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Ireland's stamp to celebrate 200 years of the opening of the GPO in 1818

Brian Warren writes on page 13

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial	2	Across the Irish Sea Two Ways - Julian Tweed	14
The Finnish connection – mails between Ireland and Finland part II - Tero Kilpiljarvi	3	To Antigua in 1935 - an Airmail Cover	15
A Map of Ireland's Travelling Post Office Routes - Editor	7	Postal orders – the Backsides – John Lennon	16
Making the Mails Go Faster - part IX - Editor	8	Auction watch - Erinman	19
Dublin GPO is 200 years old - Brian Warren	13	Letter to the Editor	20
		'Madame Joseph' – a note of warning	20
		Cloonyquin Post Office – Brian Warren	21
		The Irish Abroad – part 15 – Brian Warren	23

EDITORIAL

I must begin this issue with an apology to Rod Greer. In retyping, I succeeded in getting all the dates wrong in his short piece on page 90 of our December issue. The first day of British postage due stamps was in fact 20 April 1914. His item was actually posted in Port Said on 16 April and the postage due stamp was affixed on 23 April. It would have helped if I had checked the item before committing to print - mea culpa!

Welcome to 2018! No doubt we will suffer the usual spate of new issues, the majority of which will see minimal postal use, those of us over the age of 40 (which is surely nearly all of us!) still harping back to the days when we actually got stamps on our incoming mail and stood a reasonable chance of getting all the new issues at least from our own country. Yes! – the world has indeed moved on but the fact remains that when one comes to buy a stamp these days, one is very, very rarely offered a commemorative even at a ‘big’ post office. The other day, I took to a post office (in the London area) a tracked/signed for item going overseas, which I had pre-stamped using, inter alia, a couple of old commemoratives. The clerk looked at the stamps in surprise, checking with his colleague that they were ‘proper stamps’ commenting that he had never seen them. Mercifully, my item was, after discussion, accepted. Yet this little episode tells me that modern stamps (‘standard value’ definitive excluded) are little more than labels falling into the same category as match box labels, cigarette cards or ‘stickers’. So, why do I as editor put a block of four of a new issue on our front cover? Good question! To my mind, for once, the stamp has a real significance. Dublin’s post office, not only meaning so much to the Irish nation, but also has a special significance for us collectors, whether it be for the postal history, so much of which passed through that office in pre-stamp days, the overprints, so many of which crossed its counters or just the visits we have all surely made to one of Dublin’s finest buildings. Yet, I suspect 99% of Ireland’s population will never see the stamp in use, a real

tragedy; would it not be good for the design to have been incorporated into a ‘stamp on a roll’ and put on general sale for a few months so that at least those buying a casual stamp will be aware of the 200th anniversary. A case of ‘too much effort and not fitting into the marketing plan’, I suspect.

I hope you do not think I am in a mood for having a moan but perhaps I am. Yesterday I found myself travelling on bus, tube and main line rail in London. Everywhere I was on public transport, I was subjected to verbal diarrhoea, neverending witter from announcements, telling us to ‘mind the gap’, the name of the next station perhaps four times, the driver telling us ‘we have stopped at a red signal’ (he would hardly stop at a green one!), guards instructing disembarking passengers to pick up all their belongings at each and every station and as for the latest drivel from London Transport buses telling us to ‘hold on, the bus is about to move’. What are we taken for? Health and safety has, as we all know, gone mad but has it never occurred to any of the perpetrators of the witter that there is greater risk of damage to my eardrums from imparting all the largely unnecessary information than of my forgetting to realise that the bus might move (I think I boarded it in the hope that it would move, sometimes a rare occurrence in London’s traffic). And we are paying for all these people! We must all be thankful for the calm that our hobby provides (and countless other similar hobbies too) and feel sorry for those unable to achieve any meaningful ‘me time’. Stick at it!

It merely leaves me to say that I look forward to seeing as many members as possible at the Annual General Meeting in Dublin (details in the Newsletter) and I do hope everyone will bring something to show; a few sheets from each of us will make for a much more entertaining gathering and you never know what we might all learn!

Stan
26 February 2018

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FINNISH CONNECTIONS

EARLY LETTER POST BETWEEN IRELAND and FINLAND

Tero Kilpijarvi continues his article the first part of which appeared in the December 2017 issue

In the December issued, I covered the years until 1905 and shall now continue showing the items I have found, in strict chronological order.

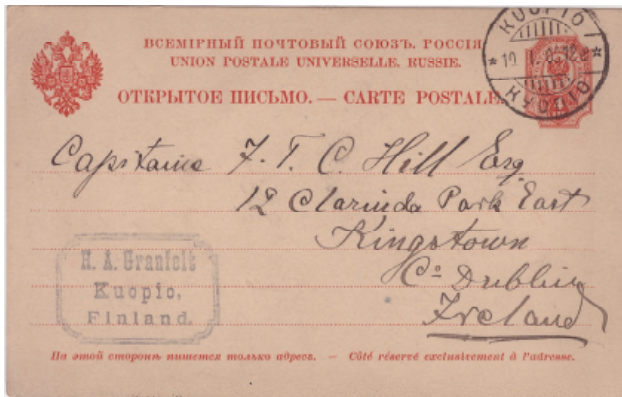


Fig 12 Stationery card, rate 4 kop: Kuopio 10.1.1908 to Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) - a Russian stationery postcard based on the definitive issue of 1889 and cancelled with the bilingual postmark of Kuopio.

The sender acted as a solicitor and registrar at the provincial government of Kuopio and received much philatelic correspondence from foreign collectors.

Below Fig 13 postcard, at 4 kop rate: Mariehamn 24.5.1910 to Frake Bay. The rate was valid 1.5.1891 to 13.9.1917. Addressed to the 1st officer on a sailing ship at Fenit, Co Kerry, the westernmost commercial port in Europe. Bilingual p/m type of Mariehamn, Åland Islands was in use 1907-18.



fig 13

The three-masted Finnish schooner s/v Ingrid (built in 1865) was likely to have been carrying a cargo of timber and was to be wrecked later the same year on the Finnish coast. The card was sent by the sailor's sister from his home in the Åland Islands.



Fig 14 Postcard, rated 4 kop: Raahen 13.8.1912 to Downpatrick. The Russian 2 kop. stamps are from the definitive series issued in 1909. Cancelled with the trilingual postmark (type in use 1912-18). The postcard is from the period when only Russian stamps had to be used when sent abroad, as from 15 May 1911. The sender served on the British cargo ship s/s Lizzie Westoll and was about to sail to Cardiff, very likely loaded with timber. The ship was built in 1895 and was torpedoed in 1917 south-west of Ireland.



Fig. 15 Postcard, underpaid by 1/2d: Queenstown 12.7.1906 to Helsinki (1)6.7. trilingual postmark, the date die is missing '1'. Paid for only the inland rate, a hexagon T-mark handstamp was applied in transit at London (L). This type does not show the amount taxed, but was marked in pencil (5 centimes = 1/2d); there is no indication of collection. The UPU regulations of 1906 stated the amount due should be shown as double the amount of the deficient postage. The picture postcard (Irish Piper on the front) is an Irish production and the printer's brand figure is shows the nationalistic slogan (Éire go bragh - 'Ireland forever'). Later in the year the emigrant is recorded as sending his regards home from Toronto!



Fig 16 Stationery envelope uprated to make up the 2½d foreign rate: Queenstown 12.2.1914 to Helsinki 17.2. with a trilingual arrival machine b/s. The order of date and month in the Queenstown postmark is changed versus fig. 15.

The addressee was active at that time in an athletic club in Helsinki, subsequently for a National association becoming the leader of the wrestling team in the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris.



Fig 17 Letter 15.10.1914 from Vyborg (Viipuri), now in Russia, sent registered, franked at 20kop (10k postage and 10k registration fee) via Tornio (18.10.) at the very northern end of the Gulf of Bothnia (where it was censored), routed via Sweden and Glasgow (26.10.) to Belfast. This was the only route available after the outbreak of World War 1.

The sender was a sawmill and the addressee a commission agent. In the next column, I show the reverse of this cover (fig 17a) showing the 20kop franking (there are two more stamps under the Finnish censor label). It is the only example that I have seen of Finnish WW I censorship on a letter to Ireland, even if often seen on mail addressed to England.



Fig 17a



Fig. 18 Card, rate 20 p: Joensuu 20.12.1920 to Dublin. This was the first postcard rate abroad set in Finnish currency since 14.8.1900 and became effective when Finland was acknowledged as an independent member of the UPU. The rate was valid 12.3.1918 - 31.1.1921 but due to high inflation then increased to 90p and to 1,20mk just a year later. In line with the UPU colour coding the stamp is red. The town name in Russian has been removed from the lower circle of the handstamp.

Written in Esperanto, this is private correspondence: the daughter is thanked for her postcard and photographs. It also tells of their preparations for the Christmas season.

