

British Varieties and Irish Overprints.



Supplement No. 5

EIRE PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION

March-April, 1962

The British stamps, supplied for overprinting by the Provisional Government of Ireland up to and including the 1 shilling value, were those of the contemporary Issue of 1912-1913. They were, with the exception of a single value, all typographed by Harrison & Sons, London. The 6d value was that printed by the Government Printing House (Somerset House) and was the only value produced on chalky paper.

The original sheets of the typographed stamps consisted of 240 stamps arranged in two vertical panes of 120 stamps each (ten horizontal rows of 12 stamps each). The two panes were surrounded by an interrupted Jubilee line, and were separated by a gutter, the same size as the stamps, and containing four vertical bars horizontally ruled. The term "Jubilee" line denotes the continuous line used to frame each pane of stamps on British stamps. Its purpose was to reduce the wear on the plates at the edges. It first was employed in 1887 which was the Jubilee year of Queen Victoria. Each sheet had a Control and the stamps were perforated 15 x 14. (see illustration above).

There were some engraving errors on the basic British stamps which while of particular interest to British collectors, nevertheless constitute an important segment of a specialized collection of Irish stamps.

There are about 4 items of sufficient significance to warrant attention. These will be considered in the order of ascending face value:

REVERSED "Q" IN THE "ONE" PENNY VALUE STAMP



REVERSED 'Q' IN ONE

It is claimed that the so-called "Q" for "O" in "ONE" (Gibbons GB 357a) exists in the overprinted Irish stamps but Mr. J. S. Preston in an article prepared for the Irish Study Group and reprinted by permission of the author in The Revealer, May-June, 1959, pp. 409-411 points out that he has been unable to find any evidence to substantiate this claim. Since the "Q" flaw is known on Control E-14 which was discovered about 1914 and not known to have been supplied by Great Britain unless it was in the reserves of the stamps remaining in the Irish Post Office stores when overprinting began, we will leave this matter for future research and discovery.

The somewhat similar flaw which we might well call the reversed "Q" does exist. It occurs on the ninth stamp of the fifteenth row of Control T-22. Since the flaw occurs on the printing plate, it is relatively immaterial whether the sheet is perforated or imperforated since the determination of the manner of perforation is made subsequent to the printing.

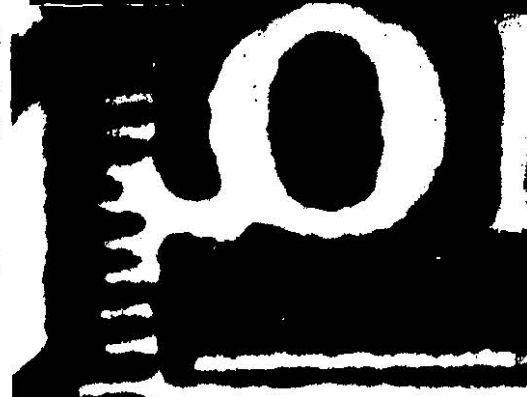
We reprint the illustration of this flaw, together with the enlargement thereof

from the excellent article by Mr. M.G. O'Reilly in The Revealer, January-March, 1957, page 302:

"This variety has been found on some of the printings of the plate with Control T 22. It is found on the 9th stamp in row 15 of the sheet, or position 177.

"This is, of course, in the lower pane, It is found with the five-line RIALTAS overprint as illustrated, and with the three-line SAORSTAT overprint.

"The variety is shown in two enlargements the second purely for emphasis."



"PENCF" and "PENCF" CORRECTED ON THE 1½d VALUE

Our good friend, the late Perry Adams described the basic error on the 1½d value overprinted by the Provisional Government in an article in The Revealer, Nov-Dec. 1952, page 94:



Original Error.

"In the Irish section, Scott notes the original error as # 15a, but does not mention that the overprint appeared on two distinct shades, chestnut and pale red brown (S.G. # 10 and 11). 'PENCF' appears but once in each overprinted sheet of 240 subjects -- the 12th stamp of the 15th row. Engraver's Control is confined to Q-21 Perf., the Thom cliché in black only. It does not appear in



The Error Corrected.

the Harrison Rialtas coils. The life of the overprint error was quite short, and, as the catalogs indicate, it has high premium value, even as a single; it is at its philatelic best in blocks of four and up.

