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IRISH STAMP DESIGN

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Thesis by

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C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION. (1 – 3)

Since its inception in May 1840 the adhesive postage stamp has gone through many stages of evolution. What was once used as a mere label denoting the pre-payment of postage has over the years transformed into an extremely potent medium for advertising, propaganda and promoting the national image of a country. In effect, stamps have been used as minature posters, the impact of which depended largely on the printing and graphic techniques of the time. Certain countries were faster than others in recognising the potential of stamp design as a medium for advertising, nevertheless, it did not take too long before most countries were making full use of stamps for this purpose.

Ireland was no different to any other country in this respect, and after she became a freestate on January 15th. 1922, the need to project some sort of national image through her stamp design had already begun. As Ireland was no longer under British rule there was no need to continue using British stamps, as was the case for some eighty years, so Ireland had their very first stamp issued in December 1922. This was the first design in a set of four. the other three designs were issued at random throughout 1923. As a set they evoked certain images of Ireland by using motifs that were very much associated with Ireland. I have discussed in my paper at some length all four designs including some of the essays (this is the term used to denote a design for a stamp) that were refused in the competition from which the four designs were chosen. Not only was the need to project a national image apparent in Irish stamp design, politics and religion were also very closely intermingled in the stamps of Ireland.

In this paper I will be discussing the very first Irish stamps, which were issued in 1922-23, and noting the developments that have taken place from that period right up the present day in Irish stamp design. I shall also talk about the changes that have occured in typography, printing, the sort of images being used and where possible comparing this to other countries.

When I set about researching this subject I found that not a lot has been written on the development of Irish stamp design over the past sixty years, Nevertheless I was able to contact members of the Irish Philatelic Society, Dublin Stamp Society and Federation of Irish Philatelic Societies. Within these societies I met a number of people who were most helpful in my research and allowed me to view their own private collections on Irish stamps. Most of the material that I managed to receive from these people has only been seen by a very small number of people.

This material included photographs of many original designs that were refused for various issues over the years, and also included some photographs of the original preliminary sketches made by the designer when working on his/her design. This all proved immensely valuable to my written paper, because not only was I able to discuss the designs that were issued but also I could compare and discuss those that were refused. I was also allowed to read through some very old papers which contained a lot of valuable and relevant information to my paper.

Those people who I would like to thank for their help are Mr. Fred. E. Dixon, Mr. Jim Kelly, Mrs. A. Fogarty, Mr. Pat Casey and Mr. Fintan Walsh, all of whom were most helpful to me in my research, and without whom I could not have completed this paper.

I also felt that it was necessary to go and speak with somebody who actually had designed for Irish stamps, so I travelled to London to meet with Peter Wildbur who has been designing Irish stamps from as far back as 1963. The information obtained from Peter proved to be most valuable to my paper, and at this particular stage I would like to offer a word of thanks to Peter Wildbur for all his help.

Before starting to read this paper, it is necessary to understand the two specific categories of Irish stamps.

1. Definitive Issues: A definitive stamp is one which is used for periods of up to 15-20 years although there are some series that have lasted longer. After their time is up the series is replaced by another and the process starts all over again.

2. Commemorative Issues: A commemorative stamp is produced for a special occasion or to honour a distinguished person and is on sale for periods up to 3 months. After that they are taken off the market and replaced by another set.

In order to trace systematically the developments of Irish stamp design, I have broken my paper into a number of sections. Each section is clearly indicated on my Contents Page.

Finally, to give a complete picture with regard to the setting up and development of Irish stamp design, I have included a brief synopsis of the Postal History of Ireland, and how it actually operated before the invention of postage stamps. In order to be able to understand the printing processes, which I refer to quite often throughout my paper, I felt it was necessary to give some very concise information on each process. In doing so this should clear up any questions that may occur when reading this paper.

Being a student in the field of Visual Communication, and also having been interested in Irish stamps as a hobby, the research and writing of this paper was of special interest to me. It is my hope that my writings will be of value to others with similar interests who may wish to read it. With that I would to proceed.

POSTAL HISTORY. (4 — 7)
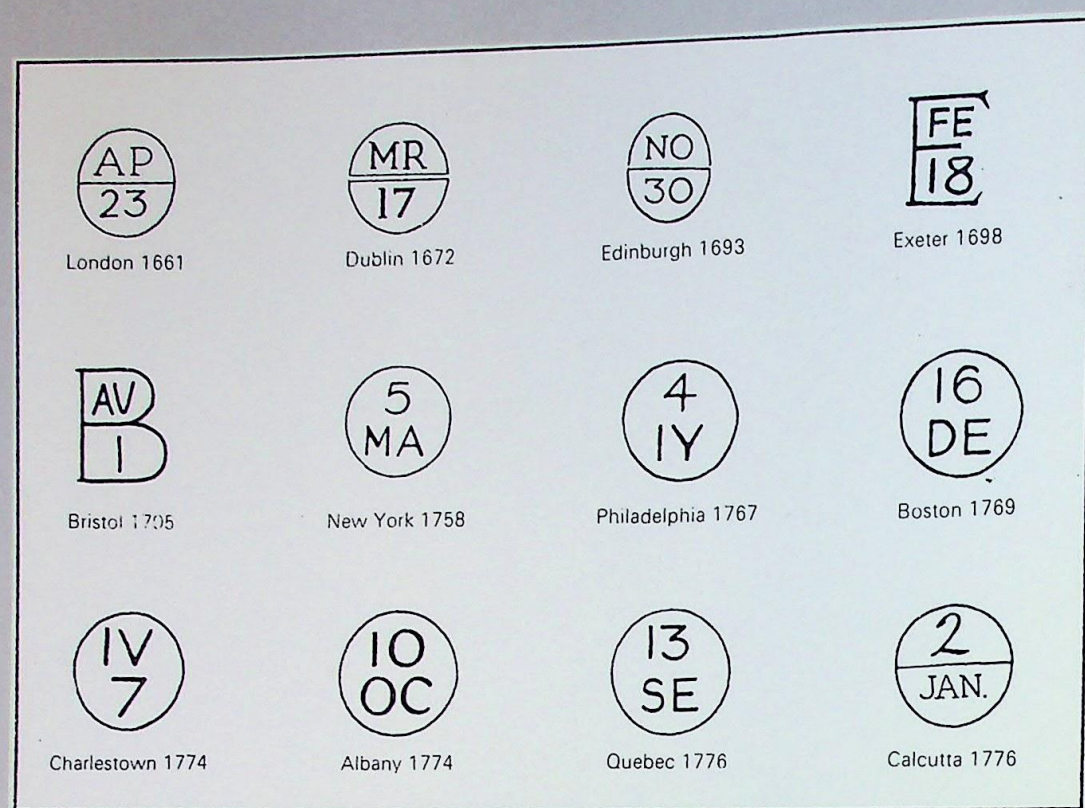
(Fig. 1) EXAMPLES OF BISHOP MARKS FROM AROUND THE WORLD, DURING THE 17th & 18th CENTURIES.


(Fig. 2) POSTMARKS DENOTING WHETHER OR NOT MONEY NEEDED TO BE COLLECTED FROM THE RECIPIENTS OF THE LETTERS.

ALL THOSE POSTMARKS WITH 'FREE' WERE PLACED ON LETTERS POSTED BY PEERS OR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, AND ALLOWED THEIR MAIL TO BE DELIVERED FREE OF CHARGE (USED FROM 1707 ONWARDS)

ALL THOSE POSTMARKS WITH 'PAID' MARKED WITHIN THE DESIGN, MEANT THAT THE LETTER HAD BEEN PRE-PAYED BEFORE POSTING.

The exact date of the establishment of the Post Office in Ireland is not known but it is recorded that Evan Vaughan was appointed postmaster to Dublin in 1638, so it was in existence by then. By 1670 there was not only a regular twice weekly mail service linking Dublin and London, but a similar service linking Dublin to all the principal towns of the island. The first Post Office in the city of Dublin was in High Street and it changed location several times until 1818 when it moved to a new building in Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street). Letters sent during this period did not have stamps like those we have today.

Instead a Handstamp was used which was known as a 'Bishop Mark' and was invented by Postmaster-General Henry Bishop in 1661 - and introduced in 1670. Numerous types of 'Bishop Marks' were used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I have included some examples of the type of 'Bishop Marks' being used from all over the world Fig.1. to give some indication of how they compared with those being used in Ireland at about the same time. It is obvious that the design of such 'Bishop Marks' did not warrant a lot of thought, they were quite simply a means of dating the despatch of letters for the better part, the earlier 'Bishop Marks' were quite simply a rough circle enclosing the day and month the letter was posted. Some places in Great Britain used, the first letter from the name of their town/city into which to work the day and month, and these became their 'Bishop Marks'. Although these 'Bishop Marks' varied from time to time nothing very elaborate was ever produced. These Marks remained in use for about 125 years and never gave any more information than the day and month which the letter was posted.

Around 1796 more elaborate handstamps - known as Postmarks - were introduced Fig.2. These Marks contained more information than the 'Bishop Marks' and often had some decorative elements within the design. As can be seen from the example. Some of these Postmarks carried information such as 'Free or Paid'. This enabled the postman to know whether or not he had to collect money from the recipient of the letter.
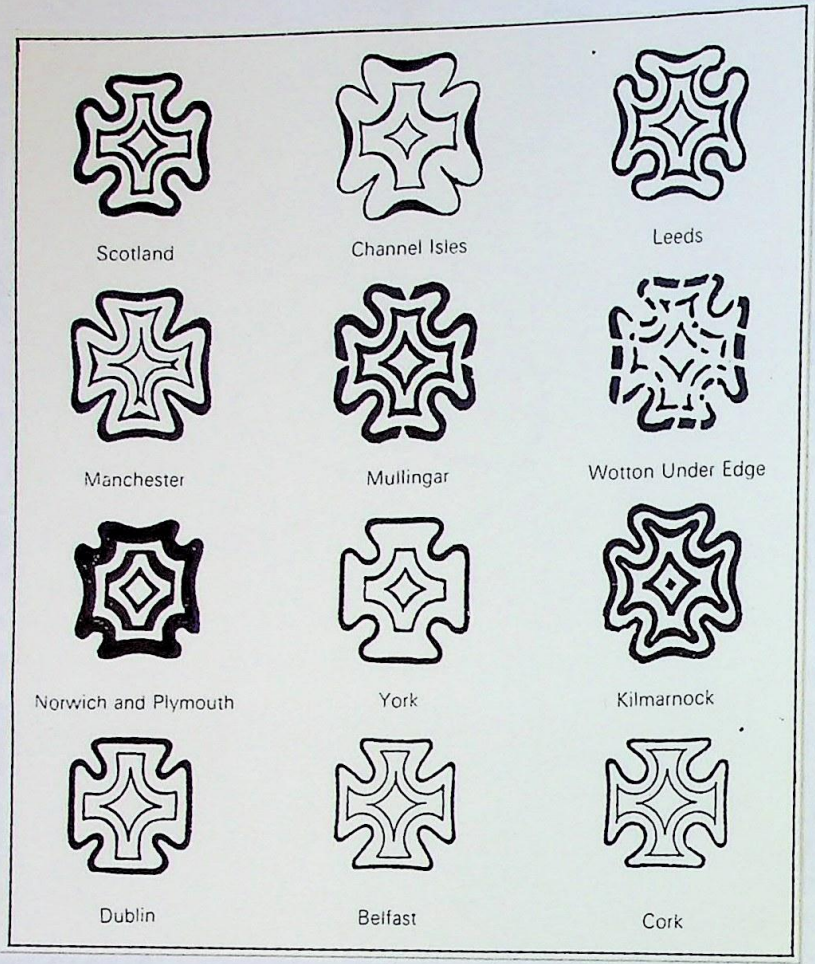
(Fig. 3) MALTESE CROSS CANCELLATIONS - BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN ADAPTED FROM THE TUDOR ROSE. MANY TYPES EXISTED; THERE WERE LOCAL VARIATIONS AND DIFFERENT COLOURS, COMMONEST BEING BLACK AND RED.
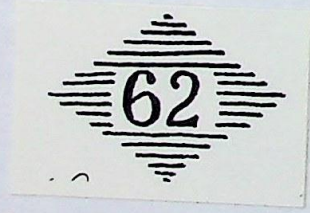
(Fig. 4) BARRED OBLITERATOR.

