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The Post Offices and Handstamps

of

MONAGHAN

by

Brian de Burca

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THE POST OFFICES and HANDSTAMPS of MONAGHAN

by Brian de Burca

First published in 1965-1966 in the E.P.A. "Revealer", to whom acknowledgement is given, the article has since been amended after further information was obtained from another visit to Ireland.



These Notes on the Post Offices in Co. Monaghan were prepared during holidays in Ireland, and details of the early Date Stamps were supplied through the kindness of Mr. F. E. Dixon. The holidays were very happy and I will try to convey some of the enjoyment and interest by recounting events - not always pertinent to the postal story!

Not all the Post Offices were visited, partly through lack of time, more often because of the difficulty in locating them. However, a complete listing is given. A large scale Survey Map is essential in finding one's way around, but even that has limitations as all Post Offices are not marked on it and, in addition, the roads are not always provided with sign posts.

The one impression that remains with me of these holidays in Ireland was the kindness and co-operation which I received almost everywhere. I do hope I have not offended anyone and that this article and these Notes will be the beginning of the modern story of The Irish Post Offices.

I regret the indignation which I stirred up in the deep bosom of the Post Mistress at Ballybay! Perhaps, in time, she will forgive me.

Some time ago I read in the "Irish Times" a statement by a Post Office official that the Irish Post Office was sixty years behind the times in management. Be that as it may, it is certainly far in advance of the English Post Offices in its kindness to a visitor who, in his enthusiasm for postal markings, must have broken many, many Irish P.O. Rules and Regulations! I do not know of any other Country, apart from Holland, where one would receive such a welcome.

The inland county of Monaghan is situated in the Province of Ulster. The administrative centre and county Town is also named Monaghan and stands in an agricultural district.

The postal administration of Co. Monaghan is under three centres:

1. Monaghan, in the north.
2. Clones, in the south west, and
3. Dundalk, eastwards, in the county of Louth.

Mr. N. McKenna is the Post Master at Monaghan (1965-1966) and to him I am indebted for his unfailing help and co-operation, for without it much of the information just could not have been recorded.

The Post Offices are listed alphabetically, in English with their Gaelic spelling. The dates which are given are those which are known to us but do not necessarily cover the limits of their use.

There are two main types of Handstamps in use at the present time :-

1. Those with double rings, of which there are three sub-types, and
2. Those with single rings, and four sub-types.

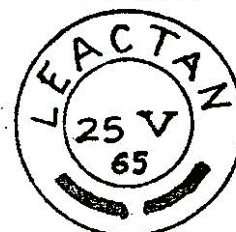
Some information has been given on the earlier types and, from these, it will be seen that the Double Ring type was the earliest type of the metal handstamps.

Type in use at Post Offices

- A. Clones, 1938 - 1948
 Latton
 Monaghan, 1926-1929
 and later with a "2" between the two bars
 Rockcorry
 Clones and Monaghan
 had three bar types between the years 1930 and 1934

Double Rings

Type 'A'



- B. Ballinode
 Ballybay, 1939
 Castleblayney
 Castleshane
 Clones, from 1948
 Clontibret
 Emyvale, 1929 to 1934

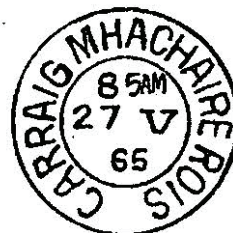
Type 'B'



- C. Carrickmacross, from 1938

Type 'C'

- With county added
 Ballybay, 1930 to 1931
 Newbliss
 Scotstown, 1934 to 1960
 Smithborough
 Tydavnet



The P.O's & Handstamps of Monaghan (cont'd)

Page 3

Single Rings

Type in Use at Post Offices

D. Aghabog:

Bradox; Brandrum; Broomfield.
Carrickmacross; also with bar divided
and "i" inserted.
Coolderry; Cortubber.
Doobat; Drum; Dunraymond.
Claslough; Greenan's Cross Roads
(closed Feb. 6, 1965)
Killybron; Larah; Lisnalong.
Mullan; Selloo; Stranoden
Swan's Cross Roads; Three Mile House.

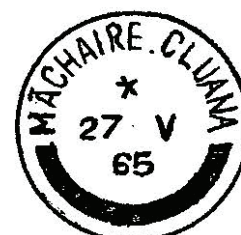
Type 'D'



E. Analore; Anyalla; Aughnamullen

Ballymackney; Carrickroe;
Castleblayney; Creighanroe;
Donaghmoyne; Doohamlet; Drumacrib;
Drumully; Emyvale (1965);
Knocknatallon; Latnamard;
Loughmourne; Magheraclone;
Monaghan - 1; Scotshouse;
Shantonagh (from 1953); Silverstream;
Stonebridge; Tullynahinera.

