

CENSORED COVERS OF IRELAND

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A most interesting sideline of Irish philately is the collection and study of Irish censorship markings and labels. Since Eire maintained strict neutrality during World War II, the censorship of mail became an important function of the Government.

As a national policy, Ireland required that all out going mail, except for certain diplomatic and ecclesiastical mail pass the established Irish censors. The number of such censors is unknown but it must have been upwards of 200. Our own member, Mrs. Casner reported numbers running from 10 to 203 in her own collection (Revealer, page 460).

In the censoring of Irish mail, the censor applied a printed censor label with black lettering on pink paper in Gaelic with his censor number. Because of the fact that most of the mail during the war touched English ports, usually the British censor label was also placed on the envelope.

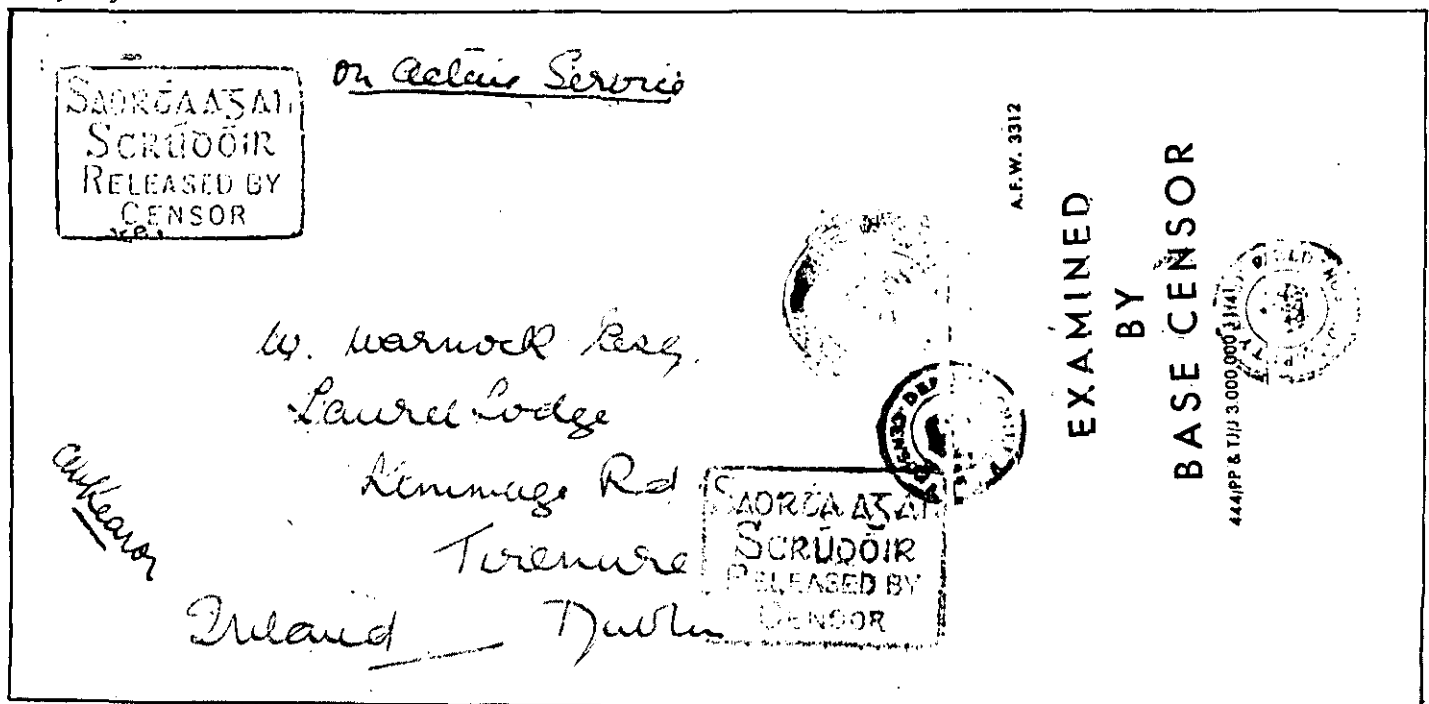
Irish Stamps

The rubber stamp censor markings are not as common as the printed labels. Mr. Fred Dixon has supplied such interesting information on these markings from time to time and we shall try to summarize them in this issue:

