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A T.O.3 mark apparently used at Queenstown
your editor has been doing a little research without drawing a proper conclusion
see article on page 19

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EDITORIAL

Let me start with an apology from Brian Warren. I have just had a message from him to say that he is running late with the production of his annual 'That Was The Year That Was' booklet and as a consequence the annual update for 2018 will follow as an addendum to our June 2019 issue.

I have always relied on Brian's annual rendering as our main contribution to the 'Keeping the Members up to date' function which is surely a key part of our Journal's purpose. For my part, despite a snippet of news further into this issue (see page 16), I am quite unable to keep up with the new issues and sadly see all too few of them used!

Page 16 will tell you that my desk has been busy these past few months. That is how I like it; please keep it coming! Proper letters to the editor are rare animals indeed today, although I am pleased to say that several have reached me this past year. Most correspondence arrives by email, scans attached, with the briefest of notes along the lines of 'Have you seen this?' For me, although it leaves me to do the 'discourse', that is generally no real problem in that I can then fill such space as is available with whatever little I may know myself on the subject.

An example of that lack of knowledge is shown in the brief article I have included in this issue on the subject of 'T.O.3.' on page 19. I usually keep one article back to fill in the space available at the end of the editing cycle each quarter. This quarter it was 'T.O.3.' Luckily for you, dear readers, leaving questions unanswered, I ran out of space! But do please let me know if you have any thoughts or anything to add so that a future note can throw more light on the mystery. The exchange of knowledge is what our Journal is all about.

Some of you will recall my New Year resolutions of past years to 'Finish off the Numerals Book'. I am pleased to report decent progress in recent months and am targeting a final draft by late Summer.

However, there is still a lot of data to be checked, visits to London Archives to be made and a mass of illustrations need tidying. So, at this time, usurping my editorial space with a private request, I do ask that if any members do have collections of the numeral cancellations used in the period up to c1894, or later in some offices, that I am not aware of, they contact me with a view to ensuring that whatever does get published is as complete as possible. At the very least, you are surely bound to have additions to date ranges!

One item not included in this issue is the list of actual dates for many of the recent closures kindly provided to me by Stephen Ferguson, Assistant Secretary of An Post. Some of these closures were inevitably controversial. I hope to be able to put together a full listing of all closures in a forthcoming issue.

Now, as those of you who were at the AGM in Dublin last year may recall, I did advise the gathering that it was and indeed remains my intention to stand down as editor at this end of the year after our December issue. It my earnest hope that we have a Member who will come forward and take on what has, for me, been an interesting and enjoyable, if occasionally a somewhat harrowing task. It has enabled me to be in touch and indeed meet many of our Members and I do look forward to helping my successor with articles and help if required. It is an exciting challenge and I do urge one of those reading this to take on the mantle, have fun and meet a lot of interesting people.

My apologies for a somewhat rambling editorial this time and do please enjoy the Spring – London has just a lovely few days with record February temperatures and I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM in Belfast with the hope we have a 'busy' gathering.

Stan
2 March 2019

OUR OFFICERS

President:	John Greer, Dublin	greer.john1944@gmail.com*
Vice president:	Robert Benninghoff, New Jersey	rmrmercer01@aol.com
Secretary:	Brian Warren (acting)	brian.warren2@upcmail.ie
Treasurer/Membership secretary	Brian Warren	brian.warren2@upcmail.ie
Editor and webmaster:	Stan Challis, Guernsey and London	stan@roskelly.co.uk
Auctioneer:	Rod Greer, Christchurch, England	rod.greer@hotmail.co.uk
Irish area secretary:	John Lennon, Dublin	johnglennon@eircom.net
Southern area secretary:	Peter Wood, London	peter.wood95@btinternet.com
Committee:	D Quail and B Harmon plus those named above	

*: Note new e-mail address for our President.

AIRMAILS OF THE EARLY 1920s
with some emphasis on the Belfast to Liverpool flights
John Lennon



A cover intended for a Belfast to Liverpool flight in June 1924

Having covered the flights from Galway to London and Berlin, (*September 2016 and March 2017 issues of 'IP'*) and bearing in mind the recently concluded excellent series of articles in our Journal by Ronny Vogt, I set about searching various archives for what other information might be available in connection with other flights of the 'early days'.

For Air Mails in Ireland during the War of Independence, 1919 to 1921, when regular mail services were disrupted, especially in large parts of Munster, I must refer the reader to FAI's 'The Military Postal History of Ireland' by Heinz Kumpf.

Whilst, most of the information that I have garnered has come from contemporary newspapers and concentrated on the Belfast to Liverpool flights of the early 1920s, I shall start with a few other extracts.

On 15 September 1920, the Belfast Newsletter (BN) carried a denial that *an aeroplane, deceived by a Sinn Fein ruse, dropped official mails at Bantry and that they were seized and carried off by Sinn Feiners in a motor car. The aeroplane landed at the proper place and its mails handed over to the authorised persons.*

On 26 July 1921, shortly after the Truce, Freeman's Journal (FJ) reported:- *An aeroplane carrying mails from the South of Ireland to Belfast crashed on*

Donaghadee Golf Links, Co Down. The machine was badly damaged but the pilot and his companion escaped.

Before these events, an Air Mail had been established between London and Paris. The Irish Examiner noted, in May 1920, that the Post Office was trying to popularise the service. *Now letters can be posted in any pillar box in London and the charge has been reduced from 2/6 to 2/- per letter. Some day we may expect to see the enterprise extended to Ireland.*

In February 1922, the Irish Independent (II) reported:- *A deputation from one of the big trans-Continental air mail carrying services in Paris has been received by Mr JJ Walsh (the newly appointed Postmaster General of the Provisional Government) as to an aerial postal service. The deputation spoke impressively of the part which, in their opinion, Ireland, because of its favourable geographical position, would play in the future of this service between Europe and America as a point of arrival and departure. Mr Walsh hoped it might be considered when the country was more settled and the Irish Post Office was in a strong position.*

According to the II of 1 September 1923, possible sites were being inspected in Belfast for aeroplanes to be engaged on an experimental air mail service

between Plymouth, Manchester and Belfast. The experiment was to be tried for about a month in connection with the arrival of American mails at Plymouth. Dummy mail bags were to be used. A preliminary test flight took place on Saturday 15 September and a four week trial began two days later. It had been announced that the mail would be dropped by parachute on a field behind Balmoral Industrial Institution with the plane landing at Aldergrove. The trial, with dummy mail, continued until 19 October.

Captain de Havilland told a BN reporter that the tests had been so satisfactory that there was a good chance of air mails to Belfast beginning in spring or summer. The landing of mails by parachute was quite successful and the packages always landed within 50 yards of the target.

On 17 October, BN reported that JJ Walsh and others had met a delegation from Britain in Cork and inspected Haulbowline Island, which had remained under British control, as a possible air base for transmitting American mails to London.

An interim report on air mails, issued in February 1924, was not very encouraging. Most businesses post their letters as late as possible and want them delivered as early as possible next morning. Aeroplanes do not fly by night and the present service achieved their desires. *For the present only long-distance main line Imperial mail routes stand to gain much from aerial transmission.*

Nonetheless, plans for a Plymouth to Belfast air mail progressed and, on 1 April, BN said that *a member of the Air Ministry flew into the new municipal aerodrome site at Malone to inspect the work in progress. The service will commence within a month.* It was hoped the public would support it by sending their letters for England by air mail. On 24 April it was announced that the service would start on 30 April 1924.

The Belfast Postmaster said that letters for the air mail should bear an Air Mail label or manuscript equivalent and the air mail fee was ½d for 2 ounces. Letters with an additional ½d late fee may be posted in the Late Fee box in Garfield Street up to 5.45pm.

The new aerodrome at Malone was officially opened on 30 April and the Lord Mayor of Belfast was on the inaugural flight to Liverpool. No mail was carried.

On 2 May the BN reported – *The air mail service between Belfast and Liverpool should have commenced yesterday, but unfavourable weather . . . upset the arrangements and the aeroplane did not attempt the journey. A very heavy consignment of*

mails had been received, and the bulk of these were forwarded by the ordinary steamship routes.

On 3 May the report read – *With an improvement in the weather yesterday afternoon the first aeroplane to carry mails on the Belfast – Liverpool service made the journey in schedule time. There was a comparatively small number of letters in the consignment. 4,000 letters each day are necessary to insure the commercial success of the venture.* The mail was despatched from the GPO, Belfast, at 6.05pm and arrived at Aintree at 8.35pm. It consisted of 1,500 letters, including a sack of registered packets.

For a period, in almost every issue, the BN gave an account of the previous day's flight. On 6 May it reported the heaviest consignment of letters since the service began, *including 24 letters which were posted after the stated hour.* It was even heavier on 8 May. Three passengers could be taken and usually they were named! The fare was £3. There is no reference to mail ever continuing to Plymouth or anywhere else.

The service was beset with bad weather with heavy rain, a hailstorm and particularly fog at Aintree. On Friday 9 May, *the plane failed to take off properly, due to the sodden state of the ground (at Malone), and just tipping a bush, came to earth again slightly damaged.*

When the service resumed, on 12 May, Aldergrove was used. An extensive drainage scheme was begun at Malone. 'Heavy' and 'Large' mails were recorded on 15, 16 and 17 May and it was announced that on the 19th the flight from Liverpool would be to Malone. However no flights took place that or the following day due to fog at Aintree.

On 21 May, two planes left Liverpool for Belfast. One had to turn back due to a thick fog and the other landed at Southport Sands to take up a consignment of newspapers. There was not enough space in Aintree for a fully loaded plane to take off so newspapers were brought to Southport and loaded there! The wheel carriage broke and attempts to tow it to safety failed. It was caught in the rising tide. A prolonged period of foggy weather eventually led to the announcement from the Postmaster General, on 19 June 1924, that the service had been suspended indefinitely. It seems the decision was not only due to the weather but finances played a major part. The use of Aldergrove added an extra £7 per day for each plane. Irish papers put some of the blame on a lack of interest in the project at the Liverpool end.

