

D.F. Newsletter

Vol. 2 No. 26 Spring 1977
HOUSE JOURNAL OF
DAVID FELDMAN LTD' DUBLIN



BY SUBSCRIPTION

D.F. Newsletter

EDITORIAL

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LITERATURE It is generally agreed that literature is the life blood of our hobby. A philatelist without the necessary knowledge, will not obtain the full enjoyment that is procurable from his or her particular interest or study, unless he or she has the required knowledge.

Philatelists are fortunate in that there is a vast source of information available to them in book form, we also have specialised literature Dealers and Auctions, a wonderful range of periodicals and magazines, and more important to those who specialise is their Society Journal or Newsletter. Hence there is no reason for being uninformed these days. Yet some collectors have not decided for themselves which came first "The Chicken or the Egg" With knowledge you can always buy and sell much better. Dealers are always more pleased to do business with a well informed client, each transaction becomes a pleasure to both parties. There is much food for thought here, I leave it to you to sort it out for yourselves.

POSTAL HISTORY SUPPLEMENT Owners of our Handbook of Irish Postal History will be pleased to hear we intend to publish the first supplement to that work, in the Summer Issue of the Newsletter. We are grateful to that noted Historian Dr. de Burca who has compiled notes for this supplement, we also hope to publish the observations of other notable Postal Historians.

PUBLICATIONS Recently two items have come on the market which will interest collectors of Irish Stamps, Checklist of Irish Stamps by J.D.F. McKee, and The Overprinted Stamps of Ireland by J.A. Hill. The former can be obtained from the author at 3, South Park Drive, Foxrock, Co. Dublin. The latter from the Publisher Harry Hayes, 48/50 Trafalgar Street, Batley, West Yorkshire.

B K

ADHESIVE REVENUE STAMPS OF IRELAND

R. G. BOOTH



274



274A



274D

CHANCERY COURT
IRELAND



275

1867 Types 274-274D. Embossed on white wove paper. Wmk Block VR (type 164). Imperf. Nos 1-5 were withdrawn from use on 2:5:92 and are very scarce.

1 1d pale carmine rose die A. Die reg 1:10:67. Stamps dated: 1:10:67, 2:10:67, 3:10:67, 5:10:67, 8:10:67, 21:10:67.

(a) perf. 12½ (L)

(b) on blued paper

2 6s2d pale carmine rose die A. Die reg. Oct. 1867. Stamps dated: 3:10:67, 4:10:67, 5:10:67

(a) perf. 12½ (L)

3 £2 pale carmine rose die A. Die reg. Oct. 1867. Stamps dated: 3:10:67, 21:10:67

(a) on blued paper

4 £3 pale carmine rose die A. Die reg. Oct. 1867. Stamps dated: 3:10:67, 22:10:67

(a) on blued paper

5 £5 pale carmine rose die A. Die reg. 1:10:67. Stamps dated: 1:10:67, 4:10:67, 22:10:67

1867 1858 Series of CHANCERY COURT stamps of G.B. (type 166:) surcharged "IRELAND FEE FUND" in bright crimson letters as type 275. For plate nos. see p. 9.

A. Perf. 14. On blued surfaced paper (paper more or less blued).

Nos 6-68 are rare mint and scarce used.

6 3d deep purple

6 3d deep dull purple

7 4d deep dull purple

8 6d deep dull purple

(a) deep reddish lilac

9 8d deep dull purple

10 1s deep dull purple

(a) deep reddish lilac

11 1s4d deep dull purple

12 1s6d deep reddish lilac

13 1s8d deep dull purple
 (a) deep purple
 14 2s deep dull purple
 15 2s4d deep dull purple
 16 2s6d deep dull purple
 17 2s8d deep dull purple
 18 3s deep dull purple
 (a) surcharge inverted
 19 3s6d deep dull purple
 20 4s deep dull purple
 21 5s deep dull purple
 22 7s deep dull purple
 23 8s deep dull purple
 24 10s deep dull purple
 (a) deep reddish lilac
 25 14s deep dull purple
 26 fl deep dull purple
 (a) deep reddish lilac

