

The Revealers

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE EIRE PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION



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Winter 1984

Free Franks

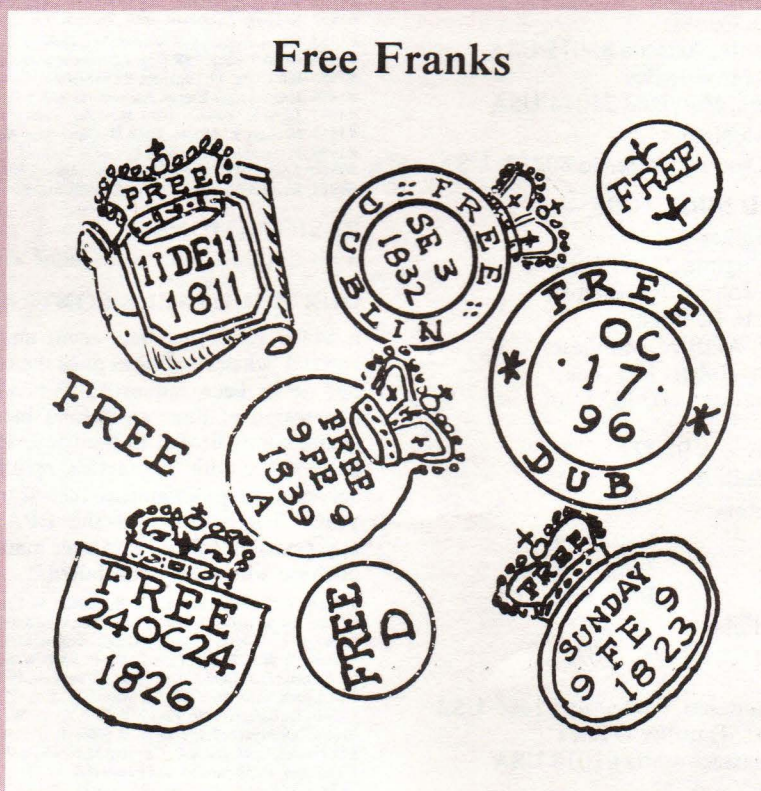


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THE REVEALER

Whole No. 157

Winter 1984

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STAFF

Editor: John J. Blessington

4302 St. Clair Ave., Studio City, California 91604 USA

Associate Editor: E. FitzGerald

1 Willow Park Drive, Dublin 11, Ireland

Publisher/Distributor: Robert D. Corless

1826 W. Indianola Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85015 USA

Advertising Manager: Robert E. Moskowitz

3313 Southern Ave., Baltimore, Maryland 21214 USA

Revealer Back Issues: Patrick McNally

P.O. Box 12143, Alcott Sta. Denver, Colorado 80212, USA.

— OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS —

President: Patricia W. Stilwell Walker

P.O. Box 1422, Springfield, Virginia 22151 USA

Vice President, North America: John J. Blessington

Vice President, Europe: George E. R. Ithell

432 Normanhurst, Feltham, Middlesex U.K.

Secretary - Chapter Coordinator: Robert C. Jones

8 Beach St., Brockton, Massachusetts 02402 USA

Treasurer: William O'Connor

P.O. Box 271368 Escondido, CA 92027

Immediate Past President: Bill Zellers

Directors:

Eugene M. Labiuk

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John J. Walsh

Brian Warren

APS Representative: Joseph E. Foley

Box 26, Short Hills, New Jersey 07078 USA

Historian: Garvin F. Lohman

1543 Sacramento #3, San Francisco, California 94109 USA

Auction & Trading Post Manager: Timothy O'Shea

46 Coolidge Rd., Chicopee, Massachusetts 01013 USA



SECRETARY'S REPORT

The EPA is an active and growing organization. In the past three years it has averaged over 100 new members per year. This is almost a phenomenal growth. It indicates the increasing interest in and popularity of Irish philatelic material.

The reasons for this are several. We have an able and enthusiastic corps of officers and directors. We have an excellent, even unique, journal with John Blessington as editor. We have a supportive and helpful group of dealer members who have been promoting Irish material as well as recruiting new members most effectively. We have a growing number of Chapters with loyal members and able leadership. These and other factors make for a winning combination.

This year, the EPA will be observing its 35th Anniversary. To celebrate this occasion special promotional projects and activities are being planned. Chapter and individuals are scheduling EPA participation in local stamp shows with booths and tables. Some members will be making posters or mini-exhibits of Irish stamps for display in public libraries, schools and other public institutions. Others are requesting the new EPA recruiting card to distribute to possible members and as hand-outs at local stamp stores, or for insertion in dealers' mailings to their Irish customers.

This year is that in which we make a real promotional effort for the cause of Irish philately. Ireland and Irish philately gives us so much. Perhaps in these ways we can give something back.

All you have to do is write to the Secretary and say what you would like to do.

NEW MEMBERS

New members accepted subject to no objections received with a 45 day period after this publication.

- #1942 Peter P. Fennell, 252b Swords Rd. Santry, Dublin 9, Ireland
- #1943 S. Burton Allison, Box 280 Hornell, NY 14843
- #1944 William J. Trenwith, 227 Elm Ave., North Hills, PA 19038
- #1945 Coit W. Yancey, 6115 Meredith Lane, Ft. Worth, TX 76134
- #1946 Finbarr Hegarty, Glanmire, Tonaphubble, Sligo, Ireland
- #1947 Merrill G. Culver, Jr., Box 8501, Houston, TX 77249
- #1948 Vincent J. Hoyer, 21 Summer St. N. Attleboro, MA 02760
- #1949 Duane A. Larson, 2021 Ridge Rd., Homewood, IL 60430
- #1950 George Fabian, 230 Fir, Park Forest, IL 60466
- #1951 Thomas F. Moran, 218 Howland Canal, Venice, CA 90291
- #1952 Kathleen Grishman, 4607 Treasure Ln., Pearland, TX 77584
- #1953 James Kelly, 35 Wainsfort Pk., Trenure, Dublin 6, Ireland
- #1954 Drew Treacy, 158 Upper Drumcondra Rd., Dublin 9, Ireland
- #1955 Bill Clark, 77 Highfield Pk., Dublin 14, Ireland
- #1956 Heinz-Jürgen Kumpf, Euckenstrasse, S/P.O. Box 70, M26, D-8000 München 70, W. Germany
- #1957 Jerrel E. Towery, 1023 Hope St., Venice, FL 33595
- #1958 Michael K. Moore, 2028 N. Cambridge Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202
- #1959 E. Joseph McConnell, Box 683, Monroe, NY 10950
- #1960 John C. O'Malley, 3107 Observation Trail, Dayton, OH 45449
- #1961 Jeremia Sheehan, 2 Beechfield Estate, Fermoy, Co. Cork, Ireland

RESIGNATIONS

- #1236 David Adam, #1638 Jame G. Mullett, #1291 E. Melvin Klein, #1837 D. Taylor Smith.

OUR HONORABLE CONTRIBUTORS

Many EPA members seem unable to write a check for \$7.00. Instead, when sending in dues the check is for \$10.00 or more! Such has never been requested. When then, these donations? Is it an expression of their enjoyment in collecting Ireland? Or are they genuinely dedicated to the cause of promoting Irish philately? We believe it is both. A practical result is that these contributions have served to keep our annual dues at their present level for the past five years. The Officers of the EPA want to express their sincere appreciation to those who have made these donations. Here are some of those who have contributed.