On the next page, I show as fig 19 a printed paper item rate 30 p: Helsinki 18.3.1921 to Dublin. This overprinted definitive stamp met a short-lived foreign printed paper rate (1st weight step < 50 g), but also this was valid only for 11 months (1.2.-31.12.1921).

In line with the UPU colour coding green was for a stamp intended for a printed paper basic rate abroad. The inspection mark in pencil was made at the post office as a check to ensure the correct rate was used. The town name in Russian has been removed from the postmark but this is a late usage in Helsinki.

This is quite an early business correspondence to a well established construction company.

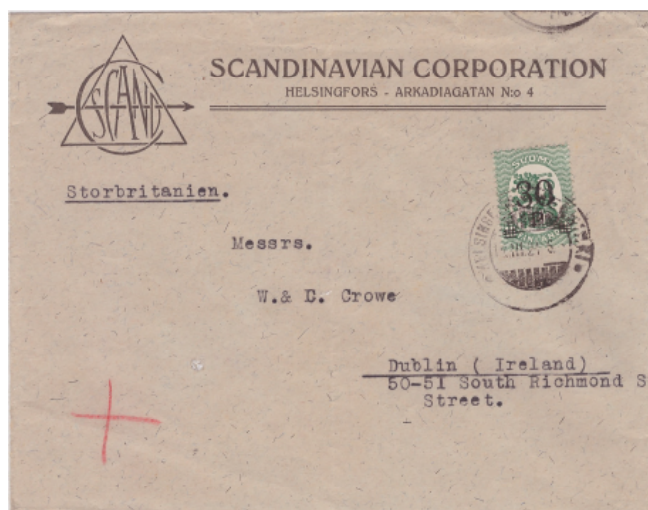


Fig. 19 (see above and previous page)



Fig. 20 Postcard, rated 1½d: Queenstown (Cork) 27.3.1922 to Turku 3.4. arrival stamp and with the ship broker's cachet and the final English 'Queenstown' handstamp. The Irish rate remained valid 13.6.1921 - 31.1.49. The postcard was sent in the last days of the Irish transition period when British stamps remained valid (until 31.3.1922). The practice of stamping postcards with an arrival postmark in Finland lasted only until 1924 (it continued on letters). This shows a scarce usage of an overprinted stamp to Finland during the transition period.

In addition to sending his greetings home the sailor also mentioned (written in Swedish) that there is no information about the next sailing and that 'They do not like the Englishmen much here anymore'.

Fig. 21 (next column) Letter, rate 3d: Limerick (Luimneach) 17.1.1923 to Helsinki 24.1. The Irish rate remained unchanged until the end of February 1951! An early Universal machine cancel (seven wavy lines and the arc in the date-stamp), in use since autumn 1921. The town name was replaced with the Irish one earliest in April 1922. The stamps have the perfin LSS Co. (½d inverted and reversed)

and the 2d stamp is with the altered 'three line' overprint.



Fig 21

The sender Limerick Steamship Company Ltd (LSS Co) operated under this name from 1893 to 1969 and was one of the main Irish shipping companies. The addressee, the shipyard in Helsinki was established in 1894 and is even today operating in the shipbuilding business (although after many changes as to the name and ownership).



Fig 22 (above) Letter, rated 3d: Waterford (Port Láirge) 4.10.1926 to Helsinki 8.10. (machine cancel on the reverse on redirection within Helsinki). An advertising cover of the 'traditional' Rosslare tourist resort with an early usage of the slogan cancel 'Buy Irish Goods' (Krag machine). This slogan type was used at several offices in Ireland including Waterford during 1926-28. An example of some early tourism from Finland, perhaps?

Fig 23 (next page) Letter, underpaid 2½d: Dublin 27.6.1929 to Lemland in Aland. The missing ½d is marked double as stipulated by the UPU regulations: 1 mk paid on 6 July as postage due; this was the lowest fee applied in Finland in the period 1921-34, although 1d equally c.80 penni. This green label type was issued in 1924 but the cancel was still from the Russian period with Russian text removed. The cover shows an early use of the first Irish commemorative 'O'Connell' set (other values 3d and 9d) which had been issued just five days earlier.



Fig 23

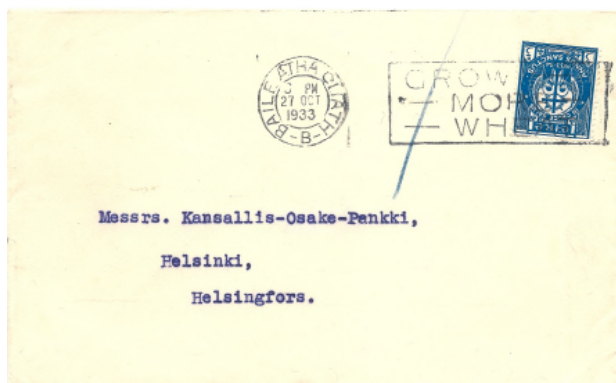


Fig 24

Fig 24 Letter rate 3d: Dublin 27.10.1933 to Helsinki 31 October with backstamp. An early use of the Universal slogan: 'Grow More Wheat', used in Dublin until 1939 and again in c1943, the double circle date die, code B and blue line marking, likely for checking. Business connections create the need for financial services through the commercial banks, like this company cover sent by The Royal Bank of Ireland Ltd (embossed on the reverse).

Finally (fig 25 next column) - Letter, rate 3d: Athlone (Ath Luain) 21.12.1936 to Turku 25.12. (backstamp, bilingual, the bridge type postmark – fig 25a below). Business correspondence sent by Woollen Mills Company Ltd of Athlone. (address printed on the reverse, see below). The business relation may well be about imports of the high quality tweed textiles to Finland. The demand was growing as the addressee company already had changed over to an industrial production of clothing.



Fig 25a



Fig 25

This last item brings us to the mid 1930's, which is as far as I intend to look at in detail. Later covers are not easy to find either, especially through the years of World War II. In fact, I have found postal items to and from Ireland into Finland hard to find in any quantity for the period before 1950, but thereafter mail volumes started to increase slowly in phase with new business and other connections.

I have a note of the volumes of letter mail sent from Finland to Ireland, which I assume were extracted from UPU records, for the following complete years:-

1931	5,647 items
1937	3,464
1940	624
1949	6,354
1955	12,431

by way of contrast the figure for 1980 was 169,084 – still under 500 a day and that will include 'circulars', copies of magazines etc!

Finally, should you have material to add to this article, I would welcome hearing from you and would ask for scans of items even into the 1950s, but also more unusual later ones from Finland. You can e-mail me at: tero.kilpijarvi@gmail.com

Editor's note: I mentioned in our December edition that I would wish to extend Tero's article by looking at Irish mail to and from other countries, although I suggest it would hard to ascertain so much detail about the individual senders and addressees. As yet and this will come as no surprise to many of our members, I have no volunteers to continue the series, which I shall loosely describe as 'Irish Overseas Mail'. I could probably attempt Australia myself but I am sure that some of our readers do have a family correspondence that could form the basis of taking the subject forward. Please let me know – all contributions gratefully received.

THE TRAVELLING POST OFFICES OF IRELAND - Editor

I have been asked by a member for a map of the routes of Ireland's Travelling Post Offices (TPOs). Not being able to locate one, I have produced the map below. The routes should be obvious, but note:

- 1 Dull red shows the routes of the Ulster TPO, the Portadown and Derry TPO and also the short lived Dublin and Derry service. The dashes show the former routes of the Ulster TPO but were never used for the service when TPO postmarks were in use. Pink is the Dublin and Belfast service.
- 2 Bright red dashes show the route taken by the Dublin and Galway TPO after c1970 when the direct route via Moate was mothballed. The Orange dashes show the Christmas only Dublin and Sligo TPO.
- 3 Bright blue is the Dublin and Cork TPO route, Navy blue the Dublin and Queenstown TPO and Grey blue the short lived Ballybrophy and Kildare Sorting Tender routes. (see also page 8)



MAKING THE MAIL GO FASTER

Part IX of an occasional series – Editor



fig 1 – Naas to Dublin in October 1896, charged at 4½ d

It is time for me to resume this occasional series continuing the story from our September 2017 issue. Following that last article, I draw your attention to the map on page 7 of Ireland's Travelling Post Office routes, which I hope is correct. Mail was of course carried on almost all rail services but to my knowledge sorting only took place on those designated as the specially staffed TPOs. Details of dates of operation, timings etc are given in 'Wilson' – 'The Travelling Post Offices of Great Britain and Ireland' and I do advise those interested to find themselves a copy.

My 'TPO articles' have largely covered the period into the 1890s with some comment on subsequent services. By that time, that whilst there is no doubt that sorting on the TPO saved time and sped the mail up, as other than by paying a Late Fee there was no recognised way to speed up one's mail. The Late Fee could be useful at main offices to get mail into the bag in those vital few minutes after the post box had been emptied but before the bag was actually sealed but once in the bag, the item had to take its chance and barring accidents would be treated exactly the same as all other items in that bag. One is, I think, entitled to assume that any Late Fee items might be placed at the top of each bundle of letters and get dealt with first at the office of delivery but would not actually be sent out ahead of normal deliveries. As an aside, having seen virtually no Late Fee items in the late Victorian period from any office beyond the major Head Offices, I suspect that a 'nod and wink' system

applied at smaller offices enabling mail to be handed in right up to the very moment the bag went to the station (or on the cart) with no extra charge being paid made despite the box having been closed officially a few minutes earlier. Certainly there was no express service.

