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The Postal Order 'that never was'

One of a number of trial designs discovered in the Archives

The story is explored by John Lennon in his article on page 51

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EDITORIAL

Welcome, once again, to a new 'season'. I must say that I tend to turn off somewhat in summer but nevertheless have put a few pieces into the 'new – to be sorted' box which I am sure we all keep and I hope you have been able to do likewise in between those days of enjoying the beach/ mountains/ foreign parts wherever the summer has taken you (Finnish trees in our case!!).

Over the period, Brian Warren has accumulated the results of the 'Most Favourite Article' survey that was sent out with our March issue. He tells me that a bare 25% of the membership responded which is obviously disappointing. Top place was shared by Ronny Vogt's airmail series, which sadly comes to end with this issue and John Lennon's searches in the archives, which we all hope he will be able to continue for the foreseeable future. Other popular features were Brian Warren's 'Irish Abroad' series and Erinman's examination of auction results. Not surprisingly Postal History in general was popular, overprints, surprisingly a little less so, whilst Brian's annual 'That Was The Year That Was' is enjoyed by those who collect modern material. Thus the random mix of articles which come to me as editor, do seem to give general satisfaction; but as I have said many times before, if you don't like it, do not suffer in silence but let me know and I will do my best to oblige. For all that, any editor is always dependent on what gets sent to them for publication and I do encourage you all to get those pens out now that the longer winter evenings are approaching (and the television programmes give rise to the usual yawns of 'seen it all before'.)

One aspect I have always wished for in each issue of 'IP' has been a vibrant 'Letters to the Editor' page. This for the most part we have failed to achieve but this issue is a most welcome exception (the lack of knowledge I showed in our last issue has created a good response!) and as ever I do remain grateful to those who do take the trouble to write to me, whatever the subject.

I would also have wished that we had a busy 'Questions and Answers' page. This we have failed to achieve; however one letter in this issue comes from Rod Greer in the form of a query to be answered. Please take up the cudgel and let Rod have the answer for publication in December.

To change the subject, I had a little outing a couple of weeks ago. I was able to join a preview visit to the restored 'Mail Rail' – the British Post Office's own underground railway across London which was closed for business some years ago. Now a short section has been reopened in conjunction with London's new Postal Museum. The Museum itself was opened at the end of July. I have not had the chance to visit it yet but shall do so as soon as time permits and will report in due course. Meanwhile Mail Rail opens to the general public during this month (September). I hope all members on their next London visit will take the opportunity to inspect both (behind Mount Pleasant Sorting Office to the north of Faringdon underground station). That said, I am advised that Mail Rail is fully booked until December – you are hereby warned and know what to do – get on the list or perhaps you do not like tunnels??? In truth, this welcome addition provides a fascinating insight into what went into the sorting and transporting of mail under London, mail-hub of the world, which any Postal Historian ought to know and enjoy.

In our December 2002 issue, Hugh McGoldrick provided a valuable introduction to Ireland's Postal orders. Now John Lennon has been able to get behind the scenes and search the archives to provide much additional information that has lain hidden for over 90 years. His article on page 51 makes a good read and will be concluded in our December issue.

Finally, do not forget Stampa in Dublin (6-8 October); as ever I look forward to you there.

Stan
30 August 2017

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IRISH POSTAL ORDERS - part 1

John Lennon has been searching the Archives

Postal Orders were introduced in 1881 to enable people without bank accounts send money by post. In the ensuing 40 years the number of denominations rose from an initial 10 to 41.

William Field, MP for Dublin, twice sought in Parliament to have distinctive Postal Orders for Ireland (in 1903 and 1907). Nothing happened!

However in 1922 action was required. Eric Browne, Post Office Accountant, Dublin, on 4 March, 1922, wrote: *In the event of the date of transfer of the financial responsibility for the Post Office in Southern Ireland to the Provisional Government of the Free State taking place on the 1st proximo, it will be necessary to arrange for the issue of an overprinted form of Postal Order.* He drew up a memorandum on the subject. To begin with, he assumed that Irish Postal Orders would be paid in Britain and vice versa. *As the British Post Office are not prepared to arrange payment of any form of Order in Great Britain other than the British Postal Order, in order to provide for an Irish issue, the British form will have to be made use of with a suitable overprinting.*

‘POST ÓRDÚ ÉIREANN’ (fig 1) was chosen for the overprint which, due to time constraints, would have to be done in London. On 21 March it was arranged for existing stocks to be withdrawn after the end of the month and for overprinted orders to take their place from 1 April. The initial supply would be distributed from Stores Section in London and the remainder of the supply, estimated to cover six months requirements, would be sent to P&T Stores in Aldborough House, Dublin.

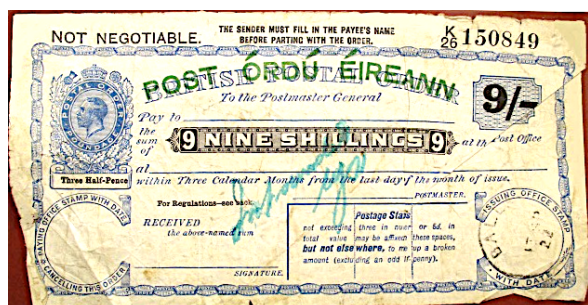


Fig.1 Overprinted ‘POST ÓRDÚ ÉIREANN’

On April 1, the Birr Postmaster wrote: *As the Free State will no doubt soon print its own postal orders I beg leave to suggest that odd sixpences be omitted.* It would be a substantial saving at a slight inconvenience to the public.

Browne wrote to the Secretary on April 7: *a scheme for the issue of a purely Irish Postal Order had not*

previously been considered. He agreed that issuing 41 separate denominations was not really necessary and suggested that the opportunity should be taken to limit the number of values. The existing grading in sixpences should remain up to 5s and then the step should be 2/6 up to £1. The drawback was that poundage would have to be paid on two orders but if the poundage on the higher orders was increased it might not attract so much attention. A pencil note in the margin states that there was no legal authority to charge anything over 2d. It goes on: *There was considerable difficulty at the recent London Conference settling the procedure to be followed provisionally to carry on the Service, in securing control of the Irish issue of overprinted orders, and the British representatives emphatically and repeatedly stated that under no circumstances would a form of Postal Order other than the British one be allowed to circulate for payment in Great Britain.*

At the end of April, the Controller of PO Stores reported that he had ascertained from the London Stores department that the supply of overprinted Postal Orders – in all 2,739,000 – is a six months consumption, as estimated by the Money Order Department. He also found out that the orders were printed by the Bank of England and wondered if there was a possibility that the Bank of Ireland might do it in Dublin.

Having an Irish Postal Order for internal use and the overprinted British ones for extra-territorial purposes was put forward but this was not supported.

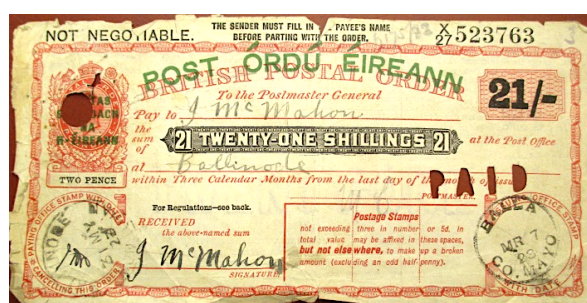


Fig.2 Overprint ‘RIALTAS SEALADACH NA H-ÉIREANN’ added across the King’s head.

In May, reputedly due to public opinion, the Postal Orders appeared with the King’s portrait overprinted RIALTAS SEALADACH NA H-ÉIREANN (fig 2). I have not found any reference to it anywhere, in the files or in the newspapers. On 18 May, in a letter to Finance, P&T reported that *the British Post Office repeatedly declined to deal with an Irish Postal Order.* It may have been thought initially that by overprinting the King’s portrait it would become an



Fig.3 Overprinted 'Saorstát éireann 1922' issued late 1923 (courtesy GB Overprint Society)

'Irish Postal Order' and would not be cashed in Britain.

A problem arose with the added postage stamps. Before 1 April some post offices in Britain refused to allow for overprinted stamps affixed to Irish Postal Orders (for those not familiar with Postal Orders, odd low value stamps could be added to make up odd amounts – eg: a 4d stamp being added to a 4/- order to make up 4/4d). After 1 April it had to be announced regularly in the papers that overprinted stamps could only be affixed to Orders issued in 'Southern Ireland' and only un-overprinted stamps could be affixed to Orders issued in the UK.

The Postmaster General, JJ Walsh, enquired on June 8 *when is the issue of Irish orders expected, and who will undertake the printing? The printing of Old Age Pension Orders is being done by the Bank of Ireland, and the same course should be followed in the case of Postal Orders.* He was told that, with agreement from the Minister of Finance, the matter had been deferred.

In January 1923, the Greystones Postmaster proposed dropping all orders with 6d and having a gummed 6d coupon, stamp size, instead. The idea was rejected on grounds of loss in Revenue, which is hard to understand.

The Controller of Stores wrote several times promoting the issue of an Irish Postal order and, on 25 April 1923, he pointed out that the current system *greatly facilitates Irish people shopping by post in Great Britain and questioned whether on national grounds it is desirable to give special facilities for such a purpose, in view of its adverse effect on the Irish distributing trade, apart from its reaction on Irish Industries.*

Following prolonged discussion, the control of overprinted British Orders in Dublin was finally agreed in the summer of 1923 but, as the Solicitor

pointed out, the Post Office Act 1908 still applied and a distinctive Free State Postal Order could not be issued without new legislation in Ireland.

After a lot of internal correspondence, which includes loads of statistics and tables, the Secretary in Dublin wrote a long letter to the Secretary in London in January 1924. *In connection with a proposal to issue a distinctive Postal order by this Administration, I shall be glad to be informed of the attitude of the British Administration in regard to each of the following suggestions.* The first was that POs in Britain and Ireland have stocks of Postal Orders of both Administrations but they could be cashed only in the issuing country. The second was that each Administration to issue and pay the Orders of both Administrations. The third proposal was for each to have only its own Orders but that both would be payable throughout the former United Kingdom. This was the one he preferred *as the most suitable and just.*

He then goes on to point out that Ireland's position with Britain was not the same as the Colonies or Dominions but more a position of equality, guaranteed by an international treaty. *The nearness of the two nations, their long and intimate connexion, their trade interdependence, the fact that they have been an administrative whole for generations, and the very circumstances under which that whole was divided, all combine to reinforce the case for the most complete mutual accommodation in matters of this kind. For reasons which will be obvious this Administration cannot go on indefinitely issuing overprinted British postal Orders. Public opinion here demands a distinctly Irish Order.*

The reply, on 17th March, didn't favour any of the suggestions but proposed the adoption of the practice followed in other Administrations which

have their own Orders for internal use and still participate in the Imperial Postal Order Service.