JJ Walsh (Irish Postmaster General) told FJ in June 1924, *Arrangements had been made whereby*

correspondence for conveyance by the various air mail services from London might be posted anywhere in the Saorstát. The special air fees were the same as charged by the British Post Office.

Six months later, in January 1925, BN stated: *Definite steps were being taken . . . for the re-establishment of the air mail service between Belfast and England. Three aeroplanes have been purchased, and it is expected that a start will be made with the transport of mails some time in March. The machines will fly between Belfast and Carlisle.*

At a specially convened meeting of Derry Chamber of Commerce in February a scheme to extend the service to Derry was discussed. On 28th, the Irish Examiner wrote:- *It has been decided . . . to establish a daily air mail and passenger service between Londonderry and Carlisle. An agreement had been reached with the Asylum at Gransha for ground for an aerodrome. The erection of the hangar will proceed forthwith and the service will be inaugurated within a month.* The Irish Times of 11 March:- *The new airmail and passenger service linking Derry with Belfast and Carlisle is to be started up at an early date . . . with an extra ½d stamp which would go to the company.*

BN reported on 19 March that *A trial flight was made yesterday morning in connection with the air mail service between Stranraer and Belfast. That on arrival of London Mail train in Stranraer, bags containing newspapers and dummy mails were taken to the aerodrome at Freugh and then conveyed to Belfast. For the new service, two planes have been purchased.* On 6 April, the plane from Stranraer encountered heavy fog and lost its bearings, finally landing in a field near Lisburn.

Belfast Chamber of Commerce was told on 15 May that the air mail from Stranraer would commence on 25 May. During the trial the dummy mails had had arrived at Belfast Post Office before 7.30am in time to be sorted for private boxes and letter bags.

The Northern Parliament, on 19 May, granted £1,000 to the service which *would connect both Londonderry and Belfast with Stranraer, and on the outward journey with Carlisle. The distance between Stranraer and Belfast would be covered in a little less than one hour as compared with three hours under present conditions. The journey between Belfast and Londonderry, which by rail occupied 3¼ hours, would be accomplished under normal weather conditions in 45 minutes, and on the outward journey Carlisle would be reached in 1½ hours from Belfast as against 6 hours 17 minutes by sea and rail.*



A map from the *Annual Report on the Progress of Civil Aviation April 1st 1924 – March 31st 1925*

Newspapers did not report on the inauguration of the real mails service, scheduled for 25 May 1925 but the following day, BN reported that *engine trouble caused the pilot of the Londonderry – Belfast Air Mail service to make an emergency landing near Limavady yesterday morning. The trouble developed when returning to Belfast after the delivery of the mails at Londonderry.*

There are no further references to the service which, according to William J Murphy in *Irish Airmail 1919-1990* (published by EPA and Irish Airmail Society) ended on 8th June.

UNUSUAL TRIANGLE



A less common item found on a recent rummage was a triangular cancellation on an 8d stamp dating I must assume from c1950s. The code 'RIG' is that of Roscommon which like so many other of the triangular cancellations is surely just about capable of being found with a search. However much scarcer is the use on the 8d stamp, this the highest value I recall seeing so cancelled. I do ask 'what other more unusual stamps can be found with these cancellations?'. I believe the triangles died out in the 1960s. They were used on 'imitation typewritten circulars and in consequence generally found on ½d, 1d, 2d and 3d values – ie: the then current printed paper rates.

WESTMEATH AND THE INDEPENDENT IRISH POST OFFICE 1784-1803: THE YEARS WHEN JOHN LEES WAS SECRETARY

Anthony Hughes

In this article, which follows on from my article in the December issue, I shall cover the initial period to 1803 when John Lees was Secretary.

Between 1784 and 1831 the Irish Post Office was independent of its counterpart in England. In 1782 the Irish Parliament, which became known as 'Grattan's Parliament', gained a degree of legislative independence. It was soon clamouring for the income of the Post Office in Ireland. As a result, in 1784, the Irish Post Office was separated from the English one. Its income, what little there was, now went to the Irish exchequer. Also it was now answerable to the Irish Parliament and not Westminster. As in England it was to have two Postmasters General, these I list on the next page. John Lees became secretary and he was followed by his son, Edward, in 1811. Father and son would run the Post Office in Ireland throughout the independence period 1784 -1831.

Table 1 tells us that there were 145 post towns in Ireland in 1784. Within a year Edward Lees announced 26 new Post Towns and many new cross post routes. Details were given in the press at the time and included a new route in Westmeath running from 'Trim through Athboy to Castletown-Delvin, Collinstown, Castlepollard, and Granard to Edgeworthstown – Edgeworthstown and Castletown-Delvin to be established Post-Towns.' (*Freemans Journal* 27 June 1786).

An additional weekly post for Moate was also announced. Castlepollard also became a Post Town that year, though it was not one of those noted in the newspaper article. Kinnegad became a Post Towns in 1793, Killucan in 1806, Rochfortbridge in 1808 and Rathowen in 1811, joining Athlone, Ballymore, Castletown Delvin, Kilbeggan, Moate and Mullingar, bringing the total number in Westmeath to eleven by 1811. Along with independence came a adjustment to the rate bands; instead of just two bands under and over 40 miles there was now three; another two were added in 1797, as shown below in Table 2:-

Table 2	Single	Double	Treble	Every
$\frac{1}{4}$ oz				over
1oz				
Up to 15 miles	2d	4d	6d	2d
15 to 30 miles	3d	6d	9d	3d
over 30 miles	4d	8d	12d	4d
In 1797 the table of rates was extended				
30 to 50 miles	4d	8d	12d	4d
50 to 80 miles	5d	10d	15d	5d
over 80 miles	6d	12d	18d	6d

Two Westmeath towns were 30 or fewer miles from Dublin: Kinnegad 30 and Killucan 28. This does not make sense as mail going to Killucan passed through Kinnegad. Two towns, Athlone 59, Moate 52 were in the 50 to 80 mile band. The others Ballymore 50, Ballynacargy 45, Castlepollard 42, Mullingar 38, Rathowen and Tyrrellspass were in the over 30 to 50 mile band.

It was during John Lees time that the Mail Coaches were introduced to Ireland. In 1784 in England, John Palmer, a Bath theatre owner, began running a mail coach between London and Bath. Soon mail coaches were operating on all the main post roads in England. It was another five years before such a system began operating in Ireland.

Post-Towns of Ireland.										119
Post-Towns, Rates, & Distances from Dublin, that go SIX TIMES Weekly, except those marked \$, which do not come in on Thurs. nor go out on Wed.										
B Albriggan	1	15	Dundalk	4	40	Lifmore	4	100		
B Banbridge	4	60	Dunleer	2	30	Loughbrickld.	4	58		
B Belfast	4	80	Flurry-bridge	4	46	Lurgangreen	2	37		
B Carlow	2	39	Gowran	4	52	Naas	2	15		
B CarrickonSire	4	74	Hillboro'	4	69	Newry	4	50		
B Cashel	4	76	Inishoge	4	63	Newtown ards	4	87		
B Castledermot	2	33	Kilcullen	2	21	New Rofs	4	67		
B Clonmel	4	81	Kilkenny	4	55	Tallow	4	104		
B Cork	4	124	Kingfale	4	135	Thomastown	4	58		
B Donaghadee	4	94	Leighlinbridge	2	45	Waterford	4	74		
B Drogheda	2	23	Limerick	4	94	Youghal	4	108		
B Dromore	4	66	Lisburn	4	73					
Post-Towns, Rates, and Distances from Dublin, Tues. Thurs. and Satur.										
A Rdee	2	33	Dunthughlin	1	14	Mullingar	2	38		
A Antrim	4	83	Elphin	4	75	Navan	2	23		
A Arklow	4	36	Enniscorthy	4	60	Nenagh	4	75		
A Armagh	4	62	Ennis	4	111	Newport, Tip.	4	85		
A Athlone	4	59	Enniskillen	4	79	Newtownavady	4	106		
A Athy	2	32	Eyrecourt	4	71	Newtown mt.ken.	2	17		
B Baltimore	4	50	Galway	4	108	Oldcastle	4	41		
B Ballitore	2	28	Gorey	4	45	Omagh	4	87		
B Ballinabinch	4	74	Kells	2	31	Philpottown	2	38		
B Ballyboy	4	55	Kilbeggan	4	44	Portaferry	4	78		
B Ballyconnell	4	67	Kilcock	2	14	Portlinton	2	35		
B Ballyshannon	4	100	Kildare	2	24	Rathfriland	4	57		
B Banagher	4	66	Killarney	4	143	Roscommon	4	69		
B Belurbet	4	54	Killeandra	4	60	Sixmilebridge	4	103		
B Birr	4	63	Larne	4	97	Sligo	4	103		
B Boyle	4	83	Leixlip	1	8	Strabane	4	101		
B Bray	1	10	Lifefkeea	4	70	Summerhill	2	20		
B Burraakane	4	74	Loughrea	4	86	Tanderagee	4	61		
B Carrickfergus	4	88	Lurgan	4	67	Tipperary	4	86		
B Castlemartyr	4	118	Maryboro'	2	40	Tralee	4	142		
B Cavan	4	54	Maynooth	1	11	Trim	2	22		
B Clougher	4	76	Midleton	4	122	Tullamore	4	46		
B Clonard	2	25	Millstreet	4	139	Tynan	4	68		
B Clones	4	61	Moate	4	52	Virginia	4	40		
B Derry (Londn.)	4	114	Moirs	4	69	Wexford	4	66		
B Downpatrick	4	72	Monaghan	4	62	Wicklow	2	24		
B Dungannon	4	73	Monastereven	2	30					
Post-Towns, Rates, and Distances from Dublin, Tuesday, and Saturday.										
B Allinashoe	4	71	Castlebar	4	114	Longford	4	58		
B Ballymahon	4	52	Castleblakeny	4	80	Magherafelt	4	87		
B Ballinrobe	4	119	Charleville	4	108	Mallow	4	121		
B Ballycastle	4	112	Colehill	4	50	Mitcheltown	4	102		
B Ballymena	4	93	Coleraine	4	109	Moneymore	4	83		
B Ballymoney	4	107	Coorehill	4	52	Newport, Mayo	4	128		
B Bandon	4	137	Cort	4	99	Raphoe	4	107		
B Bantry	4	164	Granard	4	52	Rathkeale	4	107		
B Carrick on Sha.	4	77	Killalla	4	127	Roscrea	4	59		
B Carrickmacross	4	44	Lettorkenny	4	113	Tulla	4	93		