J. Brady, R.C. Larkin, E. Johnson, E. Schiller, M. Lenane, L. Barrett, G. Losco, J. Crowley, J. O'Brian, W. McCaw, B. Ryder, J. Doherty, C. Uber, C. Murphy, R. Cochrane, W. Stilwell, P. Lynch, E. Sullivan, R. Barry, E. Lubiak, F. Baldwin, D.T. Gillen, G. Ginovsky, H. Bright, R. McBride, A. Pearce, W. O'Donnell, W.E. Davey, H.G. Bruns, R. King, W. Schmied, D. O'Leary, H.C. Halliday, A. Monahan, W. Salzmann, R. Chaiet, J. Meehan, C. Banville, P. Holmes, J.J. McGuire, L. Robleske, G. Lechlitter, J.C. Lynch, C.D. McCurdy, J. Maher, D. & A. Galvin, H. Curran, M. Gurtshaw, W. Donlon, M. Covert, D. Sammon, W. Pavey, P. & T. Ryan, W. O'Connor, G. Nicholson, W. O'Brien, D. & M. Brown, R. Fitzpatrick, E. Daly, R.F. Schmidt, G. Pojer, E. Stanley, D.P. Kulo, P. Murphy, C.D. Arnott, J.H. Napier, E. Megel, K.C. Carroll, J.M. Mackay, W. Slattery, R. Sterns, W. Fitzpatrick, W. Luther, P. Cummings, C. Mickelson, J. Greenwood, M. Pacy, J. & M. Murphy, P. Bugg, E.T. Divecchio, G. Phillips, J. Thoma, R. Cullen, W. Doe, H. Murray, D.L. Gardemal, B.E. Donohoe, C. Armstrong, G. Hott, E. Dilono, P.P. Fennell.

RECRUITING HONOR ROLL

Listed are known members who have proposed new members.

James P. Lavelle, Peter E. Bugg, J.M. Madigan, Belinda Kemper, Michael Giffney, William H. Doe, James Van Fussen, William McCaw, Walt Potts, Wil Coense, Declan O'Kelly, Carl D. Arnott.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Life Memberships in the Association have been authorized by the Board of Directors. The fees are:

Members resident in the U.S.A. \$140.00
 Members resident in Canada or Mexico 170.00
 Members resident in rest of world. 200.00

Any member who has already paid his dues for the current year may take credit against the life membership fee for the amount of dues paid. Payment may be made in 3 monthly installments. Application for life membership should be by letter to the Secretary accompanied by the appropriate fee.

From the Editor's Desk

As I am sure most of you are aware *The Revealer* was expanded to 20 pages commencing with issue No. 1 of the current volume. The reaction to the expanded version has been good, members seem to be happy. The only one unhappy is your editor. In order to maintain the 20 page issue a 25% increase in the number of articles submitted was necessary...no such increase has occurred. In fact, the cupboard is bare, this issue contains only 16 pages and no articles are on hand for the Spring issue.

Alleviating this temporary (I hope) shortage of articles becomes a high priority endeavor and will require the cooperation of many members. Each of you who has written articles in the past is asked to delve into your storehouse of knowledge and write one more. Each of you who has been planning to write your first article is asked to take the plunge and do it now. Each of you who has never considered writing an article is asked to reconsider. We have had some excellent articles on "My Irish Collection", for example, from first time authors.

For those who have never written an article perhaps a few words of encouragement are in order. First of all I agree with you, it is hard to write an article, but not for the reason you think. It is hard to write because it is so much easier to "not write".

Probably the most difficult part for the beginning writer is getting started. He expects an article springs fully formed from his thoughts and merely has to be put on paper. This may be so for some authors but most of my articles come a bit harder. Having picked a subject, I start writing down thoughts at random without any regard to eventual sequence. When I run out of ideas I go back to those already recorded and try to expand each into a paragraph. Eventually these paragraphs can be arranged in a logical order and tied together into a cohesive article. Some times ideas flow freely and the article is finished in an evening, other times it takes longer, but most times the article gets written. The important part is putting pen to paper. If you never start, obviously, you will never write that article.

The Editor is available to help anyone in any way in writing an article. If you are hesitant as to subject or the quality of your work send it along and I'll be glad to make recommendations.

It is hoped that this plea will inspire enough of you to write the articles needed to fill the vacuum that presently exists and provide for the continuing needs of the future. Whether we return to the 20 page format is, of course, dependent on your response to this plea.

Award Winners



Dick McBride, Pat Stillwell Walker, Peter Bugg

President's Notes

In October I attended Philatelic Show in Boston. This was a special event for two reasons. The John J. Clark Award for outstanding services to the Association was presented to Ed Ryan and the EPA medal was awarded for the first time in the states. The show was well attended and enjoyed by all. We actually gave Ed the award twice: once in the membership meeting and then again at the banquet. There were three Irish exhibits at Boston: Dick McBride (Connecticut Chapter President) won a bronze, Peter Bugg (John McCormack Chapter President, that's Boston folks) won a silver, and yours truly won a gold and the medal. This was a new exhibit for me and was a great surprise that it did so well. The medal was also awarded at STAMPA in Dublin to Norah Wright for her exhibit of "Handstruck Stamps of Ireland." For those who haven't seen it elsewhere, she also won the David Feldman Trophy for Best Exhibit, and a STAMPA Gold.

At STAMPA it was also announced that Norah K. Wright was named the 1984 recipient of the Thomas E. Field Award from the EPA for outstanding contributions to Irish philately. The award presentation was made in December at the annual Christmas Social of The Irish Philatelic Society.

1985 is our 35th Anniversary Year. An East Coast celebration is being planned at RIPEX in Providence, RI and a West Coast party at WESTPEX. I will be at both shows, my bonus, my husband has promised me a week of vacation in San Francisco in between as the shows are back to back weekend. I hope to see many of you at one or the other.

We are also already planning our participation at AMERIPEX in 1986 in Chicago.

On a different note, we occasionally get questions about whether or not the EPA has an expert committee. We do not; we do have a "Bogus Committee" for Overprints. This consists of volunteer members who will look at overprints that you suspect of being fake and weed out the obvious ones for you. They are not an identification service, I hasten to add. The main purpose is to publish pictures of known fakes to make it easier on all of us to spot forgeries. If they think your item is good, you will still have to get a certificate elsewhere. Of course, we are always willing to look at items (or Photocopies, enlarged) about which some of you need more data. Address inquiries to me.

Patricia Stillwell Walker
President

John J. Clark Memorial Award



Pat Stillwell Walker, Ed Ryan



RANDOM NOTES

by F.E. Dixon

STICKERS

A letter from an insurance company bore a rectangular label 36x23mm issued by the Fire Prevention Council to announce the NATIONAL FIRE SAFETY WEEK Oct. 1-Oct. 8, 1984. I happened to be away from Dublin during that week and do not know of any special activities.

PILLAR BOXES

The pillar boxes in Dublin have been made more conspicuous by painting a yellow band round them near the top.

AN POST FRANKING

The invitations for the reception and opening of STAMPA were sent in plain envelopes bearing a handstamped "frank" with the POST logo in a rectangular frame.

POST OFFICE BICENTENNIAL

The Bulletin with details of the stamp and covers has a very good two-page history of the Irish Post Office, based on Mrs. Reynold's researches. But the cover has an unfortunate gaffe: it has a spirited drawing of the Dublin & Cork mail coach with the date 1784. That coach route was not opened until 1790! There is another bad mistake on the liner of the POST envelope, which alleges that pillar boxes were introduced in 1879. This should read 1857.

SLOGAN CANCELLATION

7-14th October was scheduled as the Old Folks Week and there was a machine cancellation depicting a happy elderly couple with the dates and wording ACTIVE AGE WEEK.

DATE ERROR

For several days in August 1984 a Dept. of Defence metermark (P.B.L1577T) showed the year as 94!