However, in 1891 all was to change. There had been various proposals to establish an express service in Britain (and thereby Ireland) from 1876; in fact Hilary Wellsted's book 'Express Service 1891-1971' published in 1986 tells us that the Prussian Post Office had introduced such a service as early as 1842. She also tells us, quoting from the Postmaster General's report of 1891 that 'on 25th March 1891 a new Express Delivery Service was introduced in London'; this was soon to be extended to 'various parts of the Kingdom' with certain offices being designated 'Express Delivery Offices'. The service was extended to towns outside London on 1 August 1891 and after 1 January 1892 the service operated on a nationwide basis. I must recommend Hilary Wellsted's book to anyone who needs information more detailed than can be put into an article such as this.

Although a different scale applied initially within London for a short period, the January 1892 scale was 3d for the first mile and 3d a mile thereafter (4½d per mile if the weight exceeded 2lbs). That scale applied to items sent the entire distance by 'express messenger'. It was also possible to post the item in the usual way but for delivery to be made by

‘special messenger’ ahead of the normal delivery and that indeed is the basis of the service which was to become the ‘Express Delivery’ service that still largely applies to this day. The scale for this service was 4d, this for a letter within the basic 1oz (4oz after 1897) weight limit for the 1d rate, comprising 3d express fee and 1d postage.

There was what might be regarded as an anomaly, as to the use of stamps. Items sent all the way by an express messenger (ie: in effect by bicycle across town and unlikely to have been used in Ireland outside Dublin, Belfast and perhaps Cork) did not bear stamps; items put into the mail for delivery by special messenger from the local delivery office (no doubt the same man on his bicycle) had to carry stamps covering both postage and the express fee.

A further service ‘Await Reply’ also existed. I have seen no example of such usage in Ireland, so will not provide any detail here beyond noting that the messenger waited up to 10 minutes for free, before being charged at a rate of 2d per 15 minutes. A return fee of 3d also applied.

So much for this brief introduction to the system as applied in the pre 1914 years. Wellsted records that the ‘Express Messenger’ service was withdrawn on the outbreak of war to be reinstated in 1921 but the two examples of use in 1918 and 1919 shown on the following page do beg the question as to whether this was also done in Ireland?

How did the Express service affect Ireland? The answer appears to be ‘initially not very much’. Whilst clearly there was a demand in London and other major cities there was also a need to make the mail go faster outside of Dublin it seems that minimal use of the new service was made. The records show that just 2,543 express items were posted in Ireland during the first year of full operation to 31 March 1892, one third of the number posted in Scotland and just 2.4% of the combined total for the four ‘home countries’, London providing nearly one third of total usage. No split is provided between the two services. Usage gradually increased but the Irish total in 1900-01 was still only 8,969 items, just 1.1% of overall usage. I have not seen any example of usage in Ireland before c1895 and no stamped cover before October 1896 (*fig 1 on previous page*). I calculate the 4½d combined charge as representing 1½d postage for an item over 1oz (perhaps an article being sent to the editor for publication) and a 3d express fee. This is the sole use I have noted outside Dublin in the 1890s although surely more have survived.

Items sent by the Express messenger service across town are neither common nor easy to date. I use the

expression ‘across town’ with some caution as clearly there must have been occasional uses of the service. The Express messenger service would have been cheaper than a telegram over short distances, although I have seen no such surviving ‘rural’ use and indeed another service which would have suited better for most items, even short distance ones where the route existed, had been initiated at the same time in 1892 – the Railway Letter, which I will come to later in this series.

I will continue by showing a few examples of the Express Messenger within Dublin. *Fig 2a* below, carries no stamps and no dated postmark, there being an offset at top right which thanks to the crest of the reverse, *fig 2b* indicates, with reasonable certainty posting at Ballsbridge, the Pembroke Township offices being on the corner of Anglesey Road immediately adjacent to the ‘RDS’ Royal Dublin Society grounds). Ballsbridge district office was (and I believe still is) in Shelbourne Road just 200 yards distant. There is no indication to the charge made. The distance to Westmoreland Street is about 3000 yards (ie: about 1¾ miles) and in theory a 6d charge should apply; we shall never know if this rather than the basic 3d was levied because the stamps were generally would have been put on the ‘E’ form which accompanied the letter and was signed by the recipient to confirm time of delivery. The ‘E’ form gave details of address and timings. A few English examples of the form have survived but I have no record of any such from Ireland.



Figs 2a and 2b: possibly the earliest surviving use of the Express Messenger service in Ireland

A former owner has written a pencil note 'c1892' on the reverse of the cover. The type of Express label gives a clue as to date. Issued in 1892, it is believed to have been superseded by the mid 1890s. The cover is certainly pre 1899 in that Pembroke Township was converted to an Urban District Council in the local government reorganization of 1898. Wellsted's book notes that the layout of the labels used in Ireland is slightly different to those used in Britain but I do not propose to go into detail here.

In *fig 3a* below, I show an example of the next type of label. This must be after 1898 as the envelope is has the crest of the Urban District Council of Pembroke on the reverse (*fig 3b*); one must suspect the need for the Council to use express post to the Irish Times was to enclose legal notices for publication.



figs 3a and 3b

The red label was not always used as is shown in the example below (*fig 4*), which is helpfully dated by a College Green postmark for 1 April 1896.



fig 4

Note the endorsement 'E3' indicating 'Express – 3d paid'. The distance to Gloucester Street (now Sean MacDermott Street) was in fact just a little over a mile suggesting the 'one mile rule' was 'flexible'.

I show below an example of the 'Express Messenger' service dating from 1918 (*fig 5*). I noted on the previous page that this service was suspended in 1914 but I do ask if this was the case in Ireland. *Fig 5* below shows an example, apparently, used in February 1918.

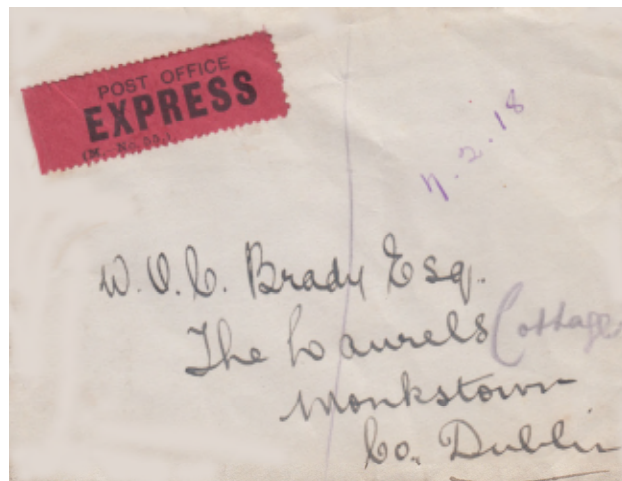


fig 5

Although the addressee W. O'Connor Brady was a well known Irish philatelist of the inter-war years and the envelope is, I suspect, addressed in his own hand I see no reason to doubt the date shown at top right. The label is 'right' for the period. The item is unstamped and there is no indication whatsoever as to office of posting – presumably in the Dublin area.



fig 6

The final example I have of this service is a local usage at Cookstown, Co Tyrone in November 1919. (*fig 6* above) I have seen other items addressed to Johnston at Cookstown and have a suspicion, no more, that he may have been a relative of Dr Stafford Johnston, the well known postal historian but have no reason to believe that the item is philatelic. More likely in the days before the telephone, Johnston, who may have been a bank manager, is telling his wife, in the days before the telephone, that he would be late home late for lunch!

The charge for delivery by this service had remained at 3d per mile until 1 June 1919 but was then increased to 6d, thus a charge of 7½d is likely to have been paid on the above item, still cheaper than a telegram. I should also note that a charge was made to the recipient in respect of incoming express mail from overseas. The rate was 3d per mile, the first mile being free, this increasing to 6d but not until June 1921. I am grateful to Wellsted for providing this detail, whose book I recommend to those needing additional information.

I shall now take a look at the 'Special Messenger' service, which required items 'going out of town' to be stamped and pass through the post. The basic cost remained at 4d until June 1918, but subject to an extra 3d per mile where the recipient lived more than a mile from the office of delivery. It goes without saying that Irish examples pre 1914 are not common and I know of no significant collection.



fig 6: 27 August 1906, Clarina, Co Limerick to London at 4d, a rare example from a small village. The datestamp is timed at 9.15pm. Taken by 'mail cart' to Limerick, connecting there into the Limerick Travelling Post Office, the item would have transferred to the Great Southern (Cork) TPO at Limerick Junction, reaching Dublin's Kingsbridge Station around 4am the following morning. Transferring to the Day Boat, and Irish mail from Holyhead (12noon departure), London (Euston) would have been reached around 5.45pm with reasonable expectation of delivery at Collingham Gardens in London's Earls Court area well within 24 hours of being posted in the country six miles to the west of Limerick.