Type 'E'



F. Baile Leargan (Castleblayney)

See later notes under this Town.
Drumakill;
Inniskeen;
Scotstown (from 1961)

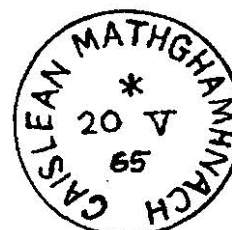
Type 'F'



G. Ballybay

Castleblayney
Clones, Co. Monaghan
Monaghan (short bar); this type is not used
on postal packets in Co. Monaghan.

Type 'G'



Various Types of Date Stamps - illustrations with acknowledgement
to the E.P.A. "Revealer"
dated Jan.-March 1966.

English Metal Types

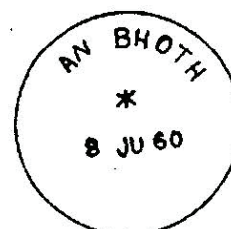
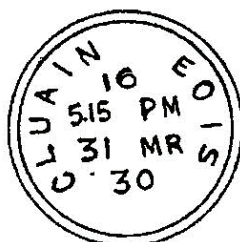
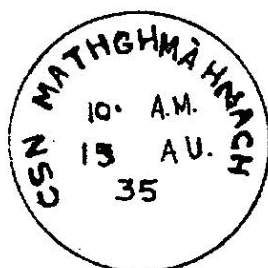
Adapted from
English type



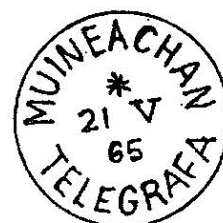
Rubber Date Stamps



Skeletons



The Three types of Telegraph Date Stamps



AGHABOG, Achadh Bog

On the road from Clones to Ballybay, in a side turning past Newbliss. A 'Family Grocer', the Post Master is Mr. Brian Nolan. Rubber date stamp Achadh Bog, Cluain Eois (Clones), Co. Mhuineachain, 29 June to 31. Oct. 1929, and in purple with Cluain Eois omitted 11 Aug. 1949 to 20. Sept. 1951. Metal date stamp type D, 1964.

ANALORE, Atha an Lobhair

Spelt Anlore by the Survey Map, and Annalore in "Eolai an Phoist" (the Irish P.O. Guide). On a side road south of the Clones-Newbliss road. Mail is collected by van from Clones. A charming and helpful Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. E. Lee. Metal date stamp type E, 1965.

ANYALLA, Eanaigh Gheala

On the road from Cattleblayney to Monaghan. A corrugated iron building, housing a small store, the Sub Post Master is a genial character, Mr. John Duffy, whom I feel sure is over 70 years. Distorted Rubber date stamp Eanaigh Gheala, Co. Mhuineachain for 27 July 1943. Metal date stamp type E, 1963.

AUGHNAMUILEANN, Achadh na Muileann

On a side road south west of Ballybay. I was unable to find this Post Office. Metal date stamp type E, for 1965.

BALLINODE, Beal atha an Fhoid

Between Monaghan and Scotstown. A petrol station, store and Post Office; the Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. McElvaney was the only difficult one encountered in Co. Monaghan. Was told off, strictly according to Regulations, and told to place my post card in the letter box. This made me reflect on the four types of women whom I had met in charge of Post Offices: the very young - willing and helpful; 30 to 40 years - unapproachable; 55 - 70 - Charming, helpful and generous; over 70 years - suspicious and a careful approach is necessary. An English Metal single ring date stamp to 4. Nov. 1931. Metal date stamp type B, 1964, somewhat worn and apparently in use for some years.

BALLYBAY, Beale atha Beithe

A busy market town. There is a new Sub Post Mistress, Miss Carragher who proved most unco-operative: I fled in front of a flaying tongue! Metal date stamp type B, 1939 - 1966. Type C, with county, 1930-1931. There is also a type G, of which I managed to get a copy from the Assistant, before Miss Carragher's wrath descended upon us!

BALYMACKNEY, Baile MacNaidhe

Some two miles from Carrickmacross, on the south Dundalk road. It lies on the first turning to the right on this road, while the village is some distance away on the left. The Sub Post Mistress, an elderly Miss Kate Rush, admitted me after closing hours. English Rubber date stamp Ballymackney, Dundalk, June 1929; and, a Metal date stamp type E, 1966.

BRADOX, Braghdogga (Badoga over the P.O.)

One finds many examples of this difference: the Gaelic spelling is found on the Post Office and the frightful modern spelling is in the "Eolai an Phoist".

Best approach is from the Monaghan-Clones road, a small store and Post Office lies in a side turning and is difficult to find. The Sub Post Master, Mr. J. Knox, was most helpful and kind. The mail is collected from Castleshane by cycle.

Gaelic Rubber date stamp, Dec. 1939. Metal date stamp type D, 1965.

BRANDRUM, Breandruim

On a side turning, about three miles from Monaghan on the Clones road. Not found on any map. There is a vicious looking Alsatian dog there. who almost drove me off. The Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. A. Woods, told me that the dog knew all the regulars and ignored them.