B. As nos 6-26 but on white to pinkish surfaced paper.

27 3d deep purple
 28 4d deep purple
 29 6d deep reddish lilac
 30 8d deep reddish lilac
 31 1s deep reddish lilac
 (a) reddish violet
 32 1s4d deep reddish lilac
 33 1s6d deep reddish violet
 34 1s8d deep reddish violet
 35 2s deep reddish lilac
 (a) deep reddish violet
 36 2s4d deep reddish violet
 (a) reddish violet
 37 2s6d deep reddish lilac
 38 2s8d deep reddish lilac
 39 3s deep reddish lilac
 (a) reddish violet

40 3s6d deep reddish lilac
 41 4s deep reddish lilac
 (a) reddish violet
 42 5s deep reddish lilac
 43 7s deep reddish lilac
 44 8s deep reddish lilac
 45 10s deep reddish lilac
 (a) reddish violet
 46 14s deep reddish lilac
 47 fl deep reddish lilac
 (a) plum

C. As nos 6-26 but on white to pinkish unsurfaced paper

48 3d purple
 49 4d purple
 50 6d purple
 51 8d purple
 52 1s purple
 (a) reddish violet
 53 1s4d purple
 54 1s6d purple
 55 1s8d purple
 56 2s purple
 57 2s4d purple
 (a) reddish violet
 (b) dull reddish lilac
 58 2s6d purple
 59 2s8d purple
 58 2s6d purple
 59 2s8d purple
 60 3s purple
 61 3s6d purple
 62 4s purple
 63 5s purple
 64 7s purple

- 65 8s purple
 (a) dull reddish lilac
- 66 10s plum
- 67 14s plum
- 68 £1 plum



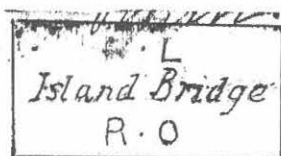
276

1868 Type 276. Wmk Scales (type 56)
 Perf. 14. Typo. De la Rue on
 surfaced paper.

- 69 £2 slate lilac E
 (a) deep lilac (on blued paper)E
 (b) on unsurfaced paper (L)
- 70 £3 slate lilac E
 (a) deep lilac (on blued paper)E
 (b) on unsurfaced paper (L)
- 71 £5 slate lilac E
 (a) deep lilac (on blued paper)E
 (b) on unsurfaced paper (L)

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE 'NEWSLETTER'

DO YOU KNOW ?



Information Requested

M. V. D. Champness

Amongst the Irish Material from the T. E. Field Collection sold recently at Harmers, there were many elusive receiving house marks. One example, unfortunately cut out, was of a Dublin Receiving Office known as Island Bridge. This is illustrated below. It was struck in black, and from the impression it would appear that the initial letter of handstamp had been erased. Can anyone produce another example and give any clue to its date of use? Perhaps someone can also solve the riddle of the missing initial. It appears to be of a type unrecorded by Mr. F.E. Dixon in his article in Stamp Collecting May 1st 1969, which listed all the types of Irish undated receiving house marks known to have been in use in Ireland between 1840-60.

VARIETIES

A Convention for the description of Irish Watermark varieties, and notes on Definitive and Commemorative Watermarks including comments on modern Definitive gum types, and a few outstanding paper types.

By J. David. F. McKee M.A. E.P.S.

CONTINUED FROM VOL. 2 NO. 25 WINTER 1976

BOOKLETS

Generally speaking, sideways Wmks (WSR & WSL) come from booklet panes, as was the case with the 1968 6d WSR and WSL types. In booklets, quantities of the WST and WSL varieties are usually numerically equal, but as booklets comprise a small proportion of the total printing of a stamp, one variety of sideways Wmk is usually in much shorter supply than the other. The 1971 (and later) booklets were produced in panes of 6 stamps, or 5 plus a label, and the outside edges of these panes were imperforate. Hence the WSL and WSR varieties of the 1971 set always have at least one imperforate side (left or right), or have one side and the top imperforate, depending on what part of the pane they come from. As only the top pair in a pane could have an imperforate top, the top stamps in a pane are slightly rarer than the bottom two pairs.

