

IRISH STAMP NEWS

No.13.

November - December 1982



75p

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No. 13 November-December 1982

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EDITORIAL

We are four years old this year and amazingly, still going strong. For this I am grateful to our contributors, our advertisers, and of course our readers. Unfortunately our circulation has not increased dramatically over the years but the magazine is breaking even financially and we do hope to continue its publication for many years to come.

We are continuing to receive interesting material for publication and I am pleased to note that IRISH STAMP NEWS has seen the debut of several philatelic writers. In this issue we congratulate Andrew Ballard on his first essay which is an excellent example of research and outstanding proof that even after 60 years there is something new to report on Ireland's first stamps.

I would like to say a special thank you to our regular columnists and contributors particularly Brian Warren and Eddie FitzGerald, Fred Dixon, John Holman, Bill Kane, Gerard Brady T.D., and John Gilmore.

We are fortunate to have had the excellent services of Fingerprint Ltd., our typesetters and thanks are due to John, Tom and Derek for keeping down the gremlins. Our printers Roger Bennett and his staff at Reprint are to be congratulated for their quality production and their keeping to the ridiculous deadlines we keep setting them.

One grouse I do have is with society and club secretaries who do not send us their programme of events.

Stamp clubs and philatelic societies are not meant to be secret or exclusive establishments, so please let me have details of meetings, events or other newsworthy items well in advance. And anyone who has any information or news that they think is worthy of publication please let me have it, even if you think I may know about it already.

Finally please help us to keep IRISH STAMP NEWS going. Show the magazine to your friends and encourage collectors to subscribe. Support our advertisers, and mention that you saw their advertisement in IRISH STAMP NEWS.

IAN W. WHYTE
Editor

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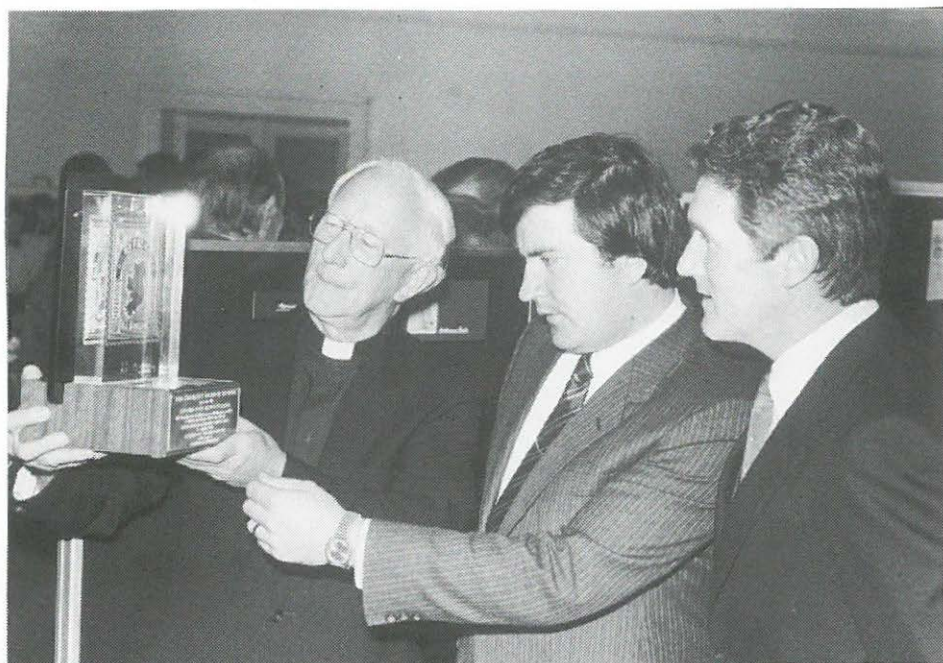
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NEWSBEAT



Mr Brendan McGuinness (far right), managing director of Grants of Ireland Ltd, admires The Stamping Branch Trophy presented ty Very Rev. John Brennan by Mr Terry Leyden T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Posts and Telegraphs.

STAMPA '82

A total of about 2,600 people attended this year's National Stamp Exhibition which took place on October 22 to 25, which was about 100 up on last year's figures. Both the organisers and the dealers expressed satisfaction with the turnout and the latter were especially pleased with the business done considering the current economic recession.

The quantity and standard of exhibits was higher than last year. A total of 31 exhibits were awarded 21 medals or trophies and 8 diplomas of merit. A full list of the awards is given at the end of this report.

The exhibition was officially opened at a reception on Thursday October 21 by Mr. Terry Leyden T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. The Minister expressed his thanks to Dr. Quigley and the Organising Committee for their con-

tinued dedication and energy which had ensured that STAMPA was firmly established as one of the major philatelic events of the year.

The Minister said that he regarded the development of an interest in stamp collecting in schools as very important and in this regard his Department, in co-operation with the Federation of Philatelic Societies of Ireland, had launched a pilot scheme to promote philately in schools. He congratulated the F.P.S.I. on its admission to the International Federation, F.I.P.

Mr. Leydon went on to announce the release, in three issues, of the new definitive series beginning on December 15 next, with two further releases in the first part of 1983. Enlarged copies of the six designs to be issued on December 15 were on display at STAMPA and the Minister hoped they would meet with the approval of Irish stamp collectors.

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Stampa '82 Contd

The opening reception was sponsored by Grants of Ireland Ltd., whose managing director, Mr. Brendan McGuinness, explained in his speech the connection his company had with philately. Last June Jersey issued a stamp to commemorate Jersey-born Jean Martell, who in 1715 founded the house of Martell, whose brandy is now world-renowned. To commemorate this stamp issue Martell produced a very special brandy in a limited edition of about 2,000 bottles, each of which bears the Jersey stamp and first day of issue cancel. Grants of Ireland provided STAMPA with an exhibit which included this special bottle of brandy along with letters between Martell and his Irish agents dating back to the eighteenth century. The company also gave out first day maximum cards to the first few hundred visitors to STAMPA.

The Minister, in thanking Mr. McGuinness for his contribution to STAMPA, mentioned that next year his Department were issuing a stamp to commemorate Carolan which would tie in with another of his company's products — Carolan's Irish Cream Liqueur!

The chairman of STAMPA, Dr. Joseph Quigley, in his opening remarks, drew attention to the absence of some overseas dealers due to the new 'V.A.T. on Import' regulations. He thanked Mr. Gerard Brady T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Environment, who had made strenuous efforts on STAMPA's behalf to overcome the problems dealers

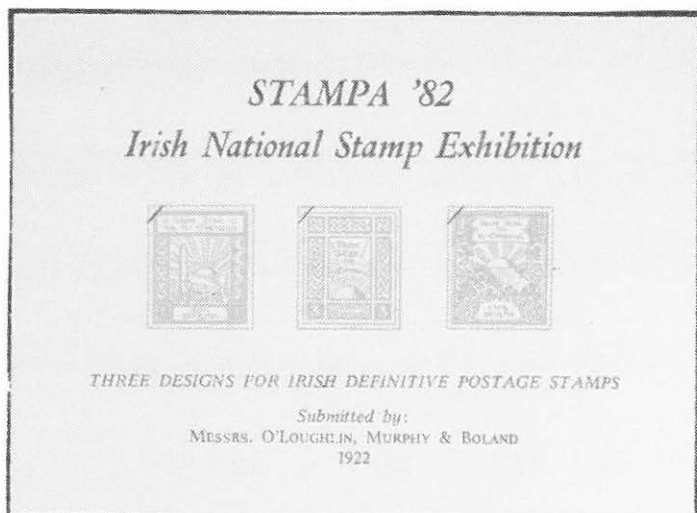
would have with Customs. However only 2 dealers had been able to come over from Britain and with greatly reduced stocks. It was to be hoped that the situation would be improved for STAMPA '83.

The souvenir card produced for STAMPA was not as popular as souvenirs previously produced such as the booklets and overprinted miniature sheets, although serious philatelists believed that it may well turn out in the long run to be quite a valuable item. Three hundred cards printed in blue, instead of the green used for the 2,500 cards for general sale, were distributed to STAMPA members.

Business at STAMPA was brisk, and most demand seemed to be for cheaper to medium range material, i.e. in the under £50 price range. There was very little on offer from the public to dealers however and standholders were disappointed with the purchasing side of the business.

The Eire Philatelic Association had a special meeting at STAMPA to present the T.E. Field Award to Brian Warren and Edward FitzGerald for their outstanding contribution to Irish philately. The E.P.A. also presented certificates to the top three exhibits of Irish material at STAMPA.

The social highlight of the exhibition was the Awards Banquet held in the Burlington Hotel at which a special award was made to Jim Sheehy. Mr. Sheehy retired this year from his post as Director of the Revenue Stamping Branch. During the ten years of STAMPA's



Stampa '82 Souvenir Card.

IRELAND: Recent Unusual Items



The 'Irish Gang' Forgery 1932



In 1932 a group of Irishmen embarked on an ambitious scheme to defraud thousands of Australians by means of forged Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes tickets. The plan called for the posting of tens of thousands of circulars and in order not to attract attention to their activities by purchasing large quantities of stamps they forged over 50,000 copies of the 1932 2d Sydney Harbour Bridge stamp, and the George V definitive 2d.

The authorities were alerted to the Irish gang's activities by an Adelaide philatelist who spotted the forgeries on mail and three people were arrested, including a photo-engraver, and a copper printing plate with a large stock of the stamps was seized.

This is the only known attempt to defraud the Post Office in Australia by means of forging stamps. Some mint examples, and a few used, have survived and these are highly prized by philatelists.

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| 1. Express Courier Service cover with label | Price
60p |
| 2. Paperlink Courier cover with label | 60p |
| 3. UNIFIL — Irish contingent of U.N. Forces in Lebanon: 3 different covers (philatelic) | £7.50 |
| 4. Recently discovered (see ISN No. 12) 'SUPPORT OFFICIAL IRA' overprint on 1972 GB Explorers 3p, mint ** | £18.00 |
| 5. 1982 STAMPA souvenir card in green (2,500 issued) showing essays for 1922-23 definitives | £2.00 |
| 6. 1982 STAMPA souvenir card — special edition for members only in blue (300 issued) | £30.00 |
| 7. 1981 STAMPA Hoban Presentation Pack (2500 issued) | £5.00 |
| 8. Ditto. Members Pack (250 issued) | £45.00 |
| 9. 1981 James Hoban Irish (18p) and U.S.A. (18 cents and 20 cents) issues on one First Day Cover with 'SILK' cachet and Dublin and Washington first day cancels. Scarce. A few left at | £9.50 |
| 10. 1981 Cork Stamp Exhibition booklet. | £6.00 |
| 11. 1981 Sligo Stamp Exhibition booklet | £5.00 |
| 12. 1981 Collectorex souvenir booklet. | £5.00 |
| 13. 1982 ANDEX/Brisbane 'Irish Gang' souvenir sheet, mint | £1.50 |
| 14. Ditto on cover posted at show with Australian commern, and exhibition cancel. Scarce, only 50 done | £9.50 |
| 15. 'Irish Gang' sheet only on cover with 'Blarney' handstamp | £2.50 |



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Stampa '82 Contd

existence Mr. Sheehy made an outstanding contribution by way of providing superb displays of material from the archives of the Stamping Branch. Mr. Sheehy also organised the donation of the Revenue Stamping Branch Trophy to STAMPA for the best exhibit of Irish postage stamps.