For up until 1939/40 most people sent their letters without prepaying them, and the postman would have to collect the money from the person who received the letter. So if anybody wanted to pay in advance of the letter being posted, then their letters were given these special Postmarks which showed that the cost for posting was paid for. Similar to the 'Bishop Marks' the Postmarks were roughly drawn and very often the information, which was hand-rendered was inserted without any thought for spacing of words or characters. Any decorative elements were also roughly drawn and lacked any great detail. Postmarks continued to be used to denote whether or not letters were prepaid and to give such information as date, time, town and year in which the letter was posted, but the quality of design never really improved. The use of such postmarks continued until May 1840 - when Postage Stamps were first introduced - and then the Postmarks were used for a different purpose.

With the introduction of Postage Stamps, there was a system required for cancelling any further use of the stamps after they had been used for the first time. This system of cancellation involved the use of certain types of postmarks to act as obliterators on the postage stamps. The first official cancellation mark was the Maltese Cross - which was believed to have being adopted from the Tudor Rose. Many types existed with local variations and different colours - the commonest being black and red. I have included some examples Fig.3 to give some idea of the variants on the one Postmark. While many of them varied in style, others were quite close in every possible way, and example of this being the Belfast and Cork Crosses Fig.3. Personally, I find it interesting the number of variations that were concieved from the one design. In 1844 the Maltese Cross gave way to the numeral obliterator, as in Britain. Unlike Britain which used an oval shape, Ireland took the form of a diamond composed of horizontal bars containing a number in a rectangular space in the centre Fig.4. Again not a lot to be said for the design of these particular cancellation marks which were variable from town to town, except that they were quite bland in appearance.
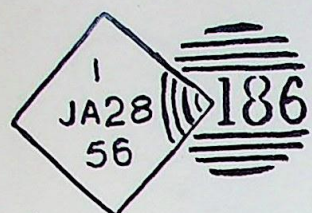
(Fig.5) DUBLIN EXPERIMENTAL DUPLEX.
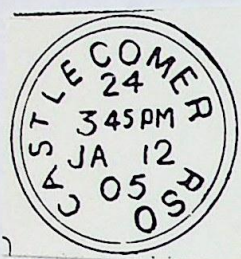
(Fig.6) HAND-STAMPS TO SHOW WHAT TOWN THE
LETTER WAS POSTED FROM.
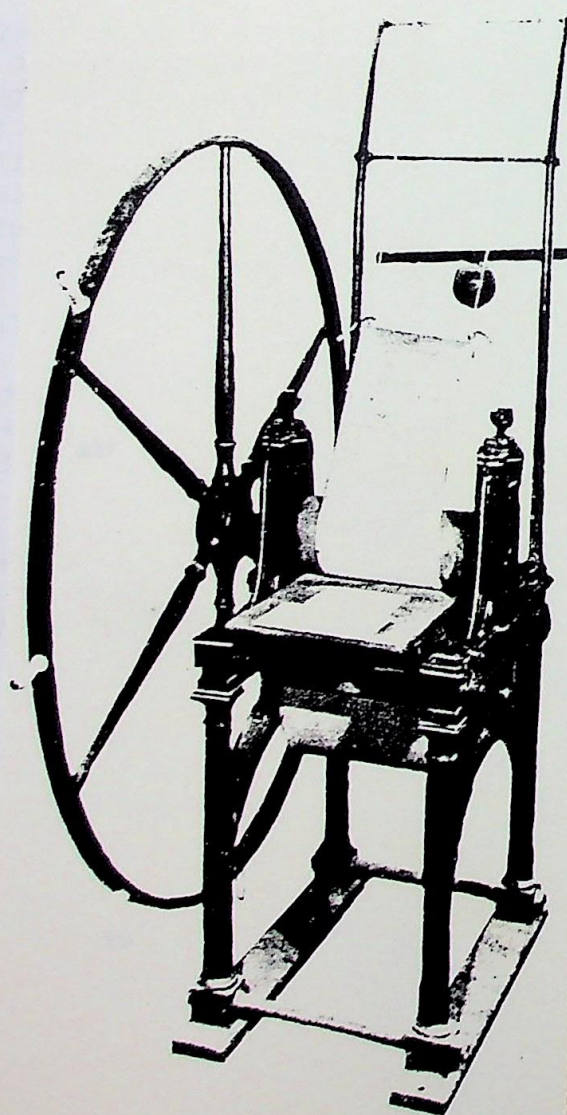
(Fig.9) 'PERKINS BACON
MACHINE' ON WHICH
THE WORLDS FIRST
STAMP WAS PRINTED.

(Fig.10) THE WORLD'S
FIRST EVER POSTAGE
STAMP. 'PENNY BLACK'
ISSUED ON MAY 1st
1840.

With the Maltese Cross and numeral obliterators it
meant that there was not information such as date
of postage etc. which had been in use in the
earlier postmarks and 'Bishops Marks' so in 1855
combined date stamps and obliterators, or 'Duplex'
stamps, came into use in Ireland. Dublin adopted
distinctive types consisting of diamond-shaped
date-stamps with an adjoining oval obliterator
containing the office number Fig.5. The office
number telling the particular part of the country
from which the letter was posted.

As time went on various modifications were made to
the obliterator and instead of using numbers to
indicate what part of the country the letter was
posted, the name of the town was contained within
the postmark Fig.6. In fact these postmarks/
obliterators are not much different to the modern
postmarks which are being used to cancel the stamps
of today. I must say that I find it interesting
to note that those marks which were once being
used to tell people where the letters were posted,
the date, year and, whether or not the letters
were prepaid - are now being used to cancel postage
stamps and yet give the same amount of information as
was contained in the postmarks of the eighteenth
century. It would appear that those postmarks, which
once had the sole purpose of rendering information
to the recipients of the letters, are now serving
the dual purpose of rendering information as to
where the letters were posted etc. and cancelling
out the postage stamps on the envelopes.

It was necessary to discuss these postmarks, 'Bishops
Marks' etc., as these were the only means of
distinguishing where a letter was posted, right up
until the introduction of postage stamps in May 1840,
and even now these postmarks are still being used.
Only now they not only give dates, time and name
of the town from which the letter was posted, they
also act as cancellations for postage stamps.

The most famous stamp printing press in the world is
the 'Perkins Bacon Machine' Fig.9 on which the worlds
first postage stamp was printed - Britains 'Penny
Black' in 1840 Fig.10. On May 1st. 1940 the 'Penny

(FIG. 11) BRITISH DEFINITIVES WHICH WERE USED IN
IRELAND FROM 1912-22.
OTHER BRITISH DEFINITIVES WERE USED
FROM 1840 - 1912, THROUGHOUT IRELAND.

(FIG. 12) 1912 BRITISH DEFINITIVES WHICH WERE
OVERPRINTED WITH 'SAORSTAT EIREANN
1922' (IRISH FREE-STATE 1922).
THESE OVERPRINTS REMAINED IN USE
UNTIL THE ISSUE OF THE FIRST IRISH
STAMP.

Black'and 'Two-Penny Blue' went on sale throughout
the Post Offices of Great Britain. The stamp
design consisted of a simple rectangle bearing
the profile of Queen Victoria. Some ornate
decorations were placed on each side of the Queen's
head, and the type was simply placed above and
below the head of the Queen. Interesting to note
that this stamp did not have the name of its country
on it. In the early years postage stamps were valid
only in the country which issued them, so there was
not need to add the name to the design. However,
after the foundation of the Universal Postal Union
in 1874 it was decreed that the country's name had
to appear on the stamps. As a mark of honour to
Britain for inventing stamps, she alone was permitted
to issue stamps without a name on them and to this
day the portrait of the reigning monarch is held to
be sufficient identification. Other countries
watched the development of postage stamps in Great
Britain,but some time elapsed before the idea was
adopted elsewhere.

As Ireland was under British rule at this time,
ordinary British definitive stamps were used
throughout Irish Post Offices Fig.11. This continued
until the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of
December 1921, when it was decided that British
definitives would continue to be used in Ireland with
an overprint Fig.12 for the 26 counties until such
time as the new government had selected designs for
their own stamps.

PRINTING PROCESSES. (8 – 9)

Throughout this paper I will refer to the different printing processes used for producing Irish stamps. Therefore I feel it necessary to give a brief synopsis of each process. In all there are four processes that have been used, letterpress, recess, photogravure and lithography.

Both letterpress and recess were used to print all Irish stamps from 1922-63.

Photogravure was first used in the printing of Irish stamps on December 2nd. 1963, and is still being used today.

Lithography was first used in the printing of Irish stamps on October 18th. 1971 and is still being used today.

LETTERPRESS.

This process known in some circles as the TYPOGRAPHIC process was used to print all the earlier stamps. The images on the plate are in reverse form; they are reversed left to right and the resulting imprint is in positive form. The images on the printing plate stand up in relief so that, when the plate is inked and pressed against paper, the printed image is obtained only from the parts of the plate which stand in relief.

RECESS.

This process is the opposite to letterpress in the sense that the image to be printed is carried as the name implies, in recesses in the printing plate. On the printing machine the entire face of the plate is first covered with ink on a viscid type; the plate is then wiped clean but ink remains in the recesses and is transferred there to the paper.

PHOTOGRAVURE.

This process is akin to recess in that the ink is transferred to the paper from recesses in the printing plate or rather the printing cylinder as the plates used for Irish stamps were cylinderically shaped. The recesses however, are not in line form like those in recess plates but are made up of a series of cells; this the lines on a photogravure stamp do not have the clear sharpness of recess lines and, under the magnifying glass, they are seen to be made up of conjointed dots, a feature most noticeable along the edges of the stamps and in the script items.

The big difference between the sharpness of the
line work of recess and the lack of the sharpness
in photogravure stamps is clearly seen under a
strong magnifying glass. However, when the
stamps are viewed without a magnifying glass, the
lack of line crispness does not always detract
from the beauty of photogravure prints.

LITHOGRAPHY.

Lithography differs from the other processes in that
the image on the plate is neither in relief nor
recess but is photo-chemically etched on the plate's
surface.

The composition of the plate surface is such that
water readily adheres to it but because of the
incompatability between water and grease, the
lithographic ink, which is a greasy substance,
does not adhere. The effect of etching, however,
is to make the etched areas grease receptive and
therefore, water repellant. In the printing
machine the plate is first covered with a film
of water but that water is repelled by the etched
areas; the plate is then covered with ink but
the ink is repelled by all except the etched areas.

Lithography has the advantage that it can cope
with very fine line work and with multi-coloured
printings.

