

IRISH PHILATELY

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EDITORIAL

This is the last issue of Irish Philately for 1985. It has been a year of success as far as our Journal is concerned. I hope that 1986 will bring more articles etc and new contributors.

I must apologise to my correspondents, I am under pressure at my Headquarters and my mail is way behind. I shall make every effort to catch up as quickly as possible.

My sincere thanks to all those who have sent articles to me for publication.

Dorothy and me wish you all a Happy and a Peaceful Christmas. Again we hope that the year 1986 will bring you all you wish.

OM Richards

"Irish Phi-ately"

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RANDOM NOTES

by F.E. Dixon

AN POST There is still confusion in the practice within An Post. Although using the An Post headed notepaper the Television Licence Section does not use the An Post prepaid envelopes but has licence number Gen 2.

ENVELOPE The Dun Laoghaire Chamber of Commerce has sponsored a circular
STICKERS label in black and orange, urging "Please help keep Dun Laoghaire Borough TIDY".

JUNE 1985 I do not usually recommend special envelopes for first-day
COMMEMORATIVES postings. An exception is the special printing for the stamp commemorating 25 years of Irish troops serving with UN. The profits will go to the Army Benevolent Fund.

POLLING CARDS The cards notifying voters of their registered numbers for the Local Government elections on 20 June were of a new design incorporating the bilingual POSTAS IOCHTA/POSTAGE PAID. However, they were delivered in envelopes bearing no postal markings!

DEFINITIVES The most peculiar aspect of the new issues on 27 June was that the envelopes sold with them by An Post illustrated the withdrawn £1 design.

FAUX PAS An attractive envelope was produced for posting at the opening of a Jewish Museum during the visit of President Herzog. Prominent are the flags of Israel and the Republic of Ireland. Unfortunately the tricolour has its colours reversed!

TRENDS Linn's Stamp News 24 June 1985 analyses Irish stamp prices and finds that the general trend of the previous seven months was down by about 20%, although a few (Thom 3-line, architectural definitives) are slightly up.

LIVESTOCK Many collectors are familiar with stamps of the 1940s issued
LEVY STAMPS by the Exported Livestock Insurance Board, which seems to have been discontinued after World War II. Now a rather different set of stamps has come into use as a result of 1979 legislation. The issuing body is CORAS BEOSTOIC AGUS FEOLA (Cattle and Meat Export Board) and the stamps prepay a levy imposed on animals exported on the hoof. Values seen are from 5p to £10. All have the same design, a central motif grasses in bright green which is repeated in miniature to provide a background. Value and inscription are in black. See Figure 1.

TOO MANY Discussion at a meeting of the Irish Philatelic Society revealed
STAMPS that several members had independently decided to restrict their buying of new Irish stamps and a resolution was passed, almost unanimously, deploring An Post's current policy.

SLOGAN NEWS There has been a slogan cancellation, which I have not yet seen, from Youghal, I think commemorating the alleged introduction of the potato by Sir Walter Raleigh 400 years ago. The myth is now discredited except in Youghal.

RECUT POSTMARKS Checking through a bundle of surplus postcards before trying to sell them I noticed that the cancellation on one from Kenmare had an extra wide space between KENMARE and SO. Comparison with the RSO marking used at Kenmare 1901-06 shows that this 1911 marking is the same but with the R deleted. Was this done elsewhere? See Figure 2.

EXHIBITION I was sorry that other commitments prevented my travelling to Belfast for the opening of an exhibition to celebrate 350th Anniversary of the Royal Mail Service. The exhibition includes postal history items of many kinds and was initially on the premises of the Northern Bank but was scheduled to travel to other parts of Northern Ireland during the summer and is a precursor of a permanent Postal Museum. Alas, there is still no indication that anything of the kind will happen in Dublin in the foreseeable future.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR STAMPS The clumsy symbol for the Year ruins the designs of the stamps. If it had to be incorporated it could have been much smaller. Another blunder was having a special envelope for the Portumna Scout Camp without having a special stamp: one of the two values could have depicted Scouts and Guides as representing the best of our youth. The childish design on the Portumna envelope is ridiculous in many respects: the youth sawing is making the elementary mistake of sawing in the middle instead of at the end.

SLOGANS Another new slogan BE A KIDNEY DONOR appeared, as scheduled, at the beginning of August but the lettering is too small and I have not yet seen a complete legible example.

1986 STAMPS Regrettably An Post shows no sign of acceding to our requests to cut down its new issues. No fewer than 11 different things or objects are to be featured but there is no indication of how many will be single stamps and how many in sets. Obviously Irish Ferns will need at least four. There were over 4000 entries in the competition for the 1986 Love stamps!

EXPRESS A cachet I have only recently seen is a large oval (55x32mm) on An Post envelope with date across the centre. Above the date is EXPRESS MAIL and below DN CONTROL. A similar letter sent in August had a different cachet of the same size and shape but reading BAILE ATHA CLIATH - DUBLIN/EXPRESS MAIL.

LICENCES Posting licence number 4 is used by the RTE Guide. The highest number I have seen is 147 printed in Irish on a plain envelope. It has DM before CEADUNAS. What does this signify?

METER SLOGAN In July the Regional Technical College, Dundalk, was using the logo of the International Youth Year in its meter mark.

DEFENCE FORCES FDC The cover specially printed and sold in aid of the Defence Forces Benevolent Fund for the stamp issued 20 June was not delivered to some subscribers until two months later, by which time the canceller was very worn!

GOLDEN WEDDING Congratulations to Bill Kane and his wife who were married on 2 September 1935.

CENSORSHIP James Gough reports an envelope cancelled in Cork 21 Nov 1922 with a double-rimmed oval cachet reading OGLAIG NA hEIREANN/ 20 NOV 1922/PASSED BY CENSOR. If genuine it is an important discovery: I do not know any markings of official censorship at the time, although it is reasonable that there should have been and OGLAIG NA hEIREANN was the name of the Irish army. Has anyone anything similar?