FORGERY

Forgeries of the £1 postage stamp have been found in Savings Books. No postally used example has yet come to light.

STAMPA 84

I was able to attend the opening Reception, and for a time on Friday afternoon, but missed Saturday and Sunday, so cannot report on attendance, etc. The exhibition was excellent and I heard few complaints of the standard of judging! The special postmarks were well up to standard and I was pleased with the special envelope provided for them incorporating a drawing I did 40 years ago, laboriously enlarging, line by line, a small engraving in the Gentlemen's Magazine for October 1787. The building to the left with a separate entrance is the house provided for Secretary John Lees.

RTE LAPSE

A television play based on one of James Joyce's Dubliners stories, "A Painful Case" had costumes and settings of the Edwardian era, with one major mistake. When Mr. Duffy received the parcel of books returned by Mrs. Sinico the stamp is recognisable as the 9d Holy Year of 1950!

REGISTRATION ENVELOPES

A new G size appeared on 30 October, with a stamp similar to those on the other postal stationery. Two versions have been seen, one with the same text as the last issue and the other with several changes—notable increasing the compensation for foreign posting to £13.50. Some with the new text have an accidental accent on the T of LITIR in the obverse heading.

CHEAP POSTAGE

On 1st November it was announced that from January next advertising circulars, if posted in quantities of 2,000 or more, will be charged only 17p, with further reductions in some cases.

AN POST ENTERPRISES

The photograph processing trade is seriously concerned at the competition provided by SPECTRA of Listowel, Co Kerry. For £4.50 one can buy a special envelope from the Post Office. You use this to post your film to Listowel, postage being paid under Listowel License No. 1. It comes back in the same envelope with excellent prints to which a label has been added specifying, "Fast delivery from An Post."

PRICE TRENDS

Col. Zellers has sent me a cutting from Linn's Stamp News alleging that the fall in stamp prices begun in 1982, less marked in 1983, is accelerating in 1984. Another article concentrates on Irish stamps and suggests that now is the time to buy, before prices go up again. It gives examples (1929 O'Connell set, 1972 miniature sheet & 1959 Guinness) of stamps which have held their own and are likely to be a good investment now. I rarely give advice on stamps' investment value. I urge collectors to collect what they like: if enough others like the same things demand will eventually exceed supply and you will make a good investment. But if you buy because something seems cheap you may discover that a large stock has been put on the market and the supply exceeds the demand. Caveat emptor!

£1 STAMP

As a result of the forgeries reported above, the existing £1 stamp became invalid after 1st December and existing stocks are being withdrawn. We still do not know the details of what the forgery looks like.

OFFICIAL MAIL

Is anyone compiling a list of the metermarks being used by the numerous Government Departments and their branches? The Department of Social Welfare, using meter PB T 2170M is the first I have seen to include its name and address in the metering.

SLOGANS

I have seen very few examples of the ACTIVE AGE WEEK 7th to 14th October, and even fewer of the USE EAST LINK, scheduled for 22nd to 26th October. The latter refers to a new toll bridge across the river Liffey near its mouth, designed to reduce the amount of traffic through the city centre. Next came "CERT, 21 Years of Hotel, Catering and Tourism Training" promised for 4th to 10th November, but used from 5th to 12th at several places besides Dublin.

NEW BOOK

"The B & I Line" by Hazel P. Smith, just published by Gill & Macmillan at £20 Irish, is far more comprehensive than the title suggests. It includes much about the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. and other precursors of the present Company, with many references to the carriage of mails. If you cannot afford to buy it suggest that your local library purchase a copy.

RED INK

On 3rd and 7th November, and probably in between, Mountmellick was cancelling ordinary mail with red ink, and 8th November Dublin C machine also used red ink instead of black.

BELFAST HEXAGON

There is a six-sided datestamp of Belfast which has several times been the subject of queries: it looked like a late-fee type, and an envelope has turned up proving that use, date 25 Jan 1914, with an extra ½d stamp and endorsed "Sunday fee."

EXPRESS

A new Express label has been introduced with LIAS/EXPRESS/L'EXPRESS. The third is probably meant to be French, but the labels used in France are worded EXPRES!

EXPRESS MAIL SERVICE

The label mentioned above is used on letters posted normally. There is also a special service, including collection as well as delivery. For this there is a large (141x99mm) "self-adhesive" label with spaces for the addresses of sender and recipient. Dr. John Mackey received a parcel by this service. One such label was used as intended: another, blank, was added to strengthen the sealing, and a third, still on its backing paper, was dropped in the letter box when there was no answer to the courier. That third is a new edition with the POST symbol: the others are old stock with P & T.

HIBERNIAN CATALOGUE

Whatever the international trend, Irish stamps are apparently keeping their value. The only price changes in the 1985 edition of the Hibernian Stamp Co.'s catalogue are small rises, especially in the early commemoratives, e.g. Shannon Scheme FDC up by £25 to £400. One feature of the Hibernian which is better than the DF catalogue is the illustration of every stamp: otherwise it is inferior: what I dislike particularly is having the main varieties, all in separate sections. There is still no proper explanation for N/C (=not constant): it should be possible to have a different indication when a variety was constant on one plate from when it was only a casual misprinting occurring in only one batch of sheets. I have found very few misprints, the worst (repeated from last year) being Brocas for Brocas on p.25 and Ghandi for Gandhi on p.105.

17p CHRISTMAS BARGAIN

The public were given only two days advance publicity of the 17p stamp, issued 26 November. It was allegedly valid only for Christmas Cards, and only until 15 December. Within a few days, rumours spread that the 9,000,000 were already sold out, but only a few small offices had exhausted their supply and other offices had plenty. One at least was using blocks of the stamps on parcels! Cards with the 17p stamp posted after 15th December were not charged postage due, and there were other misuses: one that I received contained a Christmas Card, but also a letter and a 50p coin—the Christmas minting for the Isle of Man.

POSTAGE DUE



DUNMANAWAY 1887

LONDONDERRY 1880

Covers charged postage due are among the items very much in demand. Particularly rare are covers handstruck ½d used 1870 to 1895 on newspapers and printed matter when the item was being forwarded. I recently acquired part of a newspaper wrapper with the ½d applied in Londonderry and was surprised that it differs considerably from my only other example. How many other styles exist?

CHRISTMAS STAMPS

The 26p shows an exceptional range of shades. The frame of the design ranges from deep mauve to dark purple, so dark that the black heading and EIRE are scarcely visible.

CHANGED FORM

M.P. 1009, the docket accompanying a batch of Reply Paid items, has been replaced by an unnumbered form with a blank space for the insertion of the additional charge (currently ½d).

CHRISTMAS CARDS

AN POST Christmas Cards featured an enlargement of the simple star design used for the 17p stamp.

NEW BOOKS

James A. Mackay's newest book is "Surcharged Mail of the British Isles", price £10.35 in U.K. or £12.60 overseas, postage paid. It maintains his very high standard with about 2,500 illustrations of chargemarks, explanatory marks, associated labels, etc. etc., all fully explained, with a wealth of fascinating information. The whole period from 1669 is covered and Ireland is treated as thoroughly as Great Britain.

The same author's "Postal History Annual 1985" (£5.10 U.K., £6.40 overseas) has more Scottish information than for England and Ireland. Particularly interesting are the accounts of distinguished pioneer postmark collectors and their battles with officialdom.