Metal date stamp type D, 1965.

BROOMFIELD, Taplah

On a side road off the Castleblayney-Carrickmacross road. A farm house, and the Sub Post Master, Mr. A. Finnegan, has been here for 17 years. There was no name plate on the Post Office.

Mr. Finnegan introduced me to a straight line rubber hand stamp - Castleblayney - which he used on telephone bills; he told me that this was due to be replaced by a - Broomfield - hand stamp. This was my first introduction to this type, and in all subsequent visits to Post Offices with a telephone exchange I asked for a copy. This paid dividends when I found an old 1840 type Brass hand stamp in use in Canningstown, Co. Cavan. Metal date stamp type D, in use 1964.

CARRICKMACROSS, Carraign Mhachaire Rois

My favourite town with a first class hotel and a friendly hostess who introduced me widely. There is a wonderful collection of old metal hand stamps at the Post Office, going back to 1840, and the Post Master kindly gave me copies of ALL of them! The generous help the hospitality and presents received in this town was at times embarrassing. English single ring type, 1922-1924; English double ring type, 1927-1935. Double ring type C, 1928 to date. There are two office types D, but one has a "1" at the base with two thin side bars. There is also the usual parcel type found in the large post offices.

CARRICKROE, Carraig Ruadh

First turn to the left past Emyvale; about two miles along this road look for a church in a side lane, and the Post Office will be found beside it. A small shop and the Sub Post Master, Mr. John Treanor, is at least 65 years.

Gaelic Rubber date stamp 1931-1932. Metal date stamp type E, 1965.

CASTLEBLAYNEY, Caislean Matghamnac (See also pp. 17 - 19)

The Post Master, Mr. Coyle, was most helpful and provided copies of many old office stamps going back to about 1894. There was a very worn and almost indistinct "111". Single ring metal English type, 1922-1925. Double ring metal "CSN MATGAMNAC, CO. MUINEACHAIN". 1928-1930. Large single ring skeleton, 15. Aug. to 30. Oct. 1935. Double ring date stamp type C, but with a very short bar "CAISLEAN MATHGHAMHNACH", 1942-1959.

This town has three Gaelic names. The following explanation was received from the Secretary, GPO, Dublin.

"For several years Monaghan County Council was at variance with Castleblayney Urban District Council regarding the name of the town in Irish, the former adhering to Caislean Mathghamnach and the latter to Baile Leargan. This Department accepted the title used by the Monaghan County Council until 1960, when Baile an Lorgan was supplied by the Irish Place Names Commission. In 1962 we reverted to Caislean Mathghamnach as the matter was still in dispute."

After reverting to Caislean Mathghamnach, three new date stamps were provided: (1) type G, for mail, (2) type F, for the sorting office, and (3) type E with a terminal 'T' added for telegrams.

It was interesting to note that most of the road signs had the Baile Leargan version, while the Monaghan County Council have placed one large plate outside the town with their favoured name.

CASTLESHANE, Caislean tSeagain

In a general store, the postal counter is behind grills and the postal customers apparently get preference in service. The Sub Post Master is Mr. McCarville, aged about 35 years. There is an English type of enamelled notice outside the Post Office reading: "Post Office for Money Orders, Savings Bank, Parcel Post, Telegraph Insurance, Annuity, and Express Delivery Service". Metal stamp type B, in use probably for several years.

CLONES, Cluain Eois

The P.O. was in a stone built, impressive building. Copies of some old hand stamps were obtained. A double ring CLUAN EOIS with a broad bar below, 2. Sept. 1922. A similar type but with two side bars, and a Maltese Cross between them, 1927-1929. This looks like a recut English type. Single and double skeletons, 20. May 1929 to 12. April 1930. Double ring type with three bars, 1930-1933. Small double ring skeleton, Dec. 1935. Metal date stamp type A, 18. Jan. 1938 to 1. Nov. 1948; type B, Dec. 1948-1965. Both types A and B as used here had time plugs. There is also an office stamp, Type G and a special "CLUIN EOIS TELEGRAFA" date stamp with five-pointed star.

Castleblayney and Monaghan are the only other offices with the special telegraph date stamps. There are the usual Parcel Post date stamp, and a "Delay caused by use of incorrect address" in two straight lines enclosed in a box.

CLONTIBRET, Cluain Tiobrid

On the road from Castleblayney to Monaghan. An elderly Post Master Mr. Tom Latham, told me that he had had the present date stamp type B since 1935. In that year, the Post Master arrived from Monaghan on inspection duty and Mr. Latham asked for a new date stamp as the old one was worn out. He was told that the old one was satisfactory. Mr. Latham then asked the P.M. to have a try, and, failing to get a good impression, he agreed to a replacement. It appears that economy was one reason for the retention of some of the old English date stamps for so long.