REVIEWS In 1968 James A Mackay published "The Story of Eire and her Stamps". The book had many mistakes because the author had placed too much reliance on secondary sources. Happily he learned from the mistakes and in recent years has produced a marvellous succession of well researched reference works dealing with the postal history and postal markings of Great Britain and Ireland.

His latest subject is "The Sub-office Rubber Datestamps of Ireland" and his research has yielded so much material that the results need two volumes, one for the "English" names and another for the names in Irish. 1985 is chosen for these volumes because it is the centenary of the introduction of the "Climax" rubber datestamps for use on Postal Orders at sub-offices with insufficient business to justify the supply of the expensive (7s 6d each) steel stamps. Inevitably examples from many of the sub-offices are extremely rare and the lists are based mainly on the official proof books. There are, however, offices which used the rubber datestamps without the fact being recorded in the proof books. Another complication is that some offices received frequent replacements without the new handstamps being registered.

The second volume discusses the remarkable ranges of styles of lettering found with the Irish names - upper and lower case, upright and sloping, with and without serifs etc. A valuable feature is the comprehensive indexing, by English name, by Irish name and broken down into counties.

At £6.60 post paid (£7.90 overseas) per volume, the two volumes are strongly recommended as is the Postal History Annual 1986, £5.10 post paid (£6.40 overseas) in which there is a good proportion of Irish material. Order from James A Mackay 11 Newall Terrace, Dumfries, DG1 1LN, Scotland.

AN POST For the last few years, when I took a holiday I arranged that all
CHARGES mail addressed to my house would be delivered to nextdoor
 neighbours. When I visited the District Post Office to arrange
the same facility this year I learned that what was formerly done free is now charged a minimum of £12.50!

OFFICIAL In September the Department of Health changed the slogan with its
SLOGANS metermark from PROTECT YOUR BABY/IMMUNISE to ERADICATE MEASLES/
 IMMUNISE YOUR BABY.

FELDMAN The catalogues for David Feldman's November sales in Zurich and
AUCTIONS New York are delightful to browse through and list an unprecedented
 assemblage of major rarities. The New York sale includes nearly
300 lots of Irish overprints, with all the major rarities, even the 1d missing
accent and also the missing accent and t. There are nine examples of the 2d coil
SG 74b including a mint pair and used strip of three and there is a tenth example
in the postal auction!

OCTOBER 3rd The 22p depiction of a Visual Display Unit is tolerable: the
COMMEMORATIVES 26p attempt to show ancient and modern peat working is a
 failure. A white line separating the two would improve it.

The 44p is allegedly designed by Brendan Donegan but its merit depends on the original painting by Sean Keating.

CANCELLED
Correction

The CANCELLED on postage dues, reported in Irish Philately September 1985 is not a post office marking but is applied by ESB accountants.



Figure 1



Figure 2

PRISONER ON PAROLE

by W.E. Davey

In the March 1985 issue of the IPC "Journal" a letter from me was published, asking questions arising from the acquisition of a letter addressed to Joseph Donald O'Gorman, Prisoner on Parole, at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicester Shire. One of our members, Tony Cassidy, was good enough to give me a lead -- and, though it is not absolutely complete, what a story I have unravelled.

First of all I learned a lesson - NEVER, NEVER presume anything! I wrote:- "Must have been an Irish 'soldier of fortune'". How wrong can one be! In extenuation I would add that everything pointed to my presumption being correct - a letter from the father mailed at Kilrush, Co Clare; time of the Peninsular War (1808-14); and the name O'Gorman. Let me tell you, Joseph O'Gorman was a FRENCHMAN! Yes, he was, as I will show you shortly.

However, let me deal with a few of the minor questions first. The 1/8 $\frac{1}{2}$ charge on the letter. Fred Dixon and Peter Collins (Christie and Robson Lowe) both agree that the extra $\frac{1}{2}$ d was a local delivery charge (something frowned on by the PO authorities of that day and age).

Tony Cassidy queried the mileage which I gave as 144 suggesting that it was 141, the mileage known for Kilrush. The impression is very heavily over-inked and on close examination could be either but in view of the fact that 141 is the known mileage I think it must be that. Drumellihiy (I found three different spellings) is approximately six miles north of Kilrush towards Cooraclare. But let me turn to the main question - who were the O'Gorman's?

I am greatly indebted to M/s Mary Moroney, Local Studies Department, County Library, Ennis, Co Clare, for going to considerable trouble to produce photostats of various entries in a number of books and journals and it is from

these sources that I am able to put together a brief but very interesting history of the O'Gorman family.

Thomas MacGorman, the father of Joseph Donald O'Gorman, the 'prisoner on parole', was born at Castletown, Co Clare in 1732. At an early age he went to France, was educated at the Irish College in Paris, and eventually became a noted physician in that city. At this time, for some unknown reason, he dropped the Mac from his surname and assumed the 'O' instead. Incidentally, he was a fluent Gaelic speaker and compiled, in manuscript form, several works relating to Irish History and genealogy which are now to be found in the library of the Royal Irish Academy in the British Library, British Museum, London. He married the daughter (some sources say 'sister') of the Count d'Eon, a wealthy nobleman of Burgundy, who possessed extensive vineyards in that province.

Thomas O'Gorman joined Walsh's regiment of the Irish Brigade and so distinguished himself that he was created a Chevalier and Knight of the Royal and Military Order of St Louis by King Louis XV 'with whom he was on intimate terms of friendship'.

Following the death of his wife's parents he became possessed of the family estates in Burgundy and made considerable profit from the wine trade. He made periodic trips to Ireland in order to extend the sale of the wine produced on his estates. His wife bore three sons, one of whom was the afore-mentioned Joseph Donald O'Gorman.

