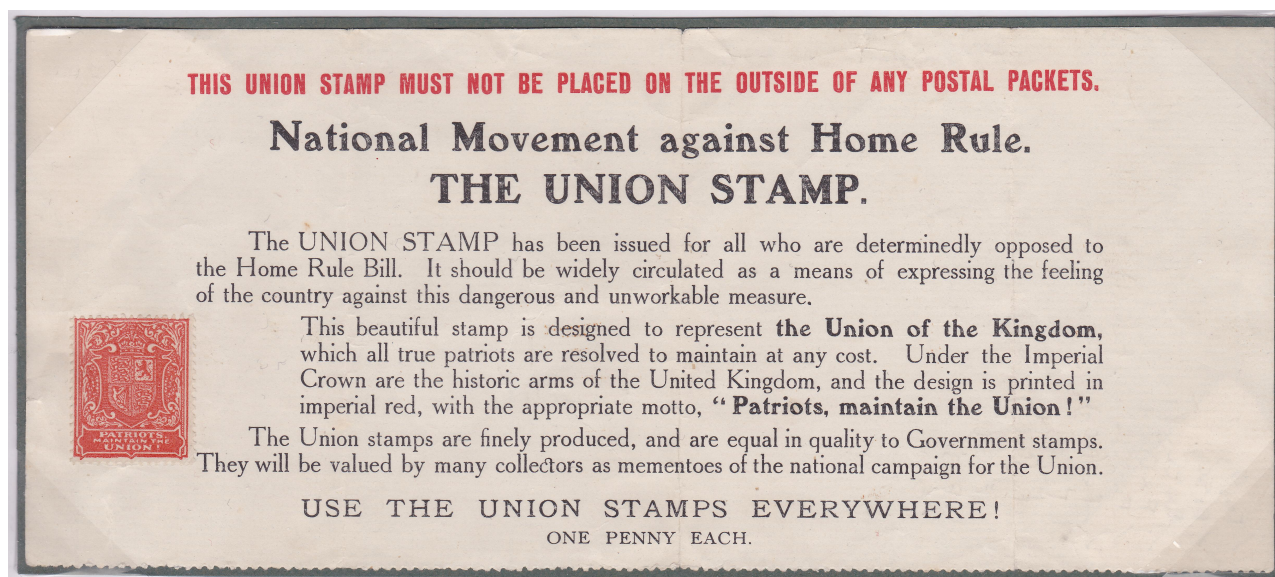


fig P21

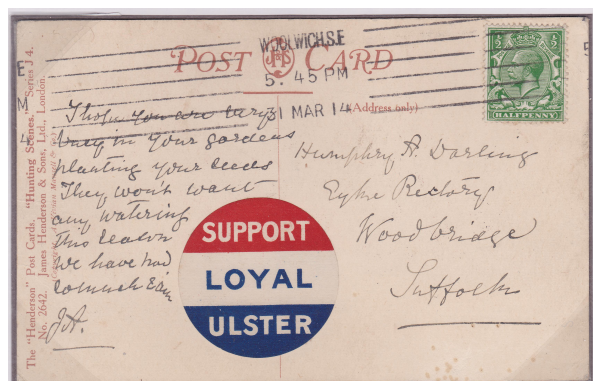
Fig P21, above, shows the publicity for the original stamp clearly indicating the labels must be placed on the reverse, whilst fig P22, below, shows a 'postally unacceptable' use, although it seems unlikely that postage due was actually collected on delivery.



fig P22

"Support Loyal Ulster"

This is a red, white and blue label used on a postcard from Woolwich, London to Suffolk in August, 1914. I have not seen it recorded before and it may well originate from England (fig P23 below).



Home Rule/ Anti-Home Rule - Poster Stamps.

This era saw others produce labels connected with the Home Rule controversy. The Poster Stamp Company produced an attractive series of labels - three being pro-Home Rule and three against! These are found on mail and so actually appear to have been used by supporters. I have not seen all six displayed together before so take the opportunity to do so below - all much reduced to fit the space available (figs P24-P29):-

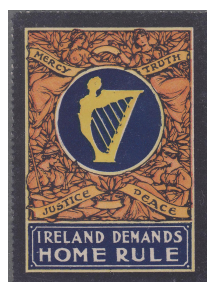


fig P24



fig P25

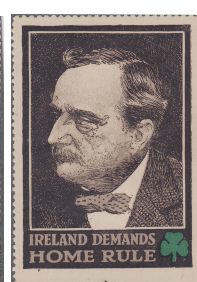


fig P26



fig P27



fig P28



fig P29

Shown in fig P26 is John Redmond, leader of the Irish Nationalist Party, whilst figs P27 and 29 feature Sir Edward Carson, leader of the Ulster Unionists.

Please also note the corrections to part 12, which appeared in the September 2012 issue, on page 92 of this edition. I will continue looking at the Political Labels in our next Journal.