Within a week, Dublin wrote back: *With regard to proposal 3, it has been interpreted in rather a different light from that in which it was made. Our proposal is for an interchange of postal orders between the Free State and Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Imperial Orders would continue to be payable in the Free State. Is this quite out of bounds of possibility?*

Suddenly relations changed, London's reply beginning 'Dear O'Hegarty' and ending 'Yours sincerely' and signed personally 'F H Williamson'. He wrote *it would be of assistance to us to know whether you contemplate making your Orders closely similar to ours in size, general appearance and arrangement and such details as the position of the figures indicating amount and of the spaces for date-stamps, the watermark and so forth. I should be glad to have any information you can give me on this point.*

By way of aside, Patrick Sarsfield O'Hegarty, a Cork man, had entered the Civil Service as a clerk in the Post Office. He was posted to Great Britain throughout WWI. In 1918, O'Hegarty refused to take the oath of allegiance required of Irish civil servants by Britain and returned to Ireland. There he ran The Irish Bookshop in Dublin and continued his writing on politics and history. In 1922, he became Secretary of the newly formed Department of Posts and Telegraphs, a position that he kept until his retirement in 1945. Meanwhile, on the British side, Brigadier-General Frederick H Williamson had been Director, Army Postal Services (1915-20) and had been appointed Assistant Secretary of the British Post Office. Awarded a CBE in the Birthday Honours List of June 1922, by July 1923, he had risen to the post of Secretary of the GPO and was subsequently to receive a knighthood.

We can only imagine the 'high-fiving' in the Secretary's office (then in Dublin Castle) on reading this. 'Dear Williamson' was informed *Our Order would be bi-lingual and might need to be slightly larger but we would prefer to keep to the same size and if it was essential for having Free State Orders cashed in Great Britain we would find no insuperable difficulty in getting necessary bi-lingual matter into the space available. Let me know and we can then prepare a design and let you see it.* Subsequent correspondence reverted to more official tones.

On 30 June, London wrote: *The PMG is prepared to agree to the payment in this country of Postal Orders belonging to the proposed Irish Free State*

issue on the understanding that the Orders will conform with Imperial Orders as nearly possible in size, shape and arrangement.

Some decisions had already been made in Dublin. The full series of 41 values would not be issued and a single watermark would be used (*fig 4 below*), unlike in Britain where each value had its own, necessitating 41 dandy rolls. Eventually, 29 values were decided on. All 6d values above 5/- would be dropped except 7/6, 12/6 and 17/6, for which there was a significant demand. When reducing the size of the counterfoil was proposed, the Controller of Stores advised that it was important that the number should stand out clearly as they had *found that the numbering machine gets faulty at times and results in the number on the Order and Counterfoil differing*. In 1923 the printing of orders was transferred from the Bank of England to a commercial contractor.



Fig. 4 The watermark

It was agreed in May 1923 to use the same paper as used for Pension Orders, with the large watermark. Having agreed that the new Irish postal orders would be the same size and general layout as the British, three months were spent looking for the Irish translation that had the exact legal meaning as the English text.

PJ Murphy, Asst., Supt., Dublin Postal District, put forward, in November 1923, a redesigned counterfoil (*fig 5*) to shorten the length of Postal Orders. His idea was adopted, not to shorten the Orders but to allow for the bilingual requirement.

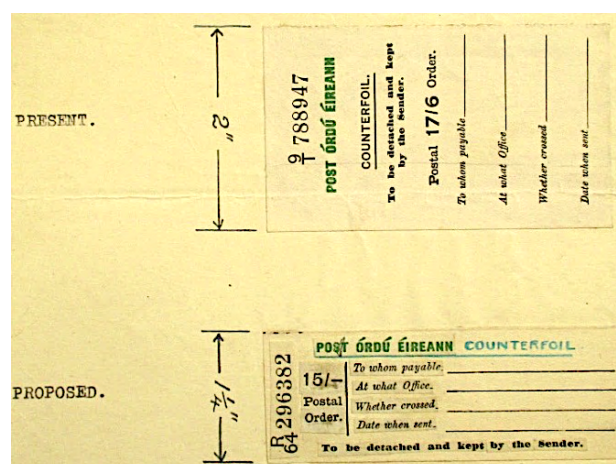


Fig.5 Proposed change to Counterfoil

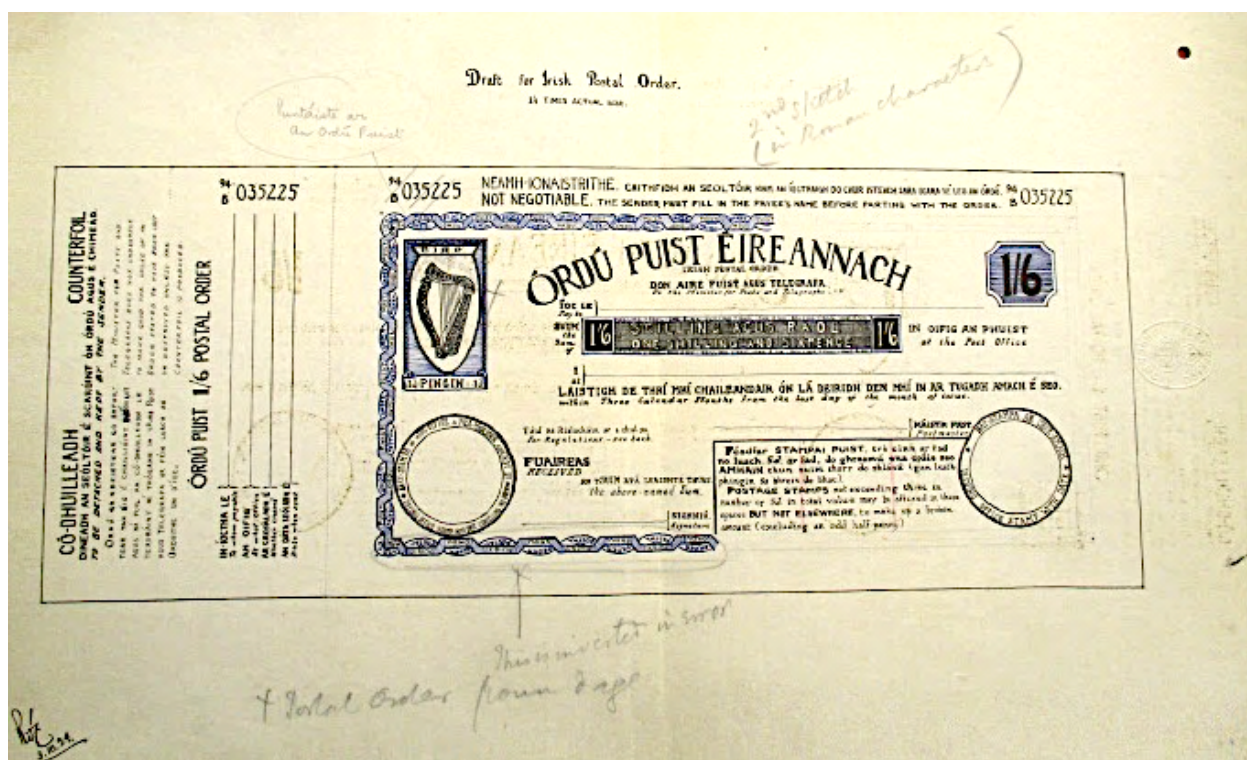


Fig.6 First Draft for Irish Postal Order

On 6 October 1924, the above draft (fig 6) was sent to the Accountant for comment. He noted that there was no mention of poundage and thought the Order number should be more prominent.

A month later the draft was sent to Revenue Stamping Branch to consider the design and precautions necessary to prevent fraudulent imitation of the Order; and . . . it is requested that they will be so good as to have a specimen Order prepared showing a design for a border, and for the poundage stamp. It had been intended using the same paper as was used for the Old Age pension Order but then decided a different watermark should be used.

Revenue replied that the production of Postal orders will necessitate the addition of a special printing plant and it is considered that the type of machine most suitable for the work is a Chambon Press similar in character to the machine which it is intended to use for printing of Old Age Pension Orders. They were of opinion that the security obtained by the presence of special watermarks should be replaced by some form of security printing and that the Pension Order paper be used.

The Controller of Stores, who had a considerable input in the whole project, proposed the printing be done by contract, as in Britain. A single sentence memo was written at the bottom of a correspondence on 17 February 1925: *The Secretary has decided that the printing of the Orders is not to be given out to contract.*

I suggest an additional printing consisting of a special security ground tint embodying the value of each separate rate. This was put forward again by the Director, Revenue Stamping Branch, A. S. Roberts, who added that he required at least six months from the placing of the order to obtain the necessary machinery and engravings.

Revenue was very fortunate to have a man of Robert's experience at this busy time. Born in Scotland in 1871, he joined Inland Revenue there but soon transferred to London. In 1922 he was Assistant Director of Stamping in Somerset House, where he had been for over twenty years. It seems he was involved in the production of the first Irish definitives there when, in June 1922, a letter from Finance in Dublin to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue in London asked them to tell him that it is almost certain that the Inland Revenue will be moved into Dublin Castle. This suggests he had already agreed to come to Dublin. The Revenue Commissioners came into existence in February 1923 and the Stamping Branch then established in the Castle with Roberts as its Director. His son, A.H.K. Roberts, provided significant philatelic information in philatelic magazines up to the 1960s.