Thomas O'Gorman, by now Chevalier O'Gorman, was a 'loyal royalist' - a great supporter of the French Monarchy and because of that his property was confiscated after the outbreak (in 1789) of the French Revolution. Eventually, about 1792, in fear of his life, he was forced to escape back to Ireland in a penniless condition and spent the rest of his life living on the bounty of friends and relations in Co Clare. He died in the home of the O'Briens at Drumellihi, as reported in the 'Clare Journal' dated 16 November 1809:-

"On Saturday last (11 November) died, at Drumellihi in the west of this county, Thomas O'Gorman Esq., commonly known by the name Chevalier O'Gorman. He was of a strong and robust form, his countenance like his heart was open and generous He possessed in an eminent degree the accomplishment of a gentleman. He was enthusiastic in his love for his country, the illustrious antiquity of which he was perfectly conversant with and constantly defended He was the representative of an Irish family that traced their origin to an era many centuries prior to the first English invasion and who made a distinguished figure in Ireland, when Ireland was a distinguished nation Though he died in an obscure spot, on the margin of the Atlantic Ocean, his memory will extend far beyond it and will be held in affectionate recollection by all those who knew him, wherever they are spread, or however they may be divided by religion or party".

He was buried in the churchyard of Kilmacduane. His wife had died in 1788 but he remarried twice afterwards. His three sons survived him, becoming officers, two in the French army and one in the navy. I only know the name of one, the 'prisoner on parole', Joseph Donald O'Gorman.

The postscript in the original letter ('Mr O'Brien presents you with his best compliments') is now explained - at the time of writing the letter, 12 October 1809, Chevalier O'Gorman was living at the O'Brien's home and, as already mentioned, died there a month later.

When I wrote to the "Journal" there was one other peculiarity that I noticed in the letter but dismissed as not being important - but it was! The concluding paragraph (all that was left of the original letter for some vandal had excised a page) begins: 'Adieu, My Dear Son, I give you my paternal blessing with all my heart and soul'. Why 'Adieu'? Meaning 'to God'. Strictly speaking that word is only used when bidding a last farewell to someone whom you never expect to see or contact again in this world. And that is exactly why it was used here, Chevalier O'Gorman must have known that his life was coming to an end for he died on 11 November 1809, one month after writing the letter.

"Prisoner on Parole" - those words caught my attention in the description of an item in a postal history auction and caused me to make a high bid for it, yet it came my way for less than the estimate for no-one else thought it worth bothering about. What pleasure I have derived from the hours of interesting research! Thank you, Tony Cassidy, for giving me the clue as to where to start; and also again my thanks to M/s Mary Maroney of the Ennis Library for the help she accorded me and without which this could not have been written.

Bibliography:- History and Topography of Co Clare - by J Frost (1893).
A Journey through West Clare 1800 AD - by Chevalier Thomas O'Gorman; Edited by Thomas O'Broin. (Published by the Shannon Archaeological and Historical Society in their Journal - The Other Clare Vol 5).
The Clare Journal of 16 November 1809 quoted in the above.

* * * * *

POSTCODING FOR IRELAND

by M. McNamara

In Irish Philately March 1979 and December 1980 members were informed that the British Post Office had begun to put phosphor coding dots on mails for Ireland. I also gave details of some of the codes used and how the coding dots could be read in binary number form. As expected, there have been many changes, modifications and experiments in the meantime, and at this stage the building plans for 84 Mechanised Letter Offices (MLO) in the UK is expected to be completed in early 1986. Likewise, the developments in so far as they relate to mail for Ireland, have made it difficult to write the full story but, not wishing to procrastinate any longer, I eventually put pen to paper in mid-1985. The article which follows was written, primarily, for publication in Ident - the quarterly journal of the Postal Mechanisation Study Circle - and, by its nature, has many terms not seen normally in this journal. To aid the reader a glossary of terms is provided as an appendix to the article.

Most members will be aware that within the Universal Postal Union there exist also different smaller postal unions or special tariffs agreed between two or more governments. For many years, the United Kingdom and Ireland have had such an agreement and, accordingly, mail between the two countries is paid for at inland rates. Letters posted in the UK for Ireland are immediately routed through the inland system, but it does not follow that coding dots can be applied, as the application of coding dots to foreign-going mail would be contrary to UPU regulations.

THE EARLY DAYS

The existence of idents and coding dots on mail to Ireland first came to my notice in 1971 when working in an office in Dublin which received about fifty letters a day from the UK. Occasionally, letters from Sheffield, Preston, London EC and others were noticed to have idents, and these were saved from the waste paper basket for investigation at some later stage. In time, this would prove to have been a wise move because, in the following years, the many changes and developments in code-sorting created interesting and unexpected aspects to 'dotty cover' collecting which a collector in the UK is unlikely to have seen.

IDENTS, DOTS AND NO DOTS

As a result of the many changes over the years, a number of distinct types of mail coded en route to Ireland can be found. These are as follows.

BRIGHTON TRANSORMA PERIOD 1935 - 1968

The fact that mail for Ireland was going abroad appears to have been irrelevant to the Brighton Transorma operators. Transorma covers to Ireland in my collection are from 1959 to July 1964, although much earlier covers have been seen.

MOUNT PLEASANT SIXPLSM 1952 - 1956

Like many other PLMSC collectors, the rediscovery of the Mount Pleasant SixPLSM (Six-Position Letter Sorting Machine) idents of the early 1950s had me searching in dealers' junk boxes, but with no success. As much mail for Ireland would have been sorted at Mount Pleasant, some must have received SixPLSM idents, so my search will continue.

LUTON TRIALS 1960 - 1969

Although I have no Luton material, the possibility of a Luton code for Ireland should not be ruled out. In his article "Luton Phosphor Coding Experiments 1960-1969" (Ident Volume 4 Page 87), Patrick Awcock reports the existence of Luton dots on a cover to South Africa. As that cover appears to be the only foreign-coded Luton cover in collectors' hands, it is not known whether it is an error, a freak or a true coding. As it has a coding pattern value higher than any other known, it could well be a true coding, which would suggest that a code for Ireland existed.