There is also a straight line rubber hand stamp "CLONTIBRET" for telegrams. The present date stamp does not give a very clear impression due to erosion of the metal, rather than fair wear. The erosion may be due to leaving the date stamp on the wet pad when not in use, as I have seen similar date stamps in good condition after 40 years of use. This type of eroded date stamp may be seen in many post offices, even after five years of use.

COOLDERRY, Cúl Doire

Spent an afternoon looking for this Post Office in Coolderry and, next afternoon, found it off the Kingscourt road in the parish of Fehace. The Post Office is located in a cottage and I met the Post Master, Mr. Sidney Babington, who looked about 70 years, sitting in a very old 'Hillman Minx' motor car. He told me that he must have done 200,000 miles in it, and that it had never groaned or moaned at him. He agreed that he could not say the same about his wife! His father also had this P.O. Of English descent, his father got the P.O. when serving with the Brownlows, local English estate owners.

Rubber date stamp "CUL-DOIRE", Carraig Machaire Rois", June 1929. A similar type "Cul Doire, Co. Mhuineachain". 6. Jan. 1932. The Post Master told me that the last rubber date stamp had been repaired with sealing wax and string before replacement. Metal date stamp type D, 1960 approximately.

CORTUBBER, Cor Tobair

I was unable to locate this Post Office, which lies somewhere to the west of Shantonagh. Rubber Gaelic date stamps, Jan. 1935 to Oct. 1949. A copy of date stamp type D, at present in use, was provided by the Post Master, Monaghan.

CREIGHANROE, Critean Road

Some two miles north of Castleblayney on the road to Armagh. A Petrol station, general store and Post Office, the Post Master Mr. Gabriel Moore. Rubber date stamp, Dec. 1929. Metal date stamp type E, 1965.

DERRYGORRY, Doire Ghofraidh

On the frontier above Ennyvale. Rubber date stamp, 28. Nov. 1930. This Post Office was closed in 1932.

DONAGHMOYNE, Domhnach Mhaighn

Some three miles from Carrickmacross, approachable either from the Castleblayney or Donaghmoyne roads. It is some distance up a side road and the Sub Post Master is a wonderful old pipe-smoking character whom I will long remember. As usual, he was camera shy.

At least three different rubber date stamps were used between 1929 and 1940. Metal date stamp type E, from 1960 approximately.

DOOHAMLET, Dubhthamhaacht

Spelt without the four "h's" above the Post Office, as of course it should be. It is located half way between Castleblayney and Ballybay. The Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. A.R. Sherry, was Victorian in charm and kindness. English single circle date stamp, March 1930 to 17 May. 1943. Metal date stamp type E, 1965.

DOOHAT, Dubhait

It lies south of Newbliss. The P.O. is in a small shop managed by an elderly Sub Post Master, Mr. Thomas Hall. The Post Office Name Board had been taken down for repainting, but the Post Master held it up in front of the P.O. to allow me to take a photograph. This was one of the few photographs which I managed to obtain of camera-shy post masters. The mail is collected by van from Monaghan. Rubber date stamp, July 1931 to Aug. 1949, replaced at least three times. Metal date stamp type D, 1965.

DRUM, Druim

On the road from Clones to Cootehill (Cavan). A small, clean, busy shop in a pretty village, the Sub Post Master, Mr. A.T. Stewart was over 70 and very charming. Rubber date stamp with at least three changes between 1929 and 1943. Metal type D, 1965.

DRUMACRIB, Druim an Chruibh

Some two miles from Castleblayney on the lower Armagh road. Located in a private house, without any Name Plate, the Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. Elizabeth O'Neill, told me that it had been removed one month ago for repainting, but that her husband had failed to collect it. She insisted on sweeping the forecourt of the Post Office, and moving inside, before allowing me to take a photograph. Metal date stamp type E, 1965.

DRUMMULLY, Druim Mullaigh

Near Clones, but failed to locate it.
Metal date stamp type E, provided by the Post Master, Monaghan.

DRUMAKILL, Druim na Coill

East of Castleblayney, but failed to locate it. Rubber date stamps 1933-1946. Metal date stamp type F, on a post card which was kindly returned to me by the Sub Post Master.

DUNRAYMOND, Dun Reamoinn

Somewhere north of Ballybay, but failed to locate it. Rubber date stamps 1930-1941, changed at least three times. Metal type D, 1965.

EMYVALE, Scairbh na gCaorach

On the main road north of Monaghan; a small village, and the Post Office is in a private house. Mr. F. Donohue, a relative of the Sub Post Mistress, could not have been more obliging. There is an enamel notice outside the P.O. as for Castleshane. Double ring type B with thick bar and time plug 4 P.M. from March 1929 to May 1931. Without the time plug, June 1934. Metal date stamp type E, 1965 and for at least five years before this date. Straight line rubber handstamp for telegrams.

