

Irish Air Mail Stamps

SUPPLEMENT No. 22

ÉIRE PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION

July, 1965

The first airmail stamps to be issued by the Irish Department of Posts and Telegraphs did not make their appearance until 1948. On 7th April 1948, two airmail stamps in the values of 3d and 6d were issued.

This very attractive issue was designed by R.J. King and shows the flight of the Angel Victor, the Messenger of St. Patrick over various places in Ireland, in each of the four ancient provinces, associated with the patron Saint of the Irish.

The stamps were recess-printed by Waterlow in London in panes of 60 stamps [6 x 10]. Perforations 14 1/2. Most students of these stamps feel that there were probably sheets of 120 stamps, divided into two panes.

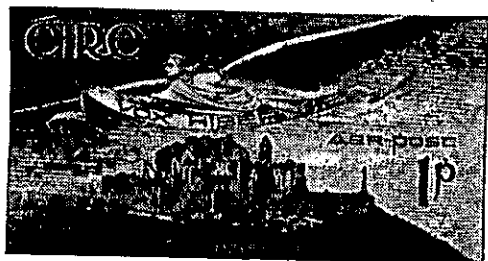
In the first appearance of the 3d and 6d values in 1948, they were in great demand and supplies of most post offices were sold out in a couple of hours.

Four additional values were issued, two on 4th April 1949 - 1d and 1/- and two on 13th December 1954 - 8d and 1/3. On 1st April 1965, the 1/5 stamp in blue appeared.

Apparently there was little use for the 1d and 3d and by 1959, the post Office Guide listed as on general sale only the 6d, 8d, 1/- and 1/3.

1d. ROCK OF CASHEL

"THE VOICE OF THE IRISH"



Issued 4 April 1949. Chocolate or dark brown. The Angel Victor bearing the scroll, "The Voice of the Irish" - VOX HIBERNIAE is shown flying over the Rock of Cashel. The Rock of Cashel is situated in the heart of Tipperary. For ages it was the center of the civil and religious life of the ancient province of Munster.

The Rock itself is a singular phenomenon of nature. It is composed of a tremendous mass of stone and stands alone in the midst of a vast plain - The Golden Vale.

It contains the ruins of a royal palace, a cathedral church, a royal chapel and an almost intact round tower, one of the finest in Ireland. It contains the ancient coronation stone of the Kings of Munster as well as the famous Cross of Cashel.

Legend tells us that the vision of an angel blessing the Rock, seen by two swineherds in the latter half of the 4th century, led Corc Mac Luighdeach the king of Munster, to establish a stronghold there and the kings of Munster were crowned on the pedestal of the ancient Cross.

3d. LOUGH DERG

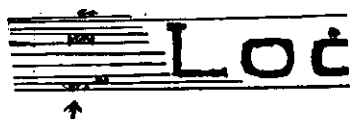
Issued 7th April 1948 [3,000,000]. Blue. The Angel Victor is depicted flying over St. Patrick's Purgatory on an island in Lough Derg in the ancient province of Ulster, in Donegal.

A very early legend tells that St. Patrick, by spending forty days of fasting and prayer in a mysterious cavern on an island in the lake, expelled the evil spirits. Today, it is the scene of pious pilgrimages. Station Island is half a mile from the shore and is less than an acre in extent. Most of its area is occupied by the buildings pertaining to the pilgrimage, which include the impressive church of St. Patrick.



This value produced some interesting varieties, reported by our President, Fred E. Dixon in The Philatelist, June 1948 and The Revealer, Sept-Oct. 1959,

The first variety discovered was a re-entry on the 3d, which occurred on about half of the initial supplies, suggesting that there was only one plate - in two panes. But the variety was absent from later printings and it has never been proved whether the original plate had been repaired, a new plate introduced, or the printing done from only one half of the plate.