NORWICH EXPERIMENTS: SECOND BINARY PATTERN PERIOD 1967 - 1975

During the period 1971 to 1975, I subscribed to a one-page Newsletter for radio amateurs, which issued weekly from Norwich. The Newsletter was normally posted every Tuesday, just in time for the last collection of the day. During that period, only about eight covers received coding dots and the same pattern of dots was applied in all cases. In view of the number seen, there appears to be no doubt that Norwich had a code for Ireland and used it regularly. The input code IR is printed as 10000000111011 (where 1 represents a dot and 0 represents a space), or 7-4-0 in binary form. All covers seen to date are addressed to Dublin or Dunlaoghaire and are from each of the years 1971 to 1975, the earliest being dated 21 July 1971. With regard to the earlier Norwich trials, none of these has come my way but the search will continue.

LONDON EC 1968 - 1979

The old London EC system also coded mail for Ireland but the code applied was purely to divert such mail for inland sorting at Mount Pleasant. Letters postmarked by London EC and mail for Ireland included in bags for London (instead of London Forward) from Papua, the USSR, Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, Spain and Greece have been seen bearing London EC dots. This unusual routing means that few covers have been seen but all have the same dot pattern (obtained by keying "PRO") as applied to UK addresses outside London. My earliest London EC cover is dated 9 September 1971. Another unusual cover in my London EC collection, which caused me confusion for some time, is a meter-mail item to Dublin posted by Aer Lingus of Bond Street, London W1 on 28 October 1972. How the letter came to be coded in London EC I do not know but it could be one of a meter-mail posting that was handed in at a London EC office counter rather than in London W1 or mail diverted from London W1 to London EC for some operational reason.

NATIONAL SYSTEM 1969 - 1978

As mentioned earlier, UK mail for Ireland was, and still is, treated as inland mail but it did not follow that coding dots were applied. Except for accidents this mail was keyed off for manual sorting and the ident only was printed. My earliest cover from the national system is from Croydon office and is dated 7 September 1971.

NATIONAL SYSTEM 1978 AND AFTER

Much of the mail from the UK arriving at the Central Sorting Office in Dublin is sorted already into county groups or post towns. Likewise, Dublin sorts some mail for the UK. For sorting purposes, the printing of the ident only on Irish mail as if it were foreign mail must have created some unnecessary problems owing to the amount of mail which travels between the two countries. The problems would gradually spread as the number of MLOs increased. So, following an agreement between the two administrations, coding dots began to appear on mail for Ireland during 1978.

READING AND LONDON FOREIGN SECTION SPLSMs

It is inevitable that, because of inexperienced staff, bad handwriting or a misleading country title such as S Ireland, some Irish mail will be sent to Foreign Sections. This type of error usually has a London FS cancellation but, unfortunately, no evidence of machine sorting there. Examples bearing Reading backstamps, where the use of an airmail envelope probably caused the letter to be mis-sent, have also been seen. Is it not a pity that the Reading SPLSMs (Single Position Letter Sorting Machines) do not print idents!

With regard to London FS, when in London in October 1983 en route to the PMSC Annual General Meeting, I posted ten letters to Dublin in the "abroad" box at the King Edward Building in the hope that they would receive SPLSM idents. The experiment was a total failure. However, the nice surprise was the single cover posted in London E1 which arrived bearing a clear postmark of E1 - E18 and large DD red idents of a Foreign Section SPLSM. A further surprise, however, happened in September 1984. During conversations about radio and stamp collecting with a radio amateur friend, he mentioned that, in recent weeks, his weekly Newsletter, posted first class on Wednesdays from Potters Bar in Hertfordshire, did not reach him until the following Monday. Apart from Air Mail markings on the covers, he could not see a reason for such a delay in

delivery. On showing me two of the covers, which luckily he had not thrown away, the reason for the delay was obvious. There, clearly printed on both covers were the large red identis of Foreign Section SPLSMs and with that two nice covers were added to my collection.

THE PRESENT SYSTEM - STARTING DAY

I have never seen much point in establishing which office was the first to use the new Irish codes but it appears that the introduction date of the new codes in MLOs of the day was a matter for each office. As regards the newer MLOs, I receive PMSC covers by standing order and all MLOs brought into operation since October 1978 appear to have used Irish codes from their first day of operations. For the record, though, the earliest coding seen by me so far is postmarked Fylde Blackpool Wyre on 13 May 1978. This record could be broken again as the Preston postcard, found in a stamp dealer's junk box and which cost 5p, did not come my way until May 1983. Mention should also be made of Bob de Vekey's report ("International Codes" Ident Volume 2 Page 47) that the use of codes for Eire could have begun in February 1978.

MLO OPERATIONS

It will be expected that the amount of mail for Ireland will vary considerably from office to office. Some MLOs will always have a lot of mail for Ireland while others will handle relatively little. In general, these variations are overcome by extract coding, short coding or not coding at all. At the same time, little mysteries pop up, one at a time, and it is usually necessary to seek the solution from the Head Postmaster concerned. There are exceptions:-

Aberdeen I have little mail from Aberdeen and all covers seen to date have identis only. In a letter dated 20 May 1982, the Head Postmaster stated that the volume of mail passing through there is so small that it does not warrant a separate selection. Consequently, the code desk operators key off these items for manual processing at that stage so that no code dots are applied to covers.

Croydon I have about twenty covers from Croydon and all covers have ident only. In a letter dated 29 May 1982, the Head Postmaster stated that, when it was decided to introduce postcoding for Irish mail, there were no spare boxes on their sorting machines to accommodate the new selections. However, in a review of machine plans, Irish selections would probably be included. In a further letter, dated 27 March 1985, the Head Postmaster advised that mail for Dublin City commenced to be coded there in October 1984. The remainder is still not coded.