DAMAGED MAIL

For generations post offices have used re-sealing labels to patch up torn letters and parcels. This is now superseded. I received a packet which was badly torn—I think in the cancelling machine. The packet was delivered in a heat-sealed transparent bag on which is printed:

Dublin Postal District

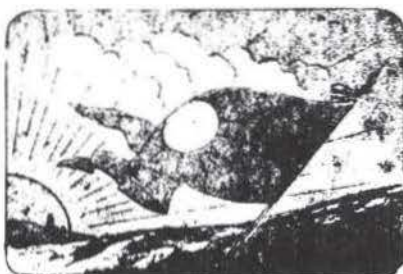
The enclosed postal packet has been officially sealed in the Central Sorting Office.

While every effort is made to ensure safe handling of mail, damage does occur occasionally. Any inconvenience is regretted.

SLOGANS

1985 is International Youth Year and a slogan cancellation announcing it with the motto **FACING THE CHALLENGE** came into general use early in January. In Galway, however, it was soon replaced by another, celebrating the tenth year of the Druid Theatre Company, in an unusual format: The name appears round a circle containing an emblem and the dates are in ribbons below the circle.

LABEL



Illustrated is a multicolored label with "Eire go Bragh" at the lower right, probably from the same source as the series shown in **IRISH STAMP NEWS**, Autumn 1984, and believed to date from the period 1905-10.

AUCTION PRICES

Some interesting realisations at the MacDonnell Whyte sale on 26 January: 1625 letter £160, VICEREGAL LOGE cancellation on pair of 1/- Thom, £95; 1981 cachet "Delayed due to Mail Robbery", £28; Collection of Irish Maltese Crosses £550; Blocks from top and bottom of sheet of ½d with the overprint missing in top row, £2,600; O'Connell 2d with "bullet-hole", two blocks showing shift, £210; Airmail ½ with extra feather, positional pair £220; UK 3½d registration envelope used from Cork 1920, £48 and UK ½d reply paid postcard, with reply half attached, sent from Rathmullen 1903, £48.

LOVE STAMPS

If the regrettably defunct "Society for the Suppression of Superfluous and Speculative Stamps" had survived it could have added another S—for Silly.

The stamps were badly timed appearing in the same week that savage increases in postal rates were announced, some foreign postal rates being nearly doubled. The basic 22p and 26p rates are unaltered but will now cover only 20 grammes.

The End of an Era

by Bill Kane



For many years Irish Postal Historians have been mystified by the cryptic marks shown above on plain envelopes. Anyone who had a Post Office Savings Bank account, at sometime in their life, received such an envelope, hence they knew it emanated from that department. But they could not explain the connection between the mark and the P.O.S.B.

All Government Departments official correspondence carry an identifying logo or frank, with the one exception, the P.O.S.B. as in the instance outlined above.

I cannot say when this mark was first used, but my first acquaintance with it was in 1924 when, as a Post Office Telegraph Messenger, I worked in the P.O.S.B. in Dublin Castle.

The premises was in a building located beside the Ship Street Gate of the Castle. Following the 1916 fire of the G.P.O. in Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street) Dublin the Savings Bank was transferred to Dublin Castle.

The mail section was in a ground floor room at the entrance to the building. This room was also for enquiries etc. The staff consisted of two members, one being the Adult Messenger, and the other the Boy Messenger. The Adult Messenger was a Mr. Clarke, who had the responsibility for sealing all the envelopes and then applying the "DC" handstamp. I asked him what was the significance of the mark and he told me it stood for "Dublin Castle."

When one wished to send their account book to the P.O.S.B. for any reason, such as to have it checked, or have the yearly interest entered in the book, you went into any Post Office and requested two envelopes for that purpose. One envelope was plain, on which you wrote your name and address. This cover and your book you enclosed in the second envelope which was officially addressed to the Savings Bank, Dublin.

When the plain envelope was returned to you, it bore a single mark, i.e. the "DC". That is, until this year, when I was surprised to find my envelope bore a meter mark in place of the familiar "DC".



I suppose this is part of the new policy of "An Post".

Can we hope and trust the faithful "DC" handstamp will find a new home in the Post Office Museum.

Free Franks of Ireland

by George E.R. Ithell

In 1652, a Council of State ordered that all letters of ministers of state and council, including Members of Parliament, should be carried free of charge. There were many regulations which governed this 'perk' and of course many attempts to take advantage of this privilege. Regular changes in the clauses governing the Free Post had to be made, but the main stipulations for those eligible were that the writer's residence was not in excess of twenty miles from the posting area; there was a limit on the number of letters to be sent and received in any one day; the name of the sender, complete with the date and place of posting should be written on the letter.

Fraudulent use by others not qualified was punishable by very heavy penalties. Deportation for several years was mentioned for forging a Member's signature. Records may reveal many culprits, but this would possibly be too long a list. Items in my own collection would confirm that the regulations were often disregarded, but whether there are any serious breaches has so far not been discovered.

Post charges for mail carried was 2d for eighty miles, 4d for distances between eighty and 140 miles and 6d for each letter travelling over 140 miles. These figures were operative about 1630 and were comparatively expensive when one considers the fact that the salary of the Master of Post in the period would be something less than £100 per annum!

Before the earliest handstamps were used writers were required to inscribe the word FREE in manuscript on the cover but, earlier than this, it was only necessary that "the Seal of the Writer be known" to the inspector. Another form of endorsement was the wording... "For the Service of the Government". As all this privileged mail was passed through one office in each country (London, Edinburgh and Dublin) it was a simple operation for scrutiny as to the authenticity of the writer.



Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

The first handstamp with the word FREE is recorded on an Irish entire of 1707. This design shows a capital F with serifs and other letters in small script (Fig. 1). Another unique type is seen on a letter in Trinity College Library, Dublin and has a trefoil symbol above and below the capital lettered FREE enclosed in a circle (Fig. 2). Unframed handstamps of various sizes are seen with the word FREE (Fig. 3) on dated mail up to 1754.

From its inception, the Irish Post Office was under the control of the Postmaster General in London with a succession of Deputy Postmasters until 1784. The Irish Post Office was then independent until 1831 when the Act of Union was fully ratified and the office was again administered from London.

Before, during and since their independence of those days, Irish mail marks show slightly varying designs, distinguishing them from English and Scottish marks. The earliest Bishop mark recorded on an Irish letter is 13 August 1670.

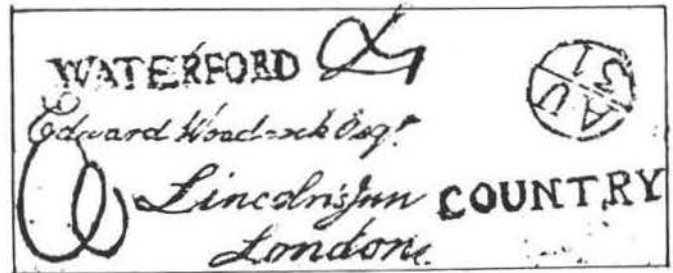


Fig. 4

A change took place in 1713 and the day and month positions were reversed on the handstamp used in Dublin.

Ireland was having its fourth design in use before an English FREE made an appearance in 1764.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Ireland's design (Fig. 5) shows capital letters with a large FREE in a circle, whereas the English type was devoid of the D presumably to distinguish the Dublin from the London mark (Fig. 6).

The known Scottish handstamps were in a very limited number and only one type has, to my knowledge, been seen. It is similar to the Dublin mark, except that the letter E replaced the D, presumably to indicate Edinburgh (Fig. 7). Dates of use are recorded as from 1772 until 1792. This mark appeared on only a very few covers.

DUBLIN DISTINCTION

Whilst the London designs changed little, some very distinctive designs were introduced in Dublin.



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

The encircled FREE with D (Fig. 5) was succeeded by a type with the letters following the curve of the circle and including the D (Fig. 8). About the same time another little-used mark, similar to Fig. 5, is seen without the circle and is only known on items between 1873 and 1874 (Fig. 9).