He produced a Report in May 1925, in which he gave details of the printing process and went on to provide a comprehensive breakdown of the expenses to be incurred. *I annex specimen prints of dummy orders which have been prepared to show the possibilities of this method of production (fig 7).*

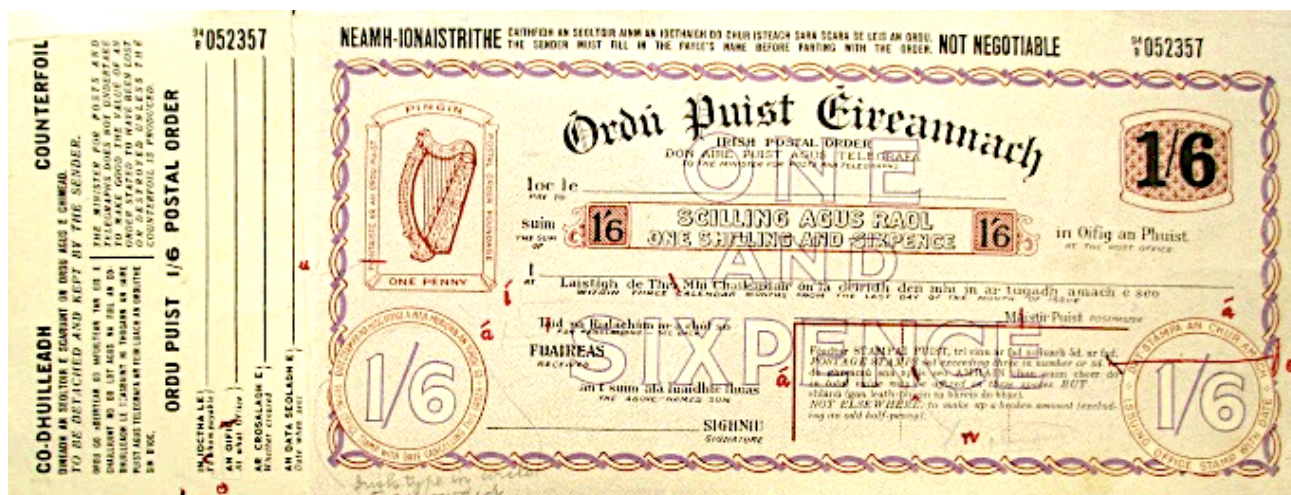


Fig.7 1925 'Dummy' order with corrections marked in red.

Two invoices relate to this dummy order. One is from Robert Flanagan of Drumcondra, Artist & Designer, paid £2-15-0 for *preparing finished drawing (bi-lingual) Black block for New Irish Postal Order*. The other is from B. Dellagana & Co Ltd, London, paid £10-10-0 for *one drawing of border etc., for Postal Orders, colour drawing, setting necessary type, making set of 3 colour zincos complete, proofed in colour*.

The costs for which sanction would have to be sought were £2,995 and this was received from Finance in September 1925. *A supply of British Postal Orders estimated to last until June next is on hands but it is hoped to have the new postal Order available on 1st April or soon after*. Revenue Commissioners were asked to *take steps towards the installation of the necessary machinery and the preparation of the final design of the proposed order*.

On 14 October, the Stamping Branch reported that *the space available for the panel stating the value of the order in words is in some cases insufficient to allow both the Irish and English lettering to be used without making the letters too small to be easily legible. It is suggested . . . that the panel should be in Irish only and the ground tint in English*. This was agreed. The proofs of the new Orders were checked and approved for both texts on 5th December. Samples of the new Orders were received on 18 January 1926. Dellagana was paid £14-10-0 for *making necessary drawings & fittings for Irish Postal Order* and £36-10-0 for *setting up type for whole of back and panels and counterfoil for front in English & Irish and for engraving special micro copper plate of repeat lettering for background including sample plates*.

The Post Office Editorial section said that when the two languages were printed together one should be

smaller to avoid confusion. In the previous proofs the text around the harp was in Roman capital letters and when such are used the practice was to omit the accents but in the latest proof it was in Irish characters and the accents should appear. The Translation Section, Leinster House, was consulted and said *as this inscription is not easily readable there is scarcely any necessity for the accent!* The Government had issued directions in August 1924 that all printing and typing on Government Services should be in Roman characters but the Secretary was of opinion that it should be left as it was.

In February 1926, it was noticed there was no mention of 'Saorstát éireann' shown on the 'Dummy' order. This was rectified by incorporating it in the poundage 'stamp' the harp being slightly reduced in size.

In early April, just as the final details of fitting the requirements into the limited space were agreed, a letter arrived from London stating that it was proposed reducing the size of British Postal Orders and suggesting the new Irish Orders might like to follow suit. As the design *conforming in size and arrangement with the existing British Postal Order had been approved and as the arrangements for the final engraving were well advanced it would not be possible to make any alterations in size without incurring considerable expense*.

I will continue the story in our December issue but in the interim, I must give my special thanks to John Sheffield and Revenue Archives both for access to their files but also for their help. Without those files, this article would be missing a lot of important information. Their files were marked "D for D" (Due for Destruction), which thanks to good fortune did not happen. However, sadly several of the P&T files on Postal Orders were culled in 1956. It is likely those dealt with the overprinting contracts.

IRISH AIRMAILS – FLIGHTS of 1932 – part 3
Part XIV in a series of articles on the History of Air Mail in Ireland
Ronny Vogt



Illustration 28: Posted New York on 13 May and carried by Amelia Earhart on 20 May Harbour Grace - Londonderry. Londonderry arrival postmark of 23 May. No. 22 of 50 covers carried.

Transatlantic pioneer flights

In this third part of 1932 flights we will have a closer look at the Atlantic. Activities, from an Irish perspective, were dominated by Amelia Earhart and Jim Mollison. I will start with Amelia Earhart's famous flight.

When Amelia Earhart was the first woman *passenger* on a transatlantic flight in June 1928, she described herself as being as useful as a sack of potatoes but she was, nevertheless, treated as a hero. Subsequently, she decided to do it by herself. On 20 May 1932 she took off in her Lockheed Vega aircraft from Harbour Grace, Newfoundland and touched down on 21 May at Culmore, near Londonderry. This was the first transatlantic flight by a woman pilot, the first solo crossing by a woman and the fastest crossing by anyone. Amelia Earhart carried 50 covers with her, numbered from 1 - 50 which allows for easy identification of covers (illustrations 28 and 29 above and next column).

One of the lesser known fates of the Amelia Earhart covers is that two of these covers were to be saved in 1934 from an aircraft crash near New York (illustration 30 and 31).



Illustration 29: Unused postcard showing Amelia Earhart on 21 May on arrival at Culmore, Londonderry, after her successful flight.

On 19 December 1934, at 3.25 a.m., American Airlines Curtiss Condor NC12395, piloted by John J. Deater operating the Newark - Chicago airmail service, caught fire while landing at Buffalo, New York, and was completely destroyed. Some 225 lbs of mail was salvaged in burnt and charred condition. A cachet in black or violet was applied 'DAMAGE DUE TO / AIR MAIL INTERRUPTION / AT / BUFFALO NY / DEC. 19, 1934'. Two covers are known from this disaster that had been previously carried by Amelia Earhart on her Harbour Grace to Ireland flight across the Atlantic on 20/21 May 1932. These have the violet cachets and are numbered 43 and 46 out of the 50 covers. These two covers were apparently sent back to the United

States at the end of 1934, presumably under separate cover and by chance found themselves on that Newark to Chicago flight – an amazing coincidence.



Illustrations 30 and 31: Amelia Earhart Harbour Grace - Londonderry cover no. 46 (front and back), signed by her. Returned to the United States at the end of 1934 and saved from the American Airlines crash at Buffalo N.Y. on December 19, 1934, en route Newark – Chicago with cachet 'DAMAGE DUE TO / AIR MAIL INTERRUPTION / AT / BUFFALO NY / DEC. 19, 1934'.

But there were other pioneer and record flights as well. The DO-X, with 12 engines and 157 feet wingspan, was by far the largest heavier-than-air aircraft the world had seen at that time. As well as being a technological marvel, the DO-X was a flying pleasure dome with dining rooms, sleeping quarters and a central saloon 23 feet long carpeted with Oriental rugs. To promote his plane, Claude Dornier organized a gala air cruise to New York that would include stops all over Europe and South America. But a series of minor accidents threw it disastrously off schedule, including sitting in Lisbon harbour for six weeks, only reaching New York some 9 months after the original start of its journey. The return flight was achieved somewhat faster in stages over six days, leaving New York on 19 May 1932, via Dildo (Newfoundland) on 20 May, Holyrood (also Newfoundland) on 21 May, Horta (Azores) on 22 May, Vigo (Spain) on 23 May, and Calshot (UK) on 23 May, to Berlin on 24 May (illustration 32).



Illustration 32: Posted St. John's on 19 May 1932, with special overprinted \$1 stamp, carried by the DO-X to Calshot and forwarded to Dublin.

In addition, there were the daring but only nearly successful flights by lucky pilots. Lou Reichers, an American 'speed pilot' as he was called in the press, left New York shortly after 11.00 p.m. on 12 May 1932, for a record flight New York - Harbour Grace - Dublin - Paris in an attempt to better Charles Lindbergh's record time (illustration 33). He reached Harbour Grace after a flight of 6½ hours early in the morning of 13 May and left again at 8.20 a.m. for the Atlantic crossing to Dublin. With only one hour of fuel left and the fog closing in he decided to ditch into the Atlantic near the 'S.S. President Roosevelt', which was rather fortunately in the area, some 50 miles off the South-West corner of Ireland. He was picked up after some 20 minutes in the water, but the aircraft was lost. No mail was carried by Lou Reichers on his Atlantic flight.



Illustration 33: Souvenir mail, posted Newark on 12 May, signed by Lou Reichers, but was not carried on the flight.

Combined sea and air services were again used to speed up Transatlantic mails. A special accelerated mail service between England and Canada was operated in 1932 for the 'Imperial Economic Conference'. The backbone of operations was the British steamer 'S.S. Empress of Britain'. Special airmails were organised between Southampton and Cherbourg on 13 July, 30 July and 13 August reaching Ottawa by a special airmail service from Strait of Belle Isle to Ottawa in less than four days.

Irish acceptances for these flights are known and I show examples below (illustrations 34 and 35).



Illustration 34: Posted Dublin on 11 July, and carried on 13 July with first special airmail service to Ottawa. Special Ottawa arrival postmark of July 18, with slogan 'SPECIAL SEAPLANE / FROM / STRAIT OF BELLE ISLE / 1/3 OF SHORTEST ROUTE / FROM EUROPE'.



Illustration 35: Posted Dublin on 12 August and carried on 13 August with third special airmail service to Ottawa. Ottawa arrival postmark of 18 August.

The Mollison flight

One of the more epic Transatlantic flights was made in 1932 by Jim Mollison from Portmarnock to Newfoundland and New York, epic because of its philatelic importance, as a privately overprinted 1s stamp of the first definitive series set was used on some covers carried on the flight. At 11.30 a.m. on 18 August 1932, Jim Mollison took off in a D.H. Puss Moth 'The Heart's Content' from Portmarnock Strand near Dublin and flew for 30 hours 15 minutes to land at Pennfield Ridge in New Brunswick after overflying Newfoundland in the hope of making a direct flight to New York. Jim Mollison had completed one of the most fascinating solo flights in the history of aviation, the first east-west Transatlantic solo flight. On 21 August he flew on to

New York and landed at Roosevelt Field at 4.34 p.m.