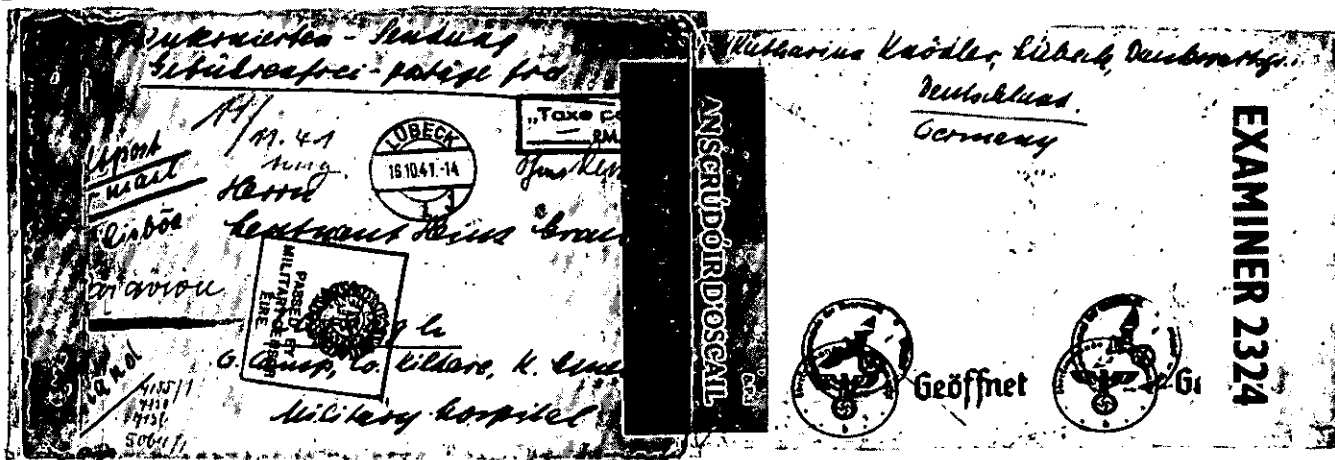
(a) The earliest type of censor marking in use was the two line handstamp: "PASSED BY CENSOR" with a number, in English and "Ceaduithe ag an Scrudoir" in Gaelic. This was in use by early October 1939 in black or violet. The numbers go to at least 140 and varieties exist.

PASSED BY CENSOR
Ceaduithe ag an Scrudoir

(b) A boxed handstamp consisting of four lines in Gaelic and English: "Saorta Agan / Scrudoir / Released by / Censor. This marking appeared in many different colors: black, red, green and possibly purple. The British Censor Label in the illustration below is tied with a double circle cancel in violet "Deputy Field Censor" with a Crown in the center:



(c) A square box containing the badge of the Irish Army with the words: "Passed by / Military Censor / Eire". This stamp was used on correspondence of German airmen interned at the Curragh Camp, County Kildare and was applied to both inwards and outwards letters. Another handstamp often used on the out mail had a Red Cross above the description "MILITARY INTERNEE" in Irish, English, German and French.



(d) This handstamp has been seen on correspondence of diplomats and church dignitaries. This example in Mr. Dixon's collection is in purple, and was used early in 1944.

(e) This handstamp appeared on registered letters reaching Ireland from overseas. It was seen used in 1942.

(d)

SAOR O SCRÚD
(Exempt from Censorship)

(e)

SAORÉA AS
AN SCRÚDÓIR

(f) This handstamp appeared on registered letters reaching Ireland from overseas. It was seen used in 1943.