STAMPA '82 AWARDS

The David Feldman Trophy for the best overall exhibit and the Revenue Stamping Branch Trophy for the best exhibit of Irish postage stamps was awarded to the same exhibit – “Irish High Value Overprints” by Rev. John Brennan. Fr. Brennan was also awarded a gold medal.

Gold medals were also awarded to the following: Dr. John P. Mackey for “Saxony Adhesive Postage Stamps”, Frank Gillespie for “Irish Crowns – 1922-1935 five shilling stamps”, Ian Whyte for “Postal History of Kingstown and District”.

Silver medals went to Brian Warren (with felicitation of the Jury) for “Ireland – the Jumelle Printings”, Dr. John P. Mackey for “Saxony – The English Connection”, Peter D. Fitzgerald for “Accent Varieties on Thom Saorstat Overprints”, Dr. Robert P. Towers for “Grenada: The Pre-Adhesive Handstamps 1784-1858”, John F. Barret for “Switzerland: The Silk Threads”, Alan MacCoy for “Postal History of Ireland”, George E. R. Ithell for “Plating the DG coils”, Brian Warren for “Decimal Multi-value Coils”, and Desmond J. Quinn for “The Canadian Queens 1868-1893”.

A bronze medal with the felicitations of the Jury was awarded to William Kane for “Spoon Cancellations”, and other bronze medallists were: John E. O. Hobbs for “Burma”, Fred E. Dixon for “Express Mail”, Patricia MacCoy for “Montenegro”, Anthony F. Finn for “Ireland: The Transition Period 1922-23”, Geoffrey McAuley for “Sudetenland”, and Heloise Mitchell for “Parasols and Umbrellas”.

Diplomas of merit were awarded to Captain Pat Casey, “Louis Peters”, John Hickey, and Declan O'Connor. The Trophy for the best exhibit in the ‘Novice’ Section – for first time exhibitors at STAMPA – was awarded to Kieran McGovern for his exhibit “Captain James Cook”. Diplomas were awarded to other novice exhibitors Michael Farry, Francis L. Corkery, and Michael Hartnett.

NEW POSTBUS SERVICE

by A. F. Finn

During a visit to Clare at the end of July, I took the opportunity of going to Ennis to see the new Postbus service in operation.

I was interested to learn that the machine used on the Postbus for issuing tickets to passengers had gone out of order shortly after the introduction of the service.



A “provisional” ticket has been introduced (see illustration), which consists of a small printed form, handstamped with the office datestamp of Ennis Post Office. The fare amount is inserted by hand by the driver of the Postbus on payment of the fare by the passenger.

No special postal markings are utilised in connection with this service, and officially there are no facilities for posting mail on board the bus, which collects and delivers mail at post offices and sub-offices along its route. Some postcards which were accepted on a “courtesy” basis by the driver were subsequently delivered with the same handstamp of Ennis applied as to the tickets.

I.P.T.A. A.G.M.

The Irish Philatelic Traders Association held its annual general meeting at STAMPA 82, and twenty members – two-thirds of the total membership – attended. The Secretary reported that three robbery notices had been issued and two complaints dealt with in the past year. The I.P.T.A. had been accepted as a member of the International Federation of Stamp Dealers Associations.

The Council for 1983 was elected as follows: Michael Giffney (Chairman); Jim Brophy (Vice-Chairman); Ian Whyte (Hon. Secretary); David MacDonnell (Hon. Treasurer); Padraig O'Shea. The new Council will take office on January 1st next.

The Secretariat of the I.P.T.A. is at 102 Leinster Road, Dublin 6. Telephone 977449.



CHRISTMAS OFFERS FROM HIBERNIAN

OVERPRINTS

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½d to 1s. Thom blue-black set SG 30-43	£120.00	£75.00	—
½d to 1s. Thom Saorstat set SG 52-63	£67.50	£50.00	—

DEFINITIVES

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SE watermark set 2/6 to 10s. SG102-104	—	£150.00	—
E watermark set ½d to 1s. SG 111-122	£95.00	£12.00	—
E watermark set 2/6 to 10s. Cream paper SG 123-5	£95.00	£5.50	—
E watermark set 2/6 to 10s. Chalky paper SG 123a-5a	£30.00	£5.75	£10.00
Gerl Lsd set ½d to 10s. SG 247-262	£27.50	£9.00	£12.00
Gerl Decimal set ½p to 50p Wmkd excluding 10p lav SG 287-301	£30.00	£5.75	£10.00
Gerl Decimal set ½p to £1 no wmk SG 339-59	£15.00	£9.50	£55.00
Gerl Decimal complete set of no wmk gum and paper variations as per Hibernian Catalogue 1983	£69.00	£17.00	—

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1960 Refugee Year to 1970 Kevin Barry	£87.50	£85.00	—
1971 Europa to 1981 Christmas	£90.00	£87.50	£125.00

POSTAGE DUES

1925 SE wmk set ½d to 6d. SG D1-4	£135.00	£30.00	—
1940-69 E wmk set ½d to 1s. SG D5-14	£45.00	£27.50	—
1971-81 Complete Decimal Dues. SG 22-31	£5.25	£5.00	£30.00

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ROBBERY IN CO. KILKENNY

On Sunday, September 6 a safe was removed from a house near Jenkinstown, Co. Kilkenny. The safe was found later with its contents removed, which included a valuable selection of stamps housed in an old green 'Rapkin Peerless' looseleaf card page stockbook. The stockbook, contained 20 pages approximately 10 inches x 8 inches, on which was a range of mint Irish high value overprint varieties and errors, all with holes pertaining to the variety, including the following items: 5 shilling wide date with 'inverted T' variety; ditto. with 'frame notch' variety; 2/6 overprints on 'Perfect' or 'Broken S' - a study including 6 or 7 examples with notes; Thom Rialtas high value set (SG 44/6) with '£120' written in pencil on Robson Lowe 1971 auction card, also narrow date 2/6, 5/- and 10/- on similar card priced £11 in pencil; Thom Rialtas 5/- and 10/- with unusual wavy line machine cancel (late usage); about 30 mint 'SE' watermark experimental coils including a few of the single perforation 1d; 10d 'SE' with 'cross' variety in mint block. Anyone who sees material which may be from this haul is asked to contact the Irish Philatelic Traders Association at Dublin 01-977449 or Kilkenny Detective Office of the Garda Síochána, telephone Kilkenny 056-21323.

This is the third major stamp robbery in Ireland this year and so far none of the material stolen in these burglaries has been recovered. Collectors are strongly advised to take every precaution as a result, and to ensure that they have their collections adequately insured.

E.P.A. NOTES

Edward FitzGerald and Brian Warren of Dublin, Ireland, are the joint recipients of the 1982 Eire Philatelic Association's Thomas Edwin Field Award. The late Thomas E. Field of Yorkshire, England, for whom the award is named, was one of the foremost Irish philatelists. He did extensive research in the subject, which contributed greatly to its advancement. The award has been presented annually to others who have also made outstanding contributions to Irish philately, in the tradition of Thomas E. Field.

FitzGerald and Warren are the authors of *The Gerl Definitives*, A Specialised Handbook of the Definitive Postage Stamps of Ireland, 1968 to 1978. The Field Award selection committee, Joseph E. Foley, U.S.A.; Michael Leonard, England; and Frederick E. Dixon, Ireland, considered the work as remarkable for

its clear presentation, accurate illustrations, and extremely thorough treatment of every aspect of the subject. The sharing of their research and philatelic knowledge and their fellow collectors continues the Thomas Edwin Field tradition.

The award certificates, and the E.P.A. Life Memberships given as part of the award, were presented at STAMPA '82 in Dublin.



E.P.A. Nor-Cal Chapter Meeting at Westpex '82. Standing (l. to r.): Frank Conley, Jim Lawless, Dana Morrison, Brian Halton, Garvin Lohman, Tom Mitchell, Preston Pope, Emery Megel and Herb Nishio. Seated (l. to r.): Tom O'Neill and Richard Swords. (Photo. by E.P.A. President, Bill Zellers).

The South California Chapter of the Eire Philatelic Association (International) held a regional meeting in conjunction with SESCOAL '82 in Los Angeles on October 15 - 17. A souvenir card, produced by the SO-CAL E.P.A. chapter, commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Irish Postage Stamps, was on sale at the show. Collectors may order the souvenir card from E.P.A., P.O. Box 1381, Riverside CA92502. The cost is US \$2.00 (IR£1.50) postpaid.

1922 - 1982

60th ANNIVERSARY

IRELAND'S First Definitive Stamp

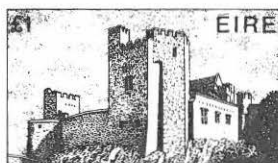


SOCAL CHAPTER

éire philatelic association
(INTERNATIONAL)

Philatelists interested in joining the E.P.A. may obtain membership information from E.P.A. Secretary, R. C. Jones, 8 Beach Street, Brockton, Mass. 02402, U.S.A., or from Michael Giffney, P.O. Box 1096, Dublin 1.

THIRD DEFINITIVE SERIES



The Irish Post Office wishes to announce the introduction of a new series of definitive postage stamps to replace the current series which was introduced in 1968/69. The new series will be on the theme of "Irish Architecture down the Ages" and the buildings selected will be illustrated in nine different designs. The series will carry a total of 20 stamps with values ranging from 1p to £5. It is planned to introduce the new series in three phases. The first phase will be launched on 15th December, 1982; the second and third phases during the first half of 1983.

Six stamps will be released on Wednesday, 15th December, 1982, as follows: 22p — Aughnanure Castle; 26p — Cormac's Chapel; 29p — St Mac Dara's Church; 44p — Killarney Cathedral; £1 — Cahir Castle; £5 — Busaras (Central Bus Station).

Pictorial First Day Covers (Price 14p each) will be printed in conjunction with the above stamps. Requests for our first day of issue cancellation must be received before the first day of issue.

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DIARY

I.P.S.: Irish Philatelic Society meetings are held on alternate Thursdays at 7.45 p.m. at the Clarence Hotel, Wellington Quay, Dublin 2.

D.S.S.: Dublin Stamp Society meetings are held on alternate Wednesdays at 8 p.m. at the Ormond Hotel, Ormond Quay, Dublin 1. Details of displays have not been received as yet.