While the preparations for this flight were taking place in Dublin, someone, still unknown, although suspicion has fallen on Paddy Saul (see 1930 flights) was creating Irish philatelic history by overprinting, privately, the contemporary Irish 1s stamp in magenta ink 'ATLANTIC / AIR MAIL / AUGUST / 1932' which is also known with the variety '1932 missing'. I show a 'Mollison signed cover' at the top of the next page (illustration 38) and other examples of flown covers below (illustrations 36 and 37).



Illustration 36: Posted Portmarnock on 16 August, with pair of overprinted 1s stamps 'ATLANTIC / AIR MAIL / AUGUST / 1932', and carried on 18 August by Jim Mollison Portmarnock – New Brunswick - New York.



Illustration 37: Similar cover, but with overprinted stamp showing the '1932 missing' variety. One of two such covers known.

One final note on these covers. I have never been able to ascertain why they were addressed to Harbour Grace in Newfoundland save that this place had acted as a starting point for previous Transatlantic flights. I have not discovered who exactly was preparing these covers or anything about the addressees.

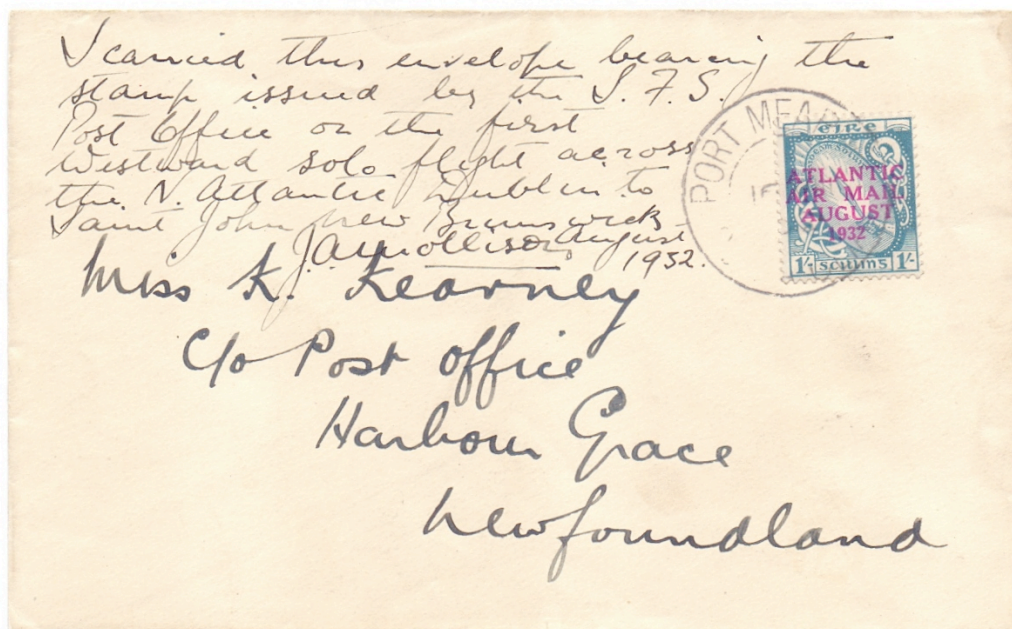


Illustration 38: Posted Portmarnock on 16 August, with overprinted 1s stamp 'ATLANTIC / AIR MAIL / AUGUST / 1932' carried on 18 August by Jim Mollison Portmarnock – New Brunswick - New York. Inscribed by Mollison 'I carried this envelope bearing the stamp issued by the I.F.S. Post Office on the first westward solo flight across the N. Atlantic Dublin to New Brunswick - J.A. Mollison, August 1932'. One of two such covers.



Illustration 39: Gresham Hotel envelope, posted Dublin, Upr Leeson St, on 18 August, carried on 18 August by Jim Mollison Portmarnock – New Brunswick - New York, with arrival postmark of Saint John N(ew) B(runswick) for 20 August, 2.00 p.m. Signed by Jim Mollison. One of 7 similar covers. It is assumed that these covers were prepared by Paddy Saul, who took the latest meteorological reports to Portmarnock on the morning of 18 August. The addressee is David Eric Saul, Paddy Saul's youngest brother, born in 1904.

Whilst the covers bearing the unofficial overprint on the Irish stamp addressed to Newfoundland are seen from time to time at auction, the next item (illustration 40) addressed to Ireland bearing a Canadian stamp and signed by Mollison is believed to be unique.



Illustration 40: Cover bearing the embossed seal of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, dated in manuscript '18th August 1932', carried by Jim Mollison Portmarnock – New Brunswick, and posted after arrival St. John's on 20 August, 2.00 p.m.

The above cover was prepared by J.G. O'Neill, then Clerk to the Dublin City Council and father of long time and now sadly deceased IPC member Jack O'Neill. It was handed over to Jim Mollison either at the Mansion House or City Hall in Dublin prior to the flight. This is the only known such cover.

I conclude this article with a very rare photograph and a scarce postcard.



Illustration 41: Photo inscribed on the back 'Mollison flying from Ireland to Canada, August 1932. Photo taken from S.S. Ascania in mid-Atlantic'. Not too many photos can exist showing Jim Mollison flying over the Atlantic.

Jim Mollison originally intended a return flight across the Atlantic with a view to completing the round trip in 4 days. Emptied of energy and unfit he waited several days in New York, meeting Charles Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart. In the morning of 28 August Mollison took off from New York but thick fog forced him down at St. John's, Newfoundland. His wife Amy Johnson urged him to cancel the flight and on 31 August, she announced that Jim would return by boat.

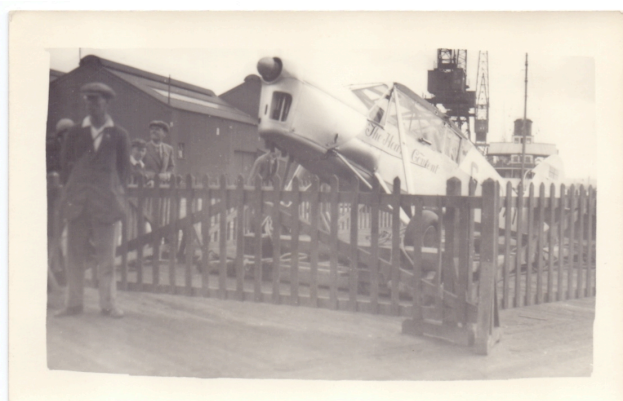


Illustration 42; This postcard shows "The Hearts Content" being unloaded at Southampton Docks on 9 September.

This concludes the series on the history of Irish Airmail which I have purposely stopped at the end of 1932 because after that date there were simply 'too many' flights. By the end of that year, commercial services were operating the important routes to Africa, Australia and New Zealand (via India) and South America on a regular basis, if not without a few mishaps along the route. Although it was to be a further seven years before regular commercial air mail services across the North Atlantic were to commence, only to be almost immediately interrupted by the outbreak of war, by 1932 all the historic pioneering work had been done and therefore I feel is the time to bring the story to a close. I hope you have enjoyed it.

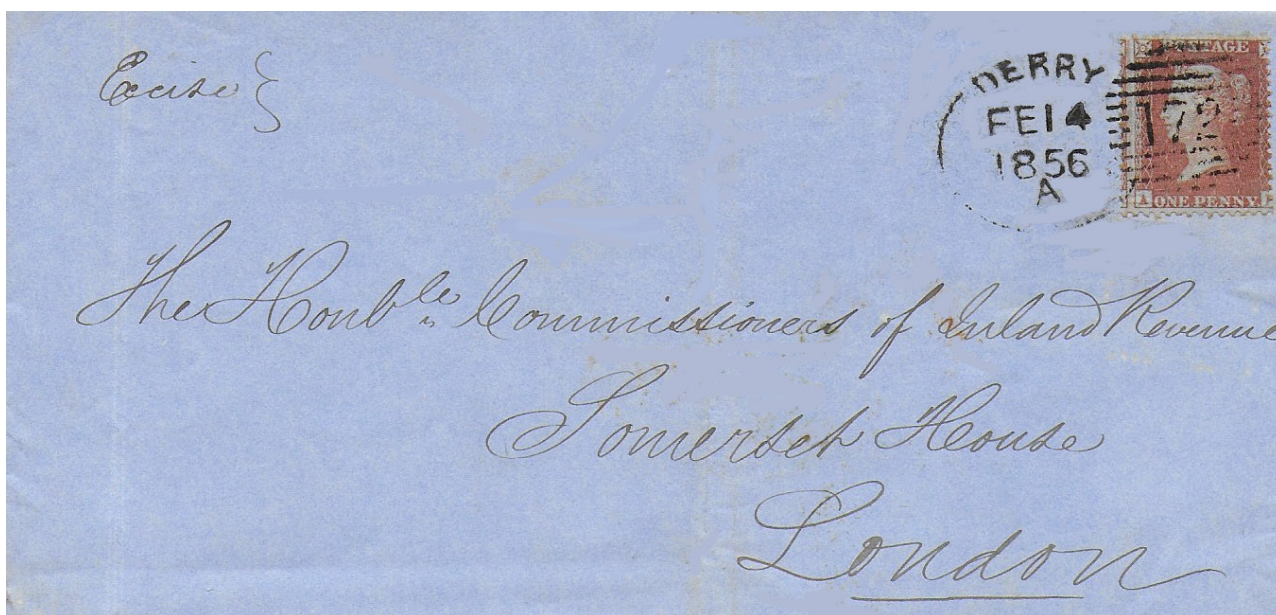
Editor's note: Before I let Ronny go, I want to thank him personally for his many contributions, the first of which appeared in our March 2014 issue. I little thought that a few chance words when we bumped into one another at the Stampex show in London back in September 2013 would result in our having such a comprehensive series of articles in Irish Philately, providing, in effect, the definitive history of the early years of Irish Airmail. On behalf of all our readers 'our sincere thanks to you, Ronny'. Stan.

A FAVOURITE COVER - A DERRY SPOON CANCELLATION

Robert Lyttle

Spoon cancellations were first introduced in England in 1853. The experiment was extended to Ireland in 1855 and eventually 32 Irish locations received this type of canceller. Initially the Irish cancellers were similar to those employed in England (the numeral identifying the location being enclosed in a pattern of oval bars); however as Irish numerals traditionally appeared within diamond bars, the English design was replaced by a traditional Irish design in 1857. Consequently one can find both English and Irish type spoon cancellations being used in the same Irish location but there is no period of overlap between the two types.