WCDO The coding at WCDO poses a problem. Prior to 1983, no dots were seen on mail for Dublin but a few for Arklow and Dunlaoghaire have the appropriate extract codes. Since 1983, the DB short code (40/15) has been seen but the majority of covers have ident only.

Redhill Coding dots were not noticed on mail from Redhill until 28 April 1981 and, even though addressed to Dublin, all had the unusual binary 61/58. In response to my enquiries, the Head Postmaster at Redhill stated on 18 February 1982 that they began short-coding items to the Irish Republic on 27 April 1981. This was not the result of any new equipment but they did not code Irish mail before due to the high amount of towns in the Irish Republic which are ambiguous with mainland towns when extract coded and, at that time, they did not have the provision of a short code. Arrangements were made for a

(local) short code of IR to be used and this produced the specially allocated binary code of 61/58. A further development appears to have taken place in the meantime, as most mail for Dublin seen since April 1983 has the DB short code (40/15).

THE CODES USED

As I reside and work in Dublin, almost all of the coded mail seen is for Dublin and so I have little information on the extract and short coding procedures used for places outside Dublin. Apart from the difficulty in obtaining and verifying examples of extract codes for Irish post towns, I have always considered that extract codes are outside the scope of this study and have left them to the binary hounds.

With regard to short codes, in my accumulation of several hundred covers, it is easy to establish that separate codes are allocated to the different Dublin Postal Districts. These are:-

Dublin	40/15			
Dublin 1	40/17	Dublin 12	40/48	
Dublin 2	40/22	Dublin 13	42/5	
Dublin 3	40/23	Dublin 14	42/7	
Dublin 4	40/24	Dublin 15	13/21	see note (i)
Dublin 5	40/25	Dublin 16	39/55	
Dublin 6	40/26	Dublin 17	26/14	see note (ii)
Dublin 7	40/28	Dublin 18	26/61	
Dublin 8	40/31	Dublin 19	27/20	see note (ii)
Dublin 9	40/33	Dublin 20	27/57	see note (i)
Dublin 10	40/34	Dublin 22	19/11	see note (iii)
Dublin 11	40/35	Dublin 24	58/58	see note (iii)

- Notes:-
- (i) District number brought into use in January 1984.
 - (ii) No such district or district number in use.
 - (iii) New delivery offices opened in December 1983 and new district numbers brought into use in January 1984. By May 1984, short code binaries had not been allocated. However, Postal Headquarters advised that they will be the same as the extract codes for the two districts concerned, namely 19/11 (Clondalkin) and 58/58 (Tallaght).

Mention was made earlier of difficulties with ambiguous extracts and, as in the case of Redhill, there are a few more MLOs which have confirmed that they short-code addresses outside Dublin rather than use extracts. The codes are in the 57/.., 60/.. or 61/.. binary series and the following have been seen:-

Binary Key For:-

57/13	EIR	Eire
57/15	KIL	Killarney
57/16	KIY	Killiney
57/56	ROI	Republic of Ireland
60/34	SI	Southern Ireland
60/37	SI	Southern Ireland
61/58	IR	Irish Republic

Used By:-

Brighton	
Crewe	
Crewe	
Belfast	see note (a)
Chelmsford	see note (b)
Chelmsford	see note (b)
Bournemouth, Portsmouth and Redhill	

- Notes:-
- (a) According to the Head Postmaster of Belfast, as well as extract coding Irish post towns, a local short code R01 (57/56) is used only in Belfast for correspondence to Eire which does not bear a post town in the address.
 - (b) The change from 60/34 to 60/37 was made in February 1984 to avoid errors at Crewe, which uses 60/34 for one of their local post towns.

As all other offices will have difficulties with ambiguous extracts, it is probable that they use the DB short code (40/15) instead of a further special short code.

In July 1980 the Head Postmasters at Bristol and Chelmsford provided details of the Dublin short codes and these have been proven in most cases. Not satisfied with this, I decided recently that the widespread use of separate Dublin district codes probably required appropriate bundle labels so that a bundle of mail for, say, Dublin 4 should arrive intact at the Dublin 4 District Office. This, of course, would not prevent bundles from being broken up in the Dublin Central Sorting Office. As enquiries in Dublin drew a blank, requests for samples of labels were made to a few Head Postmasters in the UK. Unfortunately, my requests were denied and I finished more puzzled than I had been at the beginning of my letter writing. In the case of Liverpool, which has been seen to use separate codes, their operations are explained in a letter dated 4 February 1983. To quote:- "Unfortunately, we do not have separate labels for any Dublin Districts. At the present time we forward mail to Dublin, principal cities and Dublin Forward for the remainder of the Irish Republic. Our code sorting machines do not have selections for all of these and the final sortation is a manual one. The coding is to keep them separate and help us continue our current quality of service. The labels we use for these sortations are intended for internal use only, so I am unable to send you any of these".

THE SELECTIONS MADE

As mentioned earlier, some MLOs will have a lot of mail for Ireland, while others will handle relatively little. Thus, the general volume of mail for Ireland in any MLO will decide how many selections are made. Apart from Dublin City, some or all of the following selections, based on the postal divisions of Ireland, are likely.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| SOUTH 1 | Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Kildare and the western half of Wicklow (including Baltinglass, Blessington and Dunlavin). |
| SOUTH 2 | Leix, Offaly and Tipperary. |
| SOUTH 3 | Limerick, Clare and Kerry. |
| SOUTH 4 | Cork. |
| EAST | Blackrock, Dun Laoghaire, the eastern half of Wicklow and Wexford. |
| NORTH 1 | Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan. |
| DONEGAL | Donegal |
| MIDLAND 1 | Westmeath, Longford, Roscommon, Leitrim and Sligo. |

MIDLAND 2 Galway and Mayo.

DUBLIN SUBS County Dublin.