From the foregoing we see that we can have the $\frac{1}{2}$ p value with WUp and perforated on all 4 sides (p4) from sheets: and WSL P3 or P2; and WSR P3 or P2. Similarly we have the same versions of the 1p, 2p, $2\frac{1}{2}$ p and 5p Dog (but not 5p Stag). Some of these versions are catalogued as "WS", or "Wmk. Side Inverted" which is really far too confusing to be worth accepting as a convention.

Coil stamps are WUp. Incidentally, the $2\frac{1}{2}$ p booklet pane came in two varieties, with a slight shade difference, and just possibly with a difference in the overall pane dimensions. Gum types varied on the two varieties as well. Hence it seems that both types are available WSL P3: WSL P2: WSR P3: WSR P2: include the basic WUp, the coil stamp with its different perforation gauge, the sheet stamp with gum additive (see later), and you have no less than 11 identifiable versions of the still-valid $2\frac{1}{2}$ p stamp, which has not been issued on unwatermarked paper, and perhaps will not be so issued. Happily it is still possible to obtain most of the WSL and WSR varieties by being sweet in person to the Philatelic Bureau in their enchanted grotto in the GPO Arcade off Henry Street, and checking through their stocks of the 1974 and subsequent booklets.

THE POSTAGE DUES

The 1925 Postage Due set exists with a normal WUp, as indeed do all Postage Dues, and with WI and WS versions of the 1d and 2d. The 1940 "E" set provides WI versions of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d, 1d, $1\frac{1}{2}$ d, 2d, 3d, 5d, 8d and 1/-, and with a 6d with both WSR and WSL varieties.

The 1971 Decimal Postage Due set (with changed colours) has confused the matter. It is generally much more satisfying to collect varieties in a set no longer in production, so that one can say with some confidence that all varieties are already in existence, and no more are likely to occur. With the Definitives now unwatermarked, we are rapidly approaching the time when this will be the case, but the Postage Dues continue to be printed on Watermarked paper, and so all is not yet clear. Until a month ago, the writer could have said that all 1971 values are available WUp, and that there are WI varieties of the 1p, 5p and 7p. Now it seems that the 1p is available WSL. (Hurry to the Philatelic Bureau!) Presumably as printing continues on watermarked paper (to use up stocks?) other varieties may arise and a careful look out must be kept, certainly for the WSR analogue of the WSL 1p.

How helpful it would be if the Philatelic Bureau were to offer a Wmk variety service.

COMMEMORATIVES

The number of Wmk varieties affecting Commemorative stamps is very limited. Apart from the WUp version, we find WI varieties on the 1932 Eucharistic Congress 2d, a very rare stamp; the 1949 Mangan 1d; the 1954 Newman 2d; the 1961 Aer Lingus 1/3d; and the 1968 Markiewicz 1/5d. Not all these varieties have been seen by the writer, but all are listed in one catalogue or another.

THE 1944 O'CLEARY COMMEMORATIVE/DEFINITIVE SET

One other issue deserves special mention; the 1944 "Annals of the Four Masters", more commonly called the O'Cleary set, a $\frac{1}{2}$ d and 1/- 'horizontal' format set that was eventually adopted as Definitives, replacing the 1940 $\frac{1}{2}$ d and 1/- 'Sword of Light', until they were themselves superseded by the Lsd 'Animals' set around 1969. The basic 'Normal' Wmk is WSL? or , on both values. Furthermore, both

values are to be found WSR or , (usually called WI as an 'Inverted' version of the normal WSL, but far better described as here, WSR). In addition, the $\frac{1}{2}$ d also comes from booklet panes in a version described, confusingly, as WR. Now, by our Convention, WR would be , or a

reversed WUp. But this implies WUp to be the 'Normal' for the set, which it ain't! The 'Normal' is in fact WSL or , and a reversed

version of this would be  .. We would define this as Wmk Reversed-Sideways Right or WR-SR. This variety is in fact missing from the writer's collection and so this is an assumption, albeit logical.