P.P.C.: Portadown Philatelic Club meetings are held at 7.30 p.m. on the first Friday of each month in the Kilicomaine Community Centre, Portadown.

NOVEMBER

Thursday 18th: I.P.S. 'French Classical Stamps' by Mr E. Boyle.

Wednesday 24th: D.S.S.

Saturday 27th: Postcard Auction 11 a.m. Stamp Auction 2 p.m. Burlington Hotel, Dublin 2. MacDonnell Whyte Ltd. Tel: 977449.

DECEMBER

Thursday 2nd: I.P.S. 'Thematic'. Mr A. Finn.

Friday 3rd: P.P.C. 'Post Offices and their markings'. Mr D. Quail.

Saturday & Sunday 4th & 5th: Galway Stamp Exhibition, Imperial Hotel, Galway. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Wednesday 8th: D.S.S. Stamp Auction by Hibernian Stamp Co. Ltd. Venue to be arranged. Tel: 755086.

Wednesday 15th: NEW ISSUE: Definitives 22p, 26p, 29p, 44p, £1 and £5.

Thursday 16th: I.P.S. Social Evening. Venue: 1 Leeson Park, Dublin 6.

AN IRISH LOCAL POST

By B. De Burca, M.B.E.



Sometime early in 1918 a local post was organised in Dublin by the Irish Republican Army. I have not seen any published account of this, and thought it worth while to pen a few lines on what my memory recalls of it, and with a hope that this note may elicit further information on the subject.

The object of the post was to divert funds from the British Post Office in Ireland. Posting depots were organised in various shops, and an oval cancellation as illustrated was applied on payment of a fee. The copy which I have measures 29 X 44 mm. Baile Átha Cliata is of course Dublin, and Post na Bfian would be best translated as Irish Post. A considerable amount of commercial mail passed through this post, and I have seen many covers, but unfortunately at that time an envelope without a postage stamp meant nothing to me and I am perhaps fortunate to retain a single copy.

I have no idea as to how long the post lasted, what fees were paid or the mode of delivery. It had to be kept as secret as possible as it was an illegal post according to the British laws then existing. I would welcome any further information which any reader can give.



Cork Stamp Exhibition (l. to r.): Tony O'Leary, Michael Doyle, Michael Crowley, Tom Holland serving customers at the Post Office Stand.

DISPLAY ADVERTISING RATES

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GREAT BRITAIN STANDARD	£21.60	CRISTAL VOL.1	£50.70
		CRISTAL VOL.2	£28.60
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The Annual General Meeting of the Irish Philatelic Circle was held at the Victory Services Club, London, during the weekend, 4th/5th September 1982.

Officers and Committee elected for 1982/3 were:-

President: Mr B. de Burca; Vice Presidents: Col. B. B. Zellers; Rev. W. E. Davey; Mr M. Freyer; General Secretary: Mr H. K. Jamieson, 3 Clieves Way, Hampton, Middx TW12 2PL. Area Secretaries: Mr A. V. Cassidy, Mr O. M. Richards, Mr J. Lennon; Treasurer: Mr W. Stevens; Hon. Auditor: Mr B. Warren; Auctioneer: Mr M. Leonard; Editor: Mr O. M. Richards; Committee Members: Mr J. F. Hearn, Mr G. E. R. Itell, Mr P. H. Williams, Dr V. W. Hale, Mr W. Kane, Mr J. O'Neill.

During the proceedings adjudication for the Thomas E. Field Awards were made as follows:-

General Philately

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100	100

Postal History

1st A. Kane 2nd O. M. Richards

Thematics

1st W. Stevens 2nd W. Stevens

Literature

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BOOK REVIEW

STAMPS OF IRELAND 1983 specialised catalogue published by MacDonnell Whyte Ltd. 152 pages, A5, paperback. Price IR£3.50.

HIBERNIAN Catalogue of the Postage Stamps of Ireland 1922 - 1982. 108pp. Price IR£3.00.

Two catalogues on the same subject - Irish stamps - appeared in October. Each has a different approach and for that reason they are in ways complementary to each other.

Hibernian's catalogue is split into two parts - simplified and specialised. The first gives a straightforward listing of the basic stamps with prices for mint (unmounted and hinged), used, and FDC (where available). The second part contains tabulated listings of overprint controls, plate and sheet markings, gutter pairs, booklets, panes, coils, varieties and errors, gum and paper variations, and miniature sheet plating guides. The **STAMPS OF IRELAND** catalogue, originally published by David Feldman, and now produced by MacDonnell Whyte Ltd., lists the varieties, controls, plates, etc. under the simplified listing of each issue.

There are arguments for both types of listing, and in this writer's opinion they both have equal validity. The 'Hibernian' is very handy for a collector of a particular facet of Irish philately such as plate blocks, gutter pairs, etc. On the other hand if one wants the complete listing of all the variants of a particular issue 'Stamps of Ireland' is the book to consult.

Both books have a similar numbering system which coincides for most issues, and both have a cross reference for each stamp with the equivalent Gibbons, Scott, Michel and Yvert (Stamps of Ireland only) numbers, which one presumes is convenient for overseas collectors though it may look complicated to a novice.

As regards pricing Hibernian's prices appear to be about 10 to 15 per cent lower than 'Stamps of Ireland', though it should be pointed out that while the 'Hibernian' catalogue is the publisher's price list, 'Stamps of Ireland' states that 'it is not intended as the publishers' price list, and the editor of the latter informs me that the prices given are for what collectors can expect to pay as a maximum, subject to market changes, for these stamps in very fine to superb condition. Less than fine condition can be obtained at 'substantially lower prices'.

'Stamps of Ireland' whilst covering practically all the material listed in the 'Hibernian' also includes sections on 'GB used in Ireland', 'Forerunners', 'Essays', 'Airmail Flight Covers',

'Postal Stationery' and in a useful Appendix gives priced listings of Railway Letter Stamps, Exhibition Souvenirs, and Presentation Packs.

As in most specialised books of this kind the gremlins have been at work, but there are one or two editorial howlers as well. In the 'Hibernian' there is one serious misconception whereby many overprint varieties or re-entries and flaws on the basic stamp are noted as being 'N/C' which is explained as meaning 'that a variety is not always to be found in that position'. To my mind this should have been explained thus: 'This variety is constant in the printings from a particular plate or stereo' which all of the overprint items denoted 'N/C' are.

On the face of it, with an extra forty pages, and a wider range of listings, the 'Stamps of Ireland' catalogue even though it is 50p dearer, would appear to be the better buy. However the 'Hibernian' scores for many collectors with its very useful notes on the overprint issues and their identification which is very useful for the beginners and, as I said above, its tabulated lists of the specialist material is also attractive to many.

If you can afford it buy both, if you can't then buy the one that suits your mode and range of collecting interests.

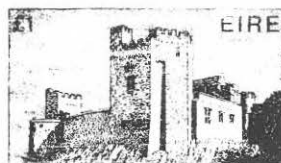
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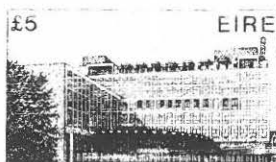
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Irish Stamp News, 102 Leinster Road, Dublin 6

THE NEW DEFINITIVES



Cahir Castle



Busaras Dublin



*Killarney
Cathedral*



*Aughnanure
Castle*



*St. Mac Dara's
Church*



*Cormac's
Chapel*

The Department of Posts and Telegraphs call it the 'Third' Definitive Series, in that it is the third series of designs. The majority of Irish philatelists would call it the eighth series having regard not only to design but also to watermark and method of printing. No doubt too that philatelists will in time refer to the series by a more subjective name such as the 'buildings', — the 'architecture series' or even call it after the artist as in the case of the 'Gerl' definitives, viz. the 'Craig' definitives.

There will be twenty stamps in the initial series though no doubt inflation will add a few more in years to come. These will be issued in three releases, the first of which comprises six stamps to be issued on December 15.

The first six values are 22p, 26p, 29p, 44p, £1 and £5. The 22p stamp features Aughnanure Castle situated near Oughterard, Co. Galway; the 26p stamp features the 12th century Cormac's Chapel built on the Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary; the 29p stamp features St. Mac Dara's church on St. Mac Dara's Island off the south-west coast of Galway; the 44p stamp features Killarney Cathedral; the £1 stamp features the 15th century Cahir Castle, Co. Tipperary; and the £5 stamp features Busaras — the central bus station in Dublin.

The stamps are litho-printed by Irish Stamp Printing Ltd. The smaller format stamps will be produced in sheets of 200, and the larger format values in sheets of 100.

The designer responsible for the series is 30 year old Michael Craig. Craig was born in Dublin and brought up in England. He went to Cambridge Art School and started his professional career by illustrating books, and in 1974 he showed a limited edition in the Royal Academy Summer Show. Since then he has illustrated about 20 books, ranging from 'Readers Digest' coffee table and educational books to books on archaeology, verse, and wild flowers. His architectural drawings are in particular demand: he seems to get the best out of any building with an eye that takes every idiosyncrasy and slots it into a drawing of astounding depth and closeness of detail.



One of Michael Craig's book illustrations.

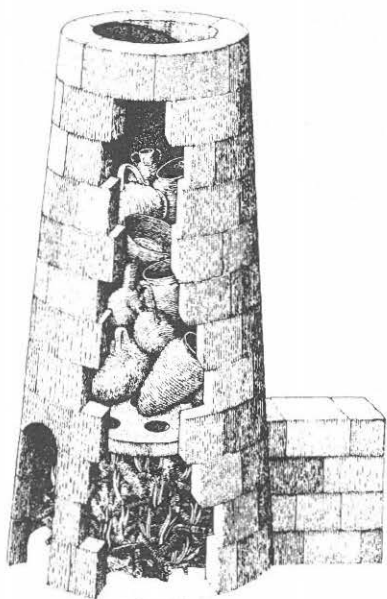
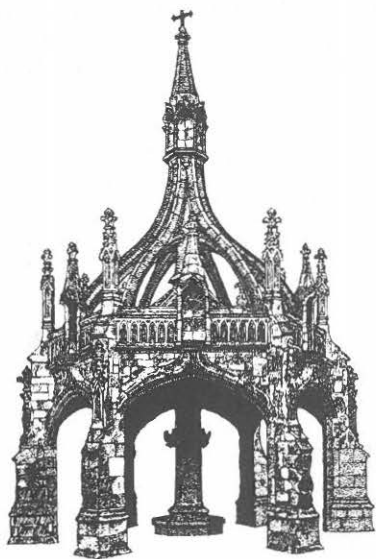
Craig was commissioned by the Stamp Design Advisory Committee to produce six different designs, each illustrating buildings of a particular period – early Christian, or pre-Christian; Romanesque; mediaeval; eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

The advisory committee, whose chairman Michael Scott is himself a renowned architect, gave Michael Craig various suggestions, and his architect father was called upon to give him some alternatives. Craig set each building a set of qualifications: it had to be a complete building and it had to fit the dimensions of the stamp, leaving room for the denomination on one side and the word 'Eire' on the other side.