Table 1: The Irish Post Towns in 1784 as they appeared in Watson's Almanack 1783 also shown was the cost of a letter to Dublin along with the distance from that city

1 st Postmaster General	2 nd Postmaster General
1784–89 James Agar, 1 st Viscount Clifden	1789 William Ponsonby, 1 st Baron Ponsonby
1789-1806 Charles Loftus 1 st Viscount Loftus	Charles Coote
1806-1809 Richard Hely-Hutchinson 1 st Earl of Donoughmore	1797-1806 Charles Moore 1 st Marquess of Drogheda
1807-1831 Charles O'Neill 1 st Earl O'Neill	1806-09 Lord Henry FitzGerald
	1808-09 Richard Trench 2 nd Earl of Clancarty
	1809-1831 Laurence Parsons 2 nd Earl of Rosse

Table 3: The Postmasters General of Ireland 1784 -1831

Sourced from *Watsons Almanack, Dictionary of Irish Biography, Nineteenth Report*,

In Ireland John Anderson acquired the contract from the Post Office to operate the first Mail Coaches. Anderson and Lees, both Scots, were related through marriage. He was also related through marriage to Robert Shaw, Accountant General of the Post Office. Subsequent history tells us that Shaw would resign the position after the publication of the 1810 report. A further relation as a result of marriage was Richard Hely-Hutchinson 1st Earl Donaghmore, later to become one of the joint Postmasters General. It was most likely these connections that ensured he got the contract for the Mail Coaches. This was typical of the nepotism that was endemic in the Irish Post Office at this time.

In any event Mail Coaches began running between Dublin and Belfast and Dublin to Cork in 1789. Within four years coaches were also running from Dublin to Limerick, Enniskillen and Galway. A Mail Coach also operated between Belfast and Donaghadee for the connection to Scotland.

On the 14 June 1792 the *Connaught Journal* reported that the Galway Royal Mail coach

'will start from the mail coach hotel in Dawson Street, Dublin and from the Mail Coach Office in Galway, and on Wed 20th June, 5am, and on each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, running in two days, until 6th July when it commences carrying the mail and will depart from Dublin at 10 o'clock every night and from Galway at 4am passing through the towns of Killcock, Kinnegad, Mullingar, Ballymore, Athlone, Ballinasloe, and Loughrea – fare to each passenger at 21s. 1d. Luggage overweight 2½d per pound, small parcels 2s 2d each. Fare to the intermediate towns in proportion and proper offices appointed to receive and forward all the coach business.'

The 'Mail Coach Hotel' was the former Royal Hibernian Hotel in Dawson Street and is now the Royal Hibernian Way. The Belfast mail left from Caple Street.



Fig 1: 1785 Ballymore / Dublin with large type town name applied. The letter includes the statement 'I wont include the receipt you sent down but that I think it unnecessary to make you pay double postage therefore will burn it'. The letter was rated at 4d for over thirty miles. This is the third recorded Town Name mark used in Westmeath and one of the offices on the Galway 'Line' after 1792.

The network was to suffer badly during the 1798 rebellion when the mail coaches came under attack. On 23 May 1798 an attempt was made to prevent mail-coaches from leaving Dublin. The Northern (Belfast) mail was burned by rebels at Santry. The same night, the Cork mail-coach was first attacked at Clondalkin, just west of Dublin but continued on its journey before being captured at Naas and burned.

Meanwhile the Galway coach was attacked at Lucan but continued on its way but the Limerick and Enniskillen coaches were missed completely at Clondalkin in west Dublin and Dunboyne in County Meath. The Connaught mail-coach was destroyed between Lucan and Leixlip. By the time the mail-coaches were attacked, the rising had already been quashed in Dublin as a result of intelligence-gathering aided in no small way by the Post Office.

Two days after the coaches were attacked, another going from Cork to Dublin was set upon by rebel forces. The only person on board, a Lieutenant Giffard, was taken off and killed and the coach continued on its way.

Attacking the mail-coaches served three purposes; first, it signalled to those beyond Dublin that the rebellion had begun in the capital. Secondly, such attacks served to temporarily cripple the Dublin Castle communications system. Thirdly, these disruptions generated unease and confusion among provincial government officials.

Attacks on the Mail coaches continued for some time, it was not until 1804 that the network began to recover and expand.

During the 1790s and particularly in 1798 the Post Office did the British state administration its greatest service through its intelligence-gathering operations. Although by no means the only source of intelligence, it played a vital role in Dublin Castle's surveillance and espionage activities. Its complex, fast and regular communication system and more importantly its network of local postmasters who possessed knowledge of individuals and associations, was invaluable to the Castle authorities in the drive to discover and suppress insurgency.

Use of the Post Office for gathering intelligence in England and Europe throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is well documented. However, it was not until the 1790s that we have incontrovertible evidence that such activity was occurring on a regular basis in the Irish Post Office. The Post Office played an indispensable role in curtailing the activities and obstructing the plans of the United Irishmen. William Pitt the British Prime Minister had a copy of Napper Tandy's letters on his desk often before those they were addressed to received them. Napper Tandy was one of the leaders of the United Irishmen.

In Mullingar the local Postmaster Thomas Shea was keeping Lees informed of local activity. He was also a member of the Fore Militia which, evidence shows, established its own communication or letter carrying service most likely organised by Shea. Shea was one of many postmasters supplying Lees with information as letters in the Irish National Archives show.

At the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Irish Post Office was to play an important role in the development of roads on which the Mail Coaches ran. In England, unlike in Ireland, there existed a substantial network of good roads previous to the introduction of the Mail Coaches there. Hence in Britain the Post Office never played the same role in road design or their maintenance as it was to in Ireland. *Figs 2 and 3* below, serve to show examples of early mail from the smaller offices in the County.

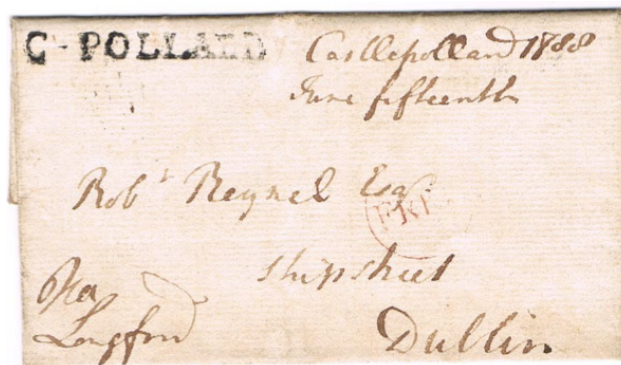


Fig 2: 1788 Castlepollard / Dublin franked by Lord Longford Castlepollard had had become a Post Town only two years before. The Letter was carried free, Longford being a peer and as such entitled to free postage. This is indicated by the just discernible red circular FREE mark applied in Dublin. On back is a large Bishop mark 16 / AU also applied in Dublin.

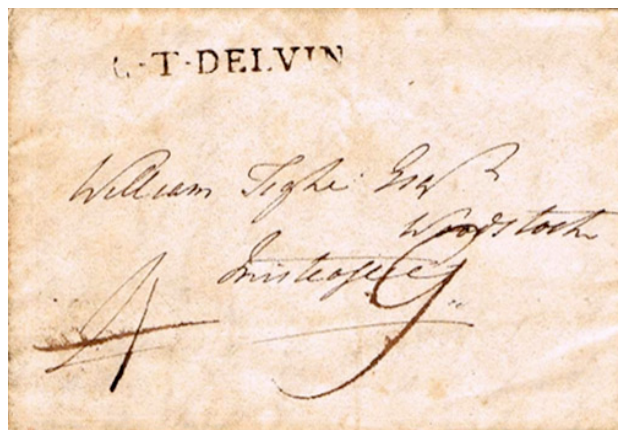


Fig 3: Castletown Delvin to Inistioge, Co Kilkenny (1801). Letters between towns not on the same post road were charged two rates to and from Dublin. Applied to this the Town name marks C.T.DELVIN for Castletown Delvin also on Back a Dublin Circular year mark JU/8/1801. Postage comprised, C T Delvin to Dublin 4d (30-50 miles) and Dublin to Inistioge 5d (50 – 80) giving 9d in all.

Appearances can be deceiving and though there were many improvements in the Post Office during John Lees' time all was not as it seemed. Soon after the two Post Offices went their separate ways much reform took place in the English one. For example double jobbing was eliminated. Those that were drawing a Post Office wage had to work in the Post Office and not pay someone else to do the job. In the Irish Post Office such practices continued unabated. These faults and many others were to be laid bare by an 1810 Westminster Parliament report known as; 'The ninth report of the commissioners appointed to enquire into the fees General Post-Office'.

Among the faults exposed was the cost of stationery, furniture, legal expenses and the excessive cost of guards for the Mail Coaches.

Another concern was the disappearance of money from the post. Between 1803 and 1807 this cost the Post Office £74,550 when 3,260 people were reimbursed for money that disappeared from the post. Another was the disappearance of pre paid letters. There was also a complete lack of accounts. The report stated that it could only estimate the annual income of the Irish Post Office since 1784. There was also much criticism of the management and how the Post Office was run and the inefficiency of the two Postmasters General.

Few changes occurred as a result of this report. As the report was published it seemed changes were afoot. John Lees was being replaced by his son Edward. Richard Trench 2nd Earl of Clancarty had just been appointed as one of the two Postmaster Generals and these two people were in the processes reforming the Irish Post Office. Also Westminster had bigger worries in the form of Napoleon and the French wars.