ESSEXFORD

No Post Office, but a 'V.R.' wall box No. 11; mail is collected from Inniskeen.

GLASLOUGH, Baile Glaslocha

Shop in a row of stone houses. The Sub Post Master is Mr. Wilson and his Assistant, Miss G. Gillanders. English double ring metal date stamp "Glasslough, Monaghan" 1929 to 31 Oct. 1944. The correct spelling, I understand, is now GLASLOUGH (with one 's'). Metal date stamp type D, 3. May. 1955 to date.

GLENBROOK, Rusgoah

Near Newbliss. Rubber date stamp 12. Sept. 1930. The Post Office was closed some years ago.

GREENAN's CROSS ROADS, Cros na Ghrianian

West of Smithborough. Thanks are expressed to the Post Master, Monaghan and the Sub Post Mistress, Smithborough for copies of metal date stamp type D, 22. March 1961 to 6. Feb. 1965, on which day the Post Office was closed.

INNISKEEN, Inis Cacin Deaga

On the Co. Louth border. The P.O. is in a general store. Metal date stamp type F, 27. May 1964.

KILLBRONE, Coille Bron

Four and a half miles from Emывale. The Post Office was closed when I called on a Sunday, but was fortunate to meet Mr. McMeel who is succeeding his father as Sub Post Master. There is a seat outside the P.O. where one can sit and gossip. He told me that there had been a Post Office here for 40 years. Metal date stamp type F, 1965.

KNOCKTALLON, Cnoc an tSalainn

Some five miles north west of Scotstown, located in a private house. A charming Irish smile and a friendly greeting from the Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. A. Comusley. Metal date stamp type E, 1965.

LARAH, Latrach

A private house on a side road off the Carrickmacross to Ballybay road, below Lough Eglish. The present Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. Brigid Swinbourne, is a very pleasant woman and has been here since May 1965, succeeding a Mrs. McCabe. I was informed that there were 30 to 100 letters per date, most at the end of the month when bills were due. Mail is collected from Castleblayney. Rubber date stamps May 1929-1950. Metal date stamp type D, 1965.

LATTON, Lechtan

Spelt Leachtfhinn on the Post Office Name Plate. A general store, some five miles south of Ballybay. The Sub Post Master is Mr. McElroy, who is probably in his late twenties. There is an enamelled Notice Board outside the P.O. similar to that for Castleshane. Metal double ring type A, 1965.

LATNAMARD, Leacht na mBard

On turning to the left some two miles along the Newbliss to Ballybay road, but failed to find it. Metal date stamp type E, 1965 by courtesy of the Post Master, Monaghan. English rubber date stamp LATNAMARD, Newbliss, Co. Monaghan 1929-1934. Gaelic rubber date stamp, 1952.

LISNALONG, Lios na Long

South of Rockcorry, but failed to find it. Rubber date stamp 18. Sept. 1933. Metal date stamp type D, 1965 obtained through the kindness of the Post Master, Monaghan, who sent my post card twice to the Sub Post Office to try to obtain a clear date stamp.

LOUGHNOURNE, Loch Mughdhorna

A farm house with an enclosed yard, about 100 yards up a side lane, not far from the junction of the Ballybay-Carrickmacross and Castleblayney - Shantonagh roads. An elderly Mr. James Duffy told me that he had destroyed his date stamp record book a year back. Rubber date stamp 3. March 1933. Metal date stamp type E, 1965.

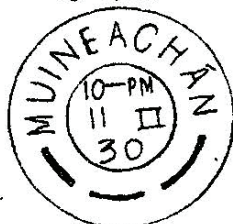
MAGHERACLOONE, Machaire Cluana

Five miles from Carrickmacross on the Kingscourt road, and opposite Coolderry Post Office, there is a road going off to the right which leads, after three miles, to Magheracloone Post Office. It lies at a T-junction and is attached to a farm house. The Sub Post Master is Mr. George Anderson, and when I called on a Thursday afternoon, the P.O. was closed. Wandering towards the farm, I found a grey-haired lady feeding chickens, who told me that she was Mrs. Susan Anderson. This kind lady informed me that the P.O. was never closed to Visitors! Where else in the World would one get such a reception? Mail is collected by cycle from Carrickmacross at 11.45a.m. and the Postman is due to return there by 3p.m. in time for the English mail. Rubber date stamps Nov. 1931-Dec. 1934. Metal date stamp type E, 1965.

MONAGHAN, Muineachan

Mr. McKenna, the Post Master, was very kind and helpful, not only regarding the date stamps here, but also of the Sub Post Offices. He also provided many maps. The Post Office was recently rebuilt, and all the old date stamps discarded without any record.

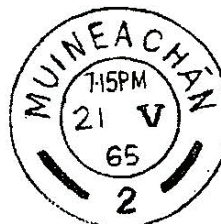
English date stamps were used until 1929; there was even a new English one issued about 1924, metal type A. I have also seen a small single ring English type used in May 1933.