He ended up with Saint Mac Dara's Church for the Christian era, Cormac's Chapel for the Romanesque example, and Cahir Castle for the mediaeval era. For the eighteenth century example Craig chose Marino Casino, in his own words "a small elegant summerhouse built by William Chambers for Lord Charlemont". Killarney Cathedral was the choice for the nineteenth century. Craig says "I drew the Broadstone (the old Great Western Railway terminus) first but it was an elevation and wasn't that exciting. Killarney could be a portrait rather than a landscape".

For the twentieth century he drew various buildings – "all sorts of places, before I ended up with Busaras. It's a very early modern building for Dublin, also it's interesting textually – there's lot of things happening. I looked at the Carrolls factory (in Dundalk), the Bank of Ireland (Baggot Street, Dublin), various other buildings, but you couldn't get them in proportion – you'd have to have a very steep perspective.

Having submitted the set of six drawings to the Department, Craig was summoned back a few months later to find that it had been decided to have nine different designs – "we thought it would be a good idea to have some sixteenth and seventeenth century buildings." So he produced a drawing of Aughnanure Castle near Oughterard as a



Two examples of Michael Craig's architectural illustrations.

typical Irish tower house of the sixteenth century, which was accepted by the committee. He then draw Steevens' Hospital and the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, and Steevens' was preferred. The Palm House in the Botanic Gardens, Belfast was the third drawing chosen but this design was discarded for political reasons, and a replacement was found in the Plam House in the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin in Dublin.

The first six designs were unveiled at STAMPA '82 and immediate reaction from collectors was favourable though there was some criticism of the lettering used. It was felt that there was little or no thought given to the inscription and denomination and that some attempt should have been made to use a more distinctive typeface.

Although the choice of Busaras had aroused some controversy when it had been announced in the national media, collectors felt that the finished artwork which was very flattering to the building was quite an attractive design. One wag however was heard to remark unkindly that the choice of £5 as the denomination for the Busaras was because the general public rarely see such a high value on their mail, though the Minister, Mr Leyden, considered the allocation of the design to the highest denomination as an honour for the architect of the Busaras who is also chairman of the Stamp Design Advisory Committee, Michael Scott.

Four values in the current 'Gerl' design definitives – 22p, 26p, 29p and £1 – will be withdrawn from general sale at all Post Offices at close of business on Tuesday, December 14. They will however still be available from the Philatelic Section, subject to stocks, until March 15, 1983.

– Acknowledgements to 'Pagust' and Department of Posts and Telegraphs for information for the above article.

THE PREPARATION OF NEW IRISH HIGH VALUE DEFINITIVES 1923-1937; AN EXAMINATION OF THE ABORTIVE SERIES OF 1923-1927 AND ITS REPLACEMENT BY THE ST. PATRICK DESIGNS

By Andrew Ballard

One unusual feature of the Irish government's stamp issuing policy between 1923 and 1927 was the continued use of overprinted British high value stamps. Although the overprinted British definitives up to and including the 1/- value were soon replaced with a new series designed by Irish artists, the government continued to overprint British 2/6, 5/- and 10/- high values of the 'Seahorse' design well into the nineteen-thirties. It was not until late in 1937, almost fifteen years since the appearance of the first independent Irish definitive, the 2d 'Map', that an entirely new set of high value stamps with the theme of St. Patrick was finally issued. Yet the St. Patrick design, which was to be used for over thirty years, had not been the first choice of the Irish government. Indeed, work on a completely different set of high values depicting famous Dublin buildings was well advanced as early as 1924, and was not finally abandoned until 1927. This article is an attempt to outline the history of this abortive high value series, and its successor, the St. Patrick series.

The Irish authorities were considering designs for new high value stamps as early as 1922. In that year a general competition was held for the proposed new definitive series. Most of the designs submitted for this competition have been known for some time.¹ It is debatable how open this competition actually was, since it had also been decided beforehand to commission established artists from whose work the final designs would be chosen. One result of this was that the artist G. Atkinson was asked to submit two designs of the General Post Office and the Customs House in Dublin for, respectively, proposed 2/6 and 5/- high values. The Provisional Government Executive studied the designs late in 1922, but could not decide whether or not to use them. It is known that the President, W. T. Cosgrave, was doubtful about the artistic merits of both designs. However, the postmaster general, J. J. Walsh, was concerned about his diminishing stocks of overprinted high values. Early in May 1923, without any form of approval from the Executive, Walsh had Atkinson's designs forwarded to the Royal Mint in London for dies to be engraved.

There was, of course, nothing unusual about using the services of the Royal Mint. All the dies and plates of the definitive series up to and including the 1/- value had been, or were in the process of being, prepared at the mint. The facilities for good quality die and plate production simply did not exist in Dublin.² However, it was unusual for Walsh to take the initiative by sending new designs for engraving. The officials at the Mint were used to dealing with top officials in the Irish Ministry of Finance, including, for example, C. J. Gregg who had direct contact with Cosgrave. It was Gregg who had handled the production of the first Irish low value definitives.

¹ See Robson Lowe, 1922 - Ireland - 1972. pamphlet, London 1972.

² In fact the Mint continued to supply the Irish government with dies and plates for nearly all of their issues until at least 1957.

By May 1923 A. S. Roberts, Director of Stamping at Dublin Castle, had taken over much of this side of Gregg's responsibilities. Consequently the Deputy Master of the Royal Mint, R. A. Johnson, who was used to dealing with Gregg or Roberts, was puzzled to receive new high value designs for the Irish Free State without any accompanying information from either of them. His surprise was complete when he actually examined the designs.

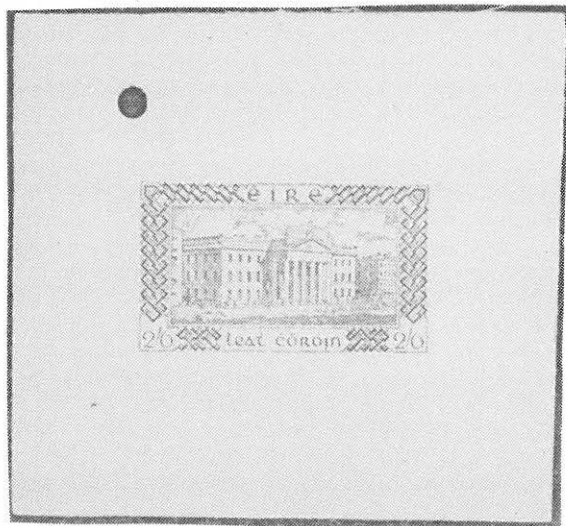


Illustration 1: Die proof in sepia on white card of the proposed 2/6 design. (Actual size).

From the first Johnson disliked Atkinson's designs, which he pronounced were more suitable for, '... some cheap calender provided to a greengrocer by some wholesale firm'.³ Johnson particularly hated the proposed 2/6 design, which depicted a contemporary view of the General Post Office complete with traffic, the whole surmounted by a modern 'Jazz' border. He complained to G. W. Stonestreet, Controller of Stamping at Somerset House, that the roads were drawn so badly that they resembled '... straight streams made of Guinness' stout'.⁴ Stonestreet agreed that the drawings were 'hopeless' and totally unsuitable for engraving. Hence it was with some reluctance that Johnson ordered the preparation of an experimental die of the 2/6 design.⁵ This die was engraved in July, and a number of proofs in sepia were pulled from it (illustration 1).⁶ These simply confirmed Johnson's belief that the designs were wholly unsuitable for production.

Johnson then decided to persuade the Irish Government to scrap Atkinson's designs and adopt new ones of the same subjects prepared in England by a 'decent' artist.

³ *Mint* 20, 886, Johnson to Stonestreet, 4.2.24, Public Record Office, London.

⁴ *ibid.*, loc. cit.

⁵ The die is now in the British Museum.

⁶ At least two proof have survived; one is in the Public Record Office and the other is in the British Museum.

Johnson had in mind Eric Bradbury or Fred Taylor, both of whom had submitted work to the Mint in the past. Stonestreet urged caution, fearing that the Irish government would treat with contempt the suggestion that an English artist design their stamps. Stonestreet had a good relationship with the officials at the Irish Ministry of Finance, and he did not want this endangered by Johnson's artistic pretensions. Johnson, however, was pleased with his idea, and ignored Stonestreet. By-passing Walsh, Johnson complained to Gregg about the poor quality of the submitted artwork, and outlined his proposal for new designs. Gregg, of course, knew nothing about the whole affair. Once he had ascertained that Roberts was also suitably mystified, Gregg took up the matter directly with the President. Naturally enough, once Cosgrave had elicited the facts from Walsh, he was not pleased. He had to admit to Johnson that, not only were the designs sub-standard, but also they should not have been sent in the first place.

In fact, the little affair considerably annoyed both Cosgrave and his officials at the Ministry of Finance. Cosgrave attempted to explain it away by pointing out that, under the Constitution, the Postmaster-General was not responsible to the executive. Technically this might have been correct, but in practice Walsh had clearly exceeded his authority. What exactly Walsh had hoped to achieve is open to question. Perhaps his concern at the low stocks of overprinted high values had caused him to behave carelessly. More seriously, and since it is known that he personally favoured Atkinson's designs, it is possible that he attempted to defy the executive and present the Ministry of Finance with a *fait accompli*. Either way Walsh had released poor quality stamp designs to the Mint, and in the process embarrassed the President. Cosgrave never forgot it. The immediate result was that Roberts was given full responsibility for the preparation of new high value stamp designs. The designs would have to be of prominent Dublin buildings, including the post office. Other than that, Roberts was given a free hand.

Roberts took his time on the new project. He discussed it at length with Johnson, out of a sense of obligation rather than conviction, for like Stonestreet he was wary of Johnson's artistic tastes. Roberts was particularly fond of the nineteenth century engravings of Dublin in P. Bartlett's *Scenery and Antiquities of Ireland*, and he finally decided that some of these could be adapted for the new high value designs.⁷ Johnson examined the book, was doubtful, but agreed when he grasped that the choice of artist was to be left to him. Privately he thought the engravings could be 'interpreted' in a rather more modern style, but he said nothing to Roberts. After some discussion between the two it was decided that an engraving of the Four Courts from Bartlett's book would be copied, and an engraved die prepared from the drawing. Other than that Roberts had little idea of the type of borders or value tablets to be used with this design. By now it was December 1924.