"With the rest of the Thom black overprints, the error appeared at the same time as the Dollards --- February 17th 1922. By June, when Harrison overprinted the four lowest values for coil use (Scott 19-22a, S.G. 26-29a). the 'PENCF' error had been re-cut on the basic plate, and is easily distinguished from the normal without a glass, as the added lower bar of the final 'E' is longer than the top one. Scott and Gibbons fail to note the re-cut variety in their Irish listings.

"In addition to its appearance with the Harrisons just noted, it persists always with Control T 22, through all the subsequent Thom overprints -- the blue-blacks, that with wider setting and the Saorstat. As with the original 'PENCF' error, the re-cuts have marked extra value and are best acquired in blocks, the Harrisons in strips.

"PQSTAGE" on the 9d VALUE

In a few sheets of the 9d (olive green) used for the Thom Saorstat overprint (Gibbons No. 61 - Scott No. 53) a marginal stamp in the left side panel shows an "O" which appears more like a "Q" making the word "POSTAGE" appear as "PQSTAGE".

"ONF" SHILLING

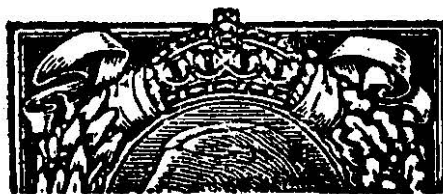
The shilling value, with Thom's wide-spaced "Rialtas" overprint (Gibbons No. 51 - Scott No. 43) and the Thom Saorstat overprint (Gibbons No. 63 - Scott No. 55), Control T 22 Imperf for both printings reveals a variety "ONF" for "ONE" with the lower bar mutilated in the value tablet at the bottom of the stamp. This appears once in each overprinted sheet of 240 stamps -- the 9th stamp of the 8th row. The illustration on the next page is from the O'Reilly article in The Revealer, January-March, 1957, page 302.

2d GREAT BRITAIN (Die I) AND (Die II)

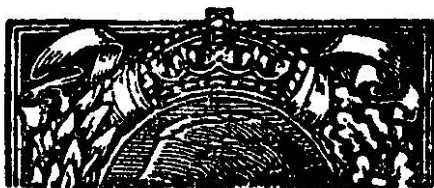
There are two dies of the 2d value in orange. These have been designated as Die I and Die II. Both Die I and Die II plates were used in the Thom "Rialtas" overprints both in black and later in blue-black and in the Harrison "Rialtas" overprints. Die II only was used for the "Saorstat" overprints by Messrs. Thom and also by Harrison.

In Die I, there are four lines of colour between the top of the head of George V and the surrounding oval. There is a space between the lines of the background and the inner frame line and the uncoloured line around the value tablet is thinner than it is in Die II.

In Die II, there are three lines only at the top of the head of George V. The lines of the background touch the inner frame line. The line around the value is thicker than in Die I.



Die I



Die II



ONE FOR ONE

High Value Stamps

For the three high values, 2/6, 5/- and 10/-, the British stamps used were until 1934 printed by Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. Ltd. of London.

The original sheets contained 40 stamps, arranged in ten horizontal rows of four stamps each. There was no gutter and the sheets were without Controls. Perf. 11 x 12. Issue of 1919.

2/6 Value

There are slight traces of re-entries on some of this value overprinted by Dollard. When Thom overprinted this value for the Saorstat issue, subject No.2 of the sheet shows a double entry. Not only are the horizontal and diagonal lines of the shield of Britannia doubled, but many of the lines of Britannia and Trident are doubled.

There are two markedly different shades of the 2/6 value stamp supplied for the Dublin Castle printing (Scott No.77-Gibbons No.83). The first shade, was a chocolate brown or russet brown, commonly described as a warm shade. This appeared in 1925 thru 1926. In some sheets of the warm shade only, stamp 3 of row 2 (in the sheet of 40 -- 4 across by 10 down) reveals a re-entry, comprising the partial doubling of the outside bottom frame line somewhat left of center; while there is a further slight doubling at the top left corner.