The major re-entry occurs on position No. 33 [sixth row, third stamp] of one pane and involves duplication of the bottom line of shading of the outline of the figure 3, and there are fainter traces in the lettering of AER POST and VOX HIBERNIAE.

3p

There is a minor variety, consisting of spots in the water in the 3d value. Most of the bottom row [Row 10] of the pane bearing the re-entry have some spots to the left of the inscription LOC DEARG. This occurs on stamps Nos. 55-60, but is faint on No. 55. About 2mm to the left of LOC.

6d CROAGH PATRICK

Issued 7th April 1948. Rose-lilac on magenta. The Angel Victor is pictured flying over Croagh Patrick, a mountain rising to a perfect cone 2500 feet above sea level, in County Mayo, in the ancient province of Connaught. On this lonely summit, St. Patrick spent the forty days of Lent in prayer and fasting for the people of Ireland. 3,000,000 issued.

Variety

Mr. Dixon reports that the only flaw he has discovered is a very slight re-entry of the letter X in VOX, occurring on subject No. 21 [4th row, stamp No.3].



8d LOUGH DERG

Issued 13th December 1954. Red-brown. Similar design to the 3d. Both Mr. Dixon and Mr. Kane report a variety, miscalled by some collectors a "stigmata" variety, but actually on the fingers rather than the palm of the Angel's right hand.

Flaw



The position of this variety is Row 3, stamp 3. It consists of a spot of color on the extended right hand of the Angel. Also near the end of the ribbon nearly under the letter "i" of "Eire" there is a small dot of ink. Since the variety is not seen on every sheet examined, it suggests again that the printing was in two panes.

1/- GLENDALOUGH

Issued 4th April 1949. Green. Represents the Angel Victor flying over Glendalough in the ancient province of Linster. Glendalough, the Valley of Two Lakes is located in the heart of the Wicklow Mountains. It is famous for its Monastic School founded by St. Kevin in the 5th century. St. Kevin had a great devotion to the memory of St. Patrick and ordered the Hymn of St. Sechnall in praise of the patron saint recited in the Monastery.



1/3 ROCK OF CASHEL

Issued 13th December 1954. Red orange. Similar design to the 1d.

Extra feather on wing. A very prominent flaw appears on stamp No. 6, row 4. It consists of a deep cut into the plate. [-->]/

FLAW



1/5 ROCK OF CASHEL

Issued 1st April 1965. Blue. Similar design to the 1d and the 1/3 above. Recess printed on paper watermarked with the letter "E"; perforations 15 x 15. Produced to meet the requirements resulting from the last change in postal rates. No varieties yet reported.

PRIVATELY OVERPRINTED 1/- MOLLISON FLIGHT STAMP



The current 1/- definitive stamp, watermark SE was privately overprinted for the flight from Dublin to New York on 18th August 1932 by J. A. Mollison. This stamp was unofficial, but copies are in existence cancelled by favour. Lowe in his Encyclopedia lists this stamp at £ 7 mint. [Vol. 1 1952].

An undetermined number of these stamps so overprinted were initialled on the back "J.A.M.". The usually found cliché reads in four lines:

ATLANTIC / AIR MAIL / AUGUST / 1932

with the date 1932 being the last line. However, a Shanahan auction of March 15th, 1938 offered a mint copy of the overprinted 1/-, and the specimen offered [see illustration above] was without the final line "1932". This variation in the overprint was the subject of an article in the Revealer, July-August, 1958 by the late Perry Adams (page 372): "The 1932 Mollison Flight Stamp".

This called forth some interesting comments by the late Thomas E. Field in the Revealer, January-February 1959, page 395: "The J. A. Mollison Flight Dublin to New York 18 August 1932. Further Notes on the 1/- Overprinted Stamp" He then listed from his extensive collection, the following items:

1. Mint block of four of the 1/- light blue S.G. 82, Scott 76, overprinted in four lines "Atlantic=Air Mail-August-1932" in a shade of red which might be described as bright purple, as illustrated Robson Lowe. Each stamp initialed on the back "J.A.M.".