However, Trench was short-lived in the position; he went on to bigger and better things, for the most part in the diplomatic field. He was later to represent Great Britain at the Congress of Vienna. Edward was to use the Irish Post Office as his own personal business where mismanagement and corruption was to reach new heights.

Another reason why there was little reform may also have been how the Post Office had proved its worth some years earlier during the troubled 1790s and Edward like his father was keeping the authorities informed of political events, most likely by the opening of letters. Hence the establishment may have preferred not to upset a valuable source of information while the war with France was ongoing. Only a few years earlier 1803 John Lees had been knighted for service to the state, most noticeable in providing intelligence to the authorities and being instrumental in bring about the Act of Union in which he played an important if little known part and very much behind the scenes.

One of the many interesting facts in the 1810 report is the income of the Irish Post Office between 1785 and 1808. The income rose from £40,115 to £177,230 representing a 341% increase (see the table below showing just how profitable the Post Office was - this abridged from the report of 1810). Even though the rates had increased during this time, it gives an indication of the increase of mail handled by the Post Office in the period.

Year	Gross Revenue	Management	Returns	Net Revenue
1785	£40,115	£22,590	£2,489	£15,026
1808	£177,230	£81,512	£14,317	£81,400

Table 3: Irish post office revenue and expenditure for 1785 and 1803

From a county postal historians point of view one item of interest in the report is the list of postmasters and their salaries. The following table lists the postmasters of Westmeath and their salaries as shown in the 1810 Report.

Post Town	Postmaster	£. s. d.
Athlone	G. R. Mathews	70. 0. 0
Ballymore	Harry Cunningham	24. 0. 0.
Ballynacargy	Thomas Townsend	10. 0. 0
Ballymore	Michael Reynolds	10. 0. 0
Castlepollard	William Riggs	20. 0. 0.
C. T. Delvin	Gregory Carey	19. 6. 4.
Kilbeggan	Mary Carey	10. 0. 0.
Killucan	John McAnally	20. 0. 0.
Kinnegad	Samuel Campbell	24. 0. 0.
Moate	Nath Russell	20. 0. 0.
Mullingar	Arthur Richardson	64. 0. 0.

Table 4: Postmasters' salaries in Westmeath 1810

Arthur Richardson in Mullingar, whose salary was £64, owed the Post Office £246. 2s. 7½d. He was not alone. The now retired Thomas Shea of Mullingar owed £202 4s 1d, William Ferguson the ex Postmaster of Athlone owed £270. 14s. 10d. Thomas Faulkner ex of Kilbeggan owed £143. 12s. 9d. These amounts represented monies they had collected for delivery of letters. It must be remembered few letters were prepaid at the time and the postmaster collected the monies and make returns monthly to the GPO in Dublin.

There may indeed have been many internal problems in the Irish Post Office; none the less, it was seen as efficient or as efficient as it could be for its day. Between 1784 and 1803 the number of Post towns had risen from 145 to 286. The frequency of the running of the mails had also improved.

In 1784 the mail was carried to 45 towns six day a week. 80 towns had a three day a week delivery and the remaining 30 had a two day delivery. By 1803, 152 had a six day delivery and the other 184 had a three day delivery representing a very considerable improvement; the service was growing!

POSTMARKS: Even though there were many new types of postmarks introduced in Dublin at this time, there were none in Westmeath beyond the Town Name marks.

Town Name: Ballymore (fig 1) Size: 50mm / 6mm Feature: very large letters Earliest: 1785 Latest: <i>not seen</i> Colour: black	Town Name: Castlepollard (fig 2) Size: 48mm / 5mm Earliest: 1785 Latest: 1808 Colour: black	Town Name: Kilbeggan Size: 44mm / 4mm Earliest: 1805 Latest: 1807 Colour: black
Town Name: Killucan Size: 39mm / 5mm Earliest: 1809 Latest: 1815 Colour: black	Town Name: Kinnegad (fig 5) Size: 37mm / 5mm Earliest: 1798 Latest: 1805 Colour: black	Town Name: Moate NONE YET RECORDED

*Table 5: Westmeath Post Towns established by 1803
(excluding Mullingar and Athlone, covered in the previous article)*

Those that had been in use prior to the establishing of the Irish Post Office continued in use until they began being phased out in 1808. Although three of the Westmeath Post towns, listed in *Table 5*, became Post towns after the period being studied in this section 1784 - 1803 as they used Town name marks, these will be listed in this section.

Although Kilbeggan and Ballymore pre date the independent Irish Post Office their earliest recorded Town name marks date from after 1784. Surprisingly, although Moate had been a Post Town since 1759 no Town name mark has yet come to light from here, or at least not seen by the author. In Westmeath other than Mullingar and Athlone the Post Towns known to have used Town Name marks are Castlepollard, Castletown Delvin, Kinnegad and Killucan.

I conclude by showing examples of mail from the period showing the C.T.Delvin and Kinnegad Town name stamps at *figs 4 and 5*. Unsurprisingly, these are considerably scarcer than those of the county's main towns of Mullingar and Athlone.

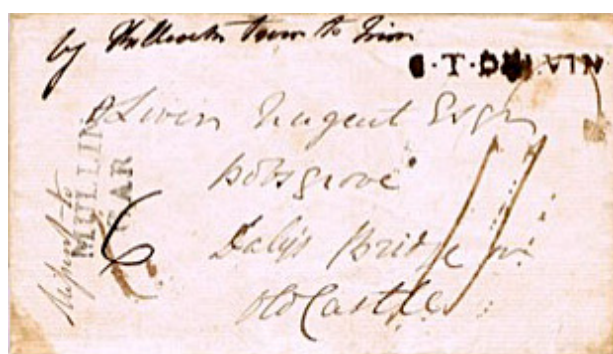


Fig 4: 1806 Castletown Delvin to Oldcastle with manuscript 'Missent to Mullingar' and also written on the front 'Try Killcock turn to Trim' The letter must have taken this route as there is no Dublin mark on the letter. Applied to letter were two Westmeath Town name marks C.T.DELVIN and the unusual two line MULLIN/GAR. Rated at 6d first this seems to have been upped to 11d. The

letter was sent by Baron Delvin, and sealed using his seal. At this time he, George Frederick Nugent, was 12th Baron of Delvin and 7th Earl of Westmeath. He was at this time one of the Representative Peers.

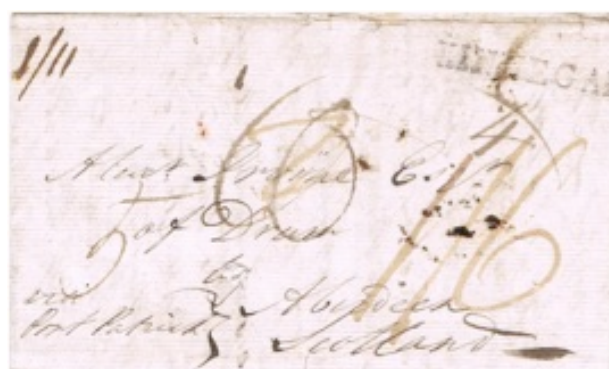
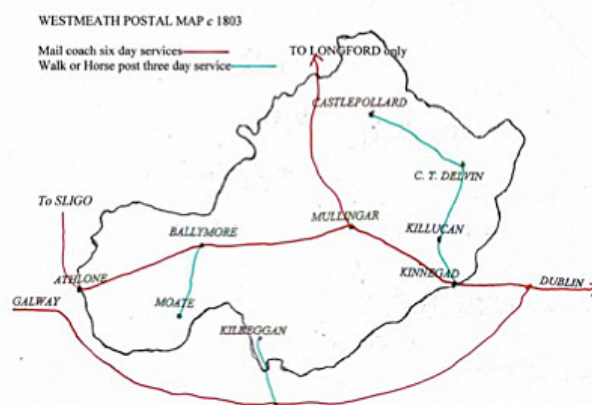


Fig 5: 1798 Kinnegad to Aberdeen via Donaghadee showing just how complicated ratings were. The total charge was 1/11d comprising 4d Kinnegad to Dublin (below the Kinnegad town name stamp), 6d to Donaghadee, 2d for the crossing to Portpatrick, then 6d to Edinburgh (making 1/6d to here), then a further 5d to Aberdeen giving 1/11d in all (top left).

Finally, using Watson's Almanack of 1804 (prepared in 1803), it is possible to draw a postal circulation map for the County in 1803, which I annex below and hope to continue the story in a future issue of Irish Philately.



OSWALD MARSH and 'SHIFTED' DOLLARD OVERPRINTS

Robert Benninghoff



It is always great to see what the various dealers bring to Stampex each October. When searching through Andy Ballard's substantial stock, I found the covers above (lower item reduced to show only the top) sent registered from Bray and Drogheda, plus several similar items, all stamped in same way from Ballinasloe and Clonmel and also offices in Cork and Clare. I find the covers interesting because they all show a 'shifted' or 'misaligned' overprint on the 1/2d stamps. The overprint is shifted to both the left or to the right. The addressee, Oswald Marsh, was an English dealer. Originally from Belfast he traded from the early 1900s well into the 1940s, a vast amount of material addressed to him having come on to the market in recent years. All the covers were postmarked 24 or 25 May 1922.

I found myself asking lots of questions.....

- How did Marsh find out about the printing varieties on the stamps?

- How did he get the stamps and covers (all addressed to him at 26 The Avenue) to the various post offices in Ireland to be mailed to him on the same days in May 1922?
- Was Marsh commissioned by a collector to obtain these printing varieties?
- Are there other Marsh covers with printing varieties to be found?

All feedback appreciated !

My own theory is that Marsh was in the habit of sending to the various head offices for material and had been sent one or more sheets with the shifted overprint by a postmaster. He sent stamped addressed envelopes (which explains the 'Addressograph' plate used) stamped with some of these varieties in these larger envelopes because he was sending for more stamps and perhaps specifically requesting the control corner blocks. Who knows? - Ed.

STAMPA INVITATION CARDS

Heinz-Jürgen Kumpf

Between the years between 1972 and 1998 receptions were organized the evening before or the morning of the official opening of Stampa. For this purpose special invitation cards were sent to philatelists, dealers attending Stampa, the press and the 'philatelic great and good'.