SUMMARY ON WATERMARK VARIETIES

Little remains to be said about Wmks. However, no article on Wmks would be complete without at least a reference to that most odd of "Irish" stamps, the Fiji 2d grey of 1922-1927 which exists imperforate (presumably catalogued SG233a) which was printed as a trial on paper watermarked "SE" as used in the Irish 1922 definitives, but was never officially issued.

Some modern Irish stamps are difficult to define as the Wmks are not easily seen. Such stamps should be examined in subdued lighting, face down on (e.g.) black plastic. The addition of some proprietary 'watermark fluid' or of petroleum ether (with a low boiling point) (and very flammable and risky: Warning from some Government; it may be hazardous to your health), the use of coloured filters to screen out, as it were, the colour of the stamp to 'highlight' the Wmk, examining the back in bright oblique light, using the new 'pressure method' involving special paper and apparatus; all are methods that can be used. With a cancelled stamp, wetting it on the aforesaid black plastic surface often reveals an elusive Wmk. In fact, the best (or rather, safest) methods are those which do not involve the addition of chemicals to a possibly valuable stamp.

In some cases, the bottom curve of the , at its open end approaches the cross-bar so closely that the Wmk appears as  Here, examination of a margin often helps. Again, the actual dimensions of the Wmk may vary from time to time, due in part, and in some cases, to stretching of the paper during manufacture. The writer has rigidly avoided involvement in size varieties.

THE CONVENTION

The Wmk varieties listed above are summarised here again for convenience. Remember, all illustrations are shown as seen from the BACK of the stamp, with the stamp upright (although face-down).

WUp.....		Watermark Upright.
WI.....		Watermark Inverted.
WSL.....		Watermark Sideways to Left.
WSR.....		Watermark Sideways to Right.
WR.....		Watermark Reversed.

WIR.....



Watermark Inverted AND Reversed.

WR-SL.....



Watermark Reversed - Sideways to Left

WR-SR.....



Watermark Reversed - Sideways to Right.

B. GUMS

GUMS TO 1968

Considerable confusion has developed in some circles as to the nature of the gum or gums used on Irish Definitives. Such gums are variously described as "GA" or Gum Arabic, an organic gum: "PVA" or Poly Vinyl Alcohol, a synthetic gum: and "PVAD", the term normally used to describe PVA gum to which colouring has been added in the form of the chemical Dextrin or Dextrine. To forestall critics, the writer adds that the definition of PVA is somewhat controversial, as it is sometimes called 'Poly Vinyl Acetate'. In fact the gum probably contains both the alcohol and acetate.

Prior to Decimalisation in 1971, Gum Arabic was used on all Irish issues, but from 1968 PVA (you decide on the Alcohol/Acetate argument) was introduced to replace GA. Now, there is one problem with pure PVA, in that it is basically matt and nearly transparent, so that on some stamps the result is an 'un-gummed' appearance. This led to production control problems, as well as user difficulties, and from about 1971-72 colour additives were mixed with PVA, giving a colouring that could be loosely described as 'yellowish' and occasionally 'shiny'.

Generally speaking, when faced with the decision as to whether a stamp is gummed with GA or PVA, one relies somewhat on the fact that GA is usually rather shiny, and PVA is matt. On the decimal "Animals" Definitives, GA was not used, but 'shiny' PVA (i.e. with colourant to make the gum visible) has appeared, in addition to plain PVA. In common with many aspects of Irish Philately, a confusion exists here. The writer has seen this shiny colourant referred to as "Gum Additive" and abbreviated to "GA". Of course!! In fact, this "GA" is only PVA with additives, and the real or honest-to-God GA refers to the pre-1970 period.

Hence, we have GA up to 1968, and PVA appearing subsequently, with GA fading out around 1970, but with a short overlap period affecting the first (Lsd) 'Animals' only. The PVA after 1970 appears both clear, matt and often quite transparent on the one hand, and with yellowish additive in varying (and seemingly uncontrolled) concentrations on the other hand, and in varying degrees of shinyness. This shininess often rivals GA, but we must trust the word of the Philatelic Bureau unless we are prepared for spectrographic analysis.