Figs 7 and 8 (next column) show two items posted respectively at Dublin Head Office (19 November 1917) and College Green, Dublin (23 November 1917) to the Marchioness of Londonderry at her London address. The 4d charge (fig 7) represented 1d postage and 3d fee whilst the lower item, stamped at 5d clearly weighed over 1oz, the charge

representing 2d for postage and 3d express fee. As noted above these rates were to remain in force until June 1918.



fig 7



fig 8



fig 9

Fig 9 above shows a less common but perfectly legal usage in December 1917. Originally posted at Indian Army Field Post Office 19, 'somewhere in France' on 19 December, it was reposted to Carnew, Co Wicklow on 26 December as an Express Letter being stamped at 3d covering only the express fee,

the original postage being free the sender being on active service. The original letter is enclosed. The sender, who certified his own mail, notes he had only had a short march that day and has moved into a place looted bare by the French 'who we took over from' and had been hard at work 'furnishing', making a bed, table, benches and 'put up two good shelves'. It is very cold, ice on the road and 7-8 inches of snow have fallen. Perhaps the sender gave too much information but certainly it was not a pleasant way to spend Christmas.

It is my intention to finish this installment immediately prior to the events of 1922 when control passed from the British Post Office to the Provisional Government but before doing so, I must leave you with one my favourite covers (*fig 10 below*). Not the cleanest but a surprising survivor, it was posted at Newbridge, Co Kildare on 21 July 1921. Sadly we do not know the time of posting (the postmark 'time plug' is merely the ubiquitous star which was normal for counter use) but let us assume the sender posted late afternoon and missed the bag taken to the 4.33pm train (I am using a 1922 timetable). No matter, it could have been put at the very top of the pouch of bag picked up from the 'apparatus' as the Cork Day Mail sped through Newbridge around 7.10pm as it covered the last 50 miles from its final stop at Maryborough (now Portlaoise) to Dublin's Kingsbridge Station in just 63 minutes. A swift turnaround in Dublin would have seen an arrival at Kingstown Pier at 8.35pm, the mail boat departing fifteen minutes later to give an arrival at Holyhead just on midnight. No time

was lost, the Irish Mail leaving that station at precisely 12.13am. Sorting would have taken place en route, the 'Mail' halting briefly at Chester and Crewe on its way to London; Euston station being reached at the somewhat ungodly hour of 5.50pm to enable bags to be offloaded, sorted with deliveries being made in the City of London by 9am that morning and as we have seen in a previous article in this series, to be sent further afield with minimal delay. However our item would not have left Euston. A TPO sorter would have rushed to whatever served as the staff signing on room and when the guard signed on perhaps at 7.30am (it would surely have been his first turn of the day) the supervisor would have handed the item to him. It may have even been delivered to Mrs Sebag-Montefiore before the train had left Euston; perhaps she was a first class passenger? No doubt she was being told who was going to meet her that evening on arrival in Dublin or perhaps to proceed direct to Newbridge; we shall never know.

All in all a wonderful service combined post office and railway at their best and truly a proper use of Express Post but and this must be the editor's challenge for this issue, despite their being much information to be found about members of the Sebag-Montefiore on the internet, who can tell me what A.R.R.C stood for in 1921??

I must express my thanks to Julian Tweed for confirming details of the workings of the 'E' form to me.

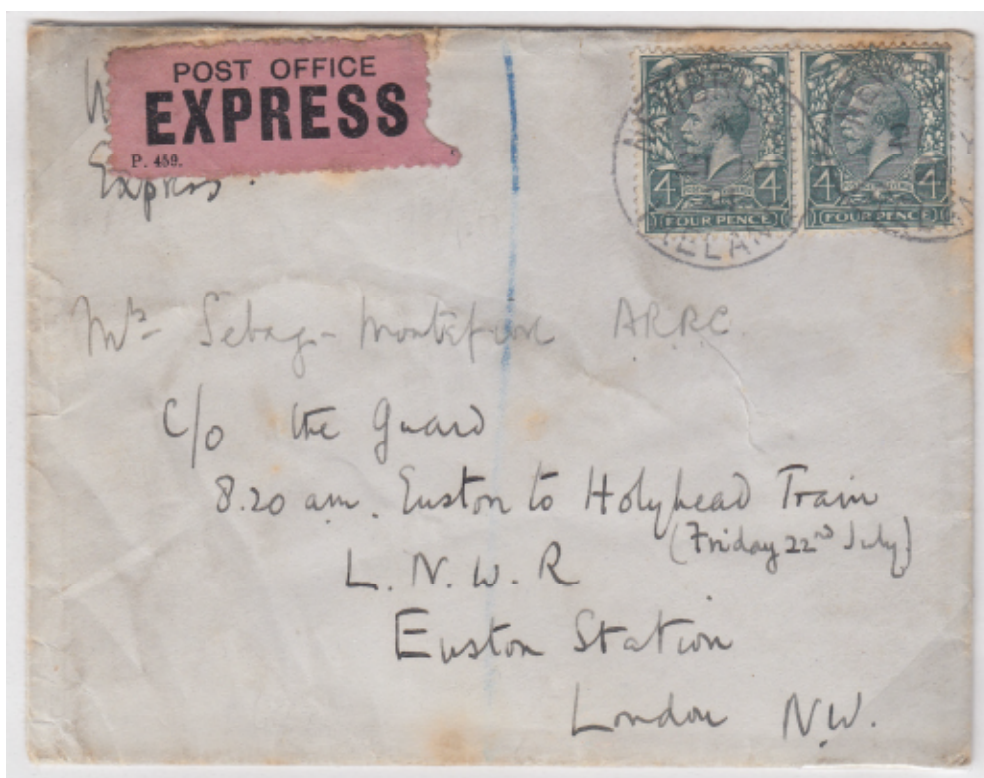


fig 10

GENERAL POST OFFICE - 200 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

Brian Warren

The General Post Office in Dublin is the oldest functioning postal headquarters in the world and recently celebrated the 200th anniversary of its opening on 6 January 1818.

Stephen Ferguson, Assistant Secretary with An Post, when interviewed recently by the local and national media said: 'There was an expectation that the post office would be serving people for the next 50, 100 years, but 200 years is quite a long time, and let's hope we can go on a little longer than that too.'



A re-enactment of the opening by Sir Edward Lees, Post Office Secretary at the time, was performed by the Fishamble Theatre. The short 15 minute play was presented in the main office of the GPO to coincide with the issue of a €1 stamp to mark the bicentenary.

The amusing play included scenes involving Sir John Lees, his wife Lady Jane, Mrs Draper and the widow Mrs O'Sullivan, who by far stole the show. The latter's husband was a mail coach guard who was murdered by highway robbers. In the play she harangues Sir John for a pension. Mrs Draper was Sir John's devoted housekeeper who, when questioned by Lady Jane, curtsied and stated that she was pleased to provide for Sir John's 'every need'! I show below, a scene from the play. More can be viewed at:

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/gpo-celebrates-its-200th-anniversary-with-performance-and-stamp-1.3352100>



Lees was Ireland's post office secretary, a title he inherited from his father. He lived in the GPO in some luxury with his staff. His living quarters were a source of a scurrilous pamphlet at the time. After a number of financial scandals, he was removed from his post in 1831.

As most IPC members will know, in its early days, the GPO had a peripatetic existence, moving from Fishamble Street to Sycamore Alley and then to College Green, before finding its permanent home in what was then Sackville Street. The College Green building was featured on a cover for Stampa issued by An Post in 1984. Designed by Francis Johnston, an architect from Armagh, the neoclassical-style building with a magnificent art deco interior was the last of the great Georgian public buildings to be built in Dublin.

It will be forever remembered as the headquarters of the 1916 rebellion, an event commemorated on its doorstep annually. This reason alone should ensure its continued existence for another 200 years. Although largely destroyed in the Rising, the portico survived and the building was rebuilt following independence and reopened in 1928.



There is also currently a small exhibition outlining the history of the GPO, again in the main office, which includes a nice reference to the late IPC member Bill Kane.

The stamp (*see front cover*) features an image of the GPO which was engraved by Robert Havell and Son and published in 1820 by G.H. Jones. As well as the €1 stamp, a large format glossy postcard reproducing the stamp, is available on purchase of the stamp at the GPO. However, the far better 2014 small size museum card featuring the same image is still available at the bureau counter for 40c which I used as maximum card as illustrated above.

ACROSS THE IRISH SEA – TWO WAYS

Julian Tweed



fig 1

Some of the favourite pages in my 'Crossing the Irish Sea' collection are those showing examples of letters that had difficulties in reaching their intended destination, particularly where that resulted in two journeys across the Irish Sea.