2. A single 1/- on piece cancelled Portmarnock on 16th August 1932 - the actual cancellation Port Mearnog.

3. A most ornamental cover, without any postal markings, addressed to D. S. Glover, Esq., New York bearing Seal in gold of the city of Dublin and the inscription "Dublin City Seal Affixed in my Presence 18th August 1932 Alf Byrne, Lord Mayor of Dublin." Then the red Seal of St. John's, New Brunswick certified in manuscript "City of Saint John, Seal, Received Aug 19/32 Jas. W. Brittain, Mayor." Finally, the gold seal on the reverse of the City of New York, again certified in manuscript "Received at New York City by..... Aug/21/32". The certification is illegible. It also carries an inscription on the front in manuscript, "Carried by me first solo East-West Trans-Atlantic crossing J. A. Mollison."

4. A cover addressed to Mr. D.E. Saul, Furness Bermuda Lines, Pier 95, N. R. New York with singles of the normal 1d and 2d Map stamp of Eire, cancelled UPR LEESON ST DUBLIN [in English] 18 AU 32.



Postage Due Permanent Issue.



For three years after the establishment of the Irish Free State, the ordinary un-overprinted British Postage Due stamps of the Royal Cypher watermark were in use throughout the Free State.

The first Irish definitive postage due stamps were issued on 20th February 1925 in the values of 1d, 2d and 6d and probably shortly thereafter in the 1/2d value, for which there was little practical use. Very shortly after being issued, instructions were given to postmasters not to sell these to the public in unused condition.

The stamps were produced by the Stamping Department of Dublin Castle in single color typography, printed it is believed from stereotypes, on paper watermarked SE.

Captain Vesey in a paper read before the Royal Philatelic Society, London on February 11th 1926 discussed the printing of these stamps and concluded :

1. The Post Office sheet consisted of 60 stamps (ten rows of 6 stamps), perforated 15 x 14.

2. The printer's sheet consisted of at least three [possibly six] post office sheets printed in one row of three [possibly two rows of three]. Miss Norah Wright, one of our own members reports [Revealer, page 443] that they were actually printed in sheets of 180, divided into three panes of 60 stamps.

3. It would appear that the stamps were printed from stereotypes.

VARIETIES.

1. Watermarks: (a) Sideways - 2d. (b) Inverted - 1d, 1 1/2d, 2d
2. No Aspirate on "p" in "pingin". - [first stamp of the 5th row] - 2d
3. Inverted Q in "Postage": 1d

In the first stamp of the 10th row the "o" of POSTAGE looks like an inverted Q - Q. This variety appears constantly and right through the printings from 1925 to the present day.

4. "Pos" of "Postage" Nearly Missing. - 1d

In the early years of this value, on stamp No. 55 on the sheet, the "Pos" of "Postage" is found nearly missing. This is inclined to vary at times, and this can be found on the 1d value E watermark on stamp No. 55

5. White Dot - 1d.

In the sixth stamp of the fifth row, there is a small white dot below the right-hand corner of the white label containing the value in letters. Subject No. 30.

6. Break in Circular Arc - 1d.

A variety consists of a break in the circular arc which results in a half round of white protruding into the normally red area. It is reported that this occurs on the sixth or last stamp of the 1st row. [See The Revealer, July-September, 1965].

Beginning in 1940, the postage due stamps began to appear on paper watermarked E with the 5d value replacing the 6d. In 1952, new values, 1 1/2d & 3d. were added to the series, watermark E and the 1d value was issued in a much paler shade - a sickly carmine [with the inverted Q present in its usual position]. In 1962, the 6d reappeared in plum and a new value, 8d in orange, each watermarked E. Recently, the 6d has been reported in a variety - a deep mulberry. In the spring of 1965, the 10d postage due appeared in what is termed magenta. Page 100 [0-1].