1922 ESSAYS. (10 – 28)

Shortly after the Provisional Government of the
Irish Free State was appointed the following
notice appeared in the newspapers:

Ard-Oifig an Phoist Ath-Cliath

*The Postmaster General of the Irish
Free State invites designs to supersede
those now issued. All designs sub-
mitted should be of symbolical
character and may not embrace any
representations of a personal nature.
Inscriptions must be shown in Gaelic
characters. A payment of £25 will be
made for each successful design. Any
design so accepted will be the property
of the Government, which will be free
to make use of it with any firm who may
be selected to produce the stamps.
Specimens of the stamps so issued can
be inspected and full information
obtained from the Secretary, G.P.O.
16 Upper O'Connell, Dublin*

By Order, K.A.A.

1st. February 1922.

The response to this notice was amazing, and because
of the hundreds of sketches and finished essays
submitted the Postmaster-General called in the
Irish Philatelic Society to help select the final
four designs. On speaking to a number of people
from the Irish Philatelic Society, I was able to
view some of these designs which were refused in
1922. Having seen some of the designs I feel it
is not only necessary to discuss the chosen designs
but also very important to discuss at some length
the essays which were submitted but not chosen.
I found it very interesting that many of the designs
that were refused had very similar characteristics
to those designs which were chosen. The essays can
be broken down into two categories, those which were
actually printed and produced in stamp form, and
those which never progressed.

(FIG. 13) 2d. GREY-GREEN MAP.
ISSUED ON DECEMBER 6th.
1922 AND WAS IRELANDS
FIRST POSTAGE STAMP.

(FIG. 14) 1½d. CLARET
ISSUED FEB. 1923

(FIG. 15) 1d. CARAMINE.
ISSUED MARCH 1923.

(FIG. 16) 3d ULTRAMARINE
ISSUED MARCH 16th 1923.


(FIG. 17) 1907 - SINN FÉIN STAMP.

The reason for some of the essays being produced
in printed form, was due to the Irish Free State
issueing invitations to firms in Dublin and London
to submit designs for the regular definitive
series of Irish Postage Stamps - each of these
particular firms were printing houses. Official
essays were printed by five firms, three of them
Irish, but none were used, so it was decided that
Irish artists should be commissioned to design
the series.

THE CHOSEN DESIGNS.

Initially it is probably wise to discuss the designs
which were accepted for use, and any points to make
with regard to the unchosen designs can be easily
compared.

The first of the four definitive designs chosen Fig.13
was 2d grey-green map which was issued on the
6th. December 1922. Designed by James Ingram of
Glasnevin and was entirely Irish in concept. Apart
from the inscriptions, which were in Gaelic, the
side panels were decorated with celtic knots and
shamrocks entwined with scroll work, which is
reminiscent of the illustrated manuscripts of the
medieval Irish monks. This aspect of the celtic
knots etc., was very prominent in most of the
essays submitted and in many cases proved to be
very overworked. Interesting to note that this
particular design caused some controversey,
particularly in Belfast, over the map of Ireland
depicted on the stamp, since no national boundaries
were delineated. The same design was used for the
½d claret Fig.14 and the 1d. caramine Fig.15 which were
added to the series at later dates. This particular
stamp design is one which I want to come back to at a
later stage, as it has a number of things in common
with one of the refused essays - which I shall discuss
a little further on.

The second design to be released was that depicting
the celtic cross, which was issued on the 16th. March
1923 on the 3d Ultramarine Fig.16. It was designed by
Miss Lily Williams, a Dublin artist well known for
her portraits exhibited at the Royal Hibernian
Academy. What I find interesting about this particular
stamp is that it would seem to have been merely a
modification of the design which was executed, by the
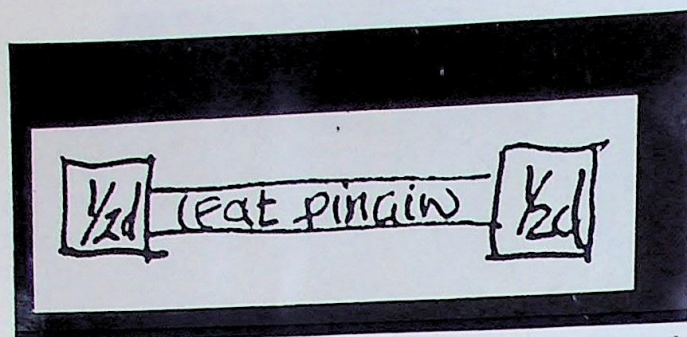
(Fig. 18) ILLUSTRATING THE CONSISTENT LAYOUT USED FOR DENOTING VALUE ON STAMP.

(Fig. 19) ½d. BRIGHT GREEN. ISSUED ON APRIL 20th. 1923.

same Miss Lily Williams, some fifteen years earlier for the Sinn Fein Party. I have included, alongside the 3d Ultramarine of 1922, her design for the 1907 Sinn Fein Stamp, so both can be compared Fig.17. The central feature of both designs being the celtic cross with its circular arches joining the arms. The cross used in the 1922 design features delicate spiral tracery and celtic knots - while the 1907 design features the cross portrayed in a more slender and less ornate form. Both stamps have the name 'Eire' inscribed across the centre of the cross, but both use different lettering. The use of the shamrock motif in the four corners is consistent to both designs and seem to me to be just filling space. Miss Williams had an extra element to contend with in her 1922 design, that was the need to work the denomination into the overall design. I think she solved the problem reasonably well and the fact that the value of the stamp is used on the bottom left and right, helps to balance with the horizontal arms of the cross.

In fact the way in which the value is used in all four designs from this series is basically the same. The numeral is placed on the right and left with the equivalent value written across between both numerals Fig.18. This was quite a common format to a lot of the designs which were refused, and it seems strange that all these different designers should choose to use the numeral denomination on the right and left-hand side of the design Fig. 18.

The third design made its debut with the ½d bright green stamp Fig.19 on the 20th. April 1923. Designed by Mr. John J. O'Reilly, a Dublin artist renowned for his illuminated addresses. The design contains an Ellipse surrounded by intricate celtic ornament in the form of a dragon - which was taken from the Book of Kells, at the top of the oval is an inscription in Irish - 'an claid heanh soluis' - meaning 'the sword of light'. This was the name of a newspaper edited by P.H. Pearse, who was executed for his part in the 1916 Rebellion and is symbolic of life and the renewal of the Gaelic spirit.
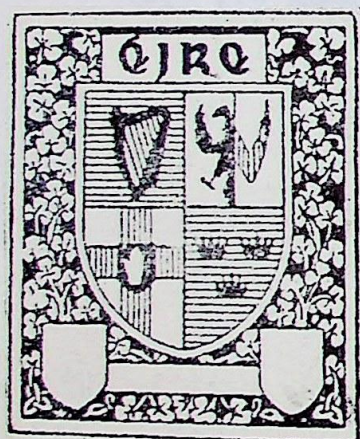
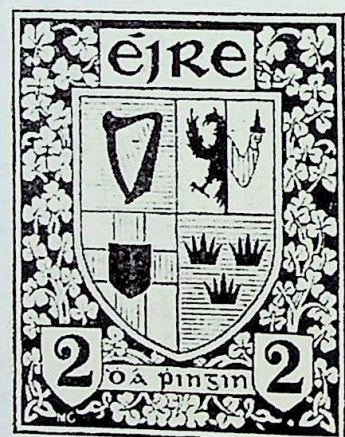(Fig.20) SUBMITTED ESSAY WHICH WAS MODIFIED.

(Fig.20) DESIGN AS ISSUED.

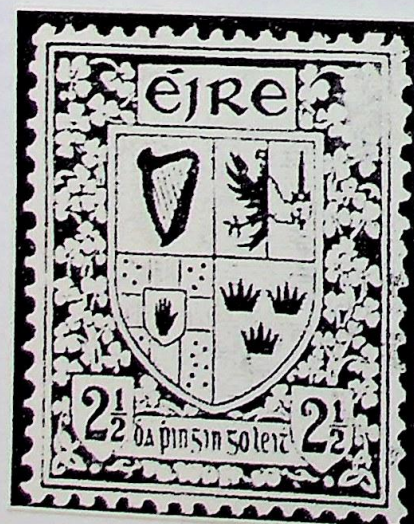(Fig.21) 2½d. BROWN FINAL DESIGN ISSUED IN THE SET OF FOUR 1922 DEFINITIVES.

(Fig.22) THREE PRELIMINARY DESIGNS - ALL WENT THROUGH MODIFICATIONS.

(1) (2) (3)

(Fig.23) 2½d BROWN - DESIGN AS ISSUED - AFTER CHANGES WERE MADE TO PRELIMINARY DESIGNS.

Certain elements of this particular stamp design were modified - from the original essay through to the design as issued Fig.20. In the design as issued 'Eire' has a larger accent over the character 'E' and uses a bolder and different typeface. Also in the design as issued the blade of the sword is broader in the centre and becomes thinner at the hilt. The clenched fist is larger than that depicted in the original essay and, finally, the value expressed as 'pingin' is done in larger lettering to that of the original essay.

The fourth design from this series was the 2½d - brown Fig.21 bearing the 'coat of arms' of the four provinces in a central shield surrounded by shamrocks. In the central shield there is a harp for Leinster, divided eagle for Connaught, three crowns for Munster and, the red hand for Ulster. This stamp was designed by Miss Millicent Grace Girling, a ceramic and stained glass artist and book illustrator of Waterford. The design of the shield is interesting since some attempt was made by Miss Girling to show the various lines and dots used by heraldic artists to denote colours in monochrome. Having said that, I think that not a lot of people, unless they have some knowledge of heraldic art, would understand this aspect of the design. Therefore I would imagine that this particular aspect of Miss Girling's design would appeal or be recognised by a small percentage of the public. I have included examples of three preliminary designs Fig.22 leading up to the design as issued Fig.23. Looking at these three essays it is easy to see the changes that were made to each one before finally arriving at the finished design Fig.23.

The first of the preliminary designs shows no value expressed and 'Eire' is seen in a different typeface to that used in the finished design. In the second preliminary design the value is shown in very bold lettering and is changed again in the third preliminary design, which has the value expressed in smaller and lighter lettering. This I feel was a wise decision by the designer because the lettering used at the previous stage was, in my opinion far too heavy and dominating. Nevertheless, by the time they got to the finished design it was decided to change the value of the stamp. This meant the designer

had to change the lettering of the value to a more
condensed form. By doing this the designer was able
to hold roughly the same size of lettering as used
at stage three, but because it was condensed he was
able to accommodate the '½d'. value. Other elements
of the design were modified through the preliminary
stages, such as the half eagle and hand with sword;
in the top right hand side of shield. This section
went through changes at every stage leading up to
the design as issued. Having said that I think the
eagle depicted in stage two would have been a lot
better than the one used in the finished design.
I feel it is more graphic while the eagle used in the
finished design is quite bland. The final element
which went through a number of modifications prior
to the finished design, was the hand of Ulster.
At the first stage it is depicted with the left
hand being reversed out of the shield and the
adjoining arms being shaded by vertical lines.
By stage two the hand has not only been drawn with
more detail, but also has been changed from a left
hand to the right hand. The adjoining arms have
lost the vertical lines, which were used at the
previous stage. For some reason or other by stage
three the designer decided to get rid of the hand
and just have a solid central shield. Personally,
I think that the designer was right to change his
mind again, and in the finished design the hand
of Ulster can be seen in silhouette against the
clear shield and for the first time tiny dots were
used to fill the four surrounding corners, which were
previously left blank. These dots would not mean
a lot to most people, but as I mentioned earlier
they were used to denote colours used by heraldic
artists when working in monochrome.