The desire to be invited to this exclusive party always exceeded the capacity. Why was it so? There were many reasons: it was not only THE EVENT in the Irish philatelic world each year (besides the Stampa Awards Dinner): it was also a social event where you met friends you had not seen for a long time. And of course, these 'opening ceremonies' included free food and beverages. As far as I remember all attendees received also a gift from An Post, often stamps, including a FDC or stationery, which would be issued at Stampa that year.

The invitations were forwarded to the respective invitee by hand or letter and were strictly personal. The total number of participants was generally about 50 – 80 people, sometimes even less. For most of the events the name of the invited person was written on the invitation. I remember quite well that some people were not given admission as they were not on the guest list, their frustration was great of not being part of the 'party'.

Generally, the receptions were mostly sponsored by An Post or Irish Security Stamp Printing Ltd (ISSPL), the 'secret' company that printed all Irish stamps at this time. With the exception of some An Post officials very few people really knew the details of ISSPL who were based in Santry Avenue, Dublin 9. There was no name on the doors and nobody was let in without any appointment which was almost impossible. In fact, the location, assumed by many to be Dublin Castle, was kept 'secret'. Visitors were not permitted for fear of material of philatelic interest 'vanishing'!

In 1990, at the Stampa reception, I recall meeting one of the ISSPL managers, Mr. Ronald Dalglish. When I mentioned that the FAI board members would like to visit ISSPL as an official delegation, he only shook his head with a smile as if to express his apology that unfortunately this would not be possible. Such was the security!

Except for Stampa 1982 the receptions took place in the premises where the Show would open the next or same day. Often the keynote speech was given by the Ministers of PTT, later by the Chairman or Chief Executive of An Post. It was very impressive when some of them began their speech first in Irish!

The Invitation Cards were generally treasured by the recipients, although a few have found their way on to the market; building a full set will not be easy! Some of the guests embellished used their cards by getting the commemorative Stampa postmarks struck on them. Others decorated the card with regular or postage due stamps and got them cancelled as well.

The size of the invitation cards was from 12.6 by 10 cm to 17.8 by 11.4 cm; the colour was generally white. In 1990 the invitation card bore the wrong name of the printer: 'Irish Security Printers Ltd', instead of ISSPL. When I asked Ronald Dalglish, to sign my card he immediately spotted the mistake and corrected it by hand into ISSPL!

Unfortunately, to my knowledge there were no more opening ceremonies after 1998 and any attempt to revive this tradition has failed. In consequence, I am glad to be able to show some of the cards from the 'Reception Years'.

My collection is by no means complete. Thus, I must give my special thanks to Brian Warren for his support in this study. Thanks also Ian Whyte for his general comments.

In conclusion and it will, I hope, be the subject of a separate article, I should also make reference to a forerunner, namely an invitation card in my possession for the opening of the Irish Philatelic Exhibition in 1944.

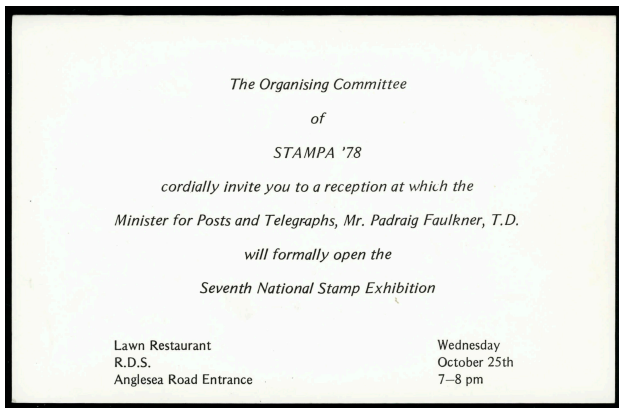
I shall now show a representation of the cards:-

1972

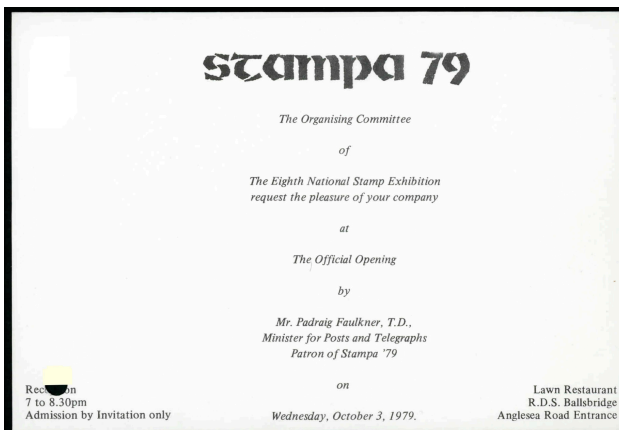
In 1972 there was an invitation which was printed in green on white card for the original Stampa reception. I have not seen a copy. Stampa itself was opened by Conor Cruise O'Brien, the then Minister with protests outside. (*what was this about? – who remembers – surely not about too many new stamps??? - Ed*).

1973 et seq

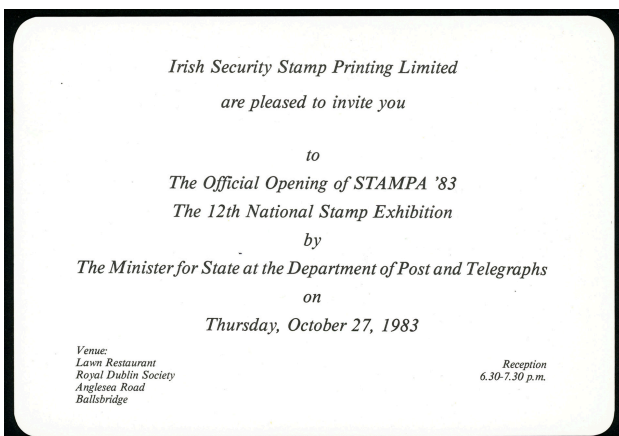
I cannot show you an example of the invitation card from the early years prior to 1978 which I show on the next page. The invitation for that year was from was Padraig Faulkner, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs and the printer was 'T Kilmartin and Sons'. I continue by showing a selection of cards from subsequent years including the 'corrected' 1990 card referred to above and conclude with an example of the 1998 invitation – no longer a card but a simple letter on An Post – the 'quality' has dropped for the final year of Stampa receptions!



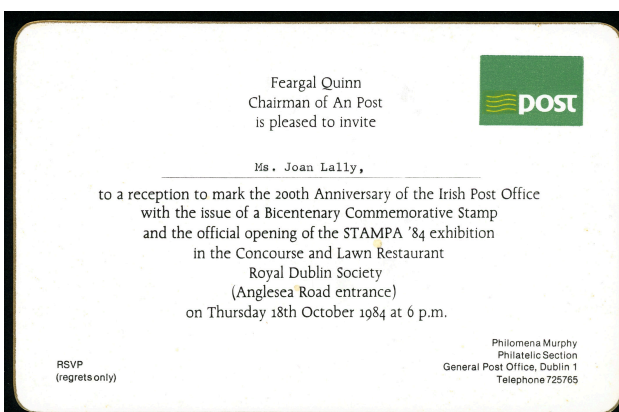
the 1978 card



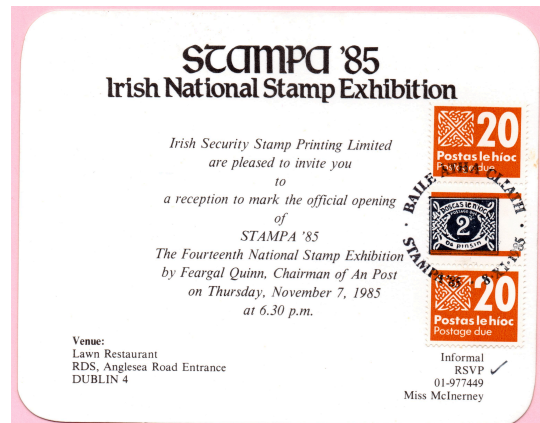
the 1979 card



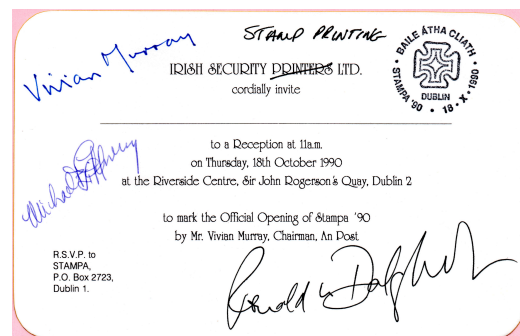
the 1983 card was printed by ISSPL



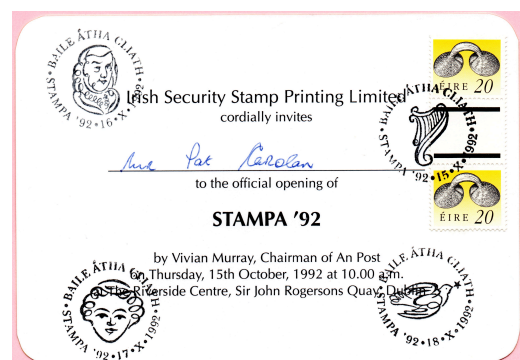
1984 was the first year of an Post sponsorship



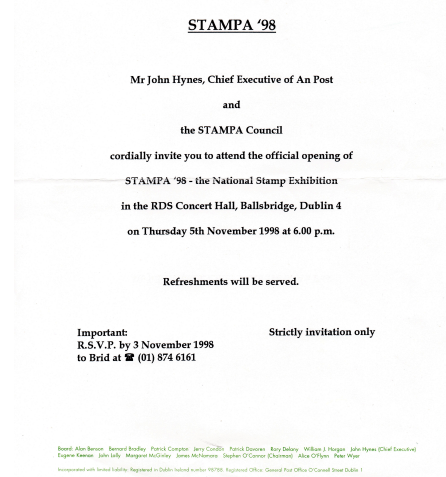
the 1985 card – one of several with either stamps or postage due stamps added to give a little colour



the 'corrected 1990 card'



the 1992 card



the invitation letter in 1998 – quality has dropped!