The wrapper illustrated (below) bears a Derry English type spoon cancellation of 14th February 1856 with stamper code A (believed to indicate 'afternoon').



The wrapper is back stamped with a Dublin transit handstamp of 15th February 1856 and a London arrival handstamp of 16th February 1856.

Although the wrapper is somewhat folded and stained and the spoon cancellation is not of the best quality (a characteristic of many Irish spoon cancellations), the main interest in the wrapper is in its contents. It was written by Thomas Godfrey, who was the Inland Revenue superintendent of the Buncrana District and sent to the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue in London and reads as follows:

Honourable Sirs,

On the morning of the 6th inst while on my way from Carn to attend the sitting at Buncrana, I alit from my gig in order to ??? some spirits in transit, and in the course of doing so my horse took fright, and as I caught hold of the reins he pulled me along at a furious rate until the bridle gave way, and I was then threw down on a rough road with great violence, which produced dislocation of the left shoulder joint as well as other severe internal injuries causing a spilling of blood; and since then I am totally unable to perform the duties of my district. Therefore I humbly pray your Honours will be pleased to grant me 28 days leave to try change of air and use other means for the recovery of my health.

The wrapper also contains a confirmation of Thomas Godfrey's incapacitation by James Davidson, Collector of Londonderry (according to the Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory of 1858, there was a J Davidson who was a Collector in the Excise Office). Davidson also writes:

... an Examiner may be sent to officiate ... with as little delay as possible, there being several constabulary prosecutions pending which require immediate attention.

The Inland Revenue was not slow in nominating a temporary replacement for Thomas Godfrey as the wrapper also contains the following note from the Inland Revenue dated 16th February 1856:

We submit that Mr James Braby Examiner, be directed to officiate in Buncrana District during the Supervisor's illness.

MAKING THE MAIL GO FASTER

Part VIII of an occasional series – Editor

This occasional series came to an abrupt halt in 2014 just before we moved and my collection had to be packed up on a short term basis. Since that date, thanks to the efforts of our contributors, I have received sufficient material to fill our pages; however that situation having coming to a halt, it is time for me to get my pen out once again. Patient readers may recall that I was discussing the development of Ireland's Travelling Post Offices.

Previous notes on TPOs appeared in previous issues as follows:-

March 2013	Dublin and Galway
Dec 2013	Dublin and Belfast
March 2014	Dublin and Cork
Sept 2014	Ballybrophy Sorting Tender

I will now take a quick look at Ireland's other TPO services, without, I hope repeating too much what has been written before. As previously, I shall rely heavily for detailed information on *'Travelling Post Offices of Great Britain and Ireland – H.S. Wilson'*.

Of the main lines radiating from Dublin, the former Dublin and South Eastern Railway line to Wexford was the poor relation. Although the route begins with Ireland's first railway from Westland Row (now Pearse) to Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) opened and carrying mails by April 1835, progress was slow, the line reaching Avoca in 1863 and Wexford not until 1872. Wilson records that the line was first officially used for the carriage of mails on 1 July 1863, initially a Night Mail, a Day Mail starting

later in the year. Whilst these early services connected into the 'mail boat' at Kingstown, a TPO did not start running until 1 January 1894. The initial timings were from Dublin at 8am (which would carry mail transferred on at Kingstown) reaching Wexford at 11.35am returning at 2.15pm reaching Dublin at 6.03pm providing a comfortable connection into the evening mail boat. One of the reasons given in a Minute of June 1891 for the establishment of the service was *'in order to give time for a reply from Wexford the same day'* once again proving the importance of the TPO connections in the days before the telephone.

Initially the postmark used on the TPO read 'Dublin & Wexford/R.P.O' but the wording had been amended to replace 'RPO' with 'TPO' by 27 August 1897, the last date for the 'RPO' mark I have recorded being 20 November 1895. The new postmarks incorporated the words 'UP' (towards Dublin) or 'Down' as appropriate, 'DOWN' being much the scarcer.

I show below (*fig 1*) a card of 1908, which nicely shows what happened to an item which reached the TPO in error. Sent from Tredegar in South Wales it reached the Wexford TPO via Shrewsbury and Crewe to Holyhead being sorted en route to a 'Wexford TPO' bag. Addressed simply to 'Loftus Hall, County Wexford', the Irish TPO sorters knew their 'stuff'. They stamped the card and endorsed it 'Waterford'. Loftus Hall, although in County Wexford is situate in the peninsula of land running south of Fethard-on-Sea towards Hook Head.



fig 1

Fethard along with a couple of other offices in the southwest corner of Co Wexford was in fact served from Waterford by ferry from Passage East. Thus the item had to be sent to Wexford Head Office, put in a bag travelling on the newly opened (1906) Wexford/Rosslare to Waterford railway, thence sent by cart to Passage, the ferry, another mail cart to Fethard and thence by foot – a circuitous route which serves to confirm that mail from south Wales to south east Ireland did not travel by the Fishguard to Rosslare ferry as has been suggested by some previous authors.

An Irish language postmark was not introduced until 1935, this showing a feature possibly otherwise unknown in Irish postmarks, namely the use of the ‘Irish ampersand’, a ‘7’ representing ‘agus’ the Irish word for ‘and’ – see *fig 2* below.



fig 2

The Wexford TPO survived partition and although fuel shortages led to withdrawal between 1944 and 1949, the final run of this service was not until 18 September 1965.

Although I have never seen examples of mail which could specifically be identified to being sorted on this service, one must assume that on the down journey, mail was ‘walk sorted’ for Wexford Town as happened for Belfast and Cork respectively on their TPO services.

Waterford, although larger than Wexford never qualified for a direct TPO service from the capital; nor did Limerick. Both cities were traditionally served via Limerick Junction. Initial bags were merely transferred to the ‘Waterford, Limerick and Western’ at ‘The Junction’ but as mail volumes grew ‘Bag Tenders’ under the control of a ‘Mail Guard’ had been introduced on both routes by 1892. Later becoming full TPO services, that to Limerick was established in 1900 and that to Waterford in 1902. Initially known as the Limerick Sorting Tender and Waterford Sorting Tender, both were renamed ‘Sorting Carriages’ c1912. Both services were withdrawn in 1918. In the years 1902 to 1918 it must have been a rare sight at Limerick Junction with all four TPOs at the station simultaneously, bags being transferred between all four routes across the long single platform. The postmarks of the

Waterford and Limerick services are scarce to rare and I show examples below (*figs 3 and 4*).



fig 3



fig 4

To complete the Limerick story, a Sorting Carriage was introduced for a few days immediately prior to Christmas in both 1938 and 1939. Little is known about this service; it is assumed to have operated from Limerick to ‘The Junction’ to connect into the Up (towards Dublin) TPO from Cork. I show a postmark of 1938 below (*fig 5*); to my knowledge all known examples are of philatelic origin.



fig 5

Although, I will revert in a moment to pre 1914 events, a brief mention ought to be made of one other service which connected into the ‘Cork’ TPO, namely the Tralee and Mallow Sorting Carriage, with bags transferred at the latter station. The service operated in the pre Christmas period 1938-40; regrettably I do not possess an example to illustrate. Post War, the service was introduced again in 1953, operating for just a few days in mid December each year until 1965. The datestamp, always a ‘skeleton’ was made up each year resulting in a variety of inscriptions both in English and Irish (known only in 1960 and 1961) – *figs 6 and 7*.



fig 6



fig 7

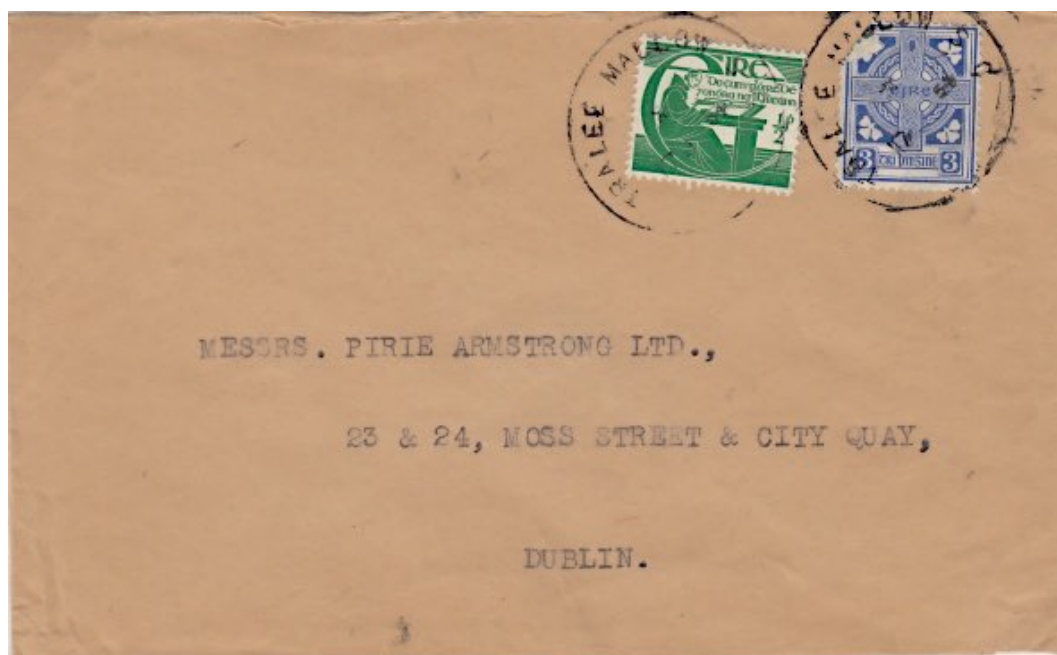


fig 8

Nearly all known postmarks from the Tralee – Mallow service are of philatelic origin but over the years I have located two commercial items and show above (fig 8) an example from December 1954 which has the extra ½d added to pay the Late Fee. My other example is dated 1957, a postcard addressed to Cobh Urban District Council, also having an extra ½d to pay the fee. It was clearly worth the while of some businesses to pay the ½d extra fee to make the mail go faster!