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

The first dated Free Frank handstamp was in two slightly different types—an abbreviated two-figure date on one and the year in full on the second. The latter appeared about a year after the first (Figs. 10 and 11). The outer frame which included the words FREE and DUB was separate from the dated portion and consequently misalignment is often seen in the impressions of these handstamps. Dates known of this type are between 1795 and 1807 in black and purple ink.



Fig. 12

The most attractive of the handstamps in this Free pattern is probably the one which appeared next: the "Mermaid Free" type. The difficulty in procuring a perfect strike is well-known. Nevertheless when one compares numerous copies, the complete picture of the design can be admired (Fig. 12).

The awkward shape and possibly large size of this handstamp made its life short. I am convinced that this handstamp was to have been the ultimate in this series. The distinctive design showing an Irish emblem, coupled with the importance of the use, must have disappointed many when its replacement was made uneconomic by the expensive repairs.

MERMAID REMOVED

The hint of Irish origin so obvious in the "Mermaid" disappeared when another design was introduced.



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

It was similar to the previous type, but with the 'mermaid removed' (Fig. 13). In the previous 'mermaids' a single-lined frame denoted that the franking was for morning duty and a double-lined frame was for evening use. All these 'mermaid removed' handstamps had the double-lined frames. For morning duty then, another design was introduced, known now as the "Spade" or "Shield" type (Fig. 14). An interesting study can be made of these two types, with the varied sizes of frames and crowns. These two designs had a long period of use from about 1815 until 1832.

CHANGE-OVER?

With these morning and evening duty handstamps, at what time was the change-over made? Noon is the most likely assumption, but two items in my collection create an anomaly.

I think it is important, and it helps my own theory, that the two items have the Cashel Mail MID IN strike and one is from Kilworth (dated 17 November 1815), the other from Cork (dated 19 November 1821) both addressed to London.



'MID IN' strikes

The Cashel coach left Cork at 9 pm carrying these respective letters. When the mail coach arrived in Dublin the next day, on time, this would be 2 pm—afternoon! As the current Free mark for that part of the day was a 'mermaid removed' type, why then was a 'spade' type used? These were dated the 18th and 20th as would be expected.

It was no secret that the free mail was a drain on the finances of the post and the authorities were very strict at times and very correct. Did whoever was responsible use the correct frank?

If so, I presume that those who travelled in the Cashel mail coach leaving Cork at 9 pm in the Novembers between 1815 and 1821 had an unenviable journey: 156 miles in fifteen hours on dark infested country roads, with stops to be made for passengers and mail. My mental picture of a driver... "with the wind in his hair and the devil behind him" would seem to be no exaggeration!



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

In 1832 yet another design was introduced for all duties. It was another attractive mark, including for the first time on this type of handstamp, the full name DUBLIN (Fig. 15).

Obscure reasons for the withdrawal of this type after only two years of use are not known, but after 1834 a further design (Fig. 16) very similar to the handstamps then in current use at the London Office, was brought into use at the Dublin Office. Obvious differences of these franks from the English type can be readily noted: there is a smaller circle, a larger crown, and a code letter appears beneath the year date. These code letters indicate the time of day when in use. The letters A, M, F, and E stand for Afternoon, Morning, Forenoon and Evening. In the final months of this privilege, which was discontinued when the Uniform Penny Post became available, an extra frank was used without code letter and this mark was apparently for general use. It is one of the most common of the later strikes.

SUNDAY USE



Fig. 17



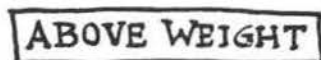
Fig. 18

Another duty handstamp, also not common, was the type used for Sundays (Fig. 17). This Free was used in Dublin between the years 1820 and 1831 and, unlike London mail for the privileged letters, Irish letters were franked with this mark on that day. London applied a receiving mark for Sunday (Fig. 18) and then the Free frank the following day.

MISCELLANEOUS MARKINGS

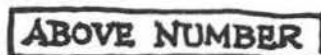


Alterations had to be endorsed



Before 1795, 2 oz. were allowed.
After that date 1 oz. was allowed.

Above the privileged number



Signified the letter had to carry payment.



Members using this privilege had to be within 20 miles of the stated post town.



Many other handstamps were used in connection with the 'Frees', such as endorsements and instructional marks which are self-explanatory but these two are by no means common.



Fig. 19



Fig. 20

The TO BE/DELIVER'D/FREE types (Figs. 19 & 20) were used for the franking of charity letters. These were the only letters which were carried free from any charge whatsoever.

The free carriage of all other mail had a restriction that it was free between General Post Offices and that which was addressed to limits outside these offices were charged the minimum 1d or 2d accordingly.

Other mailed items handed in at a general office and receiving the Free frank could incur an extra charge at the other end: a letter received at Dublin for posting to Portobello, Edinburgh would be charged a penny; a letter from London posted to Stillorgan, Dublin had to pay the Penny Post. Quite often this charge was imposed at the appropriate postmaster's discretion.

The postmaster could, apparently, use his discretion in diverting mail to obviate the journey to Dublin for the Free frank to be applied. Examples without the frank, but with all the correct qualifications, can be found. Obvious items addressed, say, from Clonmel to Cork were probably 'dropped off' en route for a speedier delivery. There is a lot of evidence that this procedure took place. More often than not, mail from the northern counties of Ireland addressed to London and elsewhere did not have an Irish Free mark. This could be that, as there was an alternative route across the sea from Donaghadee to Portpatrick, sending the mail down to Dublin was considered unnecessary and time wasting.

FREE FRONTS

The Free franks have been affectionately known as "The Cinderella of Postal History." This is possibly because of the amount of mutilated material (fronts only) in this field. One must overlook the indiscretions of our forbears: they were, after all, not interested in postal markings. They were in fact, autograph collectors and it is to them we owe our thanks that much of this material still exists.

Acknowledgements:

This article first appeared, in a slightly different form in the British publication STAMPS, issue of February 1981.

Most of the illustrations of the handstamps were made by Bill Kane for the Feldman/Kane book, "The Postal History of Ireland to 1840."

Doing The Numbers

by William Kane

I have read with great interest Tom Currant's articles under the above heading in *The Revealers* No's 142, 144, 147 and 155.

It seems strange that after all the publicity over the past year, there are so many numbers that have no example known to the investigation. This makes one wonder if the recorded data of previous historians is absolutely correct. I suppose this is part of the charm of Postal History, which encourages personal research. Hence, I now know that two MILLTOWNS had Numeral '328' and that the two handstamps were different. Can anyone answer the questions posed at the end of this piece?



MILLTOWN, Co. Kerry 1858
Approx. 22mm High x 30mm Wide

MILLTOWN, Co. Dublin 1872
Approx. 28mm High x 25mm Wide

Checking the lists prepared by J.H. Daniels (1898), T. Whitworth (1905), J.G. Hendy (1909), C.F. Denby Marshall (1910), G. Brumell (1946) and J.T. Whitney (1980) we find they all mention but one Milltown, that of Dublin. Two spellings were recorded, Miltown initially, which was changed to Milltown in 1892, although there were several Milltowns in Ireland at that time. It appears that none of them were allotted numbers, only Dublin '328'.



The Irish Post Office Guide of 1977 records six Milltowns, one in each of the following: Belfast, Co. Cavan, Co. Tyrone, Dublin, Co. Galway, and Co. Kerry.

I recently acquired two covers which seem to contradict the above. One is from Milltown, Co. Kerry to Bunratty, Co. Clare dated 14th March '58.