Johnson then looked for a suitable artist to produce the initial drawing of the Four Courts. He particularly admired the work of Fred Taylor, who had already produced several 'modernish' stamp designs, the latest being a pictorial definitive series for Palestine. However, Taylor was ill, and on Stonestreet's recommendation Johnson turned to the more traditional E. Marsden Wilson. Johnson stressed that the original engraving of the Four Courts should be 'interpreted' by Wilson, but it soon became apparent that Wilson, who was really more of an engraver than an artist, was content simply to copy the engraving and make only minor alterations. Wilson's first drawing, completed in May 1925, proved to be too large and far too detailed for the engravers. After repeated exhortations from Johnson, who finally felt obliged to send Wilson a drawn rectangle of the exact scale required for the drawing, Wilson managed to

⁷ *Mint* 20 886, Roberts to Johnson 4.4.24.

produce a revised design which Johnson could pass for engraving. Not that Johnson liked Wilson's drawing; on the contrary, he considered it to be a 'limpid copy', but since it was now July he had little choice but to pass it. (Illustration 2). Consequently an etching on brass plate was made, and four proofs from it were sent to Roberts. Roberts had been worrying Johnson for results for over a month, but in mid-July he realised that there was not the slightest possibility of the new high value designs being ready for several more months, and he made arrangements for fresh supplies of British high values to be overprinted. This took place in August, 1925.

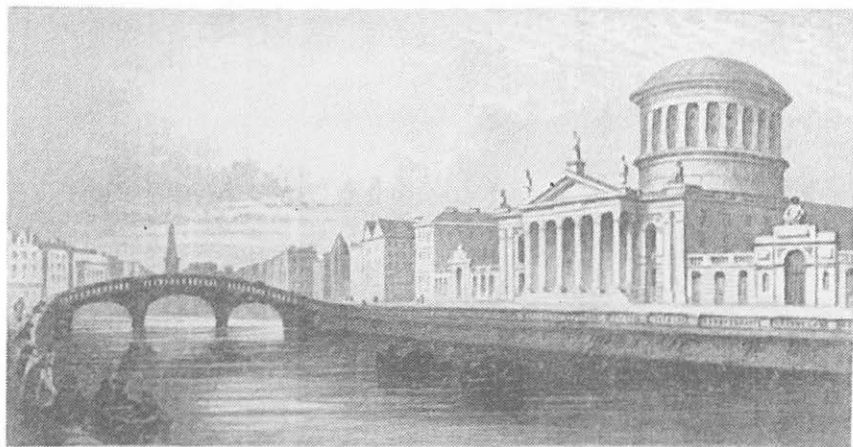


Illustration 2: Wilson's original drawing of The Four Courts.

To Johnson's surprise Roberts liked Wilson's design. Even Walsh admitted that it was far more competent than either of Atkinson's efforts. Roberts immediately ordered three proofs in each of seven specified colours, twenty-one proofs altogether, so that the final colour could be chosen. These proofs were all supplied in September.⁸ Roberts then ordered three more drawings in the same style as that of the Four Courts. The subjects were to be the Customs House and Old Parliament House from Bartlett's book, and the General Post Office from a similar work entitled *Dublin Delineated*. Roberts specified that the drawings were to be submitted to him for approval before any dies were engraved. Interestingly, it was only at this stage that it was decided to include a 10/- value in the proposed high value series.

Robert's request for more drawings posed Johnson a problem. Johnson had disliked Wilson's original drawing, but since Roberts had specifically requested the new drawings to be in the same style as the Four Courts design, he had little option but to commission Wilson. As if to make up for his tardiness over completing the original drawing, Wilson worked quickly and efficiently on the three new designs, and Johnson had them on his desk shortly before Christmas, 1925. (Illustrations 3-5). Nevertheless, Johnson did not send them on to Roberts. Whilst Wilson had been working on the new designs, Johnson had learned that the artist Fred Taylor had recovered from the illness which had prevented him from securing the original commission for the Four Courts drawing. Accordingly, two or three days after Johnson had received Wilson's final three designs, Taylor was invited to the Mint. There Johnson formally asked Taylor

⁸ *Mint* 20 886, *Stonestreet to Roberts* 23.9.25.

to prepare four more drawings, one of each of the designs ordered by Roberts including that of the Four Courts. Johnson even told Taylor that, although other designs had already been submitted these were not, in his opinion, up to the required standard and would be rejected by the Irish government. This duplicity was to cause Johnson a great deal of trouble later in the year.

Johnson's problems started in January 1926, when Taylor had a relapse and was unable to work. By late January Roberts was continually worrying Johnson for the new drawings. Roberts had already decided that the new stamp designs would use the modern 'Jazz' borders from Atkinson's rejected designs. He was impatient to complete the project. However, it was not until mid February that Taylor was able to deliver his drawings to the Mint, and Johnson was immediately disappointed.



Illustration 3: Wilson's original drawing of The Customs House.

For instead of 'interpreting' the engravings, as Johnson had wanted, Taylor had simply copied them, with subsequent results somewhat similar to those of Wilson. In spite of this Johnson still thought Taylor's work far more 'artistic' than that of Wilson. Accordingly, following instructions from Roberts, the three Wilson and four Taylor designs were sent to Dublin together with stamp size photographs of all the designs using Atkinson's borders.

To Johnson's dismay Roberts thought that Taylor's designs were 'not to be compared' with those of Wilson.⁹ In fact, Roberts was singularly annoyed that he had been kept waiting three months for what he considered to be inferior drawings. However, he contented himself with criticizing the border designs, which rather unsurprisingly looked out of place with Wilson's drawings of nineteenth century scenes. Roberts favoured a classical or architectural design for the borders, but there was no time to commission an Irish artist to do this, and so he left it to Johnson. Indeed at this stage, early in April, the Irish post office was again running seriously short of overprinted high values. Supplies were only expected to last until October, and there were no plans to overprint fresh stocks. Accordingly Johnson urged Stonestreet to produce new border designs without delay. In spite of this more time was lost because Stonestreet thought that classical type borders would be a mistake, and insisted on producing an

⁹ *Mint* 20, 886, Roberts to Hocking 12.4.26.

additional set in a Celtic style. Both sets of borders were sent to Roberts, who finally decided on Stonestreet's Celtic designs, in spite of his misgivings that, '... the Celtic has been horribly overdone since 1922.¹⁰ The four Wilson designs with their new Celtic borders were duly submitted to the Executive Council in July. Subject to one or two minor alterations — including the removal of the royal arms from the facade of the post office — the Executive approved the designs. It was also decided that the designs of the General Post Office, Customs House and the Four Courts would be used for, respectively, the 2/6, 5/- and 10/- high values. Roberts was told to make the necessary alterations and arrange for the immediate production of plates.



Illustration 4: Wilson's original drawing of The General Post Office.

Upon hearing that alterations to the drawings themselves were required, Johnson made one last attempt to have Taylor's designs adopted. He argued that it would be dangerous to let the engravers make the alterations, and unwise to let Wilson make them himself. Wilson, Johnson claimed, would take a long time, might even insist on a trip to Dublin to study the buildings at first hand, and could even refuse altogether. Johnson concluded by pointing out that Taylor's designs were still available, did not require any alterations, and anyway were by an artist who was regarded 'much more highly' by the 'artistic world generally' than Wilson.¹¹ Johnson then sent all of Taylor's designs back to Roberts and urged him to reconsider them. All of Johnson's accusations against Wilson were complete nonsense for Wilson had done his best to please Johnson. Nor did Johnson's arguments convince Roberts, who pointed out that the Executive had approved Wilson's designs, and this had settled the matter. Ironically, Taylor proved to be somewhat ungrateful to Johnson. He argued at length over the size of his fee, at one stage even threatening to lobby his MP. In the end Johnson paid up, but to get his own back on the Irish government for its 'bad taste' in rejecting Taylor's designs, he made sure that this extra payment was added to the Irish bill. His relationship with Taylor, however, was permanently soured.

Since he could delay no longer, Johnson reluctantly allowed Wilson's drawings to be altered, and dies engraved. He took his time, though. The alterations were not completed and approved until February 1927. Three etched brass plates were then prepared, but were not finished until May. In that month all three plates, together with a number of proofs from them in dark sepia, blue and green, were sent to Roberts.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, Roberts to Evans 13.7.26.

¹¹ *ibid.*, Johnson to Roberts 4.2.27.

Also in May, unable to wait any longer, the Irish government overprinted fresh stocks of British high values. Then, at the eleventh hour, the whole project faltered. The Irish government took no further action until August, when it formally requested the bill for all work connected with the high values. Johnson waited in vain for new orders to prepare plates. In fact, no further action on new high value designs was to take place for another eight years.



Illustration 5: Wilson's original drawing of The Old Parliament House.

It seems most likely that the project was a casualty of political events in 1927. In that year Cosgrave fought two elections, in June and September. In July Kevin O'Higgins, vice-president of Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedheal party and minister for home affairs, was assassinated. Above all, De Valera's Fianna Fail party finally emerged as a serious threat to Cosgrave's supremacy. The Executive had far more pressing problems to consider throughout the summer of 1927 than the proposed new set of high value postage stamps. Gregg had enough problems arranging for the executive simply to approve the required alterations to Wilson's original drawings. Once new stocks of British high values had been overprinted in May and the immediate problem resolved, the Executive was apparently prepared temporarily to shelve the project. There was also a rather curious belief, which Walsh amongst others shared, that, because high value stamps were used mainly for telegraphic purposes, it somehow did not matter that overprinted British stamps were used. Certainly this viewpoint was held by E. Blythe, who combined the Ministry of Finance with the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs from October 1927 onwards. Although the political situation was stabilised after October, Blythe thought that the introduction of new high values when adequate stocks of overprinted British high values existed, was uneconomic and totally unnecessary. Hence no moves were made to produce new high values throughout Cosgrave's final administration, which was eventually replaced by De Valera's Fianna Fail party in March 1932.

De Valera's government was far more nationalistic than that of Cosgrave, but even though immediate measures were taken to sever some of the political and commercial ties with Britain, the new government was quite content to continue using British overprinted high values. Indeed, the whole question of new high values was not even considered until February, 1935, when once again overprinted stocks were running low. Although it was then decided to overprint the current British high values, the so-called 're-engraved' series, the government finally determined that this would be the

last time it would take place. The executive then considered the Wilson designs which had been prepared by the previous administration, but rejected them. It was felt that a more appropriate Celtic Theme was required to complement the existing series to the shilling value. Other factors also worked against the Wilson designs, not least being the fact that they had all been produced in London. So eventually R. J. King, who had already designed the 1933 Holy Year and 1934 Gaelic Athletic Association commemorative issues, was commissioned to design a single stamp on the theme of St. Patrick which would be used for the new high value definitives. Once again A. S. Roberts was given overall responsibility for the project.