I next turn to TPOs going north. I wrote of the Dublin and Belfast service in our December 2013 issue but do not think, I have otherwise covered the Ulster routes. One of these can be dealt with very simply – the Belfast and Northern Counties TPO which commenced operation in 1881 ran from Belfast's York road station initially leaving Belfast at 10.15am taking just over two hours to reach its destination at Coleraine. Wilson tells us that this provided a connection out of the Dublin and Belfast TPO but that would have been the night service rather than the day service (which had connected with the mail boat from Holyhead) as this did not reach Belfast until 10.25am (timing taken from my 1887 Bradshaw) and at least a half hour would have been needed for transfer of mails between stations in Belfast. The return journey did not leave Coleraine until 4.20pm, far too late to connect through to the Holyhead mail boat that evening. Timings did improve but the service always isolated and unconnected to the rest of Ireland's TPO network before finally being withdrawn in May 1940. Commercial covers from this route are not common although philatelic examples from the 1930s can be found with relative ease. I show two commercial

items from the earlier days of the service below (figs 9 and 10), a newspaper wrapper of 1883 and hastily written postcard of 1905 both presumably posted directly on to the train for speed of delivery.

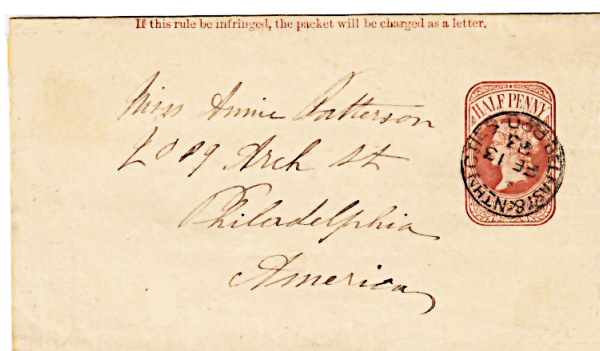


fig 9

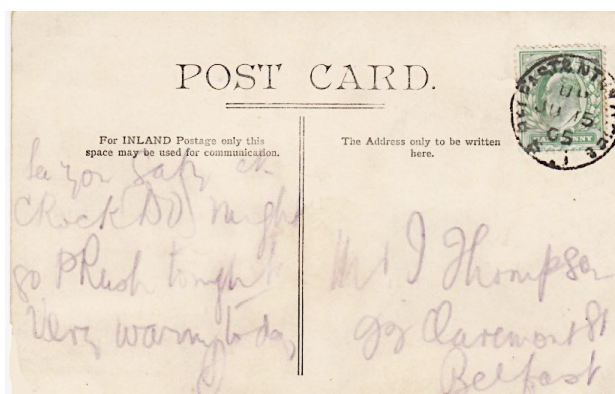


fig 10

Of greater confusion to the railway philatelist are the Ulster TPO, Portadown and Derry and Dublin and Derry services; these are all linked with the Dublin and Belfast service on the former GN(I) main line. The Dublin and Belfast was basically a day service operating between the two cities

connecting into and out of the Holyhead Mail Boat and thus the Irish mail to London (and beyond). Wilson gives much detail of the Ulster TPO; originally the Canadian mails were routed from Dublin via Enniskillen to Derry connecting with the Londonderry Colonial Packet (a story for another day perhaps). By 1865 routing to Derry was via Portadown and Omagh; the route was changed several times in the mid 1860s and Wilson includes a quote 'but there is no doubt that.....the Railway is really out of order and....twice lately the Mail train has run off the line....' – certainly not speeding up the mail! In March 1866 a service was established leaving Dublin at 7.35pm via Portadown extending as far as Omagh, thus it became established as a 'night' service, the return working arriving into Dublin at 5.25pm, the journey initially taking around six hours each way. The extra cost of a specially fitted out a sorting carriage is quoted at £169. Apparatus for transferring the mail to and receiving mail from the TPO was fitted at a number of stations en route reducing journey times and providing faster and more reliable service.

No postmarks are known from the service until 1895 although many will have covers in their collections which would have travelled on and been sorted on this service which continued as an overnight service.

An item from 1898 that travelled on the Ulster TPO and gives some insight into the postal arrangements of the time is shown in the next column (fig 11). This registered item was apparently posted at Jerrettspass, 4 miles north of Newry. Although just a mile north of the former Goragewood Junction station, mail from Jerrettspass Pass was probably conveyed to the local Head Office at Newry by mailcart rather than by rail. At Newry, most sub offices not cancelling mail, it received a 10pm postmark and was taken along with the rest of Newry's outgoing mail to Bessbrook railway station (about a mile and a half, the station having not been redesignated Newry until more recent times). The 1887 timetable tells us the Ulster TPO called at 10.18pm, reaching Portadown at 11pm where the item was unloaded to then on a 1.35am departure to Armagh (going forward to Clones). Arrival at Armagh was at 2.1am precisely, the item receiving a 4am arrival mark, which was probably the start time of the morning shift. Clonallen, saved from Armagh Head Office is closer to Richhill, perhaps 12 miles by crow from the starting point of Jerrettspass – a circuitous route making use of the TPO.

Fig 12 shows an item, which was almost certainly taken on board the Ulster TPO using 'The Apparatus' at Castlebellingham (see top left of card)

and then delivered by Apparatus at Tanderagee, that station being a bare mile from Gilford.



fig 11

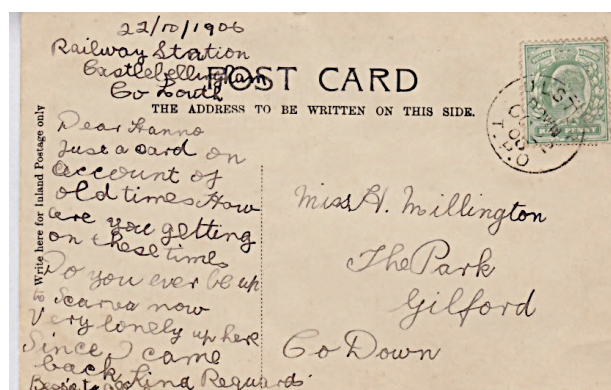


fig 12

The Ulster TPO was split into two sections in 1902, that north of Portadown being renamed as the Portadown and Derry TPO (Night), the whole being renamed in 1912 'Dublin and Derry' TPO, the postmarks of the latter being particularly scarce. Wilson states it is not clear whether this service operated through to Derry before 1902, although the Day Portadown and Derry service had been established as early as 1885.

The Day service was timed to connect with the Dublin and Belfast service (departing Dublin 7.25am) at Portadown and only required one sorting carriage to cover both journeys. The 1887 Bradshaw tells us departure from Portadown was at 9.55am thereby providing a lunchtime delivery in Londonderry of mail posted in London the previous afternoon. A same day reply would nevertheless have been hard to achieve, the Day train leaving that city at 1.40pm proving for delivery in London mid morning the following day. It was a truly integrated service.

In common with most Irish TPOs, the postmarks of both the Ulster TPO and the Portadown and Derry in the years to 1914 are seldom seen cancelling stamps but are relatively easily found as backstamps. As space does not permit, I will refrain from showing examples!

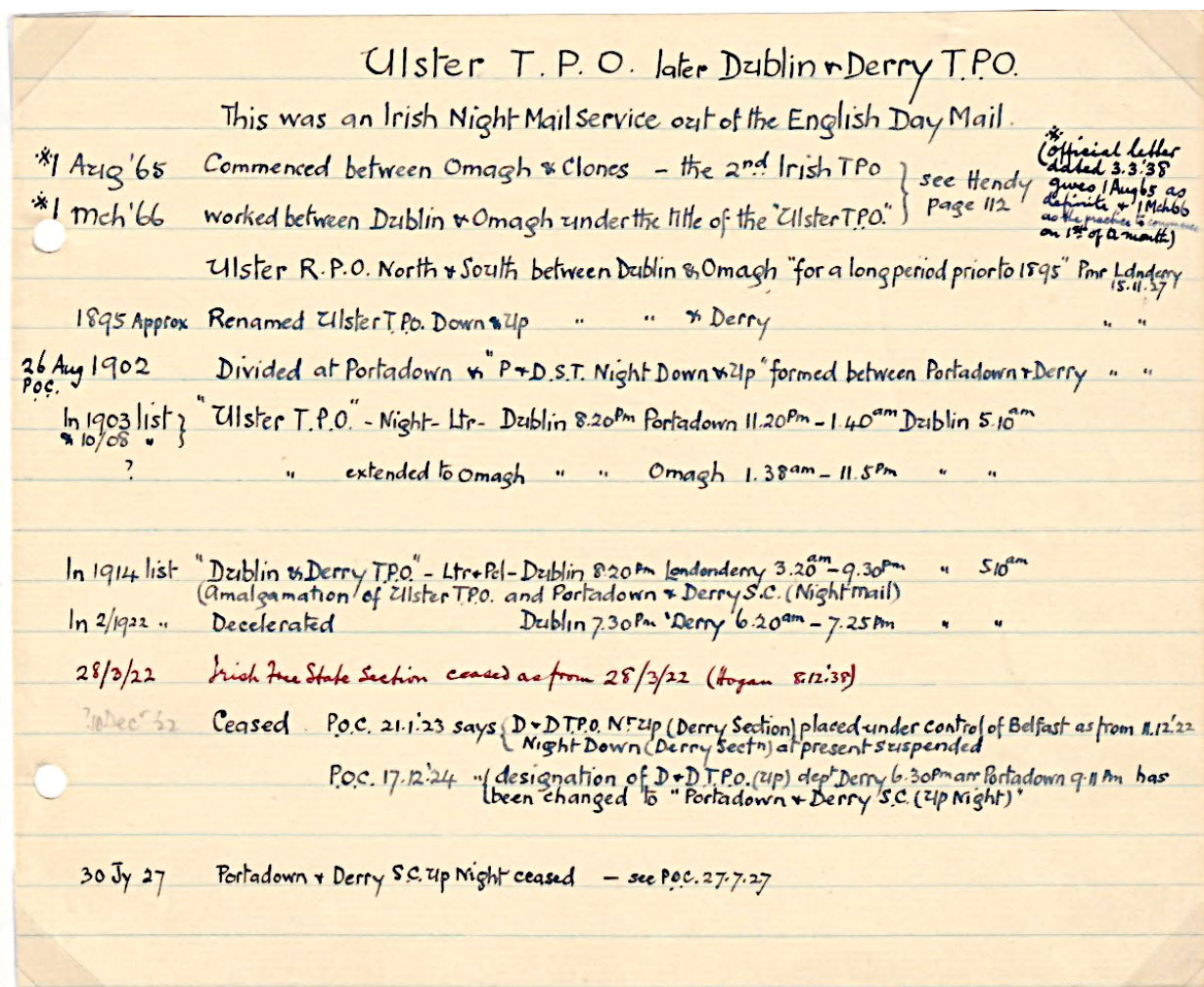


fig 13 – a page from Ward's working manual

The Dublin and Derry TPO was an early casualty of Partition in 1922. The Dublin and Belfast TPO also ceased operation. The Portadown and Derry service survived intact until 1927 when the Night service came to an end. The Day TPO continued until the outbreak of war operating for the last time on 11 June 1940. Some years ago, I acquired some pages from Ward's (he wrote the original standard work on British and Irish TPOs in 1938) working manual on the TPO services and show above (fig 13) that for the Ulster and Dublin and Derry TPOs; this was written up between c1920 and 1938.