Finally having seen and spoken about all of these
modifications, I feel that most of them were necessary,
and although the half eagle used in the finished
design was reasonable I would have preferred the
eagle used in stage two of the preliminary designs.
Nevertheless this is a small point to pick with
regards the overall design, and to finish on a more
positive note, I like the way the central shield is
echoed in the shields which encompass the value of the
stamp.

Having discussed all four accepted designs
individually, I would now like to move on and
discuss some of the refused essays, which were
submitted for the same series. When I have
finished talking about these designs I will
give some overall comments on the four accepted
designs and will be able to draw some comparisons
between them and the essays that were refused.
Although there were many essays refused I have
chosen to discuss a small cross section, as it
would be impossible to try and discuss all of them.

REFUSED ESSAYS.

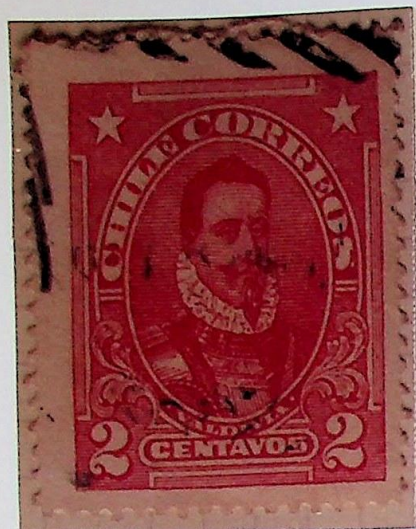Some time in mid 1922 the Dublin Press Published
the following announcement
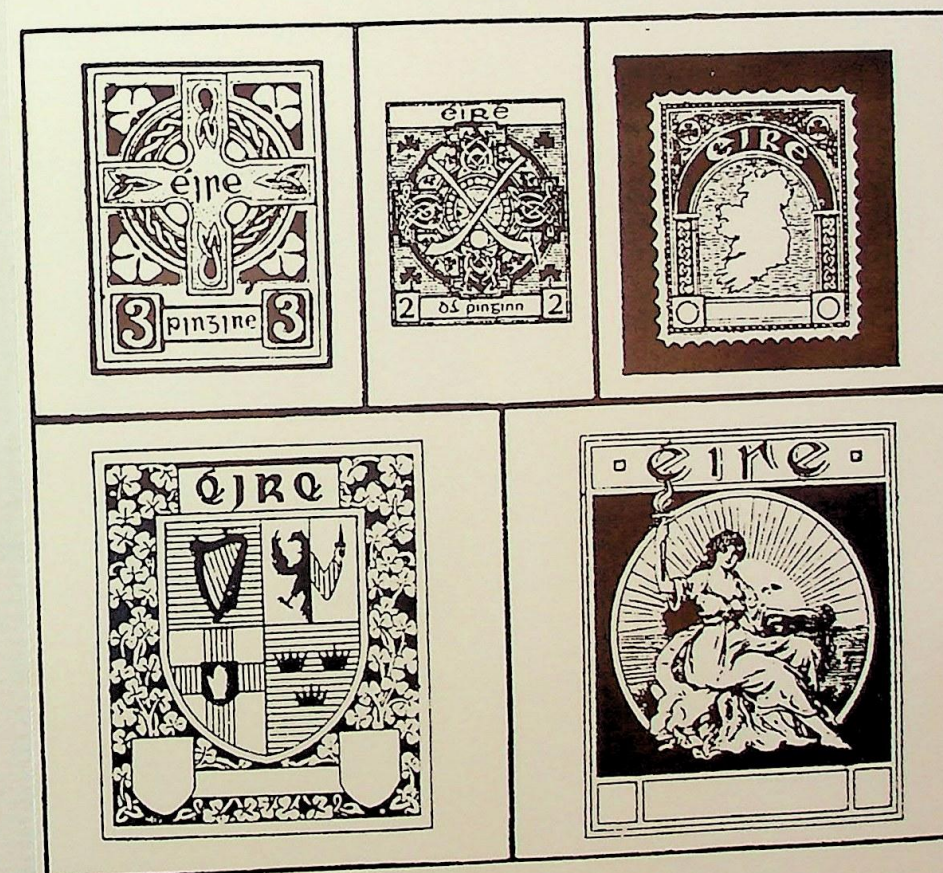
"From among the thousands of designs for Irish Free State Stamps that have been
submitted, the Provisional Government has selected those shown above for further
consideration".

(Fig.24) 1911 CHILE 2CENT VALDIVIA.

(Fig.24) DOLLARD ESSAY. SUBMITTED FOR TRIAL PRINTING, THIS STAMP RESEMBLES THE CHILEAN 2 CENT VALDIVIA IN EVERY RESPECT.

(Fig.25) 1911 CHILEAN 2 CENT VALDIVIA.

(Fig.25) JAMES INGRAM'S 2d GREY-GREEN MAP. FIRST STAMP ISSUED AND PART OF THE 1922 DEFINITIVE SERIES.

As can be seen from this news-cutting three of the five designs to be considered were finally chosen. Having already spoken about the chosen designs, I would now like to take a look at those that were refused.

The first of the printing houses to submit essays was Messrs. Dollard. Firstly Dollard submitted samples of their work in the form of typographed labels similar in format and design to the 2c stamp of Chile portraying Valdivia. These stamps resembled the Chilean stamp in every respect expect that the inscription and value were omitted. I have included copies of the 1911 Chile 2 cent Valdivia issue alongside the Dollard copy (purely trial printing). Which was submitted to the G.P.O. in 1922 Fig.24 why this particular stamp was chosen to copy is unknown. Certainly it was done without the knowledge or permission of the Chilean authorities. As already said Dollard submitted these labels for trial printing, and quite a number of different labels were submitted as an example of their printing. Although these were only labels and not actual designs submitted to be chosen for usage, I feel it was necessary to give them a mention, for I believe that the Chilean 2 cent Valdivia did have some influence on the type of layout used in a number of the actual essays submitted in 1922. I mentioned earlier on that I would compare and refer back to James Ingram's 2d. green map (one of the chosen designs). Included alongside each other Fig 25 are James Ingram's 2d green map and the Chilean Valdivia.

I feel that the manner in which certain elements have been placed within both designs bare a certain resemblance. For instance, the curvature used over the top of the map of Ireland inside which is the name of the country 'Eire' is inscribed, is very similar to the way 'Chile Correos' is placed within the Valdivia design. Also the Valdivia design uses the value of the stamp in the bottom-right and left-hand corners, with the value written out between both numerals. This is exactly how it is done in the 2d green map and, I did speak earlier about how strange it was that all the different artists and designers had used a similar layout when it came to putting in the value of the stamp. Since

(FIG. 27) DOLLARD ESSAY - ADAPTED FROM THE PAINTING BY WALTER TILL.

(FIG. 27) COPY FROM ORIGINAL PAINTING BY WALTER TILL, WHICH SHOWS THE SOURCE OF INFLUENCE FOR THE DOLLARD ESSAY.

the Chilean Valdivia was designed in 1911 and the 2d. green map designed in 1922, it is obvious who influenced who. Having said that I feel that James Ingram was not the only one to look to the Valdivia design for influence, there were many others and this can be especially seen in the format used for placing the value of the stamp within the design. One final comparison between the 2d green map and the 2c Valdivia, in the top left and right hand corner of the Chilean design, the star has been used as a decorative element, whereas in the Irish design the Shamrock has been used in the same positions, also the backgrounds of both stamps are made up of very fine lines. Whereas in the Chilean they are all horizontal, the Irish design uses them vertically and horizontally, with the horizontal lines being wavy to symbolise the sea. Although it is impossible to state for definite that the Chilean design influenced Irish designers - it is I feel highly probable.

Dollard also produced a design which was in normal stamp format and was a design that could have been used, unlike their Valdivia essay. As it turned out the design was not one of the chosen ones. I found it interesting the number of colour variations Dollards printed on this particular design. Three styles were printed. Engraved in four single colours, lithographed in fifteen single colours, and lithographed in twenty-three combinations of two colours. I thought that this was an amazing amount of work for a design which in the end was refused. I was able to photograph a number of these original essays, from the private collection of Fred E. Dixon who also kindly allowed me to photograph the Valdivia essays and many other old and very rare essays, artists preliminary sketches and allowed me to search through old books and documents of the 30's and 40's, without which I could not have written this paper.

I have included photographs of Dollard's essay Fig.27 and directly underneath is a photograph of the original painting by 'Walter Till' from which the design for the essay was derived. The original of this painting is with Fred E. Dixon, and I found it very interesting to be able to see where the idea for the essay came from. The painting features Hibernia, displaying her musical virtuosity by holding a harp and blowing a trumpet. This is exactly the same central feature of the essay - with Hibernia holding the harp and playing the trumpet

while leaning against the fluted pillar, same
as in the painting. Changes from painting to
essay were made with regards to the background .
Whereas in the painting there are trees etc.,
in the background - the essay has the rays of
sunshine in its background symbolising the dawn
of nationhood. Interesting to note that the
use of rays of sunshine to symbolise the dawn
of nationhood is a central feature in a high
percentage of the essays that were refused,and
is not to be seen in any of the chosen designs.
I must say I like this particular essay and feel
it would have been worth considering for use.
Having said that I do not think it would have
fitted in as part of a set with any three of the
four designs which were actually accepted.
What I mean by that is, all of the four designs
accepted were simplified and very flat in
composition and all were quite decorative in
appearance. On the other hand the 'Hibernia'
essay is more figurative and life-like; there's
a sense more realish about it and it is not
lavished with decorative elements, such as celtic
knots, shamrocks etc. For this reason it would
have been difficult to make this design fit in
with any of the chosen designs. Equally it must
be said that the four designs that were chosen,
do fit together well as a set, and no one design
dominates or shouts out above the rest.
Again you can see how a similar format to the
'Valdivia' design was used when placing the value
of the stamp within the design Fig.27, and I feel
that the numerals used are slightly too big in
proportion to the other lettering in the design.
Indeen looking at the rest of the lettering in
this design, it would seem to be that 'Siarstat
na hEireann', which is at the top of the design.,
is slightly squashed. Nevertheless, all of these
problems could have been modified had the design
been accepted, which unforturnately for Dollard
was not the case.