Fig 1 is such a letter posted at Liverpool on 1 October 1822 and addressed to Lerwick. Unfortunately the sender only added the key additional word 'Shetland' in much smaller writing beneath the rest of the address and so 'Lerwick' was interpreted as the probably more often seen 'Limerick'.

A rate charge of 1/1d was applied; 9d for the mileage charge to Holyhead, 1d for each of the Conway and Menai Bridge charges and 2d for the packet. As the error was not picked up in on arrival in Dublin on 2 October, the letter was re-rated to 1/10d the cover the additional mileage charge to Limerick and sent forward.

At Limerick someone must finally have noticed the mistake, presumably after realising that the addressee was not a local firm. A Limerick date-stamp for 5 October was probably applied as the letter was returned to Dublin, where both existing manuscript charges were cancelled using red inspector's 'crown with large B in centre' marks.

A new charge of 1/11d was then raised, seemingly representing the original English charge of 1/1d plus 10d mileage charge for Dublin to Donaghadee. A further re-rating at Donaghadee took the total to 3/1½d, the additional charges being 4d for the

packet to Port Patrick, 10d mileage to Edinburgh and ½d Scottish 'wheel tax'.

Sense seems to have finally prevailed in Edinburgh on 11 October where the last running Irish charge was deleted and a new and final charge of 1/6d was applied. Except for the omission of ½ d 'wheel tax', this was what the charge should have been had the dispatching clerk in Liverpool got things right in the first place; an 11d mileage charge for Liverpool to Edinburgh and 7d for the coastal letter rate from Leith to Lerwick.

There are Leith marks for 11 October on the reverse so hopefully the letter reached its intended recipient in Lerwick but alas there are no Shetland marks.

Fig 2 (next page) is another example; a much travelled letter originally posted in Dublin on 26 June 1821 and addressed to a Reverend Eaton in Yorkshire. The initial charge was 1/3d comprising 2d for the packet to Holyhead, 1d each for the Menai and the recently introduced Conway charges and 11d mileage through Wales and England.

The sender made the mistake of mentioning two places in the address, Boroughbridge and Kirklington. It went first to Boroughbridge where it picked up a '202' mileage mark and a red manuscript 'try Kirklington'. It seems Reverend Eaton was not to be found there either as the letter was next redirected to Harrogate incurring a further 6d charge.

It seems to have been held a Harrogate for some time whilst unsuccessful attempts were made to trace the addressee as the next date-stamp on the

reverse is London on 3 September, a further 1/- charge accruing. Someone there must have had some idea where they thought that the elusive Reverend Eaton might have been as it was then redirected again, this time to Castlecomer, County Kilkenny. By now the running charges had reached 4/- with the addition of 1/- mileage from London to Holyhead, 1d for the Menai charge and 2d for the packet. There was nothing for the Conway crossing this time as the letter would have travelled from London via Shrewsbury and only mail actually crossing the river was subject to the charge.

By now front of the cover was looking nearly as it does now and, apparently because of that, it did not set out up the A5 towards Holyhead as intended but found itself back in Yorkshire again. So there is a 'Wetherby / 194' mileage on the front and a Leeds date-stamp for 7 September on the reverse with a red 'Missent to' in manuscript alongside.

No further charges were levied for this detour though a further 9d was added in Dublin on 12 September for the Irish mileage charge to Castlecomer. From its past history you can probably guess what is coming next; Reverend Eaton was not at Castlecomer either!

The last postmark is on the reverse; a Dublin diamond for 16 September. The addition of another 9d for the return from Kilkenny took the final charge to 5/6d. No Dublin delivery address is evident so presumably it was returned to the unfortunate sender. He must have been most unhappy!

It might not be the prettiest of things but it has certainly given me much pleasure in untangling its convoluted progress.

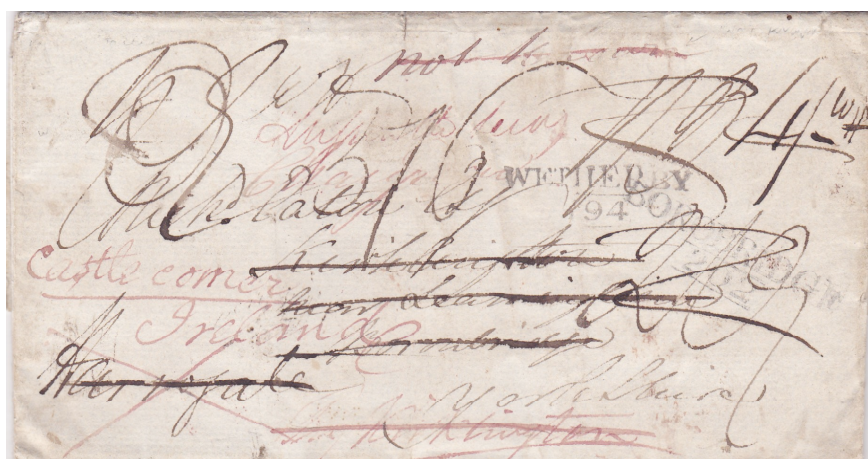


fig 2

TO ANTIGUA in 1935

A recent acquisition has begged the question once again as to where one might find details of airmail rates prior to the introduction of the 'all up' Empire rates in 1937, the North American 'standard' 1/3d rate in 1939 and the worldwide 1/4d rate in 1951. I have never seen a summary of Irish rates prior to those from 1951 given in 'Irish Postal Rates 1839-2014' (Warren and Schaaf). The cover alongside to Antigua in 1935 is stamped at 1/11d, which presumably comprises 2d postage to New York and an airmail fee of 1/9d to cover onward airmail to Antigua. Does anyone have a similar cover to confirm the rate?? – Ed.



POSTAL ORDERS – THE BACKSIDES

John Lennon concludes his study of Ireland's Postal orders

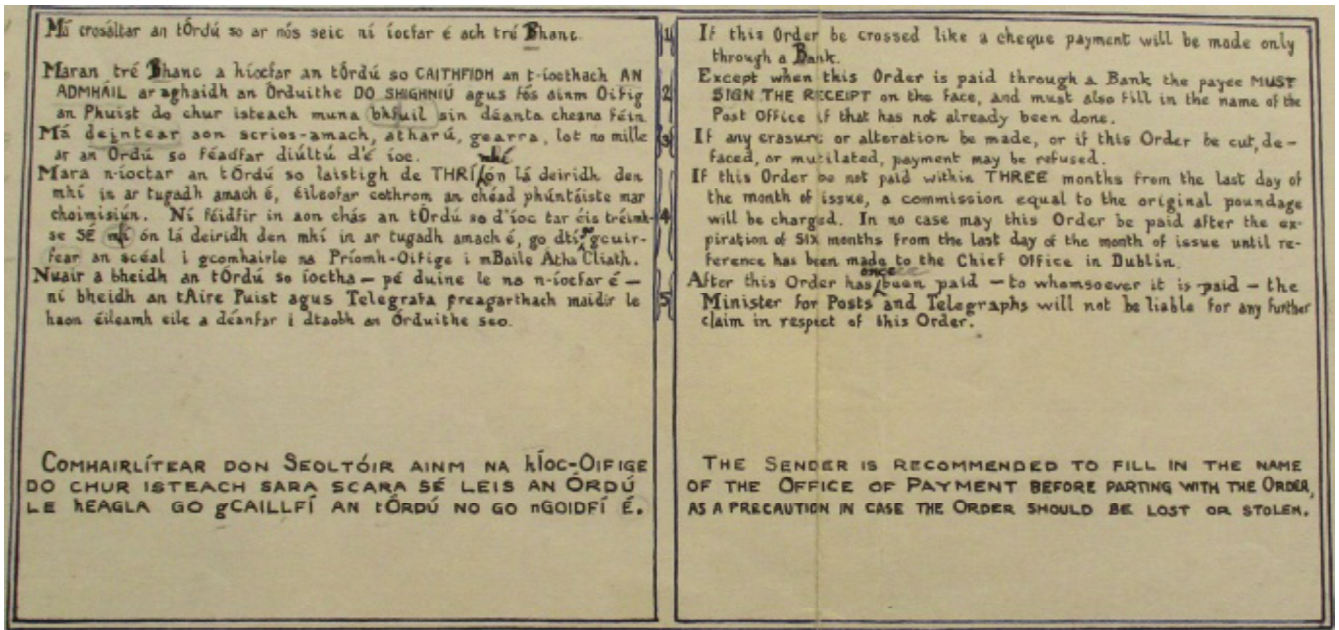


fig 1

Continued from the December 2017 issue...

The story of Postal Orders would not be complete without a look at their back. Not as attractive as the front, it was treated as a minor secondary issue. On 1 August 1924, the Editorial Branch in the Department of 'P&T' was asked for an Irish translation of matter appearing on Postal Orders. This was received on 16 August and when it was being checked it was noticed that the translation of 'For regulations see back' was omitted. It seems that it was only then that it was realised that the

regulations on the back would also have to be translated and this was provided on 9 September. Correspondence then followed as to whether the Irish wording meant exactly the same as the original English. This was finally agreed by the end of September and a proposed back, hand-drawn, was submitted on 3 October (*fig 1*).