Irish double ring with three bars below was in use from 20 Feb. 1930 to 31 Aug. 1934



Irish type A was in use from 16 Oct. 1934 to 29 Nov. 1946



A similar type A with a "2" between bars was used from date 23 Jan. 1939, until 1965-66, but the Post Master told me that it is now only used on packets, though it was used on correspondence to me.

A new type A was in use in 1949 with smaller bars and the letters more spread out.

At the present time there are now five date stamps in use.

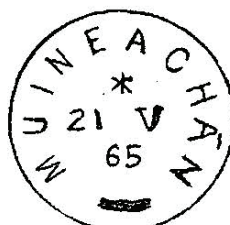
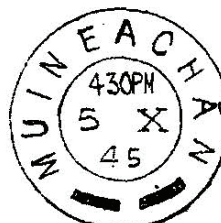
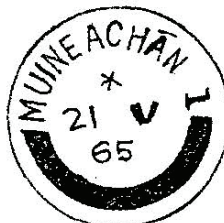
i. MUINEACHAN 1 type E, on the counter.

ii. MUINEACHAN-2- for packets

iii. MUINEACHAN CLARATHE type E for registration

iv. MUINEACHAN type G with a short bar for money orders

v. MUINEACHAN TELEGRAFA with an eight pointed star



There are also the usual double rectangular parcel stamps and an electric machine cancellation.

MULLAN, An Muileann

From Bnyvale one turns right and the Post Office lies near the Co. Tyrone border. A general store, dark and dirty. The Sub Post Mistress is an elderly woman, Catherine McKenna. Rubber date stamps, Nov. 1929 to January 1940, changed once. Metal date stamp type E, 1965 and it was impossible to get a clean impression from a dirty pad and date stamp.

NEWBLISS, Lios Darach

The Post Office is in the main street; the Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. M. McCabe, was extremely helpful and had an interesting selection of Post Cards. There is a telephone exchange with a straight line "Newbliss" hand stamp. English single circle date stamp from July 1928 to Oct. 1931. Double ring type C with county added and with time plug, 1. May. 1942 to 14. June 1954. No time plug for 1965.

ROCKCORRY, Buidhe Achair

Lies to the west of the Ballybay-Cootehill road. An attractive Post Office in a pleasant village with an equally pleasant Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. K. Conlon. Double ring date stamp type A, 1965, and probably issued in the 1930's.

SCOTSHOUSE, Achadh na nAbhla

It lies south of the Clones-Newbliss road. A dirty Sub Post Office in charge of a middle aged Mr. J. Donaghy. Rubber date stamp "ACHADH na nABHLA Co. MHUINECHAN", 7. May. 1931 to 19. Jan. 1935. Rubber date stamp "ACAD NA n_ABLA", 21. June 1929 to 28. April 1931.

SCOTSTOWN, An Bohoth (Place of Worship)

A pleasant village and the Sub Post Master, Mr. Harry Wright, is Secretary of the Union of Post Office Workers of Monaghan. A general store and Post Office. A small single circle English date stamp 1929. Double ring type C with county added, July 1934 to 1960. In this last year, the date stamp was stolen by two youths, one of whom distracted Mr. Wright's attention in the grocery department. Starting probably as a joke, it became more serious than they thought, and the date stamp was never recovered. The Police, and the Post Master at Monaghan confirmed the tale. Mr. Wright refused to discuss the matter. A skeleton date stamp was issued and my copy is dated 8. June 1960. A single ring date stamp type E was issued later in 1960, or 1961.

SELLOO, Sail Mhagh

Four and a half miles from Scotstown, near the Fermanagh border and along a pleasant "unapproved road", meaning, that it cannot be used to cross the border. A stream separates the Post Office, the only building here, from the road. The Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. Susan Flynn, stepped back in alarm when I asked for her autograph on my post card, asking "Am I on Candid Camera?" - a television programme in this area.

Rubber date stamp, 6 Nov. 1931, well worn. Metal single ring date stamp type D, 1965, and shows more signs of wear than has been seen in other metal date stamps.

SHANTONAGH, Sean tSonnach

A small village with a not too nice Post Office. The Sub Post Mistress is Mrs. Fox. Rubber date stamps "Sean tSonnac, Caislean Mat Gannac" 23 March 1929. "Sean tSonnach" Sept. 1930 to May 1931, and "Sean tSonnach Mhuinechan" July 1933 to May 1945 with two replacements. Metal single ring date stamp type E, from June 1953 to 1965.

SHERCOCK, Seacog (Sweetheart)

This town is in Co. Cavan and lies near the Monaghan border, but its postal address was Shercock, Carrickmacross until 1931. Got a wonderful reception from the Sub Post Master Mr. Wright, and a nice album of old post cards, after I assured him that I was not a Post Office official.