Yellow "code sorted" bundle labels for these selections have been seen but, compared to the numbers of the white labels of manual sorting, relatively few reach Dublin, presumably because most have been retained at Crewe, or their use may not arise for most MLOs.

MIS-SENT MAIL - "ORDINARY"

Inevitably, some mail to Ireland is wrongly coded and some of these covers bear the tell-tale backstamps. A variety of mis-sents has been seen and the usual difficulties arise as to why the errors happened. Except for the more difficult cases, mis-sents to Bradford (BD short code, BD3, BD5, BD8) and Doncaster (DN short code) are the most common errors. In the case of Bradford, the operator has keyed BD instead of DB. A mis-sent to Doncaster is understandable also as the contraction DN for Dublin is common. This also might be a straightforward typing error, as probably happened in the cases of mis-sent to Cambridge (CB2), Derby (DE short code), Dorchester (DT short code) and Durham (DH short code DH2).

Mis-sents for reasons that are not due to coding errors have been seen also. In the Post Office network of the UK many offices, including many MLOs, do not make up bags of mail for Ireland. The Distribution Office for such traffic is usually Crewe, where the bundles of letters may or may not be machine-sorted a second time. Presumably, the bundles are not broken up for machine coding as a rule, as few cases of letters bearing a second set of idents from Crewe have been seen. But, more surprising, are the mis-sents to Cardiff, Chester, Dundee, Edinburgh and Liverpool, due probably to this residual mail being sent to the wrong Distribution or General Forwarding Office.

I look forward to the day when I have a cover to Bradford, with a Baile Atha Cliath backstamp, in my collection!

MIS-SENT MAIL - "EXTRA-ORDINARY"

Like their colleagues in the UK, postal sorters in Ireland make mistakes from time to time but, if it were not for the mechanisation in Belfast, the following mis-sents could not be detected:-

1. Postcard from Cashel (Co Tipperary) to Drogheda (Co Louth) with Belfast idents and blue dots.
2. Cover from Clonakilty (Co Cork) to Clonee (Co Meath) bearing Belfast idents and blue dots (57/56) and Clones (Co Monaghan) postmark.
3. Three covers posted on the same day from Co Limerick to Clonee (Co Meath) each bearing the same Belfast idents and blue dot coding (57/56).
4. Cover from Westport (Co Mayo) to Clonee (Co Meath) bearing Belfast idents and blue dots (57/56).
5. Cover from Athy (Co Kildare) to Clonee (Co Meath) bearing Belfast idents and blue dots (57/56).

Except in the case of the postcard to Drogheda, which was coded 39/46, the use of the ROI short code (57/56) is taken as the evidence that all the items

travelled to Belfast and were coded there. As regards the mis-sorting, it is known that Clonee is often read as Clones, but neither place is in Northern Ireland.

OPTICAL CHARACTER RECOGNITION

On first hearing reports of the OCR trials at London Inland Section MLO, I had hoped that OCR coded mail to Ireland would eventually come my way but it appears that this will not happen, as the following report, provided by Philip Miall, will show.

"The British Post Office is now using an OCR machine of German manufacture to read typewritten and computer-generated addresses and apply the appropriate binary phosphor sorting code by spray printer giving phosphor bars rather than circular dots. Since the machine started operation in September 1983, I have searched for OCR items to Ireland without success. Recently, I have found out that OCR coding is not put on Irish mail (nor on to mail to any other Postal administrations normally coded, ie Guernsey, Jersey, Isle of Man). This seems to be a Post Office policy decision. The machine reads the bottom three lines of the address and applies the most appropriate sorting binary code for the address recognised. The machine does not do extract coding as it reads whole words or names, so ambiguous codes are not a problem. The machine has a very large dictionary of names (much larger than just a list of all post towns) that includes names of all the towns and counties of Ireland, as well as names like Eire, Ireland etc., along with the names of all other foreign countries. Well-addressed items to Ireland that are passed through the OCR machine will have the address read and recognised but will be passed to the present box for "address recognised foreign mail". A possible way of recognising whether an item has passed through the OCR system is to see if there is a smear of blue phosphor ink on the back. Occasionally, the ink spreads from one item to the next before the ink completely dries".

CONCLUSION

My work on writing this article began more than two years ago when I thought that it would be relatively easy. However, with the research into problem covers and the discovery, from time to time, of new information, it is only now (May 1985) that it can be finalised in any way. I have reported all that has come to light and hope that the report is free of error. At the same time, I am sure that there is more information which I should have and if any member can provide it I shall be glad to hear from him.

I must express my thanks for the help and information provided by fellow collectors and many Postmasters in the UK for without them my collection and my knowledge would be very poor indeed. I should say also that I would have been thoroughly lost if I had not joined the PMSC. The wealth of information in the Newsletter and Ident has been invaluable. As a collector of code-sorted mail for only six years, this aspect of philately has provided me with more knowledge and satisfaction than all of the previous twenty years of stamp and cover collecting.

APPENDIX

ambiguous code	An extract code common to two or more posttowns.
binary code	Number expressed by using only digits 0 and 1.

code/sort	Operation of coding mail for automatic sorting.
coding	Printing of phosphorescent dots on an envelope expressing destination in machine-readable form.
coding desk	Operator-controlled machine which carries out coding.
EC	London East Central District Office.
extract code	Short form of coding by extracting first three and last two letters of posttown (when address has no postcode).
Ident	Number and/or letter identifying a coding desk printed on mail at the same time as the coding dots.
local code	Short form of coding reserved for local use.
MLO	Mechanised Letter Office.
Mount Pleasant	Site of London Inland Section MLO.
OCR	Optical Character Reader/Recognition.
pass key	key pressed by coding desk operator to forward an item which cannot be coded.
phosphor signal	Afterglow emitted by phosphorescent substance after ultraviolet irradiation.
phosphor tape	Plastic tape coated with phosphorescent substance used to print coding dots.
short code	Short form of coding which uses name of MLO only.
SixPLSM	Six-operator-position Letter Sorting Machine.
SPLSM	Single-operator-position Letter Sorting Machine.
Transorma	Sorting machine developed in Holland in late 1920s.
UPU	Universal Postal Union - international controlling body of world's postal authorities.