There is no further reference to the back of the Orders before printing began in April 1927. The undated proof below (*fig 2*) which I located in the Archives was probably produced in 1925.

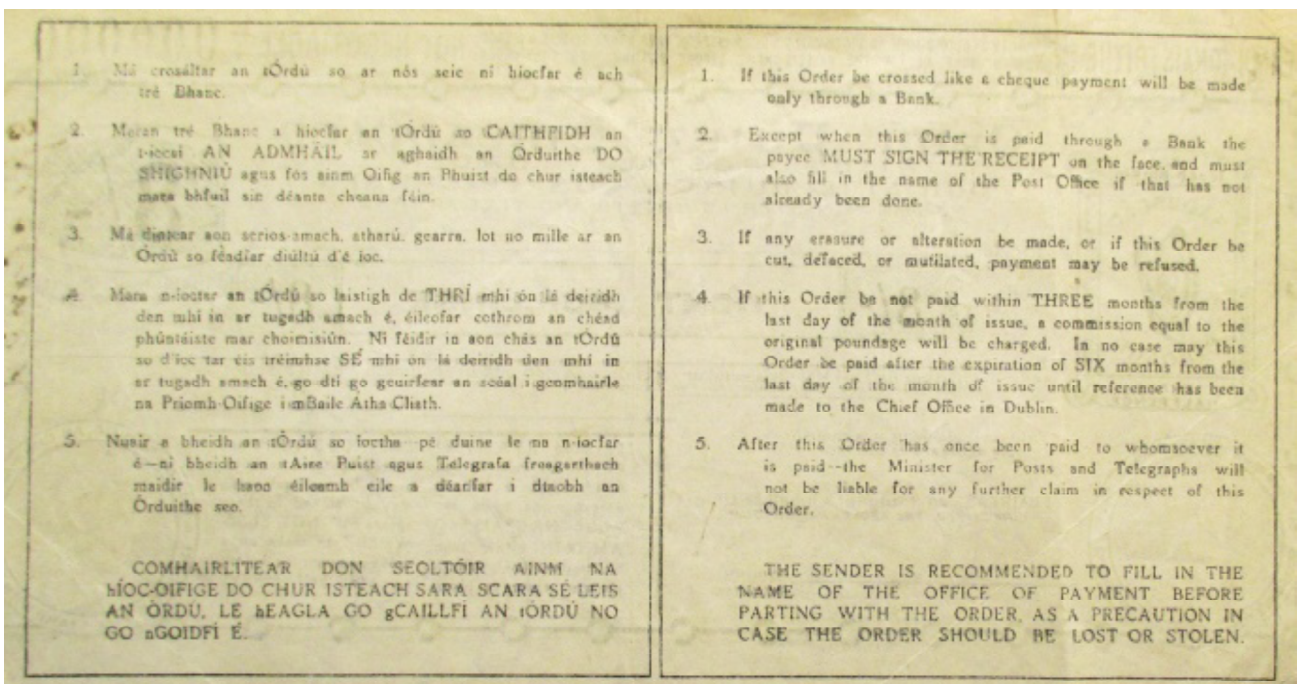


fig 2

After four years use, Roberts of the Stamping Branch wrote to H.E.Fay, Dept P&T, Dublin Castle. *'It will be necessary shortly to order a new engraving of the Postal Order Regulations. I suggest that the rule border may be deleted. Will you please say if any further amendment is required. Proofs of the engraving now in use are submitted.'* Fay replied *'... the suggestion that the rule border be deleted approved. The proofs of the engraving showing further amendments required in the text are returned herewith.'* Somebody added in manuscript *'It would be desirable to have these regulations printed in large type.'*

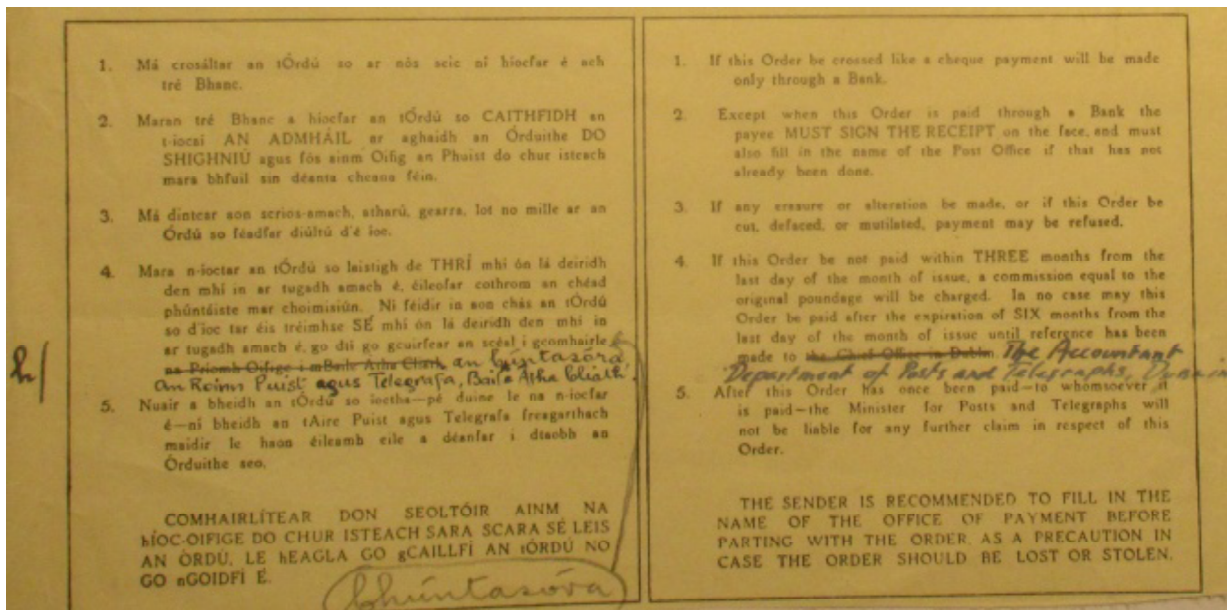


fig 3

An amendment was required in 1931. The amendment to the text was the replacement of 'Chief Office in Dublin' with 'Accountant, Dept of Posts and Telegraphs, Dublin' and the same in Irish. Roberts sent the amended text to Mr Dawson, The Nickeloid Electrotypes Co., Ltd, Printer Street, London. *'I am enclosing copy of Postal Order Regulations – the matter is to be set in 8pt Roman.'*

The letter also had an interesting paragraph headed 'Books of Stamps'. *'A further supply of 12 stereos (unmounted) of the 'Fruitfield' advertisement is required from the matrix which you hold.'*

A proof of the new setting was approved by P&T in November 1931 and sent back to Dawson asking for *twelve good pulls*. Three of these pulls were sent to Chambon on 15 December with the official order for a new steel engraving. The Official Translator in Leinster House was asked to approve the revised proof on 12 January 1932 and the new cylinder went into use on 2 February. It cost £28.

The British Post Office Circular of 28th August 1935 announced that from 2nd September the time for cashing Postal Orders without commission was being extended. Until then recipients had three months from the end of the month of issue after which commission equal to the poundage was charged, denoted by affixing stamps to the back of the Order. This was now extended to six months. No accounting was kept of this, each administration

retaining the charge, *the respective services being treated as reciprocal*. The amount collected in An Saorstát on out of date British Postal Orders in August 1935 was 2/4½d, thought to be an average monthly total. It was believed the equivalent collected in Britain was but when checked it was found only 5½d was charged in the third week in October.

The Circular included a note: *There is no change in procedure as regards out-of-date Irish Free State Postal Orders*. This led to a much correspondence on British Orders being treated more favourably than Irish ones. The charges were set by an Act of 1905 which had been amended in Britain and a similar procedure would be required in Ireland. After a year of the discrepancy an inquiry found that most Post Offices were treating British Orders the same as before, using the three months. In May 1937, it was decided to let this continue until a complaint was received. None seem to have ever been made!

An opportunity to change this regulation arose in August 1943, when the cylinder needed replacement. It was ascertained from the Post Office that no change was contemplated and the Chambon Company was asked to undertake the manufacture of new chromium faced steel engraving. This was ready on 5 October but did not arrive in Dublin until the end of the month due a delay in procuring an

Export Licence. When new higher value Postal Orders were being introduced in 1953 it was decided that the Irish spelling on these orders would be the latest approved spelling. From 1931 various steps were made to simplify Irish spelling. Aspirated consonants that were not pronounced were dropped thereby shortening some words. A basic standard

spelling was adopted in 1957. PUIST was changed to POIST. The Director of Stamping said the spelling changes would be implemented on the new values and on the existing values as their engravings needed renewal, which could mean many years. As noted in Part 2 in the December issue, none had been changed by 1959.