(g) This illustration is an attempt to depict the design of a seal, applied in wax to tie the S.P. 1 label to the envelope of a registered letter from Ireland to England. The inscription means "Department of Defence".

(h) This marking was used similarly to tie the S.P. 1 label on registered letters entering Ireland. It is an interesting survival of the numbered cancelling handstamps withdrawn from general use in 1922 when the BAILE ATHA CLIATH types appeared. Rather rare are examples of Type h used to cancel the stamps of outbound letters handed in at the Censorship office instead of posting in the usual way. This procedure was as good as a Late Fee System and did not cost anything extra.

SAORÉA AS AN SCRÚDÓIR
RELEASED BY CENSOR

(f)



(g)



(h)



OLDCASTLE PRISONER OF WAR CAMP
1914-1918

26 AUG 1915
OLDCASTLE PW CAMP.

IRISH CENSOR LABEL S.P. 1

by Miss Norah Wright

(Reprinted from The Revealer, July-August 1962, pages 535,537,538)

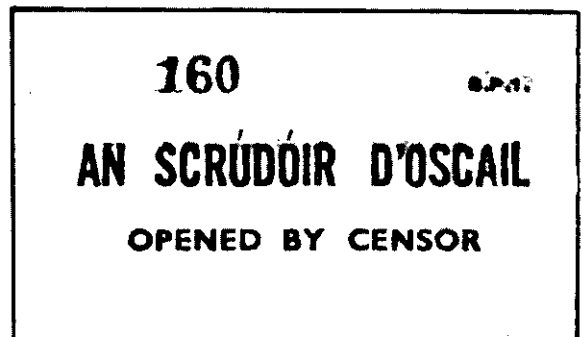
This was the commonest of the Irish Censor Labels used during the 1939-1944 war. Many different types of this label were issued. They differed in the size of the label, in the various types of print used and in the shades of colour in which the labels were printed.

Any of the labels can be classified by studying the accents over the u and o of Scrudoir, also the hyphen between the D and O of D'OSCAIL shows different characters or positions in each type.

Type I

On large size label 82 x 50 mm. Printing bold face Gothic (sans serif). Numbers either above An Scrudoir D'Oscail or below Opened by Censor. Thorn-type accents over U and o of Scrudoir and hyphen between D and O in shape of seven and close to O. 1939-1941 Colour pink

Nos. 8,15,19,32,36,65,75,76,91,105,125,137,138,141,150,151,160,166. Numbers added by hand sometimes very faint. Found only on incoming mail.



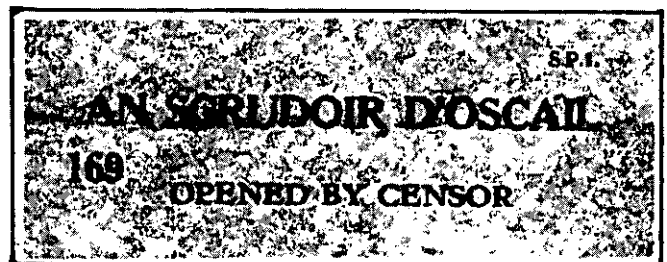
Type 1 a. As Type I but without number added by hand. Bearing handstamp Type 1939. Number in handstamp Type I. No. 115

Type 1 b. As Type I but numbers added in ink. Nos. 122, 154

Type II

Change in size of label. Printing deVenne variant of old Roman type. Figures under AN. These figures are found wide and narrow. Thorn-type accent over u and o of Scrudoir and hyphen normal and close to D. 1940-1943 Colour deep pink.

Nos. 2,3,5,15,17,22,26,33,35,36,42,47,50,53,61,65,66,77,80,82,115,117,118,121,132,134,139,158,169,172,182,190. Found on incoming and outgoing mail, registered and ordinary.



Type II a. Same as Type II except colour changed to pink. 1940-1943. Nos. 10,15,17,21,26,36,43,51,53,54,61,65,66,77,86,93,95,111,115,118,121,125,126,137,141,143,147,151,155,158,167,170,171,172,179,187,189,192,203.