I noted above the scarcity of the Dublin and Derry service and am fortunate to be able to show two examples alongside. Fig 14 shows a card that was probably reached the train by way of the Apparatus at Trew and Moy whilst fig 15 shows a skeleton postmark used on the service in 1921. This is not recorded in 'Wilson' and appears to be addressed to Donegall Street (Belfast).

I hope to take the story forward in our December issue when I will look at the changes made in 1892 giving rise to the Express Mail service and 'Railway Letters'

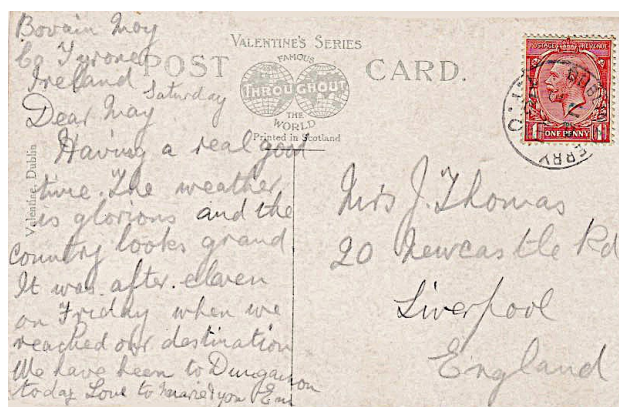


fig 14



fig 15

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR – NORTHERN IRELAND FLIGHTS

Internal UK wartime airmail

Dear Editor,

I was interested to see your short article in our June issue about wartime airmail between Northern Ireland and Britain.

May I refer you to Bill Murphy's booklet 'Irish Airmail 1919-1990'. In that he tells us that the pre war Railway Air Service has been suspended at the beginning of September 1939 on the outbreak of hostilities but that with effect from 1 September 1941 the service was restarted from Belfast to Liverpool. An addition air fee of 3d was charged in addition to the normal postage (2½d in the case of a 'standard' letter). Acceptances for the service of mail addressed to Scotland began on 9 February 1942. Mail sent by the service received express censorship, which is believed took place at Liverpool.

I show below a scan of a cover that I have from the 1st day of the service. I presume that because it was censored by the military it was not censored again by the civilian authorities. Fortunately there is an enclosure in the cover from Lt RR Hale (who censored the cover) who gives his 'address' as 53rd Division Postal Unit and a google search of this leads me to believe that this was the 53rd (Welsh) Infantry Division, which was based in Northern Ireland at that time.



I can also advise that the Northern Ireland airmail fee of 3d was reduced to 2d on 17 February 1947. The service became 'all up' as from 29 September 1947 since which date all first class mail to and from the Province has, under normal circumstances, been carried by air.

Yours etc
Robert Lyttle
Belfast

Dear Editor,

I read your piece about the Belfast WWII flights and I have to agree with you that airmail covers out of Northern Ireland during WWII are quite scarce. In my Northern Ireland WWII material I have only 2 such covers and they are virtually identical to your illustrations.

Back in the 1990s John Wilson transcribed the 'Report on the Progress of Civil Aviation 1939-1945', which is now available on the West Africa Study Circle website at -

<https://www.wasc.org.uk/NewFiles/CAA%20report%20complete.pdf>.

This lists the services stated to have been available to and from Ireland, such as the West Coast Air Service Ltd., between Liverpool and Dublin in 1940 from May until August and Manchester to Dublin from August as well as the Shannon connections. Other entries are for the Railway Air Services weekdays in 1941 on the route Liverpool - Belfast - Glasgow but with Liverpool - Belfast duplicated after September 1941. It is probably worth making an Irish related list for reference. However, I have yet to determine which if any of these services were charged an airmail fee. We certainly know that the 1 September 1941 service charged the 3d fee.



In Bill Murphy's 'Irish Airmails 1919-1990', he records the Railway Air Services First flight from Belfast to Liverpool and return on 1 September

1941 with the additional 3d airmail fee. Illustrated, on the previous page, are two postcards, one in each direction, from these flights both paid at a total of 5d (the postcard rate) which included the 3d airmail fee. The 'PU25' censor, attributed to the Provincial Censor Unit in Birmingham, is struck on the UK-NI flight, this having an additional 2d postage, presumably for surface return, dated 2 Sept from Dunmurry. It may have been censored outbound and not in Belfast but could also have been on the return.

Later on Murphy records the First Northern Ireland acceptance for Scotland on 9 February 1942, again by RAS, which he states gave priority censorship in Liverpool. That flight ties in with a statement in the "War Office Report on the Post Office in Northern Ireland" that I quote below though whether the covers were censored in Liverpool or Glasgow is not something I can comment on other than what I see written as too few covers have been seen to determine that.

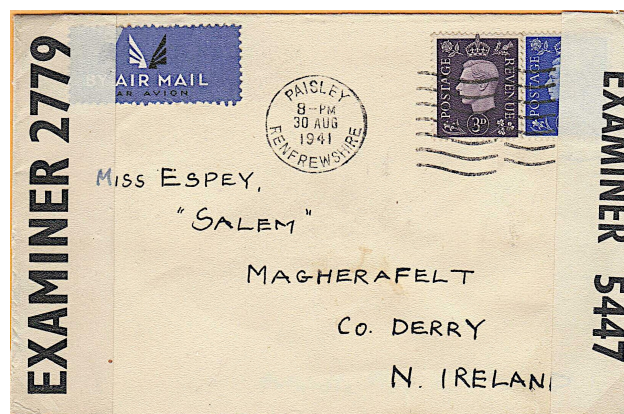
The Post Office archives in London contain a War Office Report on the Post Office in Northern Ireland, probably written in 1945 or 1946 but undated. In it they write:

'The use of the air service for the conveyance of mails was so highly developed before the outbreak of war that Empire Air Services were in operation by which all letter were forwarded by air transport as the normal means. There were daily services from Northern Ireland to Great Britain whence radiated a network to every part of the world. Unfortunately the dictates of war had serious repercussions on this aspect of postal activities, and for a time at least the air service was discontinued. In the autumn of 1942 (sic), however, a daily two-way service from Glasgow to Belfast. A fee of 3d in addition to the ordinary postal rates was charged.'

Below, I show a cover dated May 1942 addressed to Manchester which was surely flown on the Liverpool (rather than Glasgow) service. I also have another cover dated April 1943 addressed to Glasgow which fits well with the Archive Report.



Below is a cover dated 30 August 1941 (before the service officially began) from Paisley with the 5d fee and 2 PC90 censor labels, which I understand are attributed to Glasgow and Belfast.



In conclusion, it surprises me there is no mention of any Belfast airmail in the WWII Office of Postal Censorship Report.

Yours etc
Karl Winkelmann
Lectoure, Gers, France

A postage due query

Dear Editor,

I wonder if any member could confirm to me the routing that European and Indian mail from Belfast and the North of Ireland generally took to London and beyond in the years prior to partition.

The reason I ask is that I have acquired no less than six underpaid covers posted at Belfast, Lisburn and Bangor to European and Indian destinations in the years 1891 to 1921 that have been struck with London hexagonal charge marks (with 'L' at base). I also have three items from the same period to the USA/ Canada from Belfast which have a Dublin 'DN' hexagonal charge mark and to add to the confusion one to the USA with a London 'L' charge mark.

Did mail for Europe/ India go direct from Belfast to London in a closed bag via Dublin or was the routing via Larne, Stranraer, Carlisle etc. All help appreciated.

Yours etc
Rod Greer
Christchurch, Dorset

I believe there was also a service via Fleetwood at some point – who can throw more light on this? - Ed

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - THE WAR LOAN FLIGHT OF 1932

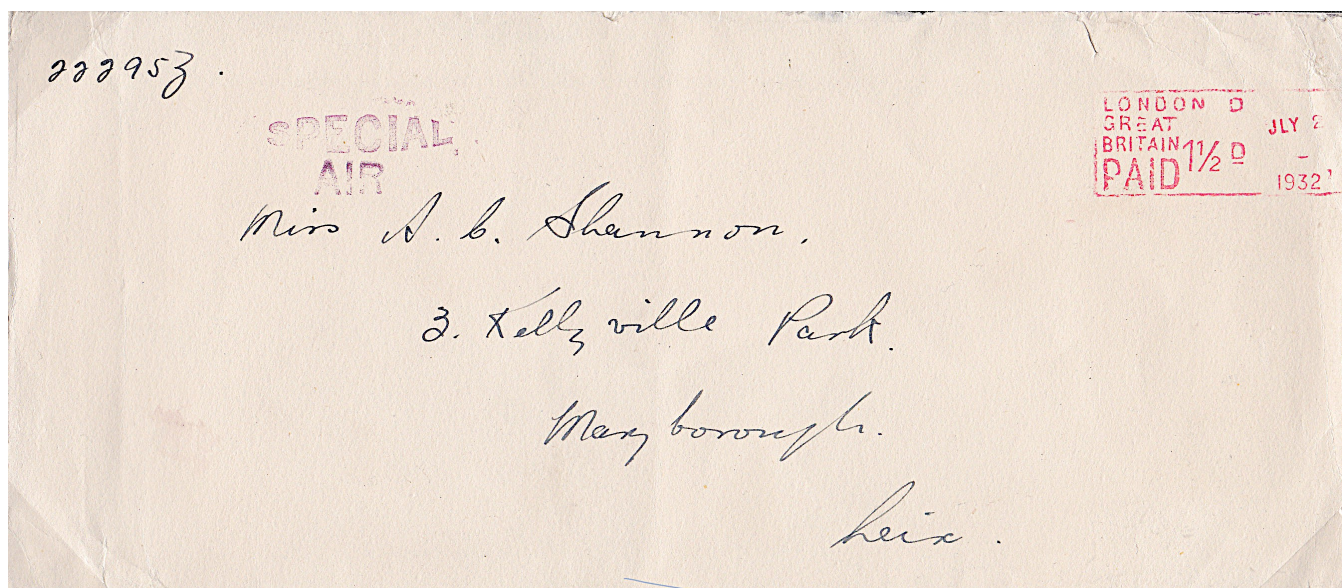


fig 1 – the Bank of Ireland envelope

Dear Editor,

I write with further information to add to the Irish Airmails article in June 'IP'.