The Philatelic Bureau further testifies that it does not use Dextrine as a colourant, but on the unwatermarked 'Animals' set of 1974, there is a real green tinge in the gum. Of course, this does not have to be Dextrine, but one remembers the plea of the Philatelic Bureau that they do not learn of the latest printing variations until the stocks actually hit their desks, and one does not thereafter wish to be overly positive. Further the Deponent sayeth not!

THE 1968 Lsd "ANIMALS"

The basic gum in the first "Animals" set was Gum Arabic, which was to be found on all values except the coil stamps, which were PVA. In addition, PVA began to rear its synthetic head on printings from 1970, when it appeared on the 1d, 2d, 3d, 5d, 6d, 9d, 1/- and 2/6. Or so states Stanley Gibbons. In fact, PVA on the 2d is problematical, and on the 5d it is known, but rare.

(Editor 's note: The 1d, 2d, 3d values appeared in coil form with PVA; this is the 2d SG referred to).

THE 1971 DECIMAL "ANIMALS"

All values in the watermarked Decimal set were produced with PVA gum, and it was on this set that the additive began to appear. In fact, the additive could have appeared on all values of the set, as more and more printings were required. However, the set proved short-lived (by Irish standards) being supplanted by the unwatermarked set over a period (still continuing) commencing in 1974. As a result some low, or odd, values on watermarked paper became virtually obsolete before they reached the stage of requiring further printings on paper gummed with coloured gum. The practical demonetisation of the $\frac{1}{2}$ p as a unit of currency, and the postal uselessness of the $\frac{1}{2}$ p and 3p values are probable causes for these denominations not appearing (to the writer's knowledge) on 'Additive' gum.

Additive appears (in addition to clear PVA) on the 1p, 2p, $2\frac{1}{2}$ p, $3\frac{1}{2}$ p, 4p, 5p Stag, 6p, 7p, $7\frac{1}{2}$ p, 10p and 20p. The omission of the 5p Dog and the 9p Stag from this list is probably due to the fact that they appeared on unwatermarked paper (UWP) quite early on. The 20p and 50p possibly never ran to enough extra printings for inclusion in the additive list because postal demand for these values was low in comparison to the lower values.

BOOKLETS

Booklets are currently still being produced on watermarked paper, and it must be supposed that they, too, will exhibit gum varieties in the future. At present, the only booklet pane that shows gum variety is the $2\frac{1}{2}$ p pane of 6 from 1974 booklets. This pane is found in two types, already dignified with type numbers. Type I uses clear PVA, but type II has a noticeably yellowish gum. There is a faint shade variety too; Type II is slightly lighter in appearance, and further,

there may be a slight variation in overall pane dimensions. It should be noted that this pane appears with both WSL and WSR, and the two types of gum are found on both Wmk. formats.

THE 1974 UNWATERMARKED "ANIMALS"

The unwatermarked Definitives naturally present considerable problems to the writer, as would any current set. Production of these stamps continues, and presumably will continue for many years. Additional denominations will be introduced as postal charges continue to skyrocket: merely look each year at the GPOs list of proposed Commemorative issues, and note the expected denominations. And, of course, keep an eye on the British charges. It seems to be a matter of national pride that we should never offer a cheaper service for any extended period.

As a result, the following comments are only of a provisional nature. Before long we may find different gums, new colourants, self-adhesives or even 'gum-it-yourself' types. So far there seem to have been no cases of shiny gum additives in this set, but a certain degree of colouring exists, notably on the 6p, 7p and 9p Stag values. An equally notable item is the 20p which appears with colouring, and also with an apparently white gum. Actually, the colouring could almost be described as tinting, and yellow is far less in evidence. The predominant tints are blue, or green, or bluish-green (or even greenish-blue?). The different varieties of the 20p are so noticeable that we could claim to be dealing with a considerable variation in paper thickness, by no means an unlikely circumstance.