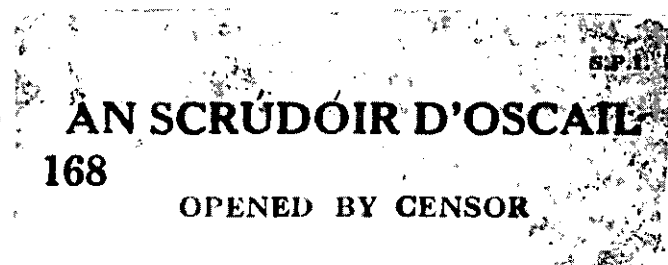
Type II b. Same as Type II but number to right. 1941. No. 31

Type II c. Same as Type IIa but number omitted.

Type III

As illustrated. AN SCRUDOR D'OSCAIL has under spacing measuring 81 mm. in comparison to 75 mm. of Type II. Line accents over u and o. Hyphen midway between D & O. 1940-1944. Colour Pink. Nos. 36,61,164,168

Type III a. As type III but number omitted.



Type IV

Same as Type II but opened by censor omitted. Irregular type accents over o and u. Hyphen close to D of D'Oscail. Print shows evidence of wear: AN, IR and AIL joined. 1942-1945 Colour pink.

Nos. 9,15,21,26,34,36,47, 50, 61, 65, 66, 84, 95, 118,132,151,155,160,172, 183, 190,198,200. Outgoing mail registered and ordinary.

Type IV a. As Type IV but number on top. No. 141

Type V

Bold type Gothic as in Type I but with smaller letters and better spacing. All strokes of equal thickness sans serif. Thorn accents over u and o. Hyphen normal. Equal distance between D and O. Opened by Censor omitted. Colour pink. No. 105

Type VI

As illustrated. A much finer impression of Type II. Triangular accents over u and o. Hyphen equidistant between D and O. 1941. Colour pink. Nos. 65, 81, 120

Type VI a. Same as Type VI but colour changed to deep pink. No. 65

S.P.1.
AN SCRÚDOIR D'OSCAIL
198

S.P.1.
AN SCRUDÓIR D'OSCAIL
81
OPENED BY CENSOR

The English censor labels P.C. 90 were frequently found sealing the opposite side of the envelope to the S.P. 1 label. When air letters were opened, one side only was sealed with S.P. 1 label and the other with plain paper. S.P. 1 labels have been seen cut into in order to seal large covers.

The British Forces airforms with the 1 1/2d printed stamp used in Southern Ireland with a 2 1/2d Irish postage stamp added. It is curious to find that these were not opened by Censor. Army mail from the north to the south was normally opened by Northern Ireland censor and sealed with Army Form W.3424. It does not appear to have been opened by an Irish Censor.

LABEL S. P. 2

This was a yellow label for sealing letters returned to the senders, and was accompanied by a slip enclosed to give the reason for return.

S.P.2.

**AR N-A CHUR THAR N-AIS ON
SCRÚDOIR GO DTÍ AN SEOLTOIR
AR AN GCÚIS A MINITEAR SA
MHEAMRAM ATA SA CHLÚDACH
SO.**

**Returned to Sender by the Censor for Reason
Explained in Memorandum Enclosed in this
Cover.**

S.P.2.

**AR N-A CHUR THAR N-AIS ON
SCRUDÓIR GO DTÍ AN SEOLTOIR
AR AN GCÚIS A MINITEAR SA
MHEAMRAM ATA SA CHLÚDACH
SO.**

**Returned to Sender by the Censor for Reason
Explained in Memorandum Enclosed in this**

Cover.

(Two forms of Label S.P. 2)

Label S.P. 4 was a slip enclosed to draw attention to the absence of reported enclosures and disclaiming responsibility.

Label S.P. 5 was a smaller slip disclaiming responsibility for the mutilation of the letter.