Messrs. O'Loughlin, Murphy and Boland printed
several essays for the design competition. Four
of them were from designs by William MacBride and
three of them were by Evelyn M. Wallis. Both
of 'The Craft Workers Limited' (which was then
situated in Harcourt Street, Dublin). I was able
to find copies of a number of these essays and,
in one case managed to see the actual pencil sketches
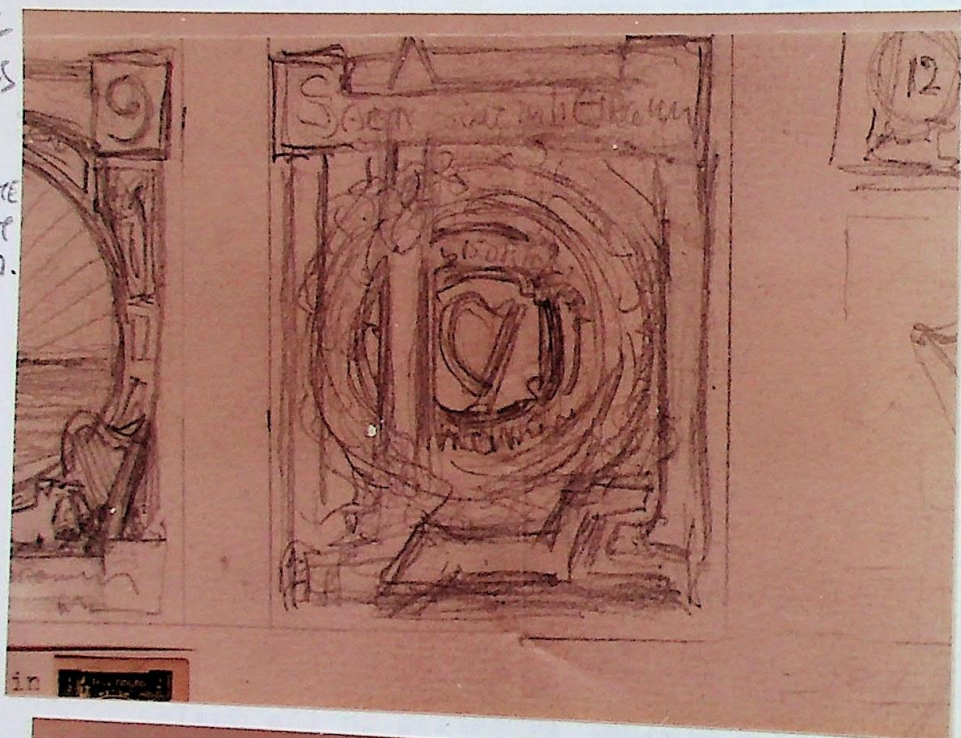of one of the artists for his design.

(FIG. 28) ORIGINAL ESSAY SUBMITTED BY 'WILLIAM MAC BRIDE'. MOST COPIES OF THIS ESSAY ARE NOW IN PRIVATE COLLECTION.

(FIG. 29) ORIGINAL PENCIL SKETCHES BY 'WILLIAM MAC BRIDE' WHICH ILLUSTRATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS DESIGN.

It is with this particular design I would like to begin - the ½d design of William MacBride which I have included Fig.28 along with the artists pencil sketches Fig.29. I found it very interesting to be able to see the preliminary pencil sketches and compare them with the finished design. Although the artist probably made many sketches I was only able to find two. Nevertheless these give a good idea of how MacBride wanted his design to look. The first of his pencil sketches shows his design beginning to evolve, with the emergence of St. Kevin's Round Tower at Glendalough, on the left-hand side of his sketch. Towards the foreground of his design is a rough sketch of a wolfhound which is one of the subjects used in the finished design, but not to such a large scale. At this stage of his preliminary sketches MacBride was thinking of using the harp as a central motif, around which he was testing the possibilities of placing some type. Also he was trying out the possibilities of placing the country's name 'Saorstat na hEireann' in a rectangular frame at the top of the design. This caused problems for him, because as can be seen from the sketch he would have had to cut through the tower, which would have looked ridiculous.

So by moving on to his second sketch, which by then is a fairly accurate representation of the finished design, we can see how MacBride changed and modified his design. Firstly he moved the rectangular frame containing 'Saorstat na hEireann' to the bottom of his design. This allowed him to fit the tower in without having to cut away any of it. At this stage the tower is more clearer with a hint of detail about it. While at the base of the tower you can see some very sketchy representations of shamrocks, which are a lot clearer in the finished design. Whereas, in his first preliminary sketch MacBride was trying out the possibilities of having the wolfhound a fairly prominent feature of his design, his second sketch shows the hound represented much smaller. Also instead of MacBride using the harp as a central motif in his design, he has in this sketch used the rising sun as his central motif, which as I've already said symbolised the dawn of nationhood. Nevertheless MacBride did not discard the harp as a motif for his design, and he fitted it into the bottom right-hand corner of the design next to the wolfhound.

(FIG. 30) COPIES OF TWO OTHER ESSAYS SUBMITTED BY 'WILLIAM MAC BRIDE' FOR 1922 COMPETITION.

(FIG. 31) COPIES OF ALL FOUR ESSAYS SUBMITTED BY MISS WILLIS - FOR 1922 COMPETITION.

So by this stage of his preliminary designs MacBride had almost reached his finished design. Upon looking at his finished design, I must say that I feel MacBride used too many symbolic elements within his design and as such left it a little cluttered. You have the rising-sun, the tower, the wolfhound, harp, shamrocks and of course some celtic patterns. I just feel that the design could have done without one or two of these elements. Indeed some of the other essays subscribed by MacBride proved even more cluttered and over-done. I have included some black & white copies of two other essays by MacBride to illustrate my point Fig.30 both of these I think are over-worked with celtic decoration and in the second design the type within the design becomes almost lost. Having said that I have to say that of the three designs submitted by MacBride I prefer the one with the tower, which I have already discussed at some length, and feel it is probably one of the better essays submitted overall.

As I've already mentioned, there were two designers whose work was printed by Messrs. O'Loughlin, Murphy and Boland who submitted to the competition. The first being William MacBride, whose work I've already discussed, and the second designer was a lady called Evelyn M. Wallis. It is worthwhile giving a mention to the Miss Wallis essays as one of them is very similar to the MacBride essay with the tower. Miss Willis designed 1d, 3d, 5d and 7d stamps Fig.31. The first of these was not unlike the MacBride ½d design showing the round tower and the rising-sun, but was set in a square frame, unlike the MacBride essay. Whereas the MacBride essay has the inscription 'Saorstat na hEireann' at the bottom and the value in words and figures at the top - the Wallis essay has the value at the bottom and inscription at the top. The reason I've remarked this being, that most of the essays that I saw and have shown in my paper have all used the inscription of 'Eire' at the top of the design and the value, in words and figures, at the foot. This also applies to the four chosen designs, leaving the MacBride essay among one of the few who broke this format. This in a sense reinforces my point about many of the designers having looked to certain aspects of the Chilean 'Valdivia' for influence in design layout.

All four Miss Willis essays feature the rising-sun
and its rays quite prominently. The second of her
essays show the inscription 'Saorstat na hEireann'
set within the rays of the sun, with the word
'hEireann' shaped to the circle of the sun. Both
the side and the top panels contained celtic knots,
which seem to me to be somewhat more controlled
than the celtic patterns used in a lot of other
essays. The third design also featured the rising-
sun surrounded by shamrocks, with the inscription
in a scroll at the top and the value, in words and
figures, at the bottom of the design. I must say
that most of the designers showed very little
imagination when it came to the lettering and its
layout. Having raised this point I shall elaborate
more at a later stage in my paper. The last of
Miss Wallis's essays featured the harp as its
central motif, which was one of the ideas William
MacBride had in his preliminary sketches for his
essay containing the Glendalough Tower Fig.29.

It is fair to say that there is quite a similarity
amongst three of Miss Willis's essays, this is
mainly due to the motifs used in each of the three.
The central motif used in all three designs being
the rising-sun, which in my opinion is quite a
strong symbolical motif. I would have thought
that this motif would have been amongst the four
designs that were chosen, especially as it
symbolised the dawn of a nationhood. As Ireland
was after achieving her independance from Great
Britain, what was happening in effect was the dawn
of a nationhood. So therefore this motif should
have been seen somewhere throughout the chosen
designs. I am not saying that Miss Willis's essays
should have been among the chosen designs, simply
the motif of the rising-sun. In fact if any of the
Wallis essays had been chosen, then they would have
required a lot of modification, and really the only
one I would have considered for print would be the
first design with the tower. Even then it would have
needed modifications, such as playing about with the
positioning of the lettering and value of the stamp,
and getting rid of those two vertical borders which
seem to be there simply for the sake of decoration.
Elements such as these would have been worth considering
at the initial design stage and although they probably
were, I doubt to any great degree. Just one final
point about Miss Wallis's essays, her fourth design
which features the harp as its central motif is very

(FIG. 32) PROPAGANDA LABELS PRINTED FOR THE FENIAN MOVEMENT IN IRELAND (1865-67)
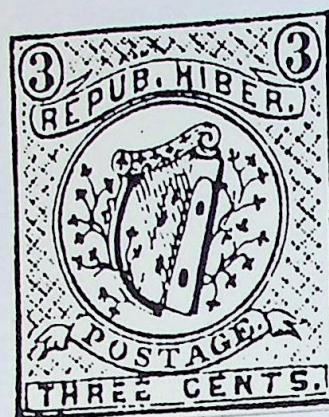
(FIG. 32) MISS WILLIS ESSAY - SUBMITTED IN 1922.

(FIG. 33) PHOTOGRAPH FROM A PAINTING BY WILLIAM ORPEN - FROM WHICH - RICHARD CAULFIELD ORPEN ADAPTED HIS DESIGN. PAINTING 'A PEACE CONFERENCE AT QUAI d'ORSAY'.

(FIG. 34) COPY FROM ORIGINAL ESSAY BY RICHARD ORPEN. THIS IS THE ONLY COPY OF THE ESSAY, AND IS NOW IN THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF FRED. E. DIXON.

reminiscent of the propaganda labels printed in the U.S.A. in 1865-67 for the Fenian Movement in Ireland. The essays were prepared but never put into use due to the failure of the Fenian Uprising. I have included black and white copies of two such labels, alongside which I have placed Miss Willis's essay Fig.32.

Another essay which I found very interesting was the one submitted by Richard Caulfield Orpen, Architect brother of the more famous William Orpen, and a teacher in the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art. The design was based on a painting by William Orpen 'A Peace Conference at Quai d'Orsay' Fig.33. I feel that this particular essay Fig.34 was one of the strongest designs submitted to the competition. The central image featured 'Liberty' holding a torch in her right hand and a harp in her left. Obviously 'Liberty' symbolised freedom with Ireland becoming a freestate, and the harp in her left hand was added to keep an Irish flavour about the overall design. The need to make each design look Irish was very important at the time, which was understandable considering that in the eighty years previous, Ireland had to use British stampsas they were under British rule. Although this design was among those refused, it did have qualities that were quite different to most of the other essays. This particular essay is the only one that I have seen, and I have seen quite a few from this competition, that uses photography as part of the design. The central motif featuring 'Liberty' is actually a photographic insert. If you look closely at the photographs Fig.34, which were taken from the original essay, it is possible to distinguish the photographic insert. The fact that Orpen used photography as part of his design meant that the effect of the overall design was somewhat more realistic from the point-of-view of the subject matter than many of the other essays which were less figurative and more symbolic. The architectural structure which surrounds 'Liberty' is very well balanced within the design and is enhanced by the typography, which is very well positioned throughout the design itself.

Richard Orpen had obviously given a lot of thought
to the layout of type within his design, and the
way in which he worked it into the architectural
structure was quite well balanced and very
successful. Orpen used a very stylised gaelic
type-face, which I did not come across in any
of the other essays. Not only was this lettering
different from most other essays, it was very
well worked into the design, and this can be
seen from the way in which Orpen worked in the
inscription 'Saorstat na hEireann' at the top
of thedesign. As the top of the structure slopes
upwards, the height of the type increases
accordingly, with the result that the title
'Saorstat na hEireann' actually echoes the shape
within which it is placed. This took a lot of
work on the part of the designer and it is
well balanced off by the English equivalent of
'Saorstat na hEireann' at the bottom of his
design, again using the same style lettering as
I have already mentioned earlier, Orpen's essay
did have qualities that were quite different to
all the other essays, and apart from his use of
photography, he used a particular type-face to
denote the words 'Postage and Revenue' which to
the best of my knowledge was not used on any
of the other essays.