The tinted 20p allows far more of the design to show through from the back of the stamp than does the 'white' gum type. Similarly the 10p and 15p (large size) show some tinting, and also let the design appear quite clearly from the back. Of the £1, it is so thin that all that can be said is that, for £1 they could at least have given us more paper; that perhaps air mail is to become so expensive that the weight of the stamp might put up the cost of sending an air letter; and that you must be careful to stick the stamp to the letter (or postcard, before long) the right way round.

Reverting briefly to the 9p Stag UWP, this value has recently appeared in a second, distinctly paler shade, with noticeably coloured gum, while the darker shade comes with both tinted and clear PVA. To sum up this subject, the study of gums on the current Unwatermarked definitives is necessarily only in its infancy, and the GPO must be watched with an eagle (not to say stag-, dog- and ox-like) eye.

C. PAPERS

PAPER VARIETIES

The writer does not intend to discuss paper types at any length. Such a study requires access to a vast number of stamps produced over many years, and even the use of physical and chemical apparatus

The subject could stand considerable additional research, bearing in mind the 46 years of life of the first 1922 Definitive designs, and the extended lives of other sets.

The best-known values exhibiting distinct paper types are the 6d "Sword of Light" from the 1940 "E" set, and the St. Patrick "E" High values.

The 6d 'Sword' value comes in two basic types, described as 'Ordinary' paper, and 'Chalky' paper. In fact, the degree of chalkiness varies somewhat and, further, the paper itself changes in colour from creamy white to white. The writer admits that he begs the question somewhat in his own collection by listing this stamp as (a) Creamy, (b) chalky, and (c) white. It could be argued that the listing should be reduced to (a) Cream, and (b) chalky; or even that it should be increased to (a) Ordinary/Cream; (b) Chalky/Cream; (c) Chalky/White and (d) Ordinary/White. But who wants to be didactic? If you do, please tell me first.

The St. Patrick "E" set ran for about 26 years, going obviously, through a number of printings and a variety of shades (as indeed did most of the 1940 Definitive set apart from the 1ld value). The first issues of 1942-45 were on a decidedly creamy-coloured paper. From about 1952 the 2/6 appeared on chalky (i.e. chalk-surfaced) paper gradually increasing in whiteness, as did the 5/-. The 10/- became chalky around 1948-50. Extremes in paper shade (degrees of whiteness) would probably classify as Cream/Chalk, and White/Chalk, the former distinct from the 1942-45 issues on cream paper. Incidentally, it seems that the WI versions of these high values also exhibit a range of papers.

THE FUTURE

What of the future? In the first case, it can be assumed that continuing pressure on the Philatelic Bureau will eventually result in an extended service whereby Standing Order customers at least (and indeed who amongst us is not?) Will receive notification of paper and gum changes, and of new printings, like other Postal Authorities. This will allow the collector to keep abreast of most (Note: one does not say all) such changes. All we need now is that pressure.