DUPLEX NOTES

Editor



fig 1 – Kilkenney to Colchester 1883 – reversed NN

Some 115 years after the last duplex cancellation was withdrawn, one would be entitled to think the subject was fully exhausted. Nevertheless three items of interest to collectors of the Victorian duplex postmarks (generally used from the 1850s to the late 1890s) have come to light in recent weeks.

Above is an innocent looking cover of 1883 but on examination it will be seen that the two 'Ns' in the town die are reversed. I have seen this in an earlier datestamp (c1840s) but was surprised to find this one. Amazingly, I have also found a second example on a tatty piece dated 2 January 1884. I cannot imagine that use was continuous for surely other examples should have shown up surely?

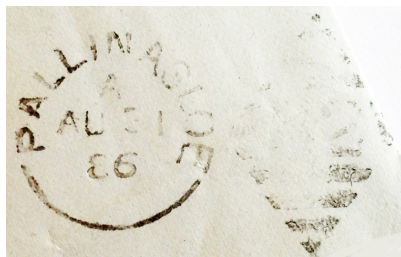


fig 2 - Pallinasloe

Next to Ballinasloe on 31 August 1886. The numeral part of the mark is all but unreadable but the town die has struck well. Well enough for it to clearly read Pallinasloe. This has been found on the back of a redirected envelope. There is no trace on the any loop below the 'P' and it does appear to be a wrong inscription but once again I must express incredulity that it has not previously been recorded.



fig 3 – Dublin Trial cancellations

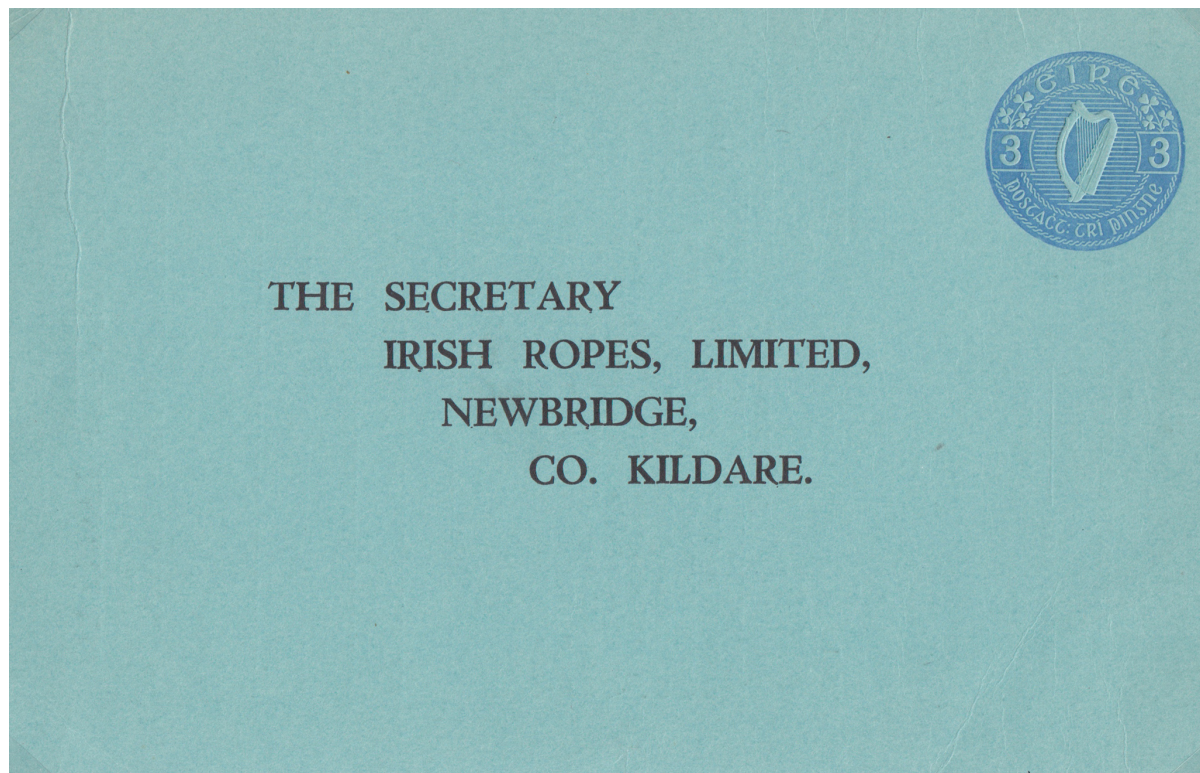
David MacDonnell has drawn my attention to the two postmarks above. In the Reginald M. Phillips collection at the British National Postal Museum, there are five envelopes, each with a colour trial on coloured paper of the 1883-84 definitives, cancelled by a code 14C DUBLIN/186 duplex dated JY 7 84. They are described at the NPM as 'Dublin Trial cancellations'.

The postmarks raise a number of questions. Where were they struck? London? If so that would imply London was supplying duplex marks to Ireland. It had always been my understanding that, with a handful of exceptions, all the Irish numeral postmarks after 1844 were made in Ireland. The Proof Books are of course lost, so we cannot check. But why else would London use a Dublin cancel for cancelling 'colour trials'.

But just as surprising is the 'C' code. I must have seen many hundreds of Duplin duplex cancellations from around this period but never have I seen a 'C' code. Has anyone seen one? I do, however, have several examples of the Dublin '14' duty stamp but annoyingly nothing from 1884. Among them is a different town die and numeral <186> used in October 1883 and another different <186> die with tiny side bars used in August 1887. Who can provide me with better detail??

MORE PRIVATE POSTAL STATIONERY FINDS

George King



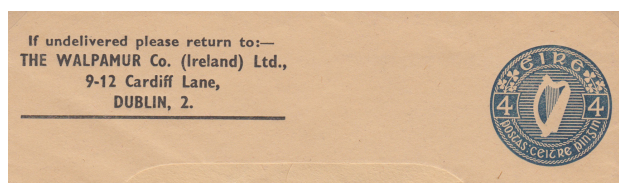
1967 – Proxy card for Annual General Meeting

I have been fortunate to obtain a number of private stationery items recently and as it is unlikely that most Members will have seen them, I show a few here. Of particular interest is the above item shown in mint condition. Any used examples no doubt would have been destroyed by the addressee at the end of the statutory retention period and no doubt long ago went to a tip in Newbridge! The mint example above is perhaps the sole survivor.



Above: A Dunlop envelope of 1946 once seemingly used by a collector for storing his duplicates in!

Right: Examples from the 1960s at the 3d and 4d printed paper rates (uprated as necessary). These no doubt contained invoices or statements and must have been used by the hundred/ thousand. Just one or two examples of each of these are known.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Various items have crossed my desk in recent weeks and I am particularly grateful to David MacDonnell of MacDonnell Whyte, Dublin, who has been busy and sent me several recent 'finds'. My thanks to him and all others who contribute - let me start with the 'current' item.

ARMISTICE STAMPS used early

These were due for release on 8 November. David tells me that at least one office put them on sale early and I show below a pair with a Harold's Cross, Dublin postmark for 7 November. He tells me that the office actually put them on sale on 1 November so there may be other examples to be found, perhaps in kiloware?



The Armistice stamps used a day early

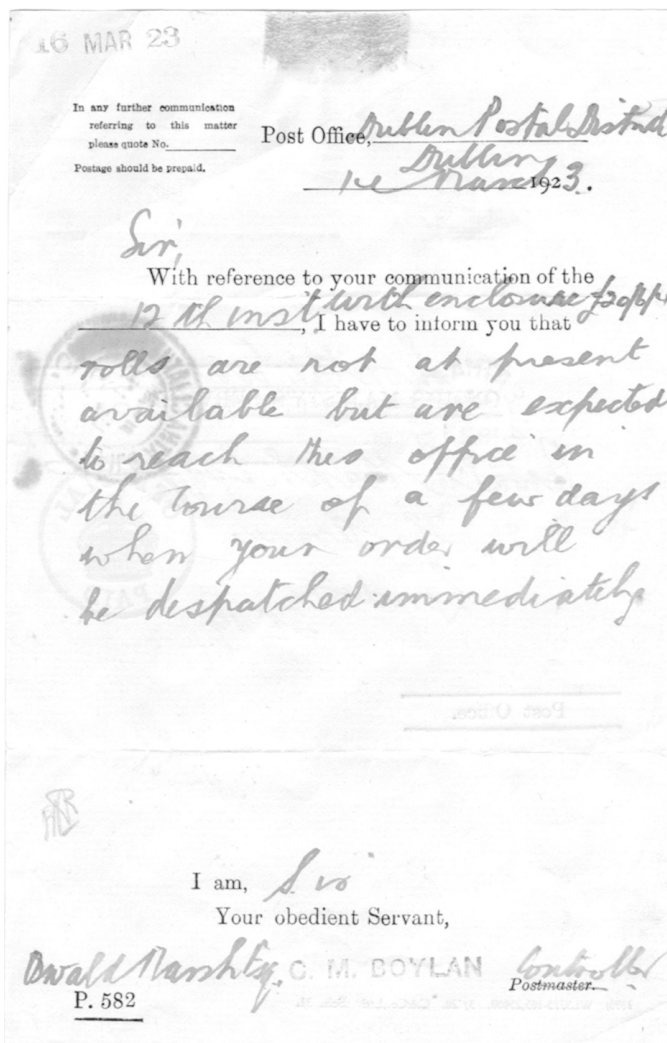
POTENTIALLY A NEW 'FLAW' on the 1929 O'CONNELL 2d

Alongside is a vertical pair of the 2d of the 1929 O'Connell issue – Ireland's first commemoration stamp. The upper stamp shows what David describes as a curious (and unchronicled) variety. It shows as a distinct extra spot on the Forehead of O'Connell. Happily, it is in pair with the stamp on top showing the 'Pen Behind Ear' of Row 4 Stamp 12. Thus, the extra spot must be Row 5 Stamp 12. It may be an inking variety, which may have lasted for a small part of the printing only. Can anyone find another example to confirm, or otherwise, having the "Pen" variety in a vertical pair.