The other shade is a sepia brown, or dark brown or even black brown. This is commonly characterized as the cold shade and appeared in January or February of 1927. The engraving on this cold shade appears to have been normal up to the spring of 1927, when the right slanting stroke of the R in CROWN began to show signs of wear on all forty stamps of the sheet and this continued. The "Perfect R" is at a premium since there were more "Broken" and "Perfect" R's in circulation.

5/- Value

"Inverted T"

An interesting and quite rare engraving error occurs in the 5/- plate of the Composite printing (Scott 78a). On stamp #1, row 2 (overprinted with the

narrow "1922"), under the hoof of the dark sea horse, inside the outer frame line appears a very clear object which looks like and is referred to as an "Inverted T".

"Inner Frame Notch"

On the same plate in the same value, same Composite printing (Scott 78a) appears another engraving error. On stamp # 3, row 3 (overprinted with the wide "1922"), a clear short slanting notch appears which resembles a new 'shading' stroke. It is beneath the hoof of the dark sea horse and lies between the double lines of the inner-frame. Once thought to be found only in the Composite printing, Mr. M.G. O'Reilly has reported finding this variety in a pair of the Dublin Castle 1927 re-issue of the wide date in black (The Revealer, Sept-Oct 1956, page 284).

10/- Value

"Runnals Re-entry"

Mr. H.C. Runnals of Catford, England discovered a major re-entry on the 10/- overprinted "Saorstát Éireann" (Castle 1925 printing).

The re-entry is clearly visible on Britannia's robe in the slanting shading lines both to the right of the shield and down the right hand side of the skirt. The variety is visible also in the shield, and in this respect somewhat resembles the well-known entry of the 2/6 stamp. (See, The Revealer, March-April, 1952, page 4).

Broken "S" in "Postage"

On the 10/- stamp overprinted by Dollard (Scott # 14, Gibbons #21 and also later by Thom (Scott # 38, Gibbons # 46) the lower loop of the "S" in "Postage" shows a clean break, easily seen without a glass. The Dollards seem to be consistently of the broken "S" plate although there was a report in the January-March 1957 Revealer (page 298) that our member, Mr. R.J. Swords has a "Perfect S" Dollard overprint. As to the Thom Rialtas overprint, although it is usually found with broken "S", Mr. Thomas E. Field has a copy of the Thom Rialtas on the perfect "S" plate.

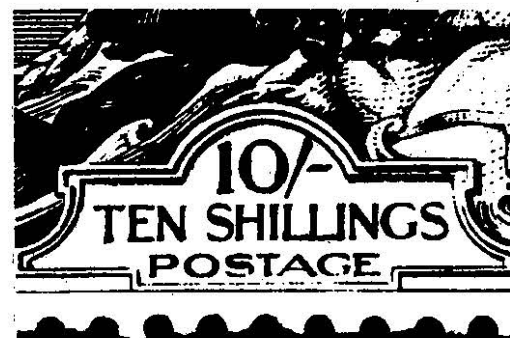
Mr. Perry Adams wrote in the Revealer (July-August 1952, page 7): "As the Thom Saorstát overprintings of the 10/- (Scott #58) came into circulation, someone suddenly noticed that certain copies no longer showed the broken "S". Closer study revealed whole sheets of forty subjects in which the original engraving error had disappeared. Thus for the first time came the realization of a second Bradbury Wilkinson 10/- plate. When the Government took over the printing at Dublin Castle, both Perfect and Broken S plates continued in use for the 10/- value, and later, the 'Composite' overprintings also were made on both. However, from sometime in the summer of 1926, again Broken S plate seems to have been used exclusively.

Dublin Castle Overprints of 1935

Before the definitive St. Patrick high values appeared, it was necessary in 1935 to re-issue the three high values. This overprinting was done by Dublin Castle on the new British issues, recess-printed by Waterlow & Sons in 1934 from new plates, easily distinguishable by the fact that the background of the King's head has crossed lines rather than horizontal in the shading. Issued in sheets of 40 - 4 x 10. Perf. 11 x 12.



THE PERFECT 'S' PLATE.



THE BROKEN 'S' PLATE.



PERFECT

BROKEN