



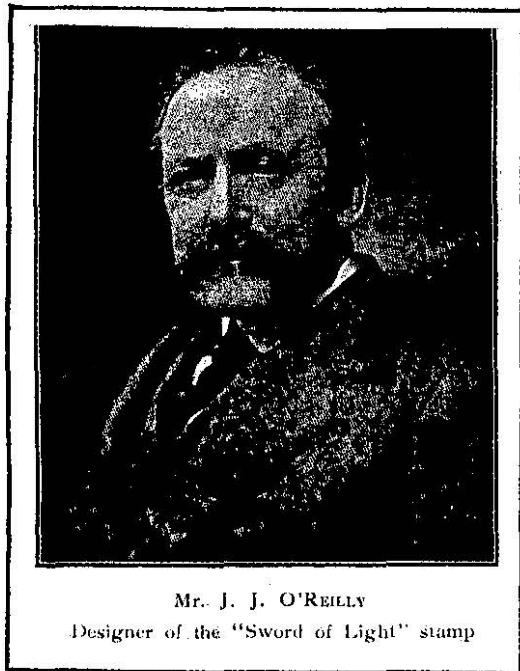
IRISH FREE STATE



SUPPLEMENT No. 7

EIRE PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION

July-August, 1962



Mr. J. J. O'REILLY
Designer of the "Sword of Light" stamp

By THE EDITOR

Professor Atkinson of Dublin submitted pictorial designs for the 2/6, 5/- and 10/- values. It was not until 1937 that the Saint Patrick design was used for the definitive high values.

It had been originally planned to have the new definitive postage stamps available on 6 December 1922 but a number of difficulties combined to make this unlikely. The printing plates were to be made at the Royal Mint in London. A special paper bearing the SE (Saorstat Eireann) watermark had to be manufactured and since the Government proposed to do the printing of its postage stamps and revenue paper at a Government Printing Works at Dublin Castle, new printing presses had to be purchased and installed. In addition, it will be recalled that the spring and summer of 1922 was a time of great trial particularly to the Post Office Department. Dublin was practically in a state of civil strife and the I.R.A. controlled most of the south of Ireland and was interfering with the delivery of the mails by conducting raids on post offices and even attempting to set up its own postal service in Cork. These events culminated in the Battle of the Four Courts in Dublin in July of 1922 and the recapture by the Irish Free State troops of Cork and the south of Ireland in August, 1922.

For the past forty years, the four designs approved for the definitive issues of Ireland have been in constant use and despite some criticism of their design, they have served Ireland well. The symbolical nature of the designs have promoted the study and collection of Irish postage stamps and the scarcity of errors and varieties is a tribute to Irish workmanship and care.

One of the accepted designs and the first in use was the so-called "Map of Ireland" designed by Mr. James Ingram of Glasnevin, Dublin. Page 25(L-1)

Almost as soon as the Provisional Government of Ireland was formed in December of 1921, preparations were made for a series of postage stamps for the forthcoming Irish Free State to be established on 6 December 1922.

The Postmaster General, Mr. J. J. Walsh on 1 February 1922 publicly invited designs for the new stamps. He proposed the payment of £25 for each successful design and stipulated that "all designs submitted should be of symbolical nature, and may not embrace any representation of a personal nature. Inscriptions must be shown in Gaelic characters."

Over 800 sketches were submitted of which 130 received careful study by an adjudicating committee presided over by Mr. Arthur Griffith. This was reduced eventually to eight, of which four designs were finally approved for the low values, 1/2d. through the 1 sh. For some unexplained reason, designs for the high values were not chosen at the time, although it is said that

IRISH FREE STATE 2d 1922



"The first Map stamp was not printed in Ireland but in London -- at Somerset House -- and is in reality Ireland's first commemorative issue. It was issued to commemorate the establishment of the Irish Free State and the first step in securing political independence from British rule. Irish leaders desired to see this adhesive printed in Ireland and available for distribution on the day that the nation took over its own government.

"The Dec. 6th printing was made on paper made in Ireland, watermarked "SE" in monogram, and perforated to the British gauge of 15 x 14. The color is a beautiful deep sea green and gives the appearance of being on chalky or coated paper. A considerable amount was sold on the first day of issue. Many of the stamps sold were used on First Day of Issue covers. All copies on Dec. 6th and immediately thereafter, have the same color and appearance.

"The reissue copies, printed in Ireland, [The reissue, or Dublin Castle printing, took place in late December of 1922] are a deep blue-green and have strong bluish tint when held to the sunlight. Used stamps, if soaked, lose the green appearance and tend toward a blue" [Malcolm O'Reilly in The Revealer].



The Accepted Design for the Low Values.

After the initial issue of the 2d value in December of 1922, there was a lag in the issuance of the remaining values and designs and to meet the needs of the Post Office Department, the "Saorstát Eireann" overprints by Thom were in use from December 1922 through 1923 and were gradually displaced by the definitive issues.

ARRANGEMENT AND PRINTING OF THE DEFINITIVE ISSUES

The printing plates were made in London, whereas the printing was done after the initial December issue of the 2d in the newly equipped government printing plant, Dublin Castle on presses furnished by Grover & Co. Ltd. of London. The paper was exclusively a domestic product containing somewhat longer fibres for sufficient strength. Experiments and improvements in the paper continued after the issuing of the 2d value, which explains certain variations in the thickness of the paper. Perforation was 15 x 14 also done in Dublin

The counter sheets contained 240 stamps in two vertical panes of 120 stamps (12 rows of ten stamps each), separated, as in the British stamps by a gutter of stamp height. The outer sheet margins had no imprint of any sort, and there were no Controls. The gutter was of the same design as the British stamps and both panes were surrounded by an interrupted Jubilee line.