This particular type-face was a 'sans-serif' and
not only was it not used in the refused essays,
there were no type faces of a similar vein used
in any of the issued designs, of Ireland, right
up until the 1940's. So Orpen was very much
ahead in his use of type-faces. As far as Irish
stamp design was concerned, and indeed his use
of photography was another concept which was
totally ignored for many years to follow. Over-all
I found that Orpen's design was very well structured,
typographically very competent and unlike most
other essays it was not cluttered with celtic
patterns etc. If I had any criticism about this
design I think I would say that the numerals,
denoting the value of the stamp, are a little too
big in proportion to the other lettering.
Nevertheless, I feel it is definitely one of the
better essays of this competition.

(Fig.35) ORIGINAL ESSAYS BY 'PERKINS BACON'. THE MODIFIED VERSION OF THESE ESSAYS WERE AMONG THE FINAL FEW ESSAYS AS SHOWN ON (PAGE.15) OF THIS PAPER.

(Fig.35) ENLARGED VERSION OF 3d. ESSAY.

(Fig.36) MODIFIED VERSION WHICH WAS AMONG THE SHORT-LISTED DESIGNS. THIS DESIGN WAS EVENTUALLY ELIMINATED FROM THE FINAL FEW ESSAYS - WHICH WERE BIDDING FOR A PLACE AMONGST THE FINAL FOUR DESIGNS - WHICH ARE NOW KNOWN AS THE 1922 DEFINITIVES.

The last of the essays that I wish to discuss is one that I felt should have been chosen. There were two disigns submitted, designed by a Mr. Walker of Rathmines (Dublin) and the essays were printed by the London Perkins, Bacon and Co. Ltd. If that name rings a bell then go back to Page Four and you will see thatit was the same company who were responsible for the printing of the Penny Black, which was the worlds first stamp.

As I've already said, there were two designs submitted, and unfortunately I have been unable to find any colour reproductions of these essays or indeed find any originals to photograph. However, I do have black and white copies of both and while the quality is not great, they should help illustrate my points. Both designs Fig.35 feature the seated Hibernia, with her left arm resting on a harp while holding aloft a torch in her right hand. As far as I know the torch is symbolic of the flame of life or indeed could be symbolic of the flame of light leading you out of darkness. At Hibernia's feet lies a wolfhound, as used in the William MacBride essay, symbolising vigilance and being on guard.
The frame on the 2d. essay took the form of an archway surmounted by an antique crown. In fact this design is similar to the Richard Caulfield Orpen essay which I just finished talking about. Similar from the point-of-view of Hibernia being within the structure of an archway. The type is placed in much the same positions in both these designs - 'Saorstat na hEireann' running across the top of both archways and the value placed at the base of each pillar in both designs.

Getting back to the Perkins Bacon essays, they both feature the rising-sun in Hibernia's background which as I have mentioned a number of times is symbolic of the dawn of nationhood unlike the 2d. design the 3d. featured Hibernia simply set in a plain circle with inscriptions and value tablets at the top and bottom. I must say I prefer the 3d. essay where Hibernia is set against a plain circle. Whereas in the 2d. Hibernia is set in a circle which is then set within an architectural structure.

(Fig. 37) ALL FOUR ACCEPTED DESIGNS FOR THE 1922 DEFINITIVE SERIES.

This to me looks like there's a circular hole cut in the archway with Hibernia on the other side looking out. The circle just does not compliment the hard structure within which it is placed. Having expressed my opinion for the 3d. essay it is also worth mentioning that a modified version of this particular essay (3d.) was amongst the five designs that were under consideration by the Irish government (as shown on Page). I have included this modified version underneath both of the original essays Fig. 36. You can see how 'Eire' was substituted for the longer inscription 'Saorstat na hEireann' and the value tablets left empty. Also the wolfhound was removed from the design, which I think was wise as there were enough elements within the design which were symbolic in nature. Although I have not seen these essays in colour, I find them easy to visualise and have no doubt that , with the correct handling of type in the value tablets and reconsider the typeface used for 'Eire' at the head of the design, this design would have been as strong as any of the four that were accepted. Unfortunately, this did not happen and this design became part of the many number of refused essays from the 1922 competition.

In conclusion I would like to say that, having discussed all four accepted designs along with a cross section of those that were refused, I would hope that I have given a sufficient insight into the quality of design and the sort of essays that were submitted in this 1922 competition. I would also like to make some general comments on certain aspects of the design of these essays, both those that were accepted as well as those that were refused. Firstly, I would say that the four designs that were chosen Fig. 37 in my opinion work well together as a set. This is mainly due to the very simplified central motifs of each design (i.e. Map of Ireland, Sword of Light, Shield and Cross of Cong). The most detailed part of each design is the celtic decoration, which also adds to the fact of the four designs relating as a set. The use of lettering and where it was positioned is quite consistent in all four designs and the same lettering has been used to keep a sense of regularity amongst the set. A point worth making at this stage is, that most of the lettering used in the early Irish stamps, including the four definitives and most of the refused essays, used hand-rendered lettering for the finished

INSCRIPTION BADLY SPACED WITHIN THE DESIGN. THE PLACING OF THE WORD 'NA' DOES NOT WORK, IT ONLY CAUSES A LOT OF BLANK SPACES WHICH ARE VERY UNPLEASANT TO THE EYE.

(Fig. 38) USE OF INSCRIPTION 'SHORSTAT NA hEIREANN' IS VERY BADLY PLACED WITHIN THE DESIGN.

(Fig. 39) ILLUSTRATES HOW THE SPACING BETWEEN CERTAIN CHARACTERS IS NOT AS GOOD AS IT SHOULD BE. ALL THOSE ARROWS IN BLUE GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF CHARACTERS WITH BAD SPACING.

(Fig. 39) AGAIN, ILLUSTRATING HOW CERTAIN LETTERS WERE BADLY SPACED.

design. Although most of this lettering was of good quality as can be seen from some of the refused essays, it did become a bit sloppy at times Fig. 38. Also the spacing between certain letters at times tended to be a little out. Fig. 39.

The necessity for the four designs to work together as a set was obviously very important and considering each of the four chosen designs were executed by a different artist, they do function as a set. This I think was a problem with many of the essays that were refused for instance there were many strong designs amongst the refused essays such as the Richard Caulfield Orpen essay Fig. 33 and the Perkins Bacon essay Fig. 35. Both of these were strong individual designs but were difficult to place with other designs to form a set. Although many designers did submit more than one design, which in a sense could have meant that all four designs could have come from the one designer, the designs tended to be all the same. What I mean by that is, the designer basically used the one central motif in most of his/her essays and just changed about the surrounding elements. A good example of this can be seen in the Willis essays Fig. 31., here you can see how Miss Willis used the rising-sun as her central motif for three of her essays and just changed about the design by placing decorative celtic borders or shamrock motifs around the figure of the design. Really these essays would not have worked as a set because they were all saying or summarising the same thing. This was not the case with the four chosen design, each one symbolised something different and, unlike many of the refused essays which tended to cram the design with different symbolic elements, they each had only one central symbolic motif which I feel was much better than having an array of symbolic motifs cluttering the design.

I mentioned earlier in my paper, that not a lot of imagination was given to the positioning of type/lettering in most of these essays. Very often the lettering seems to have been shoved in as an after-thought. I think that this was mainly due to the fact that many of the designs submitted excluding the printing houses, were by local artists who had

very little experience in using type. So when
it came to designing their essays they did not
in a lot of cases have the experience to handle
the type, how to space letters, words or know
how different weights of type effected overall
look of the design. On the other hand there were
those who handled the type very well, an example
being the Richard Caulfield Orpen essay Fig. 33,
which I have already discussed at some length.
Indeed many of the printing houses who submitted
essays such as O'Loughlin Murphy & Boland who
submitted Miss Wallis's designs Fig. 31., did not
show the best possible use of type within their
designs. Having said that,printers to this day
are known for their bad use of typography.

It is also worth noting that all of these essays
for this competition, and indeed all other Irish
stamps right up to the sixties, were restricted
in-so-far as the possibilities in printing were
limited. Nevertheless this gave these stamps a
nice period quality which places them in a specific
era. Anybody looking at these stamps would have
no problem in estimating roughly when they were
in use. Indeed most of the colours used on these
early designs, both definitives and commemorative
issues, are colours that you rarely, if at all,
see in print today. They lack a richness of hue
which is one of the characteristics of these
early stamps that helps to place them in a specific
era.

Finally, I would just like to day that, of all the
essays that have been illustrated and discussed in
this part of my paper, they have, I hope helped to
show the artistic fashion of their time. Also
from the number of designs that I have shown, I
think it would be fair to say that the advice and
suggestions made by the Department of Post &
Telegraphs concerning the 1922 essays, were very
much adhered to by the designers. What I mean by
that is the Post Office obviously suggested the
sort of motif to be used for the designs. I have
seen many other essays from this competition and,
those plus the essays illustrated in my paper all
use similar motifs. The use of celtic interlacing
in one form or another, shamrocks, the rising-sun,

(Fig. 40) A RANDOM SELECTION OF 1922 ESSAYS
WHICH ILLUSTRATE MY POINT ABOUT
CONSISTENT USED OF CERTAIN MOTIFS.

harps, round towers, sea shores, coats of arms,
celtic crosses and wolfhounds, are all too
frequent to be a coincidence. I have included
some more essays Fig. 40 simply to give an idea
of the consistent use of these motif's. Also
I would think that many of the designers were
briefed to use the lengthy title 'Saorstat na
hEireann' which I think posed a lot of problems.
In the event 'Eire' was more simple and could
be fitted into the design a lot easier and
with more clarity.

All four designs chosen from this competition
remained in use for some forty-six years when
in 1968 a second set of definitives were issued.
Over those forty-six years higher values were
added to the set but holding the same four
designs. This particular set of definitives
were obviously very well liked, to have stayed
in use for so long. Indeed, since the issue
of the 1968 definitives another set has already
taken their place.

COMMEMORATIVE ISSUES 1922 – 1960's. (29 – 38)

After the issue of the 1922 definitives, it was
another seven years before Ireland issued its first
commemorative issue. From then until 1966(when the
EASTER RISING series was released) Irish commemoratives
were confined to one, two or three stamps at the
most. The number of commemorative issues released
each year were very infrequent, sometimes only one
each year, and most of them were very dull and
unimaginative in design. Too often the designs
appeared obscure in themselves while the use of a
script and language which was alien to many people,
certainly to anybody outside of Ireland, did not
enhance their popularity internationally.
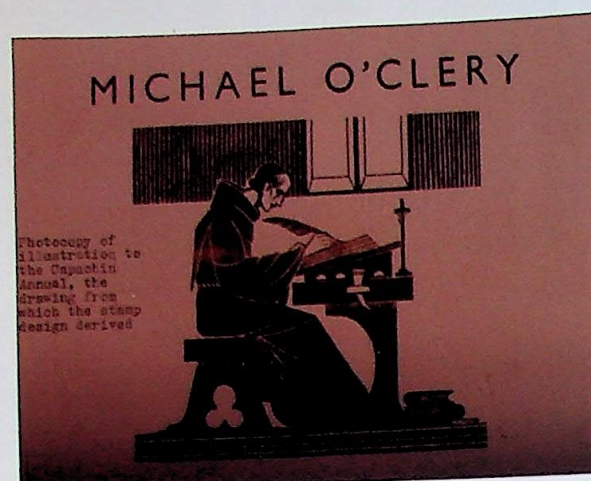
(Fig. 41) ILLUSTRATION FROM THE CAPUCHIN ANNUAL - WHICH WAS ADAPTED BY R.J KING FOR HIS FINISHED DESIGN

(Fig. 42) R.J. KING'S DESIGN AS ISSUED - 1944.