Illustration 12 actually shows an envelope of the Post Office Savings Bank and NOT Bank of Ireland.

As I understand it, the holders of War Loan stock could have purchased through the Bank of England, the Bank of Ireland or the Post Office Savings Bank. Thus, three different envelopes were used depending where the records of holders were kept. I attach scans of the three types. The Bank of Ireland envelope (fig 1) has a colourless embossed flap, which will not scan. The Bank of England (fig 2) one with the three halfpence mark is an interesting item of British postal stationery in its own right, used only for this purpose and appears in 'Collect British Postal Stationery' (Huggins and Baker) as item ES59

It is notable that Ronny Vogt's POSB item is 'Paid 8D' whereas mine is 'Official Paid' (fig 3). Perhaps volumes were so big they simply had to use every franking machine they had!

As an aside the POSB offices in West Kensington (W14) was the place that Michael Collins worked when he first went to London in 1906; biographies often just say 'The Post Office'. There is now a plaque on the house just off Shepherds Bush Road in West London where he lived although it is not one of the 'blue plaques'.

Yours etc
Peter Wood
London E.C.

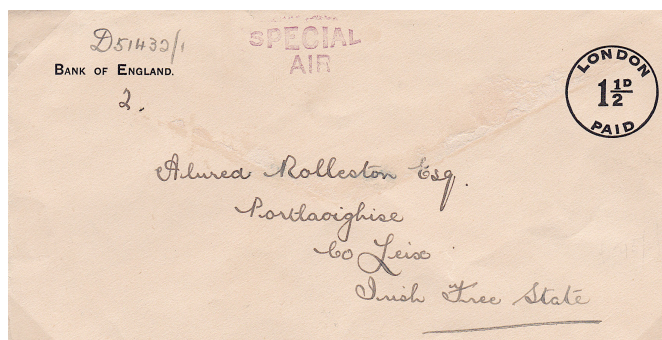


fig 2- the Bank of England envelope



fig 3 – Post Office savings Bank envelope with 'Official Paid' – see illustration 12 in Ronny Vogt's article in the June 2017 issue of IP.

Editor's note: These envelopes must be very scarce – can any member add to what Peter has written? It is interesting to note that all the envelopes, including Ronny Vogt's have the 'Special Air' cachet and a reference number at top left.

AUCTION WATCH – Erinman

The Stanley Gibbons Public Auction held at their offices at Strand, London on 14/15 June 2017 featured part of the late Dr. James Dunlop Ireland collection.

Amongst the more interesting realisations I noted, a sheetlet of 8 'Erie Puist' labels (Hibernian L41a) with lower left label 'defective at foot and a few lesser imperfections with virtually full o.g.' sold for £300 against the upper estimate of £180. In the booklets section a 1931-1940 2/- black/red SG SB1 (edition 15-38) sold for £600 against the lower estimate of £700. However, although complete the condition was described as '1/2d pane some rust spots, also other imperfections incl a few bends and loose stitching' which no doubt affected the final hammer price. Comparatively a 1941-1944 2/- black red booklet SG SB4 (edition 24-42) described as 'fine complete' sold for the upper auction estimate of £1200.

In the Murray Payne auction held on 25 July 2017, a 2p 1938 Father Mathew (SG107var) unmounted mint block of 4 R20/6 with variety first 8 damaged at base made £240 against an estimate of £250.

MacDonnell Whyte Ltd. held its summer auction in Dublin on 8 July 2017 and as ever featured many gems of Irish philately. The front cover of the auction catalogue featured two of Ireland's overprint rarities. Firstly the 1922 Thom 3 line overprint in blue black (SG53var) 1d accent missing of plate 1 R15/12 in a marginal block of four described as 'fresh mint, slight gum disturbance on reverse'. Apart from this block of four, the variety is only known surviving mint in a full sheet. With accompanying MacDonnell AIEP certificate, the item sold just below the pre-sale estimate of Euro8000 at Euro7500 euro. Likewise, a 1d mint marginal block of four with variety 'accent missing but final 't' inserted by hand R15/12' with accompanying certificate sold for Euro3600 slightly exceeding the estimate of Euro3500.

Another rarity on offer was 1922 Thom four 4 line blue black overprint 10/- (SG46var) retouch to 0 of 10/- R1/4 in a top right corner block of four (the variety and two others unmounted) also exhibiting the perfect 's' se-tenant vertically with broken 's'. Estimated at Euro5000, this rare multiple achieved Euro6250.

Rarely offered was a Dollard 1922 4d grey green lower marginal mint block of 5 with control S22 imperf. This key item for control collectors sold for Euro2000 against the estimate of Euro1800.

The only known recorded and probably unique example of the Dollard 1/2d green overprint inverted with control R21 perforated unmounted mint sold for Euro2200 euro against the pre-sale estimate of Euro2000.

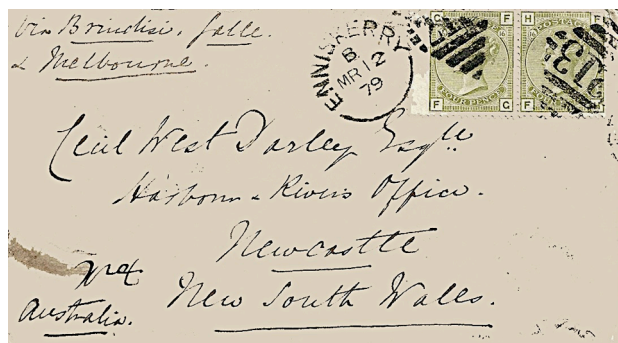
A hitherto unrecorded variety on the 1922 Thom 3 line blue black overprint 1/- bistre (SG63) this being a most unusual example with the accent inserted by hand 'double' in a mint pair R15/12 with MacDonnell AIEP certificate went under the hammer for Euro2200 against the estimate of Euro2000.

Moving away from overprints the 1935 2d 'rare coil' perf 15 x imperf mint with part original gum 'with traces of paper fibres on reverse, slight soling' and 'centre stamp from the famous Renouf strip of five' with certificate slightly exceeded the pre-sale estimate of Euro6500 selling for Euro6750.

A complete sheetlet of 15 of the 2014 Irish Citizen Army 60c with error of portrait showing Vincent Poole instead of Captain Jack White from plate 1B unmounted mint plus a sheetlet of the replacement issue sold for Euro6000 against the estimate of Euro7000. In the booklets section a 2007 Flowers Euro4.80 booklet with green map cover unmounted mint, the scarce unannounced provisional printing went under the hammer for Euro2700 against the pre-sale estimate of Euro1500.

A possibly unique only surviving known 1922 cover with Thom 2d overprint tied by a skeleton H&K D L PKT cds of the Holyhead Dun Laoghaire Packet dated 29 DE 22 achieved Euro775 against an estimate of Euro450.

An interesting e-bay realisation was that of a cover posted at Enniskerry, Co Wicklow in March 1879 to New South Wales franked by a pair of the 'green' 4d GB surface printed, a hard stamp to find on cover. I show a scan of the cover below. This realised Aus\$189 (about £120) which I have to consider as representing good value for the buyer.



THE IRISH ABROAD - PART 13

Brian Warren



fig. 1

Continuing with stamps issued by the Isle of Man Post Office, in May 2008, a six stamp set featured various Celtic flags. The 50p value illustrated the Irish Tricolour (*fig. 1*). In August the full set was also issued in miniature sheet format.



fig. 2

In addition a set of postal stationery cards reproduced the designs with matching stamp imprints (*fig. 2*).



fig. 3

A further large format stationery card with two imprinted stamps (but not the Irish design); illustrated are the flags of the various Celtic Nations on the obverse (*fig. 3*).



fig. 4

In 2009, a further stamp featuring Joey Dunlop was included as part of six stamp set to mark the 50th Anniversary of Honda Motorcycles in World Championship Racing. Joey Dunlop raced on Honda motorcycles and is featured on the 62p value. The photo was taken in the 1980s (*fig. 4*).



fig. 5



fig. 6

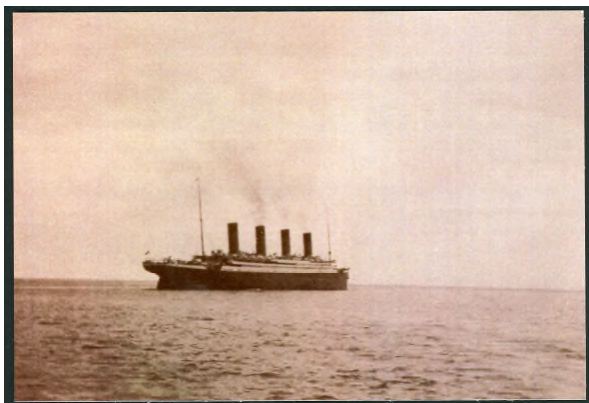
A ten stamp set issued in 2011 marked the Centenary of the Mountain Course and Great TT Races. The 38p value featured Irishman Stanley Woods racing against Jimmy Guthrie in 1935 (*fig. 5*). The 68p value featured Joey Dunlop in a TT race against David Jeffereies in 2000 (*fig. 6*).



fig. 7

The centenary of the sinking of Belfast built RMS Titanic was commemorated in 2012 with a six stamp set and a miniature sheet. The six stamps featured the Titanic (37p), the Interior of

the Ship (38p), Captain Edward Smith and a lifebelt (68p), a lifebelt and the Titanic singing (76p), Survivors in lifeboats (£1.15) and Passengers on the Titanic (£1.65). A nine stamp sheetlet contained the same set of stamps with the three higher values appearing twice in the sheet. This was sold as a pack with the cards referred to below (*fig. 7 on previous page*).



Last known photograph of the Titanic leaving Queenstown - fig. 8



fig. 9



fig. 10



fig. 11

A set of six postcards were also issued showing various Titanic scenes. Each had a different imprinted stamp featuring the same six designs as used on the sheet set (*figs. 8 to 11 show both the obverse and reverse of two of the cards complete with imprinted and cancelled stamps*).



figs. 12-17

A six stamp set was issued in April 2014 to commemorate the Millennium of the Battle of Clontarf between King Boru of Ireland and the Norsemen. The various stamps illustrated Brodir the Warrior (2p), the Battle of Clontarf (42p), Eithne waves the Raven Banner (90p), a Clontarf Warrior (£1.00), King Brian Boru (£1.60) and Fight for the Raven Banner (£2.30) - *See figs 12 to 17*.

The next part will complete the Irish connected Isle of Man issues.

(to be continued)