* * * * *

THE CANCELLING MACHINES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

by O.M. Richards

OMAGH CO TYRONE FE Dixon reports an example of a Krag Machine used in Omagh dated 20 February 1939, GM Stelfox has an example dated 8 February 1940, my own earliest example is for 15 November 1944. Figure 72.

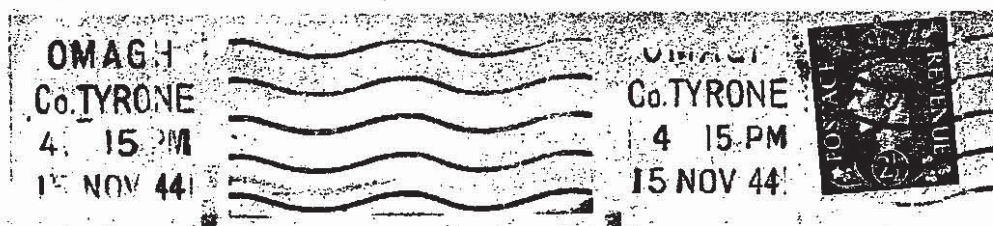


Figure 72

The die box had four lines with the date on the bottom line. The Head Postmaster at Omagh reports that this hand driven machine was in use to 1948, the exact date is not known.

A Universal Machine was issued to this office in 1948, electrically operated, its serial number was 342. This particular machine is no longer there, in the programme of withdrawing and the issue of replacement machines at regular intervals by the engineering branch of the Post Office in Northern Ireland, dates are not recorded. The earliest example in my collection is for 6 July 1951, this predates all other examples reported to me. Figure 73.



Figure 73

The die was of the type without arcs and lasted to 1964 when a new die appeared. The BPS report their first date as 28 November 1964. This die, Figure 74, is still in use and has had a long life at this office, it has arcs either side between Omagh and Co Tyrone.



Figure 74

PAID dies, Figure 75, are used regularly for bulk postings but I have not, as yet, seen OFFICIAL PAID mail.



Figure 75

Slogans are in regular use and this office is one of those issued with slogan

dies for general use. Some of the slogans used can be seen in Figure 76, it will be noticed that slogans have been used in both normal and transposed positions.



Figure 76

PORTADOWN CO ARMAGH A Krag Machine was in use at this office from 1923, FE Dixon reports an example dated 18 December 1923. It was most likely brought into use in anticipation of the rush of Christmas mail. My own earliest example is for 20 November 1924. Figure 77.

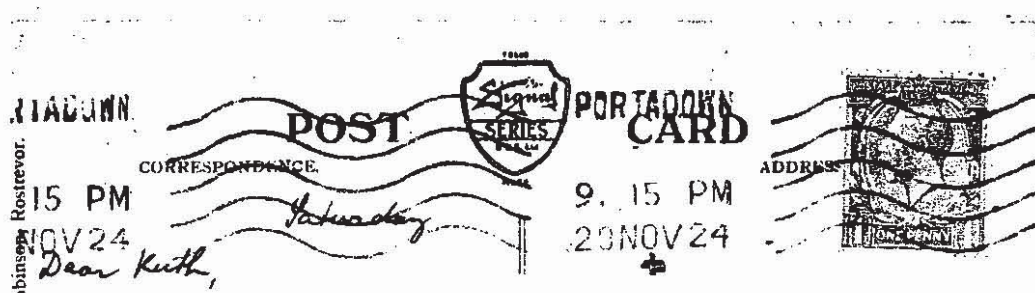


Figure 77

By the position of the name, time and date, it was evidently a four line die box but the first example I have with Co. Armagh inserted is for 20 June 1946. Figure 78.

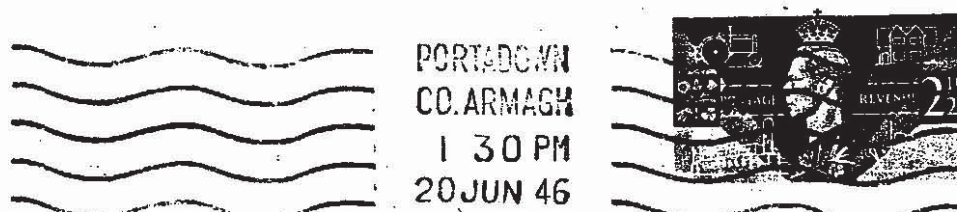


Figure 78

By 1950 a Universal Machine had been issued to this office, BPS reports 8 July 1950 but the Head Postmaster states the Krag Machine was recovered and a Universal 'D' Type installed on 15 November 1959. However, the story is complicated further by an example sent to me dated 8 February 1958. Figure 79.

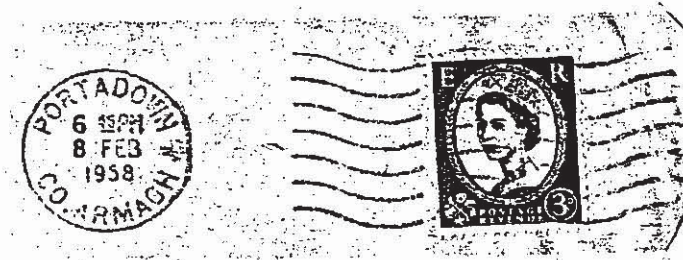


Figure 79

This is the early type of Universal die without arcs; BPS report a new die with arcs used on 17 September 1964. Figure 80 (dated 29 December 1964).