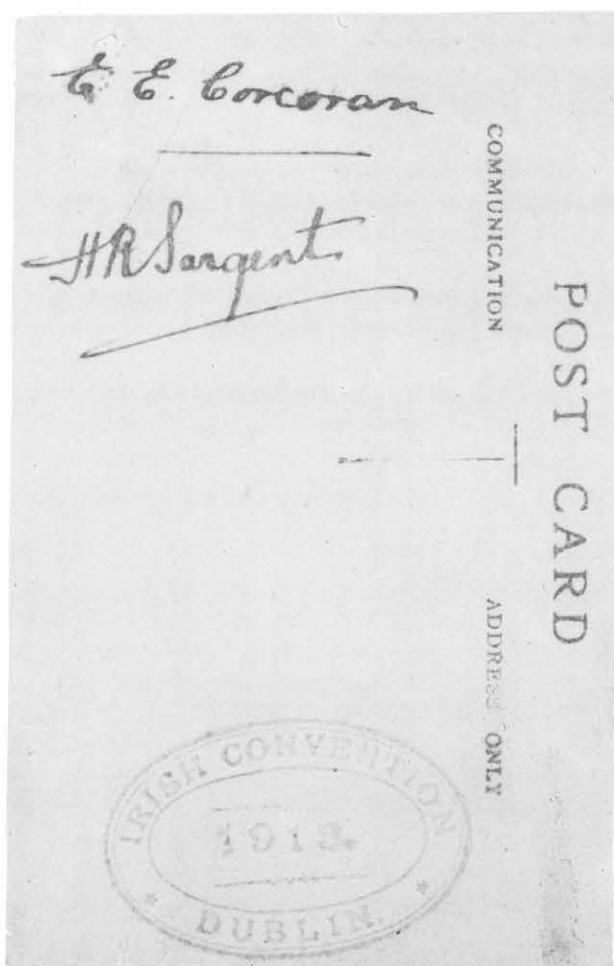
Then, paper itself is no longer a constant commodity. We find British stamps being produced on a variety of papers, such as FCP (Fluorescent Coated Paper) and PCP (Printer's Contract Paper). Manufacturers do not offer a standing guarantee that supplies will never vary. The paper substance will vary, generally for the worse, and the addition of wood pulp (mechanical wood content) helps to keep prices down. Thinner paper, appearing on stamps from all over the British Isles since 1970, allows more of the design to show from the rear, giving the appearance of gum colours that are actually colours from the stamp design. Colours 'showing through' combined with gum colourants, can give truly remarkable results in terms of the 'look' of the stamp from the rear, and also from the front.

New gums, new colourants, all will have an effect, perhaps producing many varieties not easy to distinguish except in extreme cases. In due time we may well see the introduction of paper coatings, phosphor coding for automatic letter-facing machines (ALF) and machine cancelling, and fluorescence in the actual paper through optical brightening agents (OBA). All these factors affect current British stamps. If these changes come to Ireland then a whole new page opens in the study of Irish stamps.

Nobody nowadays would seek a greater number of annual issues, but it is true that few countries in modern times can match Ireland's miserable record or having had one basic design of definitives for 46 years, from 1922 to 1969. Hence an interest in varieties of Wmk., paper and gum such as exist in our issues provides another enjoyable handle to the study of Irish philately, and gives us many more stamps to play with.....excuse it please; in which to specialise!

Note Book

BILL KANE



This is a much sought after cancellation. Recorded as registered on 23rd July '17 was mainly used on philatelic mail during the years 1917-18. The Postcard on the front cover depicts the Post Office staff, in the grounds of Trinity College, Dublin, where the Convention was held. The reverse of the card carries the signatures of the two ladies above the rubber handstamp of the Convention.

—LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor
D.F. Newsletter

Dear Sir,

With reference to Mr. M. Phelan's Shannon Scheme Cover, G.S.M. Dec 1930 P-43 gave the date of issue as 17th Oct. 1930. There is no reference in 7 '38, Gibbons catalogue of '47 gave the date 15th Oct. 1930.

Yours faithfully
Brian De Burca.

Dear Sir,

Because I am a collector of modern Irish and English definitives, David McKee's opening remarks in his article, found in the current D.F. Newsletter, were of particular interest to me.

McKee's comparison of the Irish and British philatelic Bureaus is well taken. Granted that while Britain overwhelms the philatelic public with massive amounts of technical information; for example, the almost ludicrous volume of data available on current decimal Machins, Ireland stands mute on supplying any information.

Isn't it true that except for the most basic collectors, the average philatelist does not whip up much enthusiasm for modern Irish varieties simply because there is no official data made available to him.

Thus, a deadly serious study of modern Irish stamps becomes a hopeless task, the collector loses interest and Irish Philately suffers.

Frankly, I'd much rather collect animal definitives than Machin decimals but so far the availability of necessary data weighs heavily in favor of London.

Sincerely,
William J. Pavey
Glencoe, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

I write to say thank you, for a most interesting article "Irish Watermark Varieties" by Mr. McKee. At last someone gives those who buy "Mission Mixture" something that is of interest to them. We can now go through those thousands of stamps with some purpose.