The Map of Ireland design was used for the following values:

1d. Carmine Rose	First Day of Issue - February 23, 1923
1 1/2d. Claret	First Day of Issue - February 2, 1923
2d. Deep Green	First Day of Issue - December 6, 1922



CELTIC CROSS DESIGN

The Celtic Cross design was the next to appear. President Arthur Griffith suggested to the Postmaster General that among the selected designs might well be the Sinn Fein propaganda label which since 1908 had been associated with the aims and objects of the new government. The original designer, Miss Lily Williams was asked to prepare a design from the old one suitable for single color printing. Miss Williams, a painter who was born in Dublin and studied at the Royal Hibernian Academy had painted the portraits of many of the famous Irish patriots of 1916

The Celtic Cross design was intended to appear on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1923 but since this was a public holiday, the 3d stamp was issued on day previous, March 16th and first day of issue covers are so postmarked. The entire issue was sold out by the afternoon of that day and further supplies had to be printed. The Celtic Cross design was used for the following values:

3d.	Ultramarine	First Day of Issue	March 17, 1923
10d.	Brown	First Day of Issue	May 11, 1923

SWORD OF LIGHT DESIGN

The next design to appear was the Sword of Light, designed by Mr. J. J. O'Reilly, a lithographic artist and designer of Westmoreland Street, Dublin who was born in Dublin in 1879. Famous for his illuminations, Mr. O'Reilly also designed many of the Irish bill dies. The design shows the Sword of Light with its name in Gaelic [An Claideam Soluis] and is taken from the ancient Book of Kells. Around the elliptical shield showing the Sword is the design in Celtic ornamentation of the Dragon, representing evil. Rather than a weapon of warfare, it is the Irish Emblem of Progress and Learning.



The Sword of Light design was used for the following values:

1/2d.	First Day of Issue	April 20, 1923
5d.	First Day of Issue	May 11, 1923
6d.	First Day of Issue	December 21, 1923
1 sh.	First Day of Issue	June 16, 1923

ARMS OF THE PROVINCES DESIGN



Finally, in the fall of 1923, appeared the last of the designs, that of the Arms of the four post-Tudor Provinces Leinster (Harp), Connaught (divided Eagle and hand grasping dagger), Ulster (Bloody Hand surmounted on a Cross with a dotted background signifying Gold), and Munster (the three Crowns representative of the kingdoms of Munster, South Munster and Connaught). This was designed by Miss Millicent Grace Girling, a designer in crafts and metal who was born June 23, 1901 and was less than 21 years of age when her design was accepted. She was a teacher of design at the Metropolitan School of Art.

The Arms of the Provinces design was used for the following values:

2 1/2d.	First Day of Issue	September 7, 1923
4d	First Day of Issue	September 28, 1923
9d	First Day of Issue	October 26, 1923

CHECK LIST OF THE DEFINITIVE ISSUE OF IRELAND (1922-1940) WATERMARK SE
Scott S.G.

No.	No.	Value	Design	Color	Paper Used	Watermark	Color Variations
65	71	1/2d.	Sword	Emerald	Thin & ordinary. Thick paper. Toned paper	Inverted	Pale yellow green Pale dull green Green; Deep green, Emerald. Aniline deep green.
66	72	1d.	Map	Carmine	Thin & ordinary. Toned paper.	Inverted	Pale rose, rose, rose-red, light and deep carmine
67	73	1 1/2d.	Map	Claret	Thin & ordinary.		Pale claret; full claret
68	74	2d.	Map	Deep Green	Thin & ordinary. Thick paper Coarse paper	Inverted; Inverted & Reversed	Rich sea green (Dec 6, 1922). Full sea green (Dec. 1922 reissue). Deep green, dull green, gray-green.
69	75	2 1/2d	Arms	Chocolate	Thin & ordinary.	Inverted	Reddish brown, Dull brown, yellow brown.
70	76	3d.	Cross	Ultra-marine	Thin & ordinary	Inverted	Pale ultramarine, ultramarine, full blue.
71	77	4d.	Arms	Slate	Thin & ordinary		Slate blue, gray-blue.
72	78	5d.	Sword	Deep Violet	Thin & ordinary		Bright purple, deep reddish purple.
73	79	6d.	Sword	Red Violet	Thin & ordinary	No Wmk	Pale purple to deep and dull purple.
74	80	9d.	Arms	Violet	Thin & ordinary		Deep violet, dull violet.
75	81	10d.	Cross	Brown	Thin & ordinary		Rich brown
76	82	1/-	Sword	Light Blue	Thin & ordinary		Light blue, blue, bright blue

MAJOR VARIETIES IN STAMP DESIGN

- A. Open and closed "p" in "Pigin" - 1d., 1 1/2d., 2d.
- B. Storm Off Lough Swilly - 2d. A spot of color at the approximate spot on Map design where Lough Swilly is located in County Donegal. Found on the lower pane of the sheet, the 12th stamp in the 17th row.
- C. Malformed "2" in Value Tablet - 2d. Found in position #72 in the sheet, the 2nd stamp of the 7th row.
- D. Missing Accent on "EIRE" - 3d. Position not given. 10d. (12th stamp in the 17th row of the sheet).
- E. Cross between the "i" and "r" of "EIRE" - 10d. Position not given.
- F. Booklet panes of six stamps: Scott No. 65a 1/2d. Scott No. 66a 1d. booklet pane of three stamps plus three labels. Scott No. 66b 1d. Booklet pane of six stamps. Scott No. 68a 2d. The foregoing booklet panes appear in Booklets No. 31-1 thru 21-40 for the years 1922 thru 1940. Thereafter the booklet panes are watermarked "E".
- G. There are of course numerous examples of faulty inking or wear of plates and are of interest to the specialist but difficult of cataloguing because of not being constant.