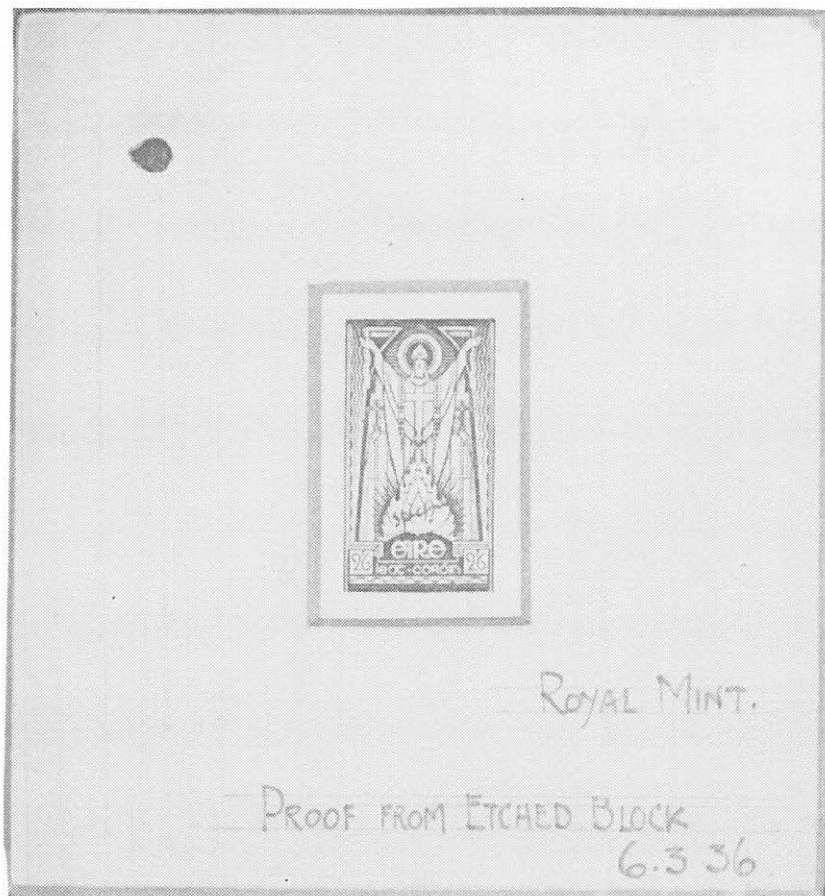


Illustration 6: 2/6 proof from etched copper block, 6.3.36. (Actual size).

In February 1936 King's completed design, depicting St. Patrick invoking a blessing on the Paschal Fire, was sent to the Royal Mint. Roberts ordered an experimental etched copper block to be prepared, but S. Evans, now superintendent of the operative department at the Mint, advised against this, pointing out that an engraved brass plate would produce the best quality proofs. Roberts, however, was convinced that copper was the ideal medium, and rejected Evans' advice. Consequently in March an etched

copper block and one proof from it were forwarded Roberts. (illustration 6). Roberts was far from satisfied, considering the copper block to be, '... just the sort of result I would expect from the local block maker'.¹² He complained to Evans about the 'flat' engraving which failed to emphasise the central design and resulted in a somewhat confused overall impression. Evans admitted that the block produced poor quality proofs, but maintained that it was only to be expected from a copper medium. Evans' smugness annoyed Roberts, but in the end he gave way and a new brass etching was made. This etched plate, together with two proofs from it, were sent to Roberts two weeks later. It was the first in a number of disagreements between Roberts and Evans.

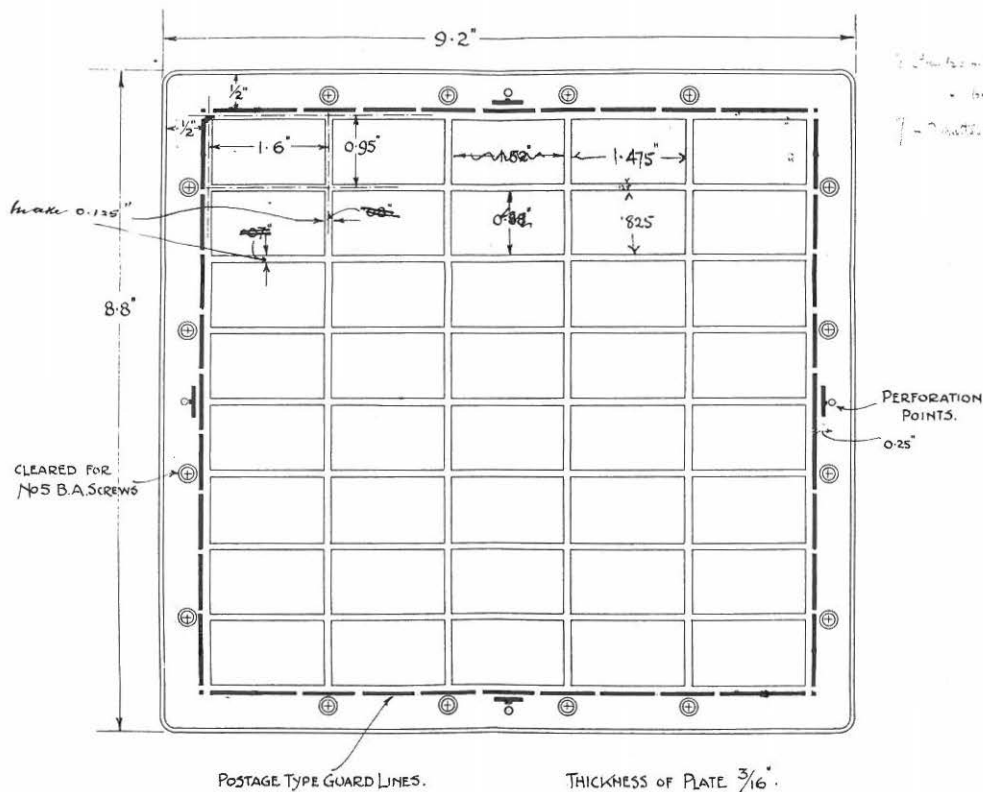


Illustration 7: Proposed Plate Plan for the St. Patrick high vals.

The proofs from the brass plate were approved, and Evans returned the original artwork. In turn Roberts sent him the 5/- and 10/- value tablets for the remaining two values and requested engraved dies of all three values. By now Evans had produced a plate plan, based on Robert's suggestion for a plate of forty stamps. Evans' plan conceived a plate 8 x 5 with perforation gutters of 0.07" and 0.08", exactly the same as for the Shannon commemorative stamp, the plates of which had been prepared by the Mint in 1929. (illustration 7). Roberts thought that the gutters would be too narrow,

¹² *Mint* 20, 1480, Roberts to Evans 9.3.36. ¹² *ibid.*, MacSweeney to Whitaker 13.3.40.

which would spoil the design. He proposed a slight reduction in the size of the design itself to 1.47" x 0.825" from the original 1.6" x 0.95", and a consequent enlarging of the perforation gutters to 0.125" all round. This would entail altering the drawing. King, however, argued that any reduction in the size of the original drawing would spoil the harmony of the design. Roberts let King have his way and a considerable number of alterations were made to the original drawing.

Examination of the early proofs produced by the Mint in January 1937 reveals the full extent of King's changes. Overall, the design was greatly simplified. The band of wavy-line border decoration immediately below the Gaelic value tablet, was replaced by a single thin white band which improved the proportions of the design. St. Patrick's garments were denuded of some decoration, and the accent on the first 'E' of 'EIRE' was grown at the Mint, and etched by the firm of Garrett and Atkinson at Ealing. Numbered 3/7 this plate was sent to Dublin on the 3rd of March. If this proved to be satisfactory it could be returned for chromium facing after an initial printing had been made, and in the meantime similar plates could be grown and deepened of the 2/6 and 10/- values. But it was all to no avail. The new plate was only slightly better than the originals, and Roberts admitted defeat. There was nothing for it but to scrap the plates and start again with improved, deepened dies. The release date was postponed.



Appd 20/1/37

ROYAL MINT 13.1.37.

Illustration 8: 2/6 die proof with King's Alterations, 20.2.37. (Actual size). (Used to make the original six plates which were not used.)

Evans was a little annoyed with the whole business. He was sure that chromium faced copper plates were ideal, and blamed Roberts for passing the dies in the first place. Roberts, for his part, formed a grudge against chromium faced plated. He had come in for some criticism from the Executive for failing to have the new high values ready for St. Patrick's Day, and he did not intend to repeat the mistake. Moreover, when explaining himself to the Executive it had come out that two plates of each high value had been ordered, which some ministers thought unnecessary. Henceforth relations between Roberts and Evans were somewhat strained.

In due course the original 2/6, 5/- and 10/- dies were deepened. The difference with the original proofs is pronounced, the deepened dies giving a darker, more polished

appearance. (illustration 9). To avoid any further problems, Evans made up a copper block of four 2/6 values and sent it to Roberts so that he could pull his own proofs. Roberts suggested a few minor changes, but was broadly satisfied, and ordered new plates, although only one plate of each value as the Executive had required. He also specified that the plates were not to be chromium faced, but simply 'flushed' with nickel. Evans, however, pointed out that the original printing problems would have been resolved by the new dies, and nickel flashed plates simply would not last. But Roberts was adamant, and so in July 1937 three nickel flashed plates, the 2/6 numbered 3/8, the 5/- numbered 4/9 and the 10/- was made more prominent. (illustration 8). Other slight changes contributed to the general strengthening of the central figure of St. Patrick, with the subsequent effacement of background details. Four proofs of each of the 2/6, 5/- and 10/- values encompassing these changes were approved in Dublin by the 20 January.



Illustration 9: 2/6 proof from deepened die 10/3/37 the final version used for the plates. (Actual size).

At this stage, everything appeared to be operating smoothly and, for once, on schedule, for it had been decided not to issue the new stamps until St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1937. Work on the actual plates proceeded quickly, and the first of them, the 5/- plate numbered 1/1, was sent to Dublin on 3 February. It was followed a week later by the remaining five plates; two of the 2/6 value, numbered 1/3 and 2/4, two of the 10/- value numbered 1/5 and 2/6, and the remaining 5/- plate numbered 2/2. At the same time Roberts received the bill for £220 — £100 for the original dies and

£120 for the six plates. The Irish press were informed of the forthcoming new high values, and Roberts ordered some proof sheets so he could supply them with some photographs.

Problems began in earnest when the stamping department ran off proof sheets of the 5/- value. Roberts was bluntly informed that a satisfactory print could not be obtained, even though the operatives had attempted everything, even using a minimal amount of ink and trying multiple rolling to get the covering. Roberts blamed the chromium facing for the poor printing qualities of the plate. With just over a fortnight to go before the issue date, Roberts desperately sent a proof sheet of the 5/- value to Evans, pointing out the problems. Evans was unimpressed. He was convinced that the chromium facing was not a problem, and suspected that the original dies themselves had not been deepened sufficiently, in which case, in his opinion, it was Robert's fault for not realising it when he examined the plate proofs. Evans could only suggest that extra depth might be obtained by etching the copper plates themselves. Since there was no time for the original plates to be returned, a new 5/- plate numbered 3/10 were finally sent to Dublin. It was from these plates that the high values were eventually printed and released on 8 September.