Nevertheless, during the course of my research I came across some very interesting material concerning many of these designs. In order to look at certain aspects in some detail, I have chosen a specific number of these commemoratives to discuss, whichshould give a very good idea of the sort of designs been produced at that time.

One designer who designed quite a lot of these early Irish commemoratives was Richard J. King, a well known Irish artist. One of his best designs was the one issued to commemorate the death of Michael O'Cleary, Franciscan Lay Brother and one of Ireland's most famous annalists. The design depicted a monk in the act of writing 'The Annals of the Four Masters', a history of Ireland from the earliest times down to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The inscription on the stamps, 'Do chum Gloire de Agus Onora na hEireann' (For the Glory of God and the honour of Ireland), is taken from the preamble to the Annals.

During my research I discovered the original of the illustration which was used in 'The Capachin Annual of 1944' from which Richard King adapted his image for the stamp design. I had seen this stamp design many times before and never really appreciated the amount of work the designer had to do.

By comparing the illustration from 'The Capuchin Annual'Fig. 41 to the original artwork Fig. 42 of R.J. King's stamp design, it is possible to see how the designer adapted the 'Capughin' illustration to fit his stamp design. Elements such as the seat,window, inkhorn and crucifix, all of which were included in the original illustration, have all been omitted from the finished design by R.J. King. What I found to be most impressive was the way in which R.J. King merged his image with the typographyof his stamp design. Remembering that all of the lettering on his design was hand drawn, it is quite astonishing the accuracy with which the first 'E' in Eire has been drawn. It is an excellent piece of craftmanship on the part of the designer, and shows that he was very

(FIG. 43) ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY R.J. KING WHICH SHOWS THE SYMBOL '7' AT THE END OF THE FIRST LINE OF INSCRIPTION.

SYMBOL PRIOR TO BEING MOVED TO THE SECOND LINE.
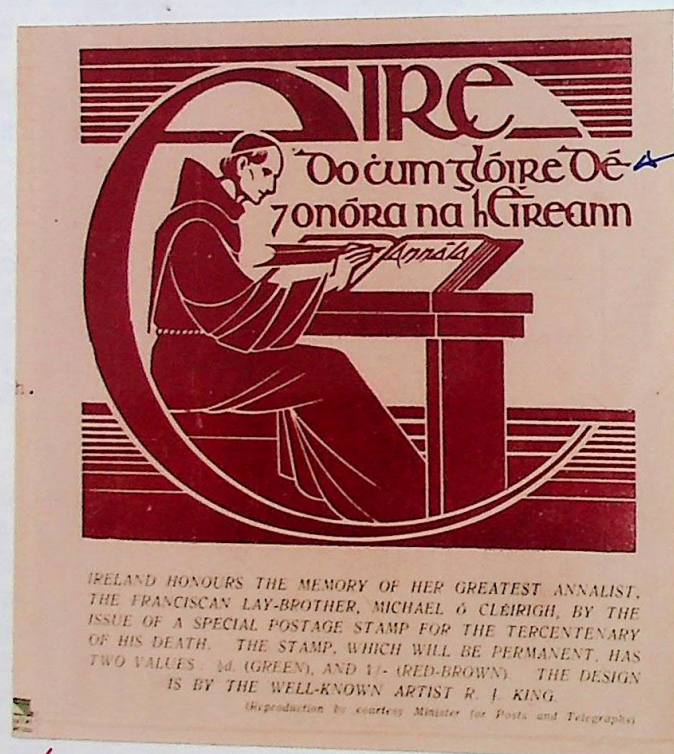
SYMBOL HAS BEEN MOVED TO SECOND LINE AND SPACED FILL OUT BY A MORE STYLISED 'E'.

(FIG. 44) SHOWS HOW SYMBOL '7' HAS BEING MOVED TO SECOND LINE AND ACTUAL LETTERING OF INSCRIPTION HAS BEING CHANGED FROM THAT USED IN (FIG. 43)

much aware of how to use type with an image. The illustration within the stamp design seems to fit so snugly into the sweeping stroke of the character 'E', which itself is nicely contained by the horizontal lines which vary in thickness and rest at the top and bottom of the design. I like the way in which the designer allows the background to stay empty, because not only do you get this play of positive and negative shapes, it also means that when the inscription was put into the design it was easily read.

Unlike most of the gealic lettering used in many of the 1922 essays, R.J. King's is very clearly and accurately drawn, and this can be seen from his rendering of the inscription which is so well positioned within the finished design. The actual spacing out of this inscription caused some problems even at artwork stage. I have included alongside each other copies of the finished artwork Fig.43, and the design as it was when printed Fig.44. If you look at the inscription in both you will see how there was a slight modification made before actually going from artwork to print. As the inscription was, in the finished artwork Fig.43 it had the symbol '7' sitting at the end of the first line and both lines went a little further out beyond the width of the design, which caused an unpleasant break in the frame-work of the stamp. Therefore it was decided to move the symbol '7' down to the second line of the inscription Fig. 44. which meant that both lines would end up flush with the frame-work of the design.

In fact along with moving the symbol the designer completely redrew the lettering for the inscription Fig. 44. using a more stylised letter 'E' and totally changing the character of the letter 'A' Really the hand-rendered lettering of this stamp design has better letter spacing than some of the type used in other commemoratives which had all been set mechanically and at greater ease. One last comment on this R.J. King design, the value has been positioned at the end of the stroke of the 'E' which acts in balancing the overall design and without this it would appear a little too heavy on the left-hand side of the design. Overall I think this is one of the finest designs among the early commemoratives and a lot of careful and accurate rendering went into producing it.

(Fig. 45) ESSAY SUBMITTED BY GERALD BRUEN FOR ISSUE COMMEMORATING 'FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION'.

USING SPACE BETWEEN EACH LETTER TO FILL WORD OUT TO CERTAIN MEASURE.
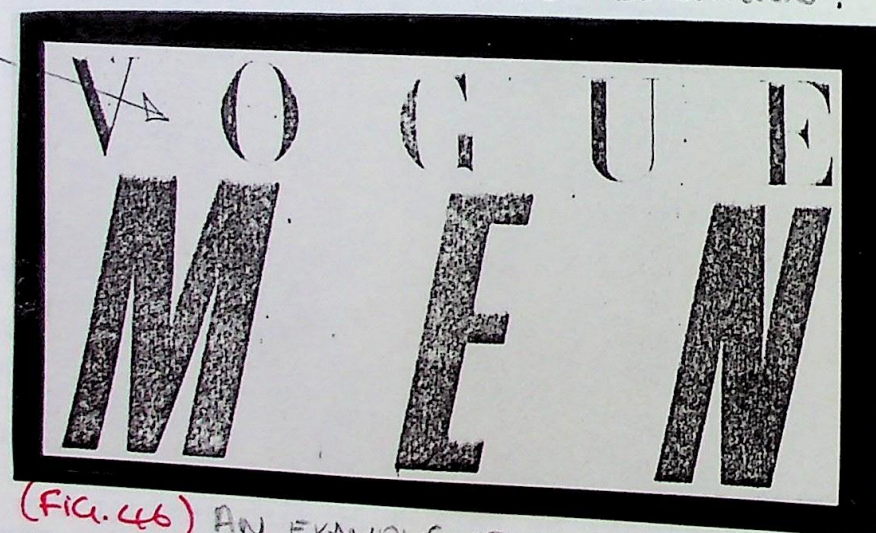
(Fig. 46) AN EXAMPLE OF MODERN TYPOGRAPHY WHICH CAN BE COMPARED TO THAT USED IN BRUENS ESSAY (FIG. 45) - BRUEN HAS INSERTED SPACE BETWEEN EACH CHARACTER TO FILL THE WORDS OF INSCRIPTION OUT TO CERTAIN MEASURE.

As I mentioned earlier R.H. King designed quite a few of the early Irish commemoratives and to give some idea of the standard of the early Irish commemoratives, it is worth while looking at some of R.J. King's other designs.

From June 22nd. 1929, which was the date the first Irish commemorative was issued, only four other commemoratives were released leading up to July 27th.1934/ My reason for choosing July 27th.1934 was, that this was the date R.J. King had his first Irish stamp issued. The stamp was the only design issued in 1934 and was released to mark the Golden Jubilee of the 'Gaelic Athletic Association'.

Before discussing R.J. Kings design, I would like to say a few words about a rejected essay which was designed by Gerald Bruen and was for the same issue which saw R.J. King's design accepted. Bruen's essay Fig. 45 . was really very simple and probably the weariest essay that I have discussed to date. Nevertheless, it is worth noting, as this was the standard of may of those essays that were refused for various issues during the early years of Irish commemorative stamp design.

The imagery used is really very bland and totally lacking in any detail, and as always the shamrock motif has been thrown in to keep the Irishness alive in the design. The layout of lettering within the design seems to have been given a lot more thought and effort than the illustration. One point worth noting deals with the layout of the lettering at the bottom of the essay. The inscription 'Cumainn Luit-Cleas Gaedeal' which is rendered in three lines at the base of the design, has similar characteristics to certain aspects of typography. Today, in Bruen's essay all three lines of the inscription occupy the exact same line length. This is called justification of type, which simply means that all the type is set on the same line-length. If one line or word cannot fill the same amount of space as another, then a certain measure is chosen and each word has space inserted accordingly between each of its characters, in order to bring them all out in the one measure. If you look at Bruen's essay it is obvious from the inscription at the bottom of the design. That space was added

(Fig. 47) DESIGN AS ISSUED - BY R.J. KING.
COMMEMORATING 'FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATIONS'. (1934)

ARMORIAL BEARINGS OF EACH
PROVINCE IN EACH
OF THE FOUR CORNERS
(SAME AS FIG. 44)

EXAMPLE OF GAELIC HAND-LETTERING
WHICH WAS CONSISTENTLY USED
IN MOST EARLY IRISH COMMEMORATIVES

SAN SERIF
TYPE-FACE
WHICH WAS VERY
UNCOMMON IN
MOST OF THE
EARLY IRISH
COMMEMORATIVES.

SANS SERIF
TYPE-FACE.

(Fig. 48) DESIGNED BY R.J. KING - ISSUED
TO COMMEMORATE THE 'BIRTH CENTENARIES
OF MICHAEL DAVITT AND CHARLES STEWART
PARNELL'. (1946)

THIS WAS THE FIRST IRISH STAMP
THAT INCORPORATED IN ITS DESIGN, A
TYPE-FACE THAT WAS BEEN USED
ON MANY INTERNATIONAL STAMPS OF
THAT PERIOD. MOST OF THESE EARLY
IRISH STAMPS USED GAELIC LETTERING ONLY,
TO DENOTE ALL TEXT WITHIN THE DESIGN

between characters to fill the word out to the correct measure. The middle line has the tightest spacing and was obviously the measure the top and bottom line had to conform to. Thebottom line had the heavier spacing between each character, with the top line having slightly less spacing inserted between its characters.