The 1d rose red (SG 40-41) was cancelled by the Numeral '328'. Strange to relate this number is the one given to MILLTOWN, Dublin yet this cover was never near Dublin. On the reverse it carries the R.H. mark of MILLTOWN struck in blue and the transit mark of Killarney in Black...no Dublin transit mark at all.



The other cover, by the same sender addressed to the same addressee, has the 1d rose red tied by the Killarney Duplex '272' this time, however, the townland is given as New Market on Fergus. Dated 11th September 1859 the backstamps this time are, the undated circular MILTOWN in black and the transit mark of New Market on Fergus also in black.

Some pertinent information I uncovered by further research is shown below.

The G.P.O. Circulation Map of Ireland, 1893.

Miltown, Co. Kerry is shown on this map. It appears that there was a Mail Cart between Killarney and Killorglin, and a Rural Postman on foot between Killorglin and Miltown.

The Post Chaise Companion, 1798

Gives a listing of the distances from the G.P.O. Dublin, in relation of the Post Offices throughout Ireland, and mentions two Milltowns.

Milltown, Co. Kerry, 152½ miles.

Milltown, Co. Dublin, 2¼ miles.

Extract from FRASER's Ireland, 1854

"Near to Milltown (Co. Kerry) is Kilcoman Abbey, (Bushfield) the seat of Sir W.D. Godfrey, Bart. In the grounds are the ruins of the Augustian Abbey, founded in the reign of King Henry III (1216-72). The villages of Milltown and Castlemain are respectively eight and ten miles from Killarney on the road to Dingle."

Re. "FIRGROVE" New Market on Fergus and Bunratty**Extract from FRASER's Ireland, 1854**

"About a mile and a half to the right of Bunratty are Rosemanagher Castle and Springfield. Two miles beyond Bunratty on the road to Ennis are Firgrove, Clonmoney and Ballycasey."

So from the above we can establish that "Firgrove" was a noted mansion.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1) Did Milltown, Co. Kerry receive an issue of Numeral '328' handstamp in error in 1858?

2) We know that Receiving Houses did not cancel the adhesives on cover. Why did Milltown cancel in this instance?

3) The straight line Milltown was struck in blue in 1858. The undated circular Milltown was struck in black in 1859. Why not in blue as in the previous year? Since the adhesive was cancelled with the numeral '328' in black the two colours of ink were available in the office in 1858.

4) "Firgrove" was the name of the house, why change the townland? Did the bag go direct to Bunratty in 1858 but on to New Market on Fergus and then back to Bunratty for delivery in 1859?

5) Why was the numeral diamond '328' not used in 1859 as it was in the previous year? Was it withdrawn?

6) The spelling of the two namestamps raises a question.

Milltown in 1858, - Straight line in blue

Milltown in 1859, - Undated circular type in black

This is in reverse of the information as in the listings, which say that Milltown was first used, later changed to Milltown. Are the listings wrong?

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Town Cancelled Perfins

by Eugene M. Labiuk

While going through my county collection of Irish postmarks, I noticed a few Irish town cancelled perfins. With there being a wide interest in Irish perfins and so little known about places of use I

thought it might be interesting to list these along with cancels and dates. I realize that this is far from complete but is provided for the interest of perfin collectors. I would also like to thank Joe Purcell, an ex-EPA member who gave additional information to this list.

Perfin	Town Cancel	Date	English/Gaelic equivalent	Stamp
"AA / C ^o L ^D "	Dublin	1912		G.B. 1d.
"AC / LD"	Dublin	JAN 8 / 1904		G.B. 1d. Edward
"AGS / & Co"	Dublin	1899		G.B. 1d. lilac
"BASS"	Baile Atha Cliath	4 JU / 25	Dublin	½d. def.
"B / L ^D "	Kingstown	5 OC / 20		1d. stamp of G.B.
"B&C ^o / L ^D / D"	Baile Atha Cliath	AUG 1929	Dublin	2d. O'Connell
"CB / & C"	Belfast	MAR 22 / 02		G.B. 1d. Edward
"C&C ^o / L ^K "	Limerick	MAY 15 / 1897		G.B. 1d. lilac
"CIE"		27 1/ 49		1d. def.
"D / &C ^o / L ^{TD} "	Cork Cork	FEB 17 / 10 SEP 14 / 03		G.B. 1d. Edward G.B. 1d. Edward
"D.M. / C."	Droichead	1938	Drogheda	2d. Matthew
"G" – 19 hole	Baile Mhic Coda	31 VII / 27	Ballymacoda	½d. def.
	Cabhan	31 OC / 27	Cavan	½d. def.
	Inniscara	31 IX / 27	Inis Cairthe	½d. def.
	Magh ealla	12 AU / 27	Mallow	½d. def.
	Mainistir na Coroon	23 JY / 27	Middleton	½d. def.
	Mogeely	27 MY / 22	Mag Eile	1p overprint
	Mag Eile	9 SEP / 27	Mogeely	½d. def.
	An Pasaiste	29 AU / 27	Passage West	½d. def.
	Rerrin	25 AU / 27	Reidhrinn	½d. def.
	Rinn ua Sgide	8 SEP / 27	Ringashiddy	½d. def.
	Chuil Mhin	2 NOV / 27	Coolmeen	½d. def.
	Ennis	4 AP / 22	Innis	1d overprint
	Baile Choilphin	20 MR 28	Colbinstown	½d. def.
	Rathdowney	2 MR 22	Rath Domhnaigh	1d stamp of G.B.
	Mohill	15 AP / 27	Maothail	1d overprint
	Brugh Riogh	19 DE / 27	Bruree	½d. def.
	Caislean O gConaing	21 IX / 27	Castleconnell	½d. def.
	Calatha Ui Threo	26 SEP 27	Castleroy	½d. def.
	Clonlara	14 DE / 27	Cluain Lara	½d. def.
	Cruach	29 FEB 28	Croagh	½d. def.
	Lumineach	17 OC / 27	Limerick	½d. def.
	Cill Choigidh	10 SEP 27	Kilcogy	½d. def.
	Tara Dhumree	14 JA 28	Tara	½d. def.
	Baile Gearr	12 OC / 27	Ballygar	½d. def.
	Killeen	25 MR 22	Cuillin	1d overprint
	Monard	date unclear		1d overprint
	Sraid Sheamuis	SE 7 / 31	James Street (Dublin)	Royal Dublin Society comm.
	Newmarket	3 SP / 27	Ath Trasna	½d. def.
	Rathcoole	NO 22 / 27	Rath Chuil	½d. def.