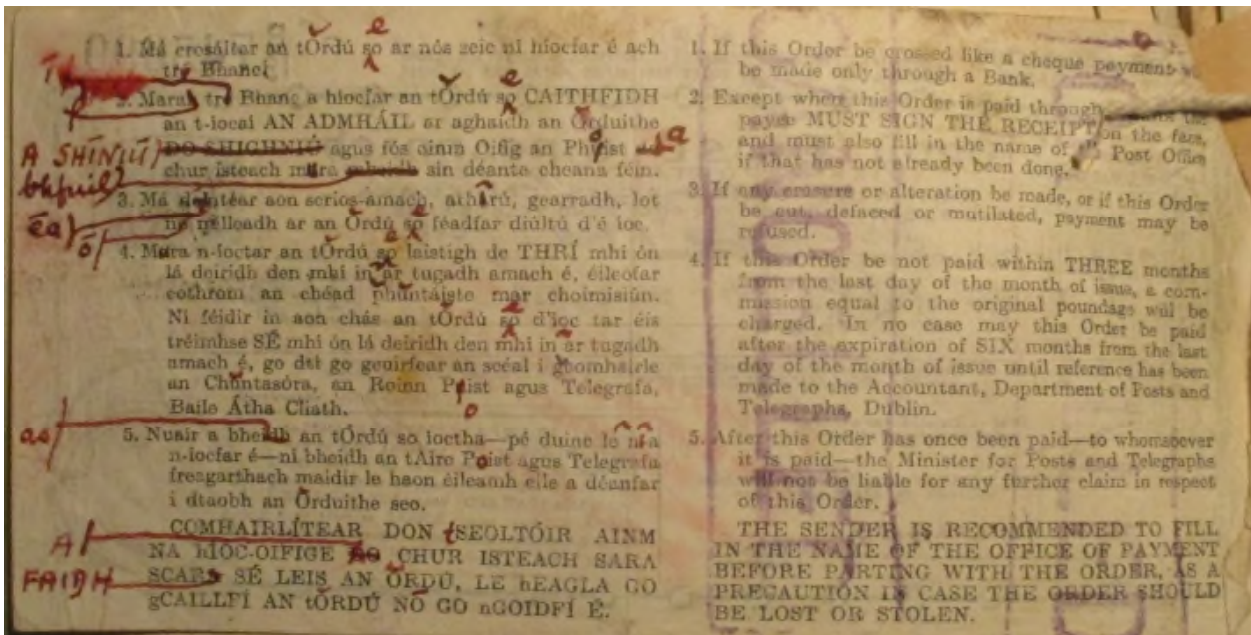


fig 4

A typescript of *the matter on the back of the form, as amended* was sent to the Director of Stamping in May 1953 (fig 4). There is no reference to when the new version of the Regulations went into use. Chambon's invoice is dated 6 November 1953 so one must assume that it would have been prior to that date.

When new £3, £4 and £5 Postal Orders were being produced in 1959 new engravings for the Regulation were included in the order to Chambon. This is the last reference to the backs in files. I do, however, conclude by showing (fig 5) the reverse of the form of Postal Order that was in use until 2001 – valid for six months but not valid in the United Kingdom.

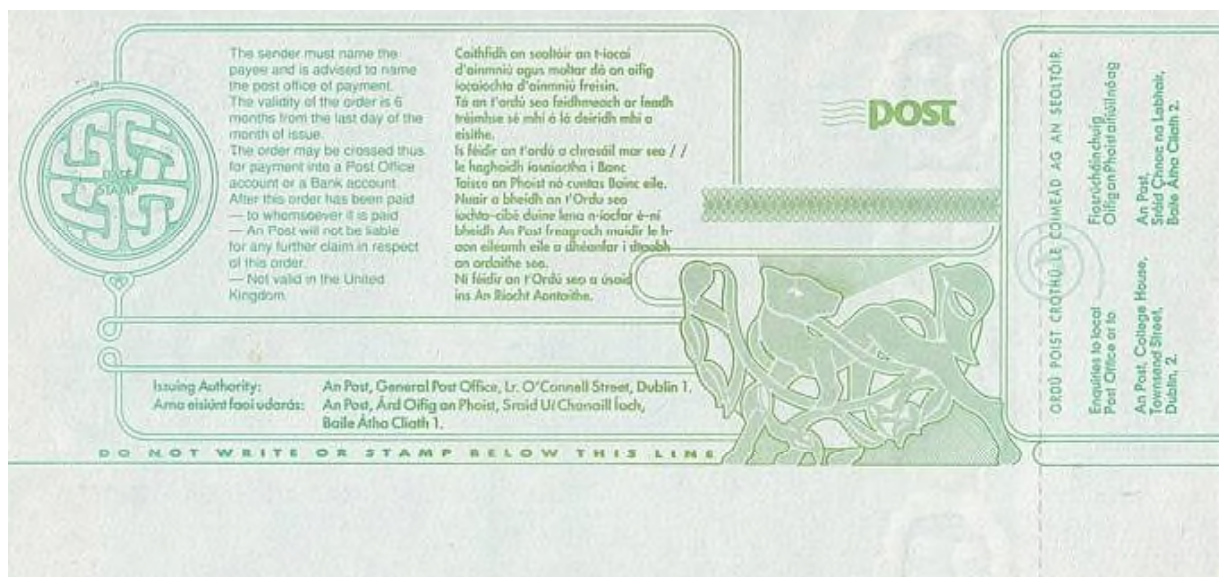


fig 5

By way of postscript, I am advised that A.S. (Alexander Scott) Roberts had been seconded from Somerset House (London) in 1922, where he had been Assistant Director of Stamping. He retired in 1938 having been on long term secondment to the Stamping Branch in Dublin Castle. He lived in Sandycove, Dun Laoghaire, until his death c1950.

AUCTION WATCH

Erinman

A small quantity of Irish material was offered for sale by David Feldman Auction in Geneva, Switzerland on 7/8 December 2017. Several lots remained unsold perhaps being too specialised for a general sale and those selling had mixed results. All prices realised are quoted without buyers premium or VAT.

A 1922 2/6d Dollard overprint (SG 17) cancelled by a 'Madame Joseph' (see note on page 20 – Ed) Dundalk registered circular datestamp of 13 Oct 22 exceeded the higher estimate of £100, selling for £130 (shown below).



Described as '1925 Composite Dates 2s6d mint top four rows of the sheet with margins, normal setting showing three se-tenant wide and narrow date pairs R3/4 & R4/4 showing variety raised a upper row with horizontal crease' with MacDonnell certificate 2007 sold for the lower estimate of £700.

Similarly a '1927 Composite Date 5s top marginal block of 12, mint nh (hinged in margin only) showing constant plate flaws, inverted T on row 2 stamp 1 and notch on row 3 stamp 3, with wide dates on row 3 stamps 1-3'. Ex Dulin and with MacDonnell certificate 2004, the block sold for the lower estimate of £1000.

A very rare example of the '1935 Re-engraved 10s with DOUBLE OVERPRINT variety, mint og right marginal, position 20 (Row 5/5), very fine'. Stated by the vendor to be one of only two known mint examples. 'Variety SG 101b with MacDonnell certificate 2009'. Estimated at £3000/4000 and catalogued by SG at £8500 the item apparently sold for only £1500 (shown below). Perhaps someone attending the sale would be able to explain why the item sold for such a low price.



Two covers with OHMS overprinted with RIALTAS SEALADACH NA H'Eireann in black, one with 1922 Dollard 2/6d & 5sh and the other cover with 10/- only both with Dublin cds to London sold for £340, against the pre-sale estimate of £300-£400.

The only item of pre-stamp Irish postal history in the sale was described as '1851 Incoming entire from an army officer in Port Louis (Mauritius), endorsed "Per Bell" with manuscript '8' paying the 8d ship rate, handstamped s/l Ship Letter, circular 'PAID' and 'Mauritius/GPO' crown hs. Most unusually the item was landed at Wexford (Ireland) with fine s/l WATERFORD/SHIP LETTER applied in blue (Robertson S2c).' Estimated at between £1200 and £1500 the item sold slightly below estimate at £1100.



On Ebay, a Jack White 'FDC' was offered for sale with an accompanying Hamilton Bowen certificate.



The item sold for approximately £1500. The stamp is surely genuine and the postmark is that of Chapelizod but was clearly applied by favour, whether or not on the actual day of issue, we shall never know. Equally, whether any copies of the stamp were actually sold at this office, I know not, thus leaving you to form your own opinion of the merits of the item.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I have recently been given two examples of the latest type of SID (self inking datestamp) as used by the British Post Office and shown by Michael Dobbs in the March 2013 issue of 'IP' (page 7).

These are on very large envelopes with a Special Delivery Label and a SID reading BFPO 3027 code 'B' on the front and a cachet of Assessment Centre Belfast, Palace Barracks, BFPO 806 on the reverse. BFOP 806 is at Holywood Co Down and both covers are addressed to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, Berkshire. I show scans below and alongside.

Hard to find in commercial use and you need to have the right sources!