Yours faithfully,
P. MacCormack Leicester.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

In my view the article on watermark varieties by David McKee left much to be desired. There are very good reasons why the watermark on the LSD animal definitives appears sideways on the low values and upright on the high values, and vice-versa on the decimal definitives. A full explanation of this may appear in a future issue of Irish Philately published by the Irish Philatelic Circle. But my most important objection is to Mr. McKee's suggestion that we refer to sideways watermarks as sideways left or sideways right. The trouble with this is that the top of the same watermark is at the left when looked at from the front and at the right when looked at from the back or vice-versa. In one place he says the description applies to the view from the front, in another to the view from the back. But notwithstanding that there is ample room for confusion. The term sideways and sideways inverted - which you use in your catalogue - are an accurate description of the watermarks and the reasons for them. As the following diagrams show it does not matter whether the watermark is examined from the front or back - on the sideways watermark the break in the 'e' is always on the bottom, on the sideways inverted watermark it always at the top.

LOOKING FROM FRONT



SIDEWAYS



SIDEWAYS
INVERTED

LOOKING FROM BACK



Yours faithfully
John Hearn, London.

OBITUARY It is my sad duty to report the passing of a great friend and wonderful philatelist John D. Houston. John who specialised in Great Britain and Ireland, was also a great student of Irish Postal History. He will always be remembered for the great work and study of Irish Spoon Cancellations, one of his pet themes. It is a tragic blow for Irish Philately, and all who knew him. Our deepest sympathies to his dear wife and family in this fateful hour.

William Kane.

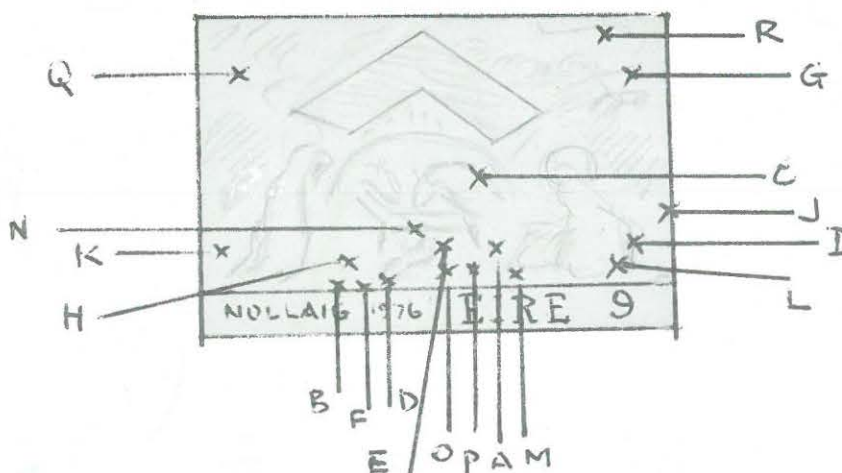
VARIETIES



1976 (Nov 11) Christmas 1976. Designer, R. McGrath. Perf $14\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$. (10×10).

Christmas 1976 Stamps

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. Row 1 St 1 White Dot | J. Row 3 St 4 Dot on Margin |
| B. Row 1 St 2 White Mark | K. Row 3 St 5 Orange Mark |
| C. Row 1 St 10 Red Mark on Cow | L. Row 3 St 5 Green Mark |
| D. Row 2 St 2 Red Mark | M. Row 3 St 7 Blue Mark |
| E. Row 2 St 6 Red Mark | N. Row 4 St 7 Light Blue Mark |
| F. Row 2 St 7 Yellow Mark | O. Row 5 St 6 White Dot |
| G. Row 2 St 7 Yellow Dot | P. Row 6 St 2 Red Mark |
| H. Row 3 St 1 Light Red Mark | Q. Row 7 St 5 Red Mark |
| I. Row 3 St 1 Green Mark | R. Row 8 St 10 White Dot |
| | S. Row 10 St 5 Extra Red Cow |



We are most grateful to Mr. D.P. Baumann of Dungarvan, CO. Waterford for the above information.

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