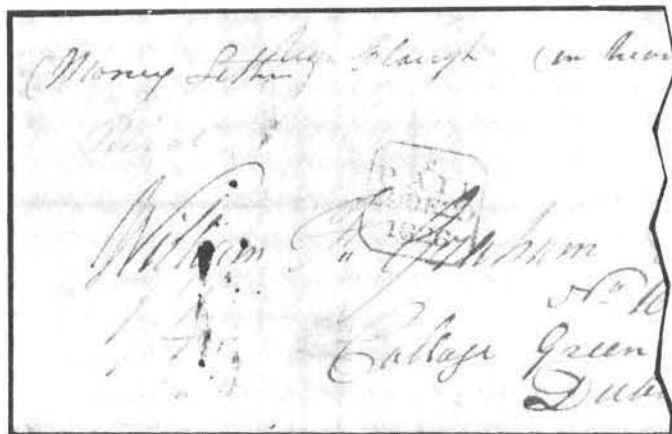
Perfin	Town Cancel	Date	English/Gaelic equivalent	Stamp
"G" — 19 hole (cont'd)	Murroe	9 AU / 27	Murbhach	½d. def.
	Inis	3 NO / 27	Ennis	½d. def.
	Cloughjordan	1 SE / 27	Cloch an tSiurtanaigh	½d. def.
	Foynes	23 JY / 27	Faing	½d. def.
	Rathnure	24 NO / 27	Rath an Iubhair	½d. def.
"G.S.R." — 10-11-12 hole	Baile Atha Cliath Pargate Street	6 MR / 25 27 JA / 31	Dublin Sraid Gheta na Pairce	2d. def. on piece with 2 × ½d. def. & 2 × Shannon Scheme each with G.S.R.
	Baile Atha Cliath	23 MR / 25	Dublin	2d. overprint
"GS / WR" 10-11 / 12-14	James Street (Dublin)	6 SP / 23	Sraid Sheamuis	2d. def.
"GWR"	Ballsbridge Dublin	AU 24 / 10		½d. stamp of G.B. illegal usage—used for personal purposes
"JP / S"	Baile Atha Cliath	2 IX / 49	Dublin	½d. O'Cleary
"KLTD" — mono.	Dun Chuinn	17 JUL 29	Dunquin	2d. def.
	Baile Atha Claith	21 NO / 23	Dublin	2d. def.
"L&L / &G"	Baile Atha Cliath	4 III / 57	Dublin	3d. Barry
"LSS" / C ^o	Gaillimh	20 DE / 28	Galway	1d. overprint
"MR / C ^o L ^D "	Baile Atha Cliath	5 ? / 24	Dublin	½d. def.
"MR / C ^o L ^D "	Baile Atha Cliath	17 DEC / 28	Dublin	½d. def.
"M / G.W.R." 15 / 10,16,13	Baile Atha Claith	8 NO / 24	Dublin	2d. def.
"P.V. / L ^D "	College Green	13 DE / 22		2d overprint
	Baile Atha Cliath	23 FE / 27	Dublin	2d. def.
"RE / WR"	Ross Lair	10 X / 55	Rosslare	1½d. def.
"RLF / &C ^o L ^D "	Belfast	JUL 13 / 1896		1d. G.B. lilac
"S.S"	Belfast	OC 1906		G.B. 1d. Edward
"TB / &C ^o "	Dublin	OC 6 / 99		1d. G.B. lilac
"W&A / G"	Dublin	20 MAY / 1915		1d. G.B. George V
"WC&S"	Baile Atha Cliath	23 FE / 27	Dublin	½d. def.
"W / ITC"	Baile Atha Cliath	30 XI / 51	Dublin	3d. def. & ½d. O'Cleary
"T ^W " (wide)	Baile Atha Cliath	18 JNE / 1943	Dublin	½d. def.
"YIC"	Baile Atha Cliath	25 SP / 25	Dublin	2d. def.
	Baile Atha Claith	2 OC / 30	Dublin	1d. def.
"3 CASTLES"	Baile Atha Cliath	14 ? / 40	Dublin	½d. def.

The Irish Post Office in the 1820's

by Anthony Booth-Jones

THE MONEY LETTER SYSTEM

This system in Ireland was similar to that in Britain except that the British Post Office would only accept letters as money-letters if they contained coins, whereas in Ireland it applied to letters containing notes as well. The sender, instead of putting his letter in a receiver or giving it to a collecting letter-carrier, had to deliver it at the paid window in the Dublin office, or, in the country, hand it to the deputy-Postmaster who wrote "money-letter" on the obverse. The sender was not given a receipt—that was firm policy until 1841. As in England there was no redress in the event of non-delivery.



These money-letters on being transmitted from one post town to another, or to Dublin, were listed on and attached to a separate letter-bill (a "money-bill") and checked on arrival. After sorting in Dublin for each post town they were again listed on money-bills for transmission to the country post town or for turning over to the Dublin alphabet or letter carrier's office. Here the procedure was repeated until finally a receipt was obtained from the addressee and filed. The system was not available for free-franked letters (all ranks in the Post Office detested frees), but one suspects there were exceptions made.

LETTERS CONTAINING PROPERTY

There are some references to these in Ireland in the 1820's, and they seem to have been dealt with on separate letter-bills like money-letters were. But I suspect that this service was only available to big-wigs like those in Dublin Castle. They would, therefore, be free-franked and there is a reference to game being sent through the post under frank (one hopes it was fresh!).

BLIND AND INSOLVENT LETTERS

These were dealt with by a small section in Dublin, after passing through an accounting process which gave credit to those offices which had been charged with them originally (they were nearly 100% unpaid letters). Any that appeared to contain property were opened and recorded in a Property Book. The senders were sent an official notification and at their option the letters were returned or re-addressed, and a receipt obtained in either case from the person to whom they were delivered. Blind letters not containing property were destroyed as were newspapers. The Secretary stated in 1823

that "they come in their thousands". In 1826 the lost postage on blind and insolvent letters was estimated at £12,000 to £14,000 per annum.

INTERNAL REGISTRATION

In 1822 Freeling (Secretary of the English P.O.) was complaining to Lees about the loss of British letters to Ireland, and in May, 1823, after some experimenting, Lees instituted an internal registry. The British Mail section in Dublin, like the Foreign Branch in London, was separate from the main part (because their hours of attendance were tied to the packet sailing schedules). Lees arranged that on arrival of the packet mail from Holyhead all double, treble or weight letters were put aside and treated the same way as money-letters. This system appears (from evidence given by Lees to the Revenue Commission in 1823) to have been confined at the outset to British mail for Dublin only. By August, 1823, he was stating: "I do not believe that any delay has been occasioned to be compared with the security of the property; we have not, since that, which is about three months ago, lost a single letter, but we had lost twenty-five in the month before, one containing above £1,000."

By 1826 the Windowman in Dublin was giving receipts to the sender for every double letter which was prepaid. And all double letters from the country, not franked, whether prepaid or not, addressed to Dublin were subject to internal registration on arrival in Dublin like money-letters. The System did not apply to letters going to England or passing through Dublin from one post town to another. What is not clear from the 1826 evidence is whether the system applied to letters from Dublin to the country.

I have a free-franked cover of 1828 from London which bears the Dublin internal registration handstamp but this may have been an error; it was redirected to Cork, and being franked, there is no evidence from the rate whether it was a double letter or not.



Some Overprint Notes

by Dr. M.W. Harrow

THOM SOARSTAT, S over E Variety

According to the literature, the S over E variety occurs in setting 2 of the Thom Soarstat printing. It is present in Row 7/10 and Row 10/10 of the sheet in the low values. In the high values, it appears in Row 9/2. It is known in all values except the 2½d and the 4d.

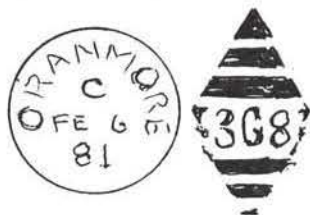
For those interested in the exact position of these varieties which they may hold, it must be remembered that the row below the R 7/10 position consists of stamps, while the row below the R 10/10 consists of a gutter in the same color as the stamp. Multiples showing a stamp below the error must be from position R 7/10, while those with a gutter below must be from R 10/10. But what does one do in a multiple in which the error is on the bottom row or where the item is a single stamp?

On those few positional multiples that I have seen, there is what appears to be a second minor error in R 10/10: a nick in the top left of the first 2 in the date. This is not present in Row 7/10. If this can be further verified by our members, we will be able to determine that position of even a single unit.