SAORSTÁT COILS SUPPLIES

The letter reproduced on the following page, signed by the Controller of Dublin Postal District, advises English stamp dealer Oswald Marsh on 14 March 1923 that 'I have to inform you that rolls are not at present available but are expected to reach this office in the course of a few days'. This would appear to be as a result of an order from Marsh for a supply of the newly overprinted (3 line) Harrison coils. As the date of issue given in successive philatelic literature for the first issue of these coils is 7 March 1923, it does appear that it is possible that regular commercial users of rolls were supplied before the philatelic world? The fact that Marsh had sent some £20 (perhaps £1,000 today) indicates the volume of these stamps which were needed by the trade at that time. Thank you for this one, David!





The Controller's letter dated 16 March 1923



MIDDAY MAIL – three varieties !

MIDDAY MAIL – VARIETIES of the Handstamp

Another snippet from David shows three varieties of the MIDDAY MAIL handstamp used in connection with the Cork Day Mail. The three marks shown at top right show, first, a stop between 'Day' and 'Mail' at 'floor' level, second the stop is not raised and finally without any stop. The marks themselves are not particularly uncommon and are known used between 1816 and 1841.

MORE FORGERIES ON THE NET

Forgeries continue to find their way onto the internet and to eBay in particular. At the risk of repeating myself, I am sure that no Member is so gullible as to be fooled by the items shown opposite. The postmarks are just too good! Equally dangerous and more likely to catch one is a 'wrong' stamp on a postal history cover. All too often, the stamp, generally a 1d red, has been removed, only to be replaced many years later by a 'wrongie'. The number on the postmark should warn you. Always check the postmarks on the back to ensure they all fit.



POSTAGE DUE MARKINGS FROM CARLOW

Cuir aon fhreagra chuig :-
Address any reply to:-

AN MAISTIR POIST
The Postmaster
Do Thagairt }
Your Reference }
Ar dTagairt }
Our Reference }

Ní mór an postas do réamhfoc
Postage must be prepaid

AN ROINN POIST AGUS TELEGRAFA
Department of Posts and Telegraphs

OIFIG AN PHOIST
Post Office

.....19.....

1^d 2^d 3^d 4^d 5^d 6^d
TO PAY TO PAY TO PAY TO PAY TO PAY TO PAY

97

8^d 10^d TO PAY INITIALS
TO PAY TO PAY INITIALS

1/- TO PAY INITIALS

TO PAY

Surcharging Datestamps withdrawn from use on
the change-over from £.S.d. currency to Decimal
currency which took place on February 15, 1971

Meanwhile, member Michael Noonan has sent me a scan of the 'surcharging datestamps' in use at Carlow head office which were withdrawn on decimalisation in 1971. Datestamps they are not, for they never had any 'date'. However I do suggest the first three all date from c1905, the one with the '97' office number was probably issued c1920, the others dating from the 1950s and 60s and the final ...D To Pay is probably c1925. Does any member have examples of these Carlow markings in use? Sadly, they are all no more.

A FRENCH POST BOX IN KILKEE

Finally to complete this selection of oddments, I am grateful to Michael Hartnett who found this French Post Box in Kilkee, Co Clare last summer. It transpires that Kilkee is twinned with the small town of Plouhinec in Brittany but I must ask if Kilkee sent a box to France – and more to the point was it a nice old 'VR' box - I am prepared to bet and indeed hope that it was not!



THE MYSTERY OF T.O.3

Editor



Fig 1 – to Cambridge Massachusetts in August 1868



Fig 2 – the T.O.3 mark on the reverse

A recent acquisition of an unstamped cover addressed to Cambridge, Massachusetts with an English type oval 'killer' (ie: non duplex) postmark on the reverse reading T.O.3 (fig 2) set me searching to find out more.

Thanks to an article written by the late R M Willcocks in the Q3 1989 edition of *Postal History*, the *Journal of the Postal History Society (UK)*, I found out a lot more.

In addition to the T.O.3 mark Willcocks states that a T.O.5 mark also exists and was used on a Queenstown related item on 5 April 1868 (a Friday). But first let me try and summarise what is known about the T.O.3 mark before looking for further trouble.

The T.O.3 mark is first referred to in the September 1956 issue of *Postal History* on a cover addressed to Rhode Island. Thanks to the late Des Norton, I am able to illustrate this on our front cover. It suggests that the T.O.3 mark was used at Queenstown and the cover was posted on 2 August 1868, a Sunday, to be sent by 'Cunard Steamer' (endorsement top left). There is nothing on the reverse (I call this cover 1).

Cover 2 is also referred to in the Willcocks article. Stamped with a 1d red, there is likewise a Queenstown datestamp adjacent to the T.O.3 mark. The cover contains the letter, which is headed 'off Queenstown Sunday 20 September 1868'. It is

addressed to Sheffield and it would appear that the sender had left Liverpool the previous evening en route for America.

Cover 3 also in the late Des Norton's collection is also referred to by Willcocks. This is from an Officer on HMS Nimble and is addressed to Dublin. There is a Dublin receivers's mark on the reverse for 13 December 1867 (a Friday). I have not been able to ascertain the whereabouts of HMS Nimble during the last months of 1867. Willcocks suggests the Far East, noting that mail from HM ships in the Far East was offloaded at Southampton. That would imply that in December 1867 T.O.3 was at Southampton. The cover is stamped 1/-, the Hong Kong rate at the time, a rate which also applied to various locations in Central and South America, Ascension and St Helena. Thus there is no certainty. That there is no Queenstown datestamp may suggest it did not come ashore at that port but what was the procedure at Southampton? Equally, could have come arrived at Plymouth or another naval port.

Now to my cover (cover 4). It is earlier than any of the three above having a Queenstown postmark for 9 August 1867 (a Friday). The item was posted unpaid and charged 33 cents in depreciated currency on arrival in the US but that was a normal procedure for the time. Code 'A' in the datestamp suggests early morning/ before noon, possibly suggesting it was put onto the overnight mail train (which ran only as far as Cork at this time).

Willcock's article goes on to give details of the sorting arrangements on the Dublin to Cork TPO and the Cunard contract which was renegotiated in 1867-8.

Continued on page *****

THE STORY OF NEWRY POST OFFICE by Seán McKevitt

a review by Ian Enlander

A short note from our editor in IP March 2015 (p.20) regarding the above recently caught my eye. Having recently obtained a copy of the book, I thought a brief review would be of interest to members.

This is a most enjoyable read combining a history of the postal services of Britain and Ireland and a history of Newry. Interwoven with these wider themes is the story of the Newry Post Office, making a fascinating tale. The book is the product of detailed research undertaken by Seán McKevitt. Working as a postman in Newry his interest and pleasure in his work and the wider post office story comes through strongly. Apparently the book sat as a draft script when Seán unfortunately passed away. His wife approached Michael McKeown, a well-known local historian, to see if there would be any interest in publishing it. The final editing, design and excellent selection of illustrations was Michael's responsibility for which he is to be congratulated.

While the book provides a wealth of information on matters directly relating to the post office and its workings, it is the human stories that add so much to the books appeal – stories of the coach service and the people behind it, indulgence in intoxicating liquors and resultant punishments, the use of coach, railway, bicycle and eventually motorised transport to get the mail through. A comprehensive record of the names and rates of pay of everyone from letter carriers and clerks to postmasters are all documented. Indeed the book highlights a potentially important resource for others to be aware of – the Newry Post Office Historical Society.

Continuing into the more recent period, details are provided of the operation of the post office and mail delivery services through the difficult years of the Troubles. Post Offices in the Newry area (and of course elsewhere in Northern Ireland) were targeted as comparatively easy places to rob as were postmen on their rounds. Indeed a number of post office staff in the Newry area were attacked and some murdered.

Sean certainly seems to have been a man who loved his job. His meticulous account of the Newry Post Office during his working life highlights every aspect of his work, detailing his colleagues and shared social activities many of which were closely linked to the post office.

It is a pity that there was no engagement with postal historians (as we would understand the term) to enlarge on and explain more comprehensively the development of the postal system and provide an overview of postal markings of the Newry area. Notwithstanding this, the book is a very useful addition to the story of the Post Office in Ireland.

To obtain a copy contact Michael McKeown at michael.mckeown@me.com
Book priced at £15 and £5 p&p

T.O.3 - continued from page 19

There is much more information in Willcock's article which I will not repeat. However, importantly, he suggests the T.O. stood for Travelling Officer and therein, I think is the key.

The Travelling Officer appears to have carried his mark with him and his function was just as his name implies. Whether or not he was an inspector or a problem solver can only be conjectured. T.O.3 was at Queenstown in August 1867, possibly at Southampton in December 1867 but at Queenstown again in August and September 1868. Meanwhile his colleague T.O.5 was there in April. But why was our man applying his mark to covers that had apparently been posted aboard. Willcocks suggests T.O.3 was actually on the TPO. Did he accompany the mail from Cork, where the TPO finished to Queenstown and did he apply his postmark to any letters handed to him?

Wilson in his book on Travelling Post Offices gives details of the Cork TPO for which no postmark, per se, is recorded before 1877 so use on the TPO is plausible. It would explain covers 1 (shown on the front cover) and 4 being handed to the TPO staff enroute but why was a Queenstown datestamp added? Perhaps the 'America' bags on the TPO had been closed and the items had to be included in the 'local mail' bag added at Queenstown. But that explanation does not work for covers 2 and 3 !!

There is clearly more thought required and particularly more examples need to be found. Where was HMS Nimble for therein, I think, lies the possible answer. And what about T.O.5?

IRISH POSTAL RATES since 25th February 2019 Brian Warren

(Previous rates table was effective from 4th April 2018)

The now annual increase in postal rates came into effect on Monday 25th February 2019. The basic inland rate for the first weight step of 100g remains at €1.00 but the majority of all subsequent weight steps, registered and express services and all overseas rates increased by between 10% and 40%. After simplifying the system some years ago, the registration and express rates have become more complicated with separate rates in certain categories for large letters and packets. In addition, some GB registration and express rates are cheaper than the equivalent European rate. Rates outlined in yellow in the tables below were either unchanged or were reduced.