SILVERSTREAM, Carrach Finne

From Monaghan take the road to the Armagh border, and after two miles, look for a petrol station and shop on the right hand side of the road. The Sub Post Master is a very young Mr. J.J. McCourt. Rubber date stamp 1934 to Nov. 1944. Single ring type E, 1965.

SMITHBOROUGH, Mullagh, or, na Mulla

Situated mid-way on the Monaghan to Clones road. A Post Office only and the Sub Post Mistress, Una Ui Tuataill, was the only one I encountered who wrote her name in Gaelic. She proved most helpful in subsequent correspondence. Double ring date stamp type C with county added, 1965 and probably in use for many years.

STONEBRIDGE, Leacht Gaillain

It lies mid-way between Smithborough and Clones. The Sub Post Mistress, Mrs. K. McCluskey, was cheerful and helpful in spite of the handicap of nine children, a number which, it would be a safe guess to say, will be increased. Rubber date stamp Aug. 1942. Single ring date stamp type E, 1965.

STRANODEN, Strath an Fhodain

On the road from Swan's Cross Roads to Monaghan there is a small shop and Post Office at a cross roads. The Sub Post Mistress, a Mrs. Maguire, is young and cheerful with two charming small children. English single ring metal date stamp 26 Jan. 1929 to 12 Sept 1930. Single ring date stamp type D, 1965.

SWAN'S CROSS ROADS, Druim Mor Thoir

About half way between Newbliss and Ballybay. A general store and Post Office; the Sub Post Master is Mr. E. Sloan. Single ring date stamp type D, 1965.

THREE MILE HOUSE, Druim Guill

Four and a half miles south of Monaghan. I understood that the house was within three miles from Monaghan. It lies in the Parish of Druim Guill, and as happens elsewhere, when there is no village the Post Office is named after the Parish. A petrol station, general store and Post Office; the Sub Post Master is Mr. S. McEntee.

Rubber date stamp, 4 Dec. 1934. Single ring date stamp type D, 1965.

TULLYNAHINERA, Tulamh na nInneona

Above Lough Egish, off the Carrickmacross to Ballybay road. In a comparative modern store, I did not meet the Sub Post Mistress, but her Assistant, Miss B. Meegan, was most helpful. Single ring date stamp type E, 1965. This date stamp appeared to be used on all sorts of items in the shop, luggage tags etc. Which made me wonder if it received its morning test on these items? There is a straight line "Tullynahinera" for the telephone bills.

TYDAVNET, Teach Damhnata

To the north of Monaghan and west of the Emyvale road. The Sub Post Mistress is Mrs. K. McKenna, 74 years old. The Post Office was in a general store, but has recently moved to a separate office next door. The P.O. Name Plates are in English only, and this is the only Post Office which I have seen in which the main Name Plates are not in Gaelic. There is an enamelled notice outside the Post Office, similar to that at Castleshane. Rubber date stamp, Nov. 1928. Double ring date stamp type C, with the county added, 1965.

With acknowledgement to the POST OFFICE MAGAZINE, January 1957
and apology for replacing three 'British' words by the
appropriate 'Emerald' ones

THE SUB POSTMASTER

All up and down the Emerald Isle
Are funny little shops,
All tucked away in narrow streets
Where traffic seldom stops;
And in the little country lanes,
In cottages and farms
A room is used for selling things,
From salt, and sweets, to charms.

And some are lit with "lectric light,
And some are lit with lamps,
But all and every one of them
Sell Irish Postage stamps!
And all and every one of them
Are run by kindly folk,
Whose customers have times of woe
And problems that provoke.

They know not how to fill the forms
That overrun their lives;
They can't compose the telegram
That says "Grandma arrives";
They need advice on how to act
When Patrick gets a spot;
Measles? Or mumps? Thé doctor now?
Or wait? - In case it's not!

These Post Masters and Mistresses,
With all their dull routines;
Of all the Civil Services
THEY know what "civil" means!
These Post Masters and Mistresses
Nigh run the Emerald Isle;
They soothe, encourage, cheer, console,
And do it all with smiles!

This article, written by the Rev. P. Mac Doinnshleibhe, has been extracted from the "Clogher Record", which is compiled and published by the Clogher Historical Society, and was kindly provided by Mr. Martin McCabe the County Librarian Monaghan.

THE IRISH NAME OF CASTLEBLAYNEY

In the 1906 Louth Archaeological Journal, the late Charles Lavery set out to establish (1) that Ballylorgan was the old name of the present town of Castleblayney and (2) that a town existed here long before the Blayneys came to the district. Lavery based his theory on a letter to Sir John Davys, written in 1607. Davys mentions "Ballylorgan" a place half way between Monaghan and Newry where Blayney was to build a castle. We know that Blayney did build a castle in the modern town of Castleblayney and therefore Lavery argues logically that Castleblayney and Ballylorgan are one and the same. Besides, the meaning of "Baile Leargan" is very appropriate because Castleblayney is built on a slope (learga).