Ultimately, however, Evans was proved to be right. The facing wore quickly from the plates, even though comparatively few stamps were actually printed. By March 1940 16,000 of the 2/6 value, 11,000 of the 5/- and 6,000 of the 10/- value had been printed.¹² In that month all three plates were sent to the Mint to be repaired. At the time the stamping department in Dublin cited the low printing figures as evidence of bad workmanship, presumably in an attempt to have the plates repaired free of charge. Evans, naturally enough, would have none of this, pointing out that he had originally warned against the use of nickel flashed plates. Privately, Evans was suspicious of Irish printing techniques, and thought that 'injurious' inks had probably been used, although this was strenuously denied in Dublin. At any rate, the 2/6 and 5/- plates were repaired, coppered in a solution of cyanide, faced with nickel and returned. The light nickel facing had worn so quickly from the 10/- plate, however, that it proved to be beyond repair and was destroyed. Production of a new 10/- plate was delayed by the war. It was not until March 1941 that the new 10/- plate, numbered 4/11 and suitably chromium faced upon Evans' strict instructions, was sent to Dublin.

In retrospect it is evident that a number of factors contributed towards the fifteen year delay in the production of new high value stamps. Walsh's indiscretion, the unsuitability of Roberts as overall controller of the first high value project, Johnson's artistic pretensions, and the political problems of 1927 all played a part. Yet it appears that delays in stamp production were fairly common at this time. It was first proposed to issue stamp booklets, for example, as early as 1925, but the project was repeatedly postponed until 1930 and the booklets themselves did not appear until a year later.¹³ Throughout the nineteen-twenties and early nineteen-thirties the Executive showed little interest in new stamp designs. This is unsurprising in view of the social and political instability which accompanied the formation of the Irish Free State. It was not until the late nineteen thirties with the new state well established that a coherent stamp issuing policy emerged. In view of the problems facing the Irish government in the early nineteen twenties it is perhaps surprising that any new high value stamp designs emerged at all.

¹³ *Mint* 20, 993.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Bob West, Curator of the Philatelic department at the British Museum, and the staff of the Public Record Office at Kew, all of whom gave me invaluable assistance during the researching of this article.

THE 1922 WATERMARK PROTOTYPE – ‘SE’ MONOGRAM

by EDWARD FITZGERALD



Since the days of Sir Rowland Hill, the question of security at all stages of stamp manufacture, processing and sales outlets has been uppermost in the minds of Postal Authorities around the world. Amongst the security devices used in stamp manufacture since 1840, the principal safeguard was the watermark and with regard to Irish stamps this was the case until 1974 by which time the watermark could be deemed to be an obsolete security device; the success of modern coating techniques made the watermark no longer necessary as had been proved in Britain with the 1967-68 Machin definitives.

In the light of the importance of the watermark at the time, it is inconceivable that any State would permit another Postal Authority to use the State's watermark cypher for an alien purpose. Yet this appears to be the case if we are to accept as accurate information, a footnote in the Gibbons Commonwealth Catalogue – the Fiji Islands section. The footnote follows the 1922-27 definitives and states "The 2d Imperforate with T10 of Ireland came from a Trial Printing and was not issued". The T10 in question refers to the SE monogram watermark. It should be noted that the design of the 2d Fiji stamp remained unchanged between 1912 and 1938; any changes of consequence related purely to the design of the Crown Agents watermark but such changes were common to numerous other Crown Colonies. This writer has been unable to trace a satisfactory explanation for the use of Irish Security stamp paper in this case or why there was a necessity to have a Trial Printing at such a late stage for the 2d Fiji definitive.

But there was a great necessity for the Government of the emerging Irish Free State in 1922 to test the suitability of the SE monogram watermark as a security device and there is abundant evidence to show that the British authorities took care of all the technicalities of stamp production for the Irish Free State until such time that Irish personnel were trained to assume control themselves. It is well known that the Royal Mint produced the plates for the typographed stamps of Ireland. In the archives of the Irish Postal Museum there are examples of artwork for the accepted definitive designs and one item on display at the Cork Philatelic Exhibition and Stampa 82 has a manuscript "Royal Mint 31-5-22".

Perhaps the most impressive source of information relating to the early days of Irish Free State is a photocopy of an album page from the collection of the late Thomas Edwin Field. The text of the album page relates "The Dies were engraved and the Plates made by the Royal Mint, London. The Stamps were printed and perforated by a special Establishment set up in Dublin Castle, the work being directed by a skilled

staff from the Stamping Department, Somerset House, London. The paper was supplied by Messrs Joynson & Son of St Mary Cray, Kent and the sheets gummed by Messrs De la Rue & Co. London". In the course of an article which appeared in the Philatelic Magazine (4 April 1947) the author A. H. K. Roberts stated "The paper used was for a short time made in England and was watermarked multiple SE standing for Saorstát Éireann or the Irish Free State. This was soon replaced by a similar Irish paper with the same watermark, made at Saggart, a mill near Dublin. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THESE PAPERS"

Concentrating on two important points referred to above (a) the involvement of the Stamping Department, Somerset House and (b) paper made in England was used originally, we can conclude that the authorities must have been satisfied with the SE monogram watermark as a security device. We can further conclude that to be satisfied on this matter, Somerset House must have made a trial run of printed stamps in order to see how effective was the watermark. If the plates for the 2d Map stamp were not ready or available, what harm would there be if other type plates were used for this particular trial? As a further security precaution it would be reasonable to use the plates for some remote isolated Colony with a small population so as to minimise the risk of improper use if the trials were misappropriated later on. A Colony such as the Fiji islands would meet this requirement.

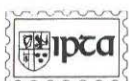
Examination of a block of the Trial Printing indicates the following characteristics (a) the paper is rag and/or esparto base paper typical of the time and when viewed under a U.V. lamp there is little or no reaction; the adhesive on the back gives the impression of being a crude grade of gum arabic, yellow-brown in colour with an unusual cloud-like streaking, probably the result of drying operations after the application of the adhesive. So far, the writer has been unable to find a block of the 1922-23 Irish definitives with an identical U.V. reaction to that of the Trial Printing. However, the writer has found one block which matches the unusual adhesive of the Trial Printing, and it is significant that the block is the 2d Map stamp which was the first issued denomination of the 1922-23 definitive series. It may yet be possible to distinguish WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY the English made paper from later Irish made papers by using the Trial Printing as a control.

While direct evidence on the purpose of the Trial Printing appears to rest with the Gibbons footnote, the circumstantial evidence indicates that this Trial Printing has nothing to do with the Fiji Islands but has everything to do with the stamps of the Irish Free State. On account of the watermark alone, this prototype should be listed in Irish catalogues and in the Irish section of other catalogues.



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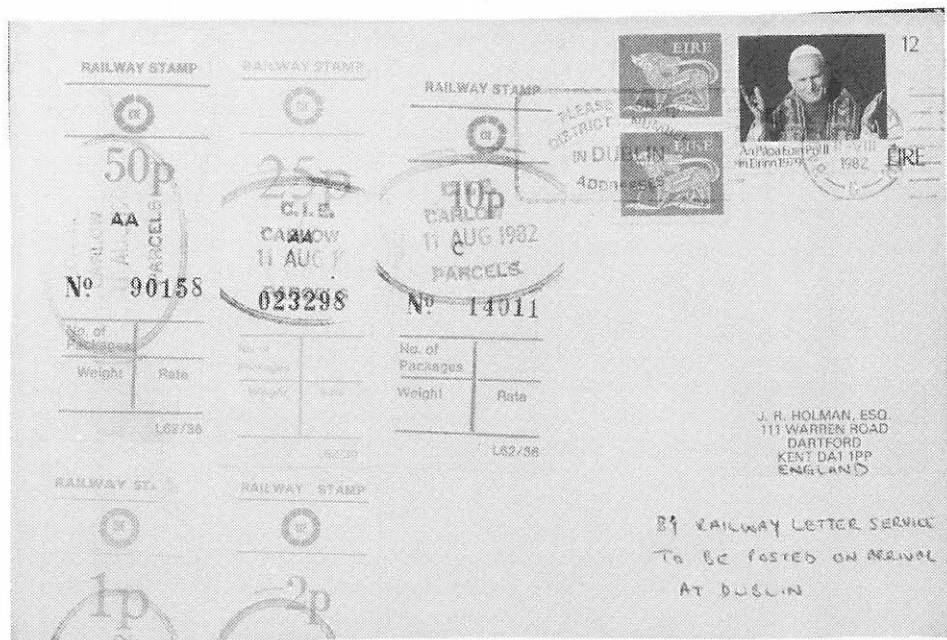
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IRISH RAILWAY LETTER SERVICES — NEWS —

by JOHN HOLMAN



Cover posted at Carlow Railway Station.

Since my last article on this subject (*Irish Stamp News*, No. 7 Spring 1981) both the C.I.E. and N.I.R. have increased the railway letter fee. The following should be added to the list of dates and fees:

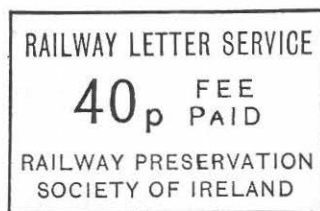
Coras Iompair Eireann	
3 August 1981	70p
28 January 1982	80p
5 July 1982	88p

Northern Ireland Railways	
27 December 1979	38p
17 November 1980	44p
23 November 1981	48p

The C.I.E. rates apply to letters carried by both rail and road services. A cover despatched by rail from Carlow on 11 August 1982 and posted at Dublin the same day is illustrated. It bears 1p, 2p, 10p, 25p and 50p stamps making up the current rate of 88p.

Since my original article was prepared, the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland (RPSI) has introduced a railway letter service. The Society signed the Railway Letter

Agreement with the British Post Office on 23 March 1981 and the first stamps were issued on 16 May. However, long before this covers had been carried and cachets used to denote payment of a railway letter service fee. On 13 April 1980 covers were carried from Howth to Dublin on a train pulled by a Great Southern & Western Rly. J15 class locomotive No. 184. The covers were given two cachets on the reverse of the envelope – one worded 'RAILWAY LETTER SERVICE/40p FEE PAID/RAILWAY PRESERVATION/SOCIETY OF IRELAND', the other 'CARRIED ON G S & W R/ J15 CLASS 0-6-0 No 184/BUILT 1880'. Both cachets were boxed and struck in turquoise ink. On the front of these covers was struck a cachet worded 'TO BE POSTED ON ARRIVAL/AT DUBLIN'. The Irish 9½p definitive stamp was handstamped 'BAILE ATHA CLIATH/13.IV/80'. A similar cover was carried on the South Kerry Railtour 17-18 May 1980 from Dublin-Mallow-Killarney-Tralee and back to Dublin. The cover seen by the writer had the 40p fee cachet on reverse (in black) on the front three cachets – an oval one worded 'SOUTH KERRY RAIL TOUR/17-18 MAY/ 1980/R.P.S.I.' (in red), a boxed one 'CARRIED ON GNR(I) S-CLASS 4-4-0 No 171/



R.P.S.I. handstamps.