Ireland (including Northern Ireland)

Weight not over	Letter / Postcard	Large Envelope	Packet
100g	€1.00	€2.00	€3.80
250g		€2.50	€4.80
500g		€3.40	€6.20
1kg			€9.00
2kg (max)			€9.00

A reduced rate applies to meter mail – The reductions of 5c (letters, postcards and large envelopes) and 10c (packets) applies for all weight steps i.e. the same reduction irrespective of the weight of each item. These reductions remain unchanged from last year.

Europe (including Great Britain)

Weight not over	Letter/ Postcard	Large Envelope	Packet - GB	Packet - Rest of Europe
100g	€1.70	€2.90	€5.50	€6.00
250g		€4.50	€6.50	€7.00
500g		€5.70	€7.50	€8.00
1kg			€11.00	€11.50
2 kg (max)			€14.00	€14.00

Rest of the World

Weight not over	Letter/ Postcard	Large Envelope	Packet
100g	€1.70	€2.90	€7.00
250g		€4.50	€8.00
500g		€5.70	€9.00
1kg			€15.50
2kg (max)			€22.50

REGISTRATION AND EXPRESS RATES

Registration			Express		
Weight not over	Ireland	All Other Countries	Ireland	Europe (incl. GB) (see list below)	Australia, Canada, New Zealand & USA
100g	€8.00 (letters) €8.20 (large letters and packets)	€8.70 (letters); €9.90 (large envelopes) €12.50 (packets GB); €13.00 (packets Rest of Europe); €14.00 (packets - Rest of the World)	€10.00	€13.50 (GB) €14.00 (Rest of Europe)	€15.00

REGISTRATION AND EXPRESS RATES (continued)

Weight not over	Ireland	Europe (incl. GB)		Rest of the World		Ireland	Europe (incl. GB) (see list below)	Australia, Canada, New Zealand & USA
		Large Letters	Packets	Large Letters	Packets	All Categories		
250g	€8.20 (packets €8.30)	€11.35	€13.50 (GB) €14.00 (R of E)	€11.35	€15.00	€10.00	€14.50 (GB) €15.00 (R of E)	€16.00
500g	€8.30 (packets €8.40)	€12.70	€14.50 (GB) €15.00 (R of E)	€12.70	€16.00	€10.00	€15.50 (GB) €16.00 (R of E)	€17.00
1kg	€13.00		€18.00 (GB) €18.50 (R of E)		€22.50	€14.00	€19.00 (GB) €19.50 (R of E)	€23.50
2kg (max)	€13.00		€21.00 (GB) €21.50 (R of E)		€29.50	€14.00	€22.00 €22.50 (R of E)	€30.50

Registration Fees – Ireland (including N. Ireland): The fees payable are inclusive of postage and cover compensation up to a maximum of €320. Additional compensation up to €1,500 or €2,000 is available for an additional fee of €4.50 or €5.50 respectively (unchanged) but to Republic of Ireland addresses only. €320 is the maximum limit for Northern Ireland. You can track and trace the item and view the recipient's signature on line.

Registration Fees - All Other Countries (including Great Britain): The compensation limit for Great Britain is €320, for Europe €150 and for all other countries €35. These limits are unchanged. You can track and trace items up to dispatch from Ireland. In practice, I have found that items posted to the UK and numerous other countries can also be fully tracked on line. A copy of the recipient's signature can also be obtained on request from An Post Customer Services (It can then be viewed on line as per Express mail – see below). Despite massive increases in registration fees in recent years, the compensation levels remain unchanged.

Express - Ireland: The fee applies to all Irish destinations (including N. Ireland). Next working day delivery is guaranteed to Republic of Ireland addresses. A signature and insurance option is available for an additional €2.00 (unchanged) which gives compensation up to a maximum of €350 (i.e. greater than the basic compensation maximum for the inland registration service). This additional insurance option is only available in respect of mail to Republic of Ireland addresses. All items can be tracked via An Post's website and, if the additional €2 fee has been paid, you can also view the recipient's signature on line for up to a month after delivery.

Dublin Area: A same day service is also available within the Dublin area for €9.50, again unchanged (Max. 2kg). The letter/packet must be posted (times of posting vary) at one of 42 (down 1) designated post offices in the Dublin area. This service has been in operation since 2014. Note no postage stamp is affixed to the item only a special label.

Express Service – Europe and Rest of World: This service is only available to Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France (incl. Corsica and Monaco), Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and USA (unchanged). No signature or insurance option is available outside Ireland but the Track and Trace system also operates to these destinations. The minimum envelope size acceptable for items destined for the USA is C5. A complimentary Easi Pak is available at post offices counters if the item is destined for the USA and is smaller than C5 in size.

Maximum dimensions of a Letter / Postcard (Unchanged): 235mm x 162mm x 5mm thickness (i.e. C5 size). (Also known as "POP" or Post Office Preferred Size). Above 100grms, the large envelope or packet rate applies for all destinations.

Maximum dimensions of a Large Envelope (Unchanged): 400mm x 300mm x 25mm thickness (i.e. C4 size). (Also known as a "Flat"). Above 500grms, the packet rate applies for all destinations.

Dimensions of a Packet (Unchanged): Maximum dimensions are a combined length, width and depth of 900mm. No dimension can exceed 600mm.

THE IRISH ABROAD - PART 19

Brian Warren

USA (continued)



fig.1

The 1994 World Cup Football Finals were held in the United States. Three stamps and a miniature sheet were released to mark the event. The miniature sheet (*fig. 1*) bears the names of all the participating countries including Ireland. The Irish team famously beat Italy 1-0 at the group stage but were subsequently knocked out by Netherlands 2-0 in the round of 16.



fig.2

In 1994 a sheet of twenty stamps (each 29c) was released on the theme "*Legends of the West*". One of the stamps bears a portrait of Nellie Cashman (b. Middleton 1845). She became noted across the American West and in Western Canada as a nurse, businesswoman and gold prospector. She and her sister were brought as young children by their mother to the USA in 1850 (*fig. 2*).



fig.3

She died in 1925 and was interred at Ross Bay cemetery in Victoria, British Columbia. A

monument to her was erected in Midleton in 2014 (*fig. 3*).



fig.4

In 1999, the third joint USA-Ireland issue was on the subject of Irish immigration/emigration (*fig. 4*).



fig.5

The American stamp was inscribed "Irish Immigration" and is slightly smaller format (40mm x 25mm) when compared with the equivalent Irish stamp (*fig. 5*). The U.S. stamp was printed on phosphorised paper.



fig. 6

The stamp was issued in sheetlets of 20 stamps (5 rows of 4 stamps) and there are plate numbers in all four corners but no top margin inscription as on the Irish sheetlets. Nine sheetlets make-up the master sheet as shown by way of a diagram in the bottom margin (*fig. 6*) which indicates the position

each issued sheetlet was within the master sheet.

A joint Irish first day cover with both stamps was available. The U.S. stamp was cancelled with a Boston "First Day of Issue" postmark. A ceremony to launch the stamps was held in Cobh and in Boston and, as a result, the Irish pictorial first day cancel was also available in Cobh for this issue.



fig. 7

I illustrate the one of the inside pages of the U.S. Postal Service Commemorative Ceremony Pack with Cobh and Boston cancelations (fig. 7). The plain joint first day cover sold by the U.S. philatelic bureau incorporated the Cobh cancellation.



fig.8

In 1997 a set of 5 x 32c stamps was issued on the theme of "Movie Monsters". One of the stamps features Bela Lugosi as Dracula (fig. 8). As previously mentioned in my articles relating to GB issues, the original Dracula

book was written by Dublin born Bram Stoker.

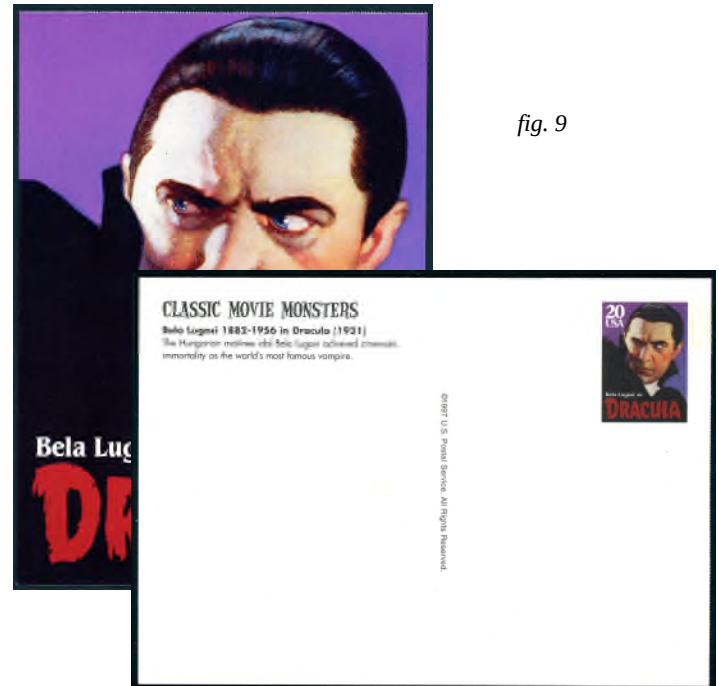


fig. 9

The U.S. Postal Service also issued a post card set with printed 20c stamps which reproduced each of the stamp designs (fig. 9).



fig 10

Finally in 2000, a five set booklet issue marked the centenary of the United States Navy Submarine Fleet. The 60c stamp (fig. 10) illustrated the USS Holland I of 1900. This issue was only available as a booklet stamp.

As far as I can recall, there have been no stamps with an Irish connection issued since 2000 but maybe one of our US based members may prove me wrong.

In the next article I will now turn to the small number of stamps issued by Canada which have an Irish connection.