Lavery continues to show that there was a town here before the Blayneys came. He argues from the Irishword "baile" which he claims always refers to a town. However, 'baile' refers, in the context, to a ballybetagh, an area comprised of 16 townlands. Hence, we cannot argue from the use of the word 'baile' that a town existed here before the Blayneys came.

I

Let us consider, for a moment, the name that Davys used - "Ballylorgan" (Baile Leargan). Of all the different forms of this name that I have met, that is the only instance in which learge is used. Lurga is always used. By bad luck, however, Lavery came across this one incorrect instance with the result that it is the only form used since. At the beginning of the century, "Caislean Mhathunach" was the Irish name given to the town, because of a tradition in the locality that the McMahons had a castle in the place. Fr. Francis Finnegan, S.J. comments: "The present Irish form of the name is a monstrosity. The principal branches of the McMahons never lived next or near Castleblayney. The town's proper name of Ballylorgan should be revived." To judge by the sign-posts, it would seem that Fr. Francis Finnegan's advice has been accepted.

Two points then have to be shown:-

1. The area round the town of Castleblayney was called Baile (na) Lurgan.
2. "Baile na Lurgan" is the correct form of the name.

1. The first point here is easily shown. Mr. Lavery has already done it. Besides Davys letter, many old maps have the area marked "Baile na Lurgan". In addition Chichester visited Monaghan in October, 1606. He describes the Temon of Muckno and tells us that it was on the northern side of the lake and directly opposite the territory promised to Blayney. We know that Blayney got Baile (na) Lurgan. Therefore, Baile (na) Lurgan was the area. Just south of Lough Muckno which is the area round Castleblayney.

2. I have stated that Davys letter is the only source that contains the form Ballylurgan. Lurga is the form most frequently used as these examples show :-

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. C.S.P. (1606-8) Nov. 4. 1606 | ... Ballilurgan |
| 2. do. Jan. 26. 1607 | ... Ballilurgan |
| 3. do. Jan. 10. 1607 | ... Ballilurgan |
| 4. Cal Pat of James 1, p. 199 | ... Ballinlurgan |
| 5. do. Pt. 11 facie LXXVII | ... Balelurgan |
| 6. do. Pt. 1 p. 103 | ... Ballinlurgan |
| 7. Inquisitions Ultoniae Car. 1 44, 77, 81. | ... Ballilurgan |
| 8. Public Records - Facie of Elizabeth 5676 | ... Ballenelurgan |
| 9. Carew MSS map. Shirley 'Monaghan' 241. | ... Balle Loergan |

The only difficulty remaining is - should we write "Baile na Lurgan" or just simply "Baile Lurgan". I would prefer Baile na Lurgan. This form is found in the Annals and when we first meet an English form of it we find "Ballenelurgan". In addition the remnants of the Irish article are seen in some of the examples I have given.

II

We have now seen that the land round Castleblayney was Baile na Lurgan, in English documents of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Was Baile na Lurgan more than an ordinary ballybetagh?

It is necessary at this stage to point out what a ballybetagh was. The land of Monaghan was divided into tates or townlands. The tates were joined in groups of sixteen and each group called a ballybetagh. Each tate had its own name and a ballybetagh received its name from some tate of the sixteen with "baile" before it.

Baile na Lurgan then got its name from the tate of Lurgan. Now the name Lurgan does not exist today, but if we examine the lists of tates in the sources, by process of elimination, we find that it was situated where Onomy is today, ie. in the town of Castleblayney. It was in this tate that Blayney built his castle.

A further question evolves; was Lurgan an ordinary tate? Is the contention of Mr. Lavery valid which states that there was a town in Castleblayney before the English came?

From the evidence that survives, it would be difficult to prove. However, Lurgan did seem to have some peculiar importance.

1. The name is found on old maps which do not mention the other ballybetaghs.
2. Davys tells us there were two ballybetaghs in Baile na Lurgan.
3. When Ross McMahon' surrendered his lands in 1587, they were said to consist of "Monaghan, Truagh, Ballenelurgan and Clancarville". From this list it will be seen that Baile na Lurgan is put on equal footing with the baronies of Monaghan, Truagh and Dartry.

However, even if there was a settlement here before the Blayneys came, it was the Blayneys who developed the modern town. It grew round the castle which Sir Edward Blayne built at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Permission was granted to hold fairs and markets here 1613 and to erect taverns 1617. In 1622 the first church(Protestant) was built. It was natural then that the town should be called Castleblayne.

If we want to substitute an Irish form for this either Lurga the name of the tate on which part of the town is built, or Baile na Lurgan (the name of the locality) is appropriate. Not however, Ballylurgan (Baile Leargan) a form which would not exist, but for that mistake of Davys in 1607.

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