'SLIEVE GULLION' (in turquoise) and an unframed 'TO BE POSTED ON ARRIVAL/ AT KILLARNEY' (in black). The Irish 9½p stamp was hand cancelled 'GILL AIRNE 17.V.80'. Unlike the April cover this one was unaddressed. Strictly speaking these would not seem to be railway letter covers as the Society had not signed the Railway Letter Agreement at that time. Nor does the 40p rate correspond to that in force anywhere else in the British Isles at that time – British Rail £1.14 (to 19 April), £1.25 (from 20 April); C.I.E. 60p, N.I.R. 38p and British minor railways 15p.

The first stamps were issued on 16 May 1981 to coincide with the Ben Bulbin Railtour. The three 20p stamps which feature locomotives owned by the Society – **Slieve Gullion** (GNR), No. 164 (S & GWR) and No. 4 (UTA) were printed in sheets of nine containing a vertical strip of three of each stamp. The stamps were printed by Format International Printers of London, some 12,600 of each stamp being produced. Some were later overprinted – see below. The first day cover bearing these stamps seen by the writer bears the **Slieve Gullion** stamp cancelled with a circular cachet 'BEN BULBIN RAILTOUR/16th-17th MAY 1981/DUBLIN-SLIGO-DUBLIN/RPSI' with a drawing of the locomotive in the centre (struck in black). Also on the cover are the 'CARRIED ON GNR(I)/S-CLASS . . .' cachet (in turquoise) and 'TO BE POSTED ON ARRIVAL AT LONGFORD' in red. However the cover did not get as far as Longford, being posted at Belfast – the British stamps were cancelled 'BELFAST62/16 MY 81'. An explanatory cachet 'JOURNEY TERMINATED/IN BELFAST DUE TO/ ENGINE FAILURE' also appears on the front of the cover (in black). Again the cover is unaddressed which is disappointing, as a true railway letter (even if philatelically inspired) must bear an address.

Later in 1981 I asked the Society to carry some railway letters for me on their regular weekend trips from Whitehead to Carrickfergus on the N.I.R. network. Some were carried from Whitehead to Carrickfergus, others Carrickfergus to Whitehead. These covers were franked with the 20p stamps cancelled with an oval cachet 'WHITEHEAD/STATION/B. & N.C.R.Y.' in red (B. & N.C.Ry. = Belfast & Northern Counties Railway). This cachet is apparently the only one used by the Society and hence was used to cancel the railway stamps on covers despatched from Carrickfergus as well as Whitehead. All covers also received the 'N.I.R./date/CARRICKFERGUS' station cachet (in blue) and the 14p Northern Ireland regional stamps were machine cancelled Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim.

The Society organised 'Santa Special' trains in December 1981 and a cover carried for me had the railway stamp cancelled with a circular cachet worded 'R.P.S.I. SANTA SPECIAL 1981' with a picture of Santa Claus in the centre (in black). The cover was endorsed 'To be posted on arrival at Mullingar' and the Irish postage stamps were cancelled 'ATH CLIATH-GAILLIMH P.O.T. LAE/19 XII 1981' (Dublin-Galway Day Travelling Post Office). This handstamp was also (erronously) applied to the 20p railway stamp. Strictly speaking the cover, being a railway letter, should not have been transferred to the T.P.O. but posted to receive the normal Mullingar postmark.

In January 1982 a letter addressed to me at my home in Kent was despatched from Whitehead — the railway stamp cancelled with the red oval cachet described above — and handed over to the N.I.R. at Carrickfergus for onward transmission. A total fee of 68p was paid — 20p to the R.P.S.I. and 48p to the N.I.R. The letter then went to Belfast York Road station where it was given the station cachet of 19 January before travelling via the Larne-Stranraer ferry to Scotland and by British Rail to London and eventually to Dartford, Southern Region where it was posted. The 14p British stamp was cancelled with the Dartford station cachet on 3 February and the Dartford machine postmark of 4 February. Possibly the cover is unique, I have not yet heard of any others travelling by R.P.S.I., N.I.R. and B.R. trains.



Cover transferred to Dublin/Galway T.P.O. at Mullingar having been transported there by R.P.S.I. special train.

In December 1981 the Society overprinted stocks of the 20p stamp 'IR£0.33p' in red, the 20p value being deleted by three bars. These stamps were intended for use on covers despatched and posted within the Irish Republic. A total of 3500 of each of the three stamps were so overprinted. I have the 33p stamps used on covers carried on the Easter Special in April. The stamps were cancelled with an oval cachet worded 'STAISIUN/MHUILEANN/CEARR' (Mullingar) in blue; the covers also bear the 'CARRIED ON G S & W R/J15 CLASS . . .' cachet, also in blue. The covers were posted on arrival at Mullingar, the Irish postage stamps are cancelled 'ACLIATH-GAILLIMH P.O.T. OICHE/10 IV 82' (Dublin-Galway Night Travelling Post Office) and alongside is a boxed single line cachet 'DUBLIN/GALWAY T.P.O.'. Both postmark and cachet are in violet ink.



The two latest R.P.S.I. overprinted sheets.

In *Irish Stamp News* No. 12 (September/October 1982) there is an advertisement offering the 20p stamps surcharged 22p and overprinted 'PORTRUSH FLYER' or 'STEAM ENTERPRISE'. The former were apparently issued on 21 August for use on mail carried on the **Portrush Flyer** from Belfast to Portrush and the second issued on 4 September for use on covers despatched on the **Steam Enterprise** between Belfast and Dublin. As yet I do not know the reason for the 22p rate or how many stamps were overprinted. Nor have I yet seen any covers bearing these stamps – I hope to report on these later.

From the information given in these notes, collectors of railway letters will have gathered that the operation of the railway letter service by the R.P.S.I. has been a little out of the ordinary – (1) carrying letters before the agreement was signed, (2) unconventional railway letter fee initially charged, (3) unaddressed covers carried and (4) mail transferred to T.P.O. service. It is to be hoped that these matters will be put right in time. It should be said that the stamps are amongst the most attractive in design and printing quality of all the stamps issued by the minor railways.

RECENT RELEASES

BY BRIAN WARREN AND EDDIE FITZGERALD



Date	Issue		Sold For	Plate Numbers
29/7/82	Fauna and Flora (Fish)	Shark —	22p	1111, 2111
		Oyster —	22p	1111
		Salmon —	26p	1111
		Prawn —	29p	11111
29/7/82	22p Envelope		24p	
21/9/82	Irish Boats	Curra —	22p	1111
		Galway Hooker —	22p	1111
		Asgard II —	26p	1111
		Howth 17 Footer —	29p	1111
9/10/82	Cork Philatelic Society Exhibition Booklet		£1.20	
14/10/82	Bicentenary of Grattan's Parliament		22p	1111
14/10/82	Centenary of Birth of Eamon de Valera		26p	1111
22/10/82	Stampa '82 Souvenir Card		£1	

All stamp issues were printed by Irish Security Stamp Printing Limited in the normal 10 x 10 sheet format with perforation type I. The Fauna and Flora issue was postponed from 19 July. This issue was the subject of correspondence in the letters page of *The Irish Times* which queried the "upside-down oyster" and the position of the tail on the salmon stamp. The Irish Boats stamps were launched at a special press reception on board the *Asgard II* and received wide publicity in the *National Press*. Here again the design of the *Galway Hooker* value was the subject of comment. The type of *Galway Hooker* depicted on the 22p denomination was the *Bad Mor* variety; the caption included on the stamp called it a *Gleiteog*. No significant constant varieties have been brought to our attention. The usual pictorial first day postmark was available for all issues in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. The use of a pictorial postmark at Limerick came to our attention when we visited the Cork Philatelic Society Exhibition. We noted on examining the FDC stock of Limerick dealer, Joe McCarthy, that the use of a pictorial first day postmark in Limerick appeared to commence with the Fauna and Flora issue of 1980. Perhaps a local collector could confirm this information. The information leaflet issued by the Department of Posts and Telegraphs has never referred to the introduction of the pictorial postmark to either Cork or Limerick. If pictorial postmarks are introduced elsewhere, without advance notice from the Post Office, we would appreciate information from local collectors. A pictorial postmark was also available at Bruree in connection with the Grattan's Parliament/De Valera issue. Eamonn de Valera was reared in the town. The plate numbers on the 22p Grattan's Parliament were 1111 as set out above. However the colour order on the top left block is light blue, yellow, magenta, black whereas the bottom right block is in the reverse order.



Plate blocks of 26p Boats featuring Asgard II and 22p Grattan's Parliament.

Exhibition Souvenirs

The Cork booklet was in similar format as previous years and contained 3 x 22p St Francis of Assisi plus 6 x ½p and 6 x 1p definitives. The exhibition postmark was shown on the back cover. Total numbered edition of 750 booklets. The Stampa souvenir card featured three designs submitted in 1922 by O'Loughlin, Murphy & Boland for the first definitive series. Total numbered edition of 2,500 cards in green. Members of the Stampa Society received the same card printed in blue. Total numbered edition of 300 copies (limited to the number of members).

Special Event Postmarks

Several postmarks were available as follows since our last report:-

29 June – 3 July: A mini-session of the Council of Europe was held in Dublin Castle. A rectangular postmark in purple was available in conjunction with post office facilities.

11 – 15 August: The usual pictorial postmark in purple was available at Portmarnock Golf Club in conjunction with post office facilities for the annual Carrolls Irish Open Golf Championship.

20 – 26 September: Special circular postmark in black commemorating the bicentenary of the foundation of St Kierans College, Kilkenny. Used on mail posted at the college.

9 October: Cork Philatelic Society Exhibition, Imperial Hotel, Cork. The circular postmark in black featured a symbolic design showing the hand of St Francis holding a bird. Special cover available. Post office philatelic facilities also available.



22 – 25 October: Stampa – Annual Irish National Stamp Exhibition at R.D.S. Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. The postmarks incorporated essay designs for the first Irish definitive series of 1922 and were illustrated in the last edition of Irish Stamp News. Usual philatelic facilities available. The skeleton datestamp "Show RDS Ballsbridge" was in use again at the Horse Show (3 – 7 August) and The Good Life Exhibition (October 7). A philatelic sales stand was provided at both events.

A slogan postmark marking Universal Postal Union Day was run on Saturday 9 October at Dublin, Cork, Cavan, Donegal, Dundalk, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. Limerick used the slogan for a period of 5/6 days.

Postal Stationery

The 22p envelope released on 29 July was described as being size "A" but is much larger (160mm x 115mm) than previous envelopes which were far too small (120mm x 95mm). The new size is the same as for first day covers. The 22p rate is of course only valid for printed matter; the letter rate was increased to 26p on the previous 1 April.

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