Yours etc

Alan Kane

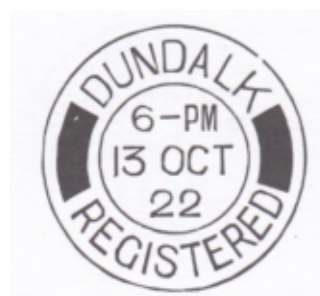
Bracknell, Berkshire



A WARNING NOTE – THE MADAME JOSEPH POSTMARKS

As editor I do regard it as a duty to alert Members and casual readers alike of the dangers of forgeries and doubtful material which comes onto the market with ever increasing regularity. Fortunately relatively little 'naughty' Irish material is on the market. In his article on page 19, Erinman refers to a 'Madame Joseph' postmark cancelling a 'Seahorse' and having a corner to fill, I suggest that a few lines of explanation would not go amiss. All is explained in a small book written by the late Derek Worboys and published by the 'Royal' in 1994. The story is this: starting in the mid 1930s to about 1948, operating in Paris, the war years excluded, the 'Madame' produced a large number of British Colonial postmarks (over 400 are known) for a 'shady' London dealer who supplied fine used Colonial stamps 'to order'. Indeed your editor found

a few examples in his own collection on some Turks and Caicos George VI stamps, which he probably collected back in his schooldays! As far as is known, the 'Dundalk/ Registered' made from wood with fixed date, is the only such known forged Irish postmark and is, to my knowledge, only found on the 'Seahorses'. As ever, take caution!



CLOONYQUINN POST OFFICE

Brian Warren



fig. 1

Cloonyquinn (or Clooneyquinn) Post Office, Co. Roscommon, which was situated on the N61 between Boyle and Roscommon, closed sometime between 2003 and 2005. Recently the location received widespread publicity in various print and online Irish media when a picture of its former telephone box appeared in the press (*fig. 1*).



fig. 2

The post office opened sometime between 1896 and 1899¹ and a photograph including the post office sign is shown in *fig. 2*. Obviously, the phonebox was some distance from the actual building as it does not appear in this photograph taken by the editor in May 1992.

A local retired businessman, Richard Cullen, who bought the former post office in 2005, became convinced that the telephone box was a sacred place after he discovered a solid gold cross wedged behind a panel where the old black phone was attached.

¹ per Harald Frank and Klaus Srange - Irish Post Offices published by FAI Germany

Richard Cullen is quoted as saying 'I got a vision in my head of a woman talking on the phone to her son who was probably in England, which seemed half a world away to her, a woman who really wanted to keep her son safe and so put that cross there.' He could not bear to think of the box being taken away or dismantled and reckons he made a good call when he paid Eircom (now Eir) €50 to leave it in situ so he could preserve it as a shrine to all the mothers and sons for whom it was a lifeline through lonely times.



fig. 3

For most of the year a Child of Prague is placed there, but at Christmas he gets the local priest to bless straw and then the crib goes into the box, with the figurines lit up thanks to a link with the power in his home (*fig. 3*).

'I think the telephone box is a symbol of Irish life and doing this gives me strength as well' he said.

fig. 4



Illustrated in *fig. 4* are three rubber cancellations from the period 1899 to 1917, the first two from proof books. The first of these marks may have been issued on opening, thereby pinning down the date but as a note of caveat, offices were generally not issued with the rubber datestamps until such

time as they issued and paid postal orders. All read 'Cloonyquinn / Elphin / Co. Roscommon' or 'Cloonyquinn / Elphin'. Note no 'e' in 'Cloonyquinn' as is also the case in any Post Office Guide listing viewed by the author.



fig. 5

Next in fig. 5 is a postcard recorded for 5 August 1922 which appears to have been missorted and has a rubber which reads 'Cloonyquinn, Castlereagh' (rather than Elphin). Castlereagh became the post town on 21 March 1916 when the circulation of mail in that part of Co Roscommon was reorganised, Elphin no longer being designated as a post town.



fig. 6



fig. 7

Also in 1922, a similar rubber for 18 December is now in Irish 'Cluain Uí Chuinn' (fig. 6) and is a relatively early example of an Irish language datestamp. However, by 18 March 1927 the English spelling had returned but 'Castlereagh' had been added at the foot of the postmark. This reversion to English was not unusual and happened at a number of offices in the late 1920s.



fig. 8

'Cluain Uí Chuinn' was back in place in December 1929 (fig 8) although the lettering was now narrower.



fig 9

An unusual rubber skeleton postmark is recorded for 9 March 1933 (fig. 9). This is likely to have had a very short period of use.



fig 10

During the period 1939 to 1951 the inscription now included a reference to 'Co. Roscomáin' rather than Castlereagh (fig. 10).



fig 11

As was the practice at the time, a Single Ring steel datestamp was brought into use c1952, this illustrated cancelling a 5p definitive in 1973 (fig 11). The inscription reads 'Cluain Uí Chuinn, Co. Roscomáin'. The last date recorded for this 'SR' is 15 May 1992 but may well have been in use until closure.

If any members have any other examples of postmarks from this office or can advise as regards the exact dates of opening and closure, I would ask that they forward details to the editor.

THE IRISH ABROAD - PART 15

Brian Warren

Channel Islands

Compared to the Isle of Man, the number of stamps with an Irish connection from the three Channel Island stamp issuing territories are few and far between with Guernsey providing the majority of issues.



fig. 1

Commencing with Guernsey, a four stamp set featuring Mail Packet Boats issued in 1973 included a 7p featuring "St Patrick" (fig. 1).

The twin screw steamer was built in 1947 and was originally used on the Rosslare-Fishguard service but worked from Weymouth to the Channel Islands from 1948 to 1963 before being transferred to work out of Dover and Folkestone. Sold in 1972 to Greece and renamed "Thermopylae".



fig. 2

Sir John Doyle was born in Dublin in 1756 and in 1783 he was elected MP for Mullingar in the Irish House of Commons. He featured on a set of four stamps issued in 1984. The 13p value features an image of the man and his coat of arms (fig. 2).



fig. 3

He participated in the American War of Independence (29p - fig.3).



fig. 4



fig. 5

He was appointed the Island's Lieutenant-Governor in 1803 and established a plan for defence of the Island (31p - fig.4).

In 1812 the Post Office accepted his offer of a boat to provide a mail service for Alderney (34p - fig.5). He died in 1834.

Guernsey has commemorated Doyle in several ways: the Doyle Monument at Jerbourg Point; Doyle Road; Fort Doyle; Doyle Street; Doyle Lane; Doyle Close; and The Doyle – (previously the site of Doyle Barracks).



fig. 6

A set of eight stamps issued in 1996 marked the holding of the European Football Championship finals in England. A se-tenant pair of 35p stamps featured an action scene from the Ireland v Netherlands game in the European Finals held in 1988 in West Germany. The Dutch won 1-0 and went on to become European Champions.

The Irish team in 1988 is best remembered for a 1-0 victory in Stuttgart over England. Can anybody recognise the Irish player on the stamp? (fig. 6 - sheetlet reduced).



figs. 7 & 8

Turning to Alderney stamps released by the Guernsey Post Office, the first one to note is a 34p value part of an 1985 issue featuring Regiments of the Alderney Garrison. The stamp (fig. 7) features the 18th Regiment of Foot, The Royal Irish Regiment which first served on the Island in 1782. The Regiment was disbanded in 1922.

In 2003, a set of six stamps was released to mark the centenary of Powered Flight. The 22p value

features Alcock and Brown's Vickers FB-27 Vimy aircraft used on the first non-stop transatlantic flight which landed near Clifden, Co. Galway in 1919 (fig. 8 - stamps reduced).



fig. 9

The centenary of the Sinking of the Titanic built by Harland & Wolfe in Belfast was the subject of a set of six stamps and a prestige booklet in 2012. The stamps (fig. 9) feature *Titanic* leaving Southampton (36p), *Titanic* sailing past Alderney (47p), The Grand Staircase (48p), Orchestra playing Final Tune (52p), Captain Edward J. Smith (61p) and Lifeboats leaving *Titanic* (65p).

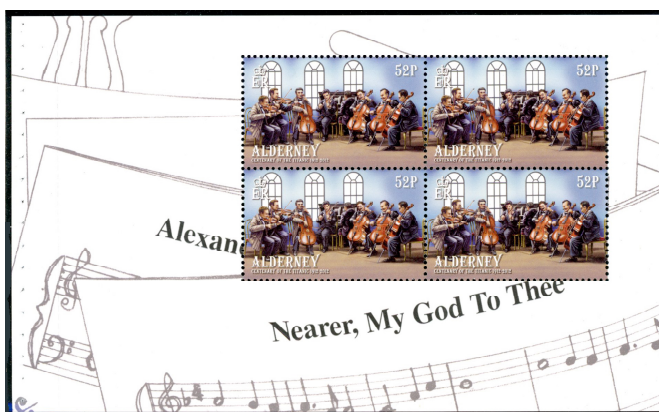


fig. 10

The booklet included six different panes each bearing a block of four of each of the values. One of the panes is shown above (4 x 52p - fig. 10-reduced).

In the next issue I will feature the three issues relating to Jersey and move on to Canada.

(to be continued)