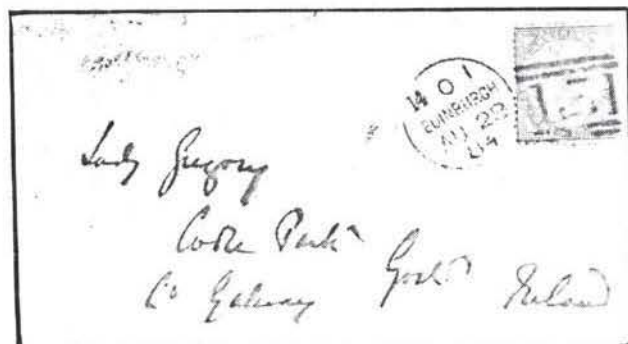
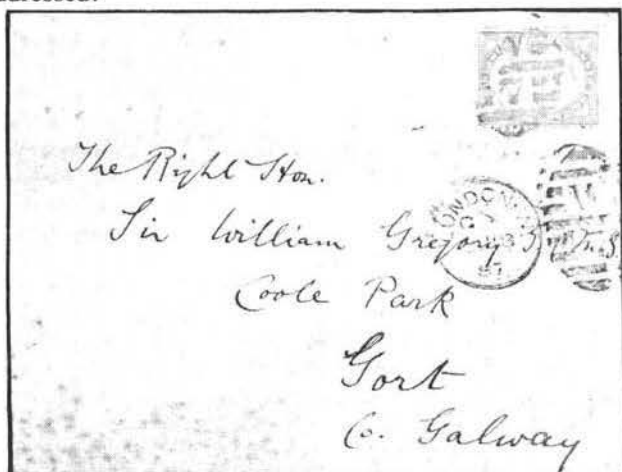
There is More to a Cover than its Markings

by Basil Hunter

In the autumn of 1982, I made a buy of six somewhat tatty covers, most of which were cancelled with the common GB 1d lilac of 1881 (Sc #89). What had caught my eye, however, being interested in postal history, was not so much the titled people to whom the letters were addressed, but some Irish cancels, including the diamond and circle duplex #368.



A search with a friend through the Fall '81 Revealer did not appear to include this duplex number in Tom Currant's "Doing the Numbers." I wrote to Tom, which resulted in an enthusiastic response. However by this time I had looked a little deeper and become intrigued. Who after all were the Rt. Hon. Sir William Henry Gregory and Lady Gregory, of Coole Park, Gort, Co. Galway to whom these covers were addressed?



Sir Gregory was into his mid-sixties when he married Augusta, then twenty-eight, and they had a son with subsequent lineage to this day. I now learned that the famous poet, Yeats, had spent "twenty golden years" working at Coole Park writing his beloved poetry, and also works for the theatre. Edward Martyn was the other member of this trio who conceived of "Our Irish Theatre", a venture born in 1898 when Lady Gregory donated the first £25. Mr. Yeats was then thirty-three.

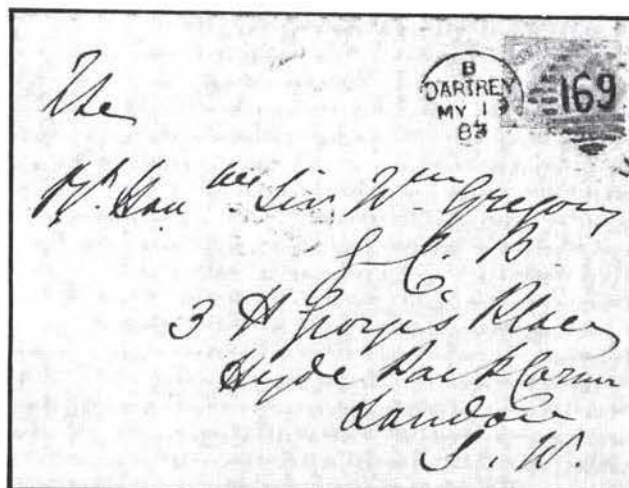
Lady Gregory edited an autobiography of her husband, and letters of his ancestors, but until this fusion of Irish minds, had written no original works of her own. Yeats set her to gathering Irish folk-lore, and soon she set about learning Gaelic.

Lady Gregory was born in 1852 and died in 1932, her eighty years spanning a long career of writing and interest in her theatre company, which eventually came over to captivate America. From these ranks arose Barry Fitzgerald, Dame May Whitty, Sara Algood, and other names which would become familiar to movie-goers the world over, all products of the Dublin Theatre training.

But now to return to postal history.

I decided to see if by any chance there might be more of this correspondence in the hands of my local dealer-friend. Yes there were and I acquired some thirty two more, some of which required repair, but happily, the postal markings were mostly good—if a bit faded on some covers.

The "knife" or back flap of many of these envelopes held intriguing monograms and wax seals; among them a crimson globe encircled with "All the world's a Stage"—who might this be?; Buckingham Palace with the familiar Crest of Lion and Unicorn had only an "H.R." on the front—perhaps the old Queen?... who knows? Many letters had the embossed paper of the "Athenaeum Club" with matching seal of the helmeted Athene.



At the local library I asked for Burke's Irish Peerage and xeroxed a full account of this illustrious pair. Apart from a myriad of accomplishments in his lifetime, his 2nd wife (from 1880 on) was no less than the celebrated Isabella Augusta Gregory—the Lady Gregory who had founded the famous Abbey Theatre in Dublin!

This cover shows the Irish Dartrey diamond duplex #169 and on the back DARTREY, CO. MONGHAN. This has been sent by the Countess Dartrey to the London address of the Gregory's.

The next cover is to the Countess of Dartrey herself and carries the Oranmore duplex. It is backstamped Cootehill.

Of great interest to me as an amateur gardener is an "On Her Majesty's Service" cover to "His Excellency, W.R. Gregory tc." in Ceylon. I had already found Sir Gregory to have been the Governor of Ceylon from 1872-1877 and that at some date a statue had been erected to him at Colombo Harbour. The letter is signed by Sir. Jos. Dalton Hooker, who took over at Kew Gardens from his most illustrious father, also knighted, Sir William Hooker, Curator of Kew from 1841-1865. The appendage 'Hookerii' goes with many rare plants discovered by this world-famous botanist.

Among other numerous cancels of interest is an Irish duplex of Thurles (too faint to reproduce). This was cancelled Ju 11, '85 and is in Co. Tipperary with a single cancel BALLY-RAGGET on the reverse (Kilkenny), the site of Ormonde Castle. Which conjures up faint memories of a hundred years previously, when Eleanor Butler of Ormonde Castle 'eloped' with Sarah Ponsonby and fled to North Wales, where these Irish refugees were to become known as the "Ladies of Llangollen"—but that is another long story....

Sir Gregory had an engaging habit of making notes, in some cases, on the backs of the envelopes as to their contents, unfortunately now long gone. One of them mentions a 'dig'—"1887, Excavations, Cyprus", so our man dabbled in archeology too. Another inscription reads: "1885, the Hon. F. Lawler, his articles on Turf Celebrities." There is vast room for speculation on this one! — Empress Elisabeth of Austria, royal consort of the Emperor Franz Josef, loved to escape the court life of Austria for the green hills of Ireland where she could reinforce her deserved reputation of the 'best Royal horsewoman in all Europe'. She did not ride in England because Queen Victoria frowned on such unladylike vigor!

About one third of the total of thirty-eight covers are addressed to Lady Gregory, the others to Sir Gregory, and one a 'penny red' dated 1875, to "Mrs. Gregory, Coole Park etc." of course pre-dates the second marriage to Augusta.

There is a mourning letter, too, dated 1885, with a notation of the back, "Countess Dillons' translations". I looked up the Dillon lineage, their county seat being in Drogheda, Co. Louth. Surely we can leave this philatelic essay with their motto "While I Breathe I Hope".....a testimony to the tenacity and enduring nature of the Irish themselves.



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