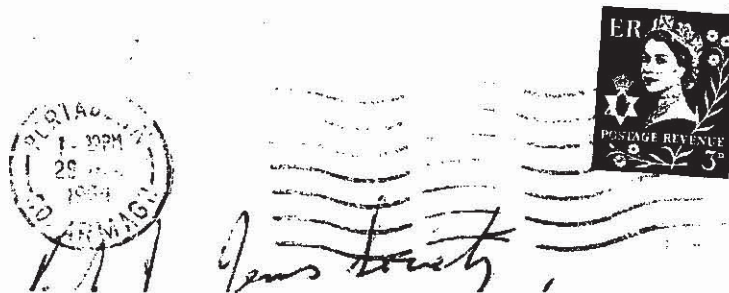


Figure 80

By 18 January 1971 a further die was in use, again without arcs. Figure 81.

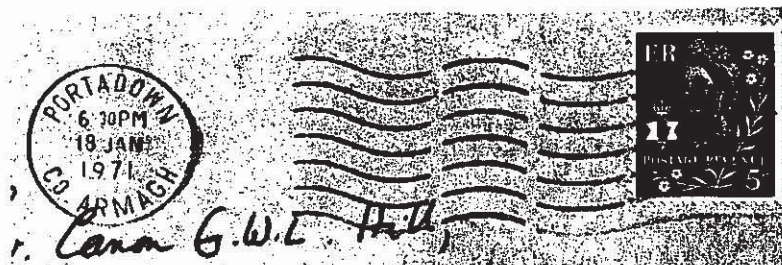


Figure 81

This latter die continued in use to 1973 when the office was renamed PORTADOWN CRAIGAVON.

PAID dies were used, Figure 82, but I have not seen OFFICIAL PAID mail.



Figure 82

Slogans were in regular use in both normal and transposed positions. Figure 83.

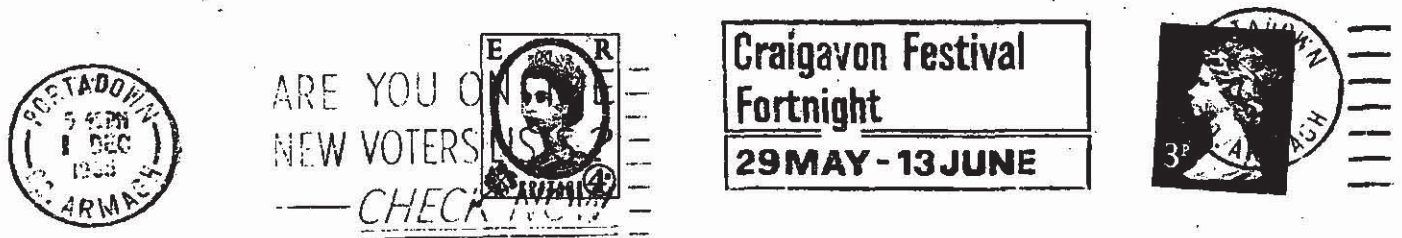


Figure 83

PORTADOWN CRAIGAVON CO ARMAGH New dies inscribed as above were issued to this office in 1973. BPS report 30 April 1973. This die is still in use. Figure 84.



Figure 84

PAID mail is still handled at this office, Figure 85, but no OFFICIAL PAID as yet. Slogans are used regularly and have been seen in both normal and transposed positions.

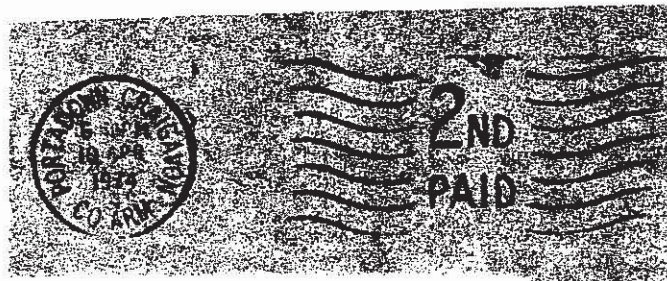


Figure 85

PORTRUSH CO ANTRIM This is one office in Northern Ireland, with the exception of Belfast, that was not issued with a Krag Machine. A Universal Machine was in use by 27 August 1933, Figure 86. Again there were no arcs in the die. There may well be earlier examples known.



Figure 86

Examples from the prewar period are plentiful. This was a very popular seaside holiday town and many thousands of postcards must have been posted then, indeed it retains its popularity to this day. This die continued in use to 28 November 1958 (BPS) when a new die, with arcs, came into use. Figure 87.



Figure 87

Slogans are used regularly, seen only in the normal position. OFFICIAL PAID mail is cancelled at this office, Figure 88, but I have not seen PAID mail.

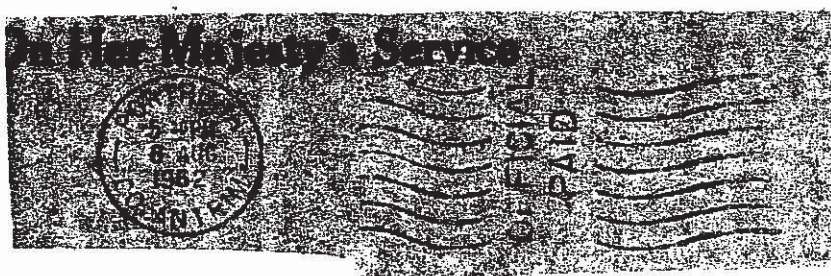


Figure 88

This almost completes the story of the cancelling machines of Northern Ireland outwith Belfast. There is only one more town to cover, Strabane. This is already written and will appear in the March 1986 issue of Irish Philately.

Belfast alone remains. Listing the machines used in Belfast is a much more complicated task. I hope to write this during the next few weeks and when it is as complete as I can make it I will photocopy it. Before publishing I will be happy to send photocopies to all members who are interested in machine cancellations.

In return I would be grateful if those members would inform me of any additional information in order that the list will be fully up to date before publishing.

If you would like a copy please write and let me know. Needless to say, I will be most interested to receive your comments.

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