As I have already said, this particular aspect of Bruen's design is very similar to concepts in modern typography, which as you can see uses type in a similar fashion Fig.46 . Apart from this Bruen's essay was very dull and unimaginative, and having seen this you begin to appreciate more the design by R.J. King.

Although this was not one of his better designs, R.J. King's issue commemorating the 'Gaelic Athletic Association' Fig.47. was certainly more interesting than Bruen's essay. The design depicted a hurler weilding a *caman*, a curved stick four feet in length and not unlike a hockey stick. At the foot of the design was inscribed 'Cumann Luit Cleas Gaedheal' (Gaelic Athletic Association) and the dates 1884-1934. This particular stamp typifies the simplicity of many of these early commemoratives, and shows the monotonous regularity in the use of the gaelic lettering. Really, after the issue of the 1922 definitives there were no major changes in the typography of Irish stamps, until Ireland started getting involved in International issues, such as the 'Europa' series which was introduced in 1960 and has seen an annual issue ever since. This is something which I shall discuss at some length, a little further on in my paper.

The only early Irish commemorative that did incorporate in its design a more internationally used type-face, was the issue commemorating the 'Birth Centenaries of Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell' which was issued in September 1946 Fig.48 . Designed by R.J. King the design shows a more balanced use of type than in his previous design for the 'Gaelic Athletic Association'. The design features as its centre-piece a cottage with the figure of a ploughman in the foreground.

ALL BLUE ARROWS INDICATE THE ARMORIAL BEARING OF EACH OF THE FOUR PROVINCES. SAME AS (FIG. 48)

(FIG. 49) DESIGNED BY R.J. KING - ISSUED TO COMMEMORATE THE 'CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF THOMAS DAVIS. (1945). ON COMPARING THIS WITH (FIG. 48 + FIG 50) IS NOTICABLE THE VERY GRAPHIC AND DISTINCTIVE STYLE OF R.J. KING.

(FIG. 50) DESIGNED BY R.J. KING - ISSUED TO COMMEMORATE THE 'TWENTY FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND'. (1958)

THIS DESIGN SHOWS VERY SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS TO THOSE ILLUSTRATED IN (FIG. 48 + FIG 49), MOST OBVIOUS BEING THE STYLE USED IN EACH.

In the background was Croach Patrick, which placed the scene in the home country of Michael Davitt. The stamp bore the inscription 'Tir Agus Teachlach' (Country and Homestead), one of the slogans of the Irish Land League of which Davitt and Parnell were the founders.

In this design R.J. King has used the gaelic lettering to denote the country's name, the value of the stamp and the slogan. Along with this he used, to denote the names Davitt and Parnell, a 'Sans Serif' type face which had not been used on any other Irish stamp prior to this issue. Indeed it was the first time a designer had broken away from totally using gaelic lettering in his/her design. The combination of gaelic lettering and the 'Sans Serif' typeface works well within the over-all design and shows that some Irish designers were beginning to watch what was going on in the stamp designs of other countries. Before drawing some comparisons with stamp design from other countries, I would like to make one final point about this particular design of R.J. King's. The actual border around his design shows the armorial bearings of the four provinces, which can be seen in each corner of the design. My reason for making this point being that the same type of border, with armorial bearings in each corner, can be seen in his 1945 design issued to commemorate the centenary of the death of Thomas Davis Fig.49. Also the typographic layout is very similar in both designs, and really if you had seen one of R.J. King's designs and been told who the designer was, you could then flick through a catalogue of Irish stamp designs and picked out his designs without looking at the designer's name. He had more or less stamped a particular style on his stamp designs which became more obvious in his later designs Fig.50.

During this period most countries throughout Europe were beginning to recover from the effects of World War Two. For many these effects were reflected through the subject matter of their stamp designs. In this respect Irish stamps were very wrapped up in what was going on in Ireland itself, and not really too worried about depicting subject matter that concerned the international public. For the better part, most of the early Irish stamps commemorated specific events in Irish history, and obviously felt the need to evoke certain images of Ireland through the typography of her stamps, this can be

SANS SERIF
TYPE-FACE.

SERIFED
TYPE-FACES.

(FIG. 51) ISSUED AROUND 1952, THIS
LUXEMBOURG COMMEMORATIVE GIVES
SOME IDEA OF THE DIFFENT TYPE-FACES
BEEN USED ON WORLD-WIDE STAMPS.
TYPE-FACES SUCH AS THESE WERE NOT
USED VERY OFTEN IN IRISH COMMEMORATIVES
FROM 1922 - 60'S.

(FIG. 52) TWO
GREAT BRITAIN
COMMEMORATIVES,
TO SHOW THE
USE OF TYPE
AND THE
DIFFERENT TYPE-
FACES BEEN
USED AT THIS
TIME.

(1)

(2)

seen through the continuous use of hand-rendered
gaelic lettering in most Irish stamp designs
prior to 1960.

Compared to the rest of Europe Irish stamps were
very much behind in their use of typography,
which was mainly due to the continuous use of
gaelic lettering in both commemorative and
definitive issues. Most other countries through-
out Europe were trying out different type-faces
from issue to issue, and just to refer back to
my point made earlier about countries commemorating
certain aspects of Post-War effects, I have
included a stamp design from Luxembourg Fig.51.
which illustrates exactly what I mean.

Based on the number of lives lost in the War,
the design was very strong and really brought home
the message very clearly. Printed in monochrome
just like all the Irish commemoratives of that time,
there is a good sense of perspective within the
design, which was an element sadly lacking in many
of the early Irish commemoratives which for the
most part seem to have a very two dimensional
effect.

As I have already mentioned, Irish stamp design
was very much behind the rest of Europe in the
use of typography. The type-face used in
Fig.51. to denote the name of the country and
value of the stamp was a 'serifed' typeface,
and only once in over forty years was a similar
typeface used on Irish stamps. Typefaces such
as the one used in Fig.51. and those used in
Fig.52 ., were being used all the time on
international stamp designs, and considering
the vast variety of typefaces available at the
time, it seems ridiculous that Irish stamps
should have chosen to use different forms of
gaelic lettering for nearly forty-two years.

My own opinion on this is, Ireland had been
under British rule for so long and had also to
use British stamps that,when it became a Free State
in 1922 the need to produce stamp designs which
were totally Irish in appearance, became an

(FIG.53) ENGRAVING BY 'BROCAS' OF ROBERT EMMET — AS USED IN THE FINISHED DESIGN (FIG.56)

(FIG.54) TWO EARLY IRISH COMMEMORATIVES — WHICH ILLUSTRATE THE POPULARITY OF USING PHOTOGRAPHS AND PORTRAITS AS THE CENTRAL MOTIF OF EACH DESIGN.

obsession. This meant that along with the subject matter echoeing certain sentiments of Ireland, so too should the type. So this lead to the regular use of hand-rendered gaelic lettering in all Irish stamps. Both commemorative and definitive, from 1922 right up to the 1960's.

Just as R.J. King's designs typified the simplicity of many of these early commemorative issues, there was one design which typified a particular concept used by many designers in the Irish stamps of this period. The particular stamp I am talking about was issued on September 21st. 1953 and commemorated the 150th. Anniversary of the death of Robert Emmet.

Emmet who was sentenced to death for his part in the attempted rising of 1803, is the central feature of the design. The designer of this stamp is unknown, and the design itself was based on an engraving made by Brocas Fig.53. which showed Emmet facing the accusers at his trial. It is this particular concept of using engravings, photographs and portraits around which to base a design, that was so popular among Irish stamp designers of that period. I have included a number of these designs in order to show how popular the concept was Fig.54 ., and how effective some of the designs actually were.

During the course of my research I came across a number of different essays for the Emmet commemorative, all using the same image, but with different treatments of the typographical layout Fig.55. Throughout the four essays the designer had covered the most suitable layouts that could have been used, concerning the image involved. It is worth noting that in all four essays the portrait has been positioned to the right of the design and, the value, Robert Emmet's name and the dates positioned on the left. This was definitely the correct layout, considering that had the portrait been placed to the left of the design it would have looked as though Emmet was squashed against the frame-

(Fig. 55) ESSAYS FOR THE ROBERT EMMET COMMEMORATIVE (1953)
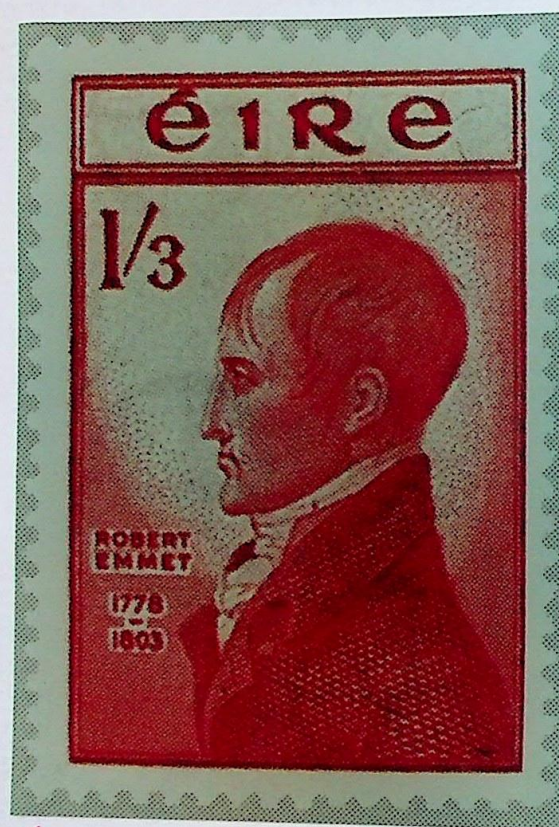
(Fig. 56) DESIGN AS ISSUED -
TO COMMEMORATE THE '150th
ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF
ROBERT EMMET. (1953)

work, and the whole effect of showing him facing his accusers would have been lost.

All four essays were quite competent in their typographical layout and if I had to state my preference I would have gone for the second of these designs, which I feel is slightly the better balanced design. Nevertheless the design as issued Fig.56.. proved to be just as successful, and apart from the one slight modification which was the removal of the dots on each side of the word 'Eire', the design was exactly the same as essay four.

Finally, all the designs which I have discussed in this part of my paper represent a fairly accurate cross section of the commemorative stamps being issued in Ireland during this period. All stamps of this period were either printed through recess or letterpress printing, both these processes remained in use until well into the 1960's and generally the stamps printed in each process had a fairly distinctive style. Most stamps printed through letterpress tended to be pure line work (images that did not involve the use of tone - simply flat colour printing). Examples of this can be seen in the stamp designs by R.J. King Fig.50 . all of which were simply line drawings. In the base of R.J. King's designs this technique was quite effective and very graphic.

The second process to be used was recess, and this was used to print most of the stamps which involved the reproduction of tonal work - such as the portrait on the 'Robert Emmet' design Fig.56 . and was by far the better of the two processes in reproducing tonal values within a design.

To put this into some sort of international context the printing processes being used in Ireland were exactly the same as those being used in countries all around the world during this period. Certain countries such as Britain and Japan were notable pioneers of photogravure, a process that was introduced for the printing of Irish stamps during the 1960's. The introduction of this printing process marked some notable changes in the production of such stamps, and in order to explain these changes in greater detail I shall be discussing this at some length a little further on in my paper.

Not only were there notable changes in printing techniques of the 1960's, there were also a lot of changes made in the areas of typography and the sort of subject matter being used throughout the stamp designs of this period. Irish stamps were beginning to take a more international outlook with their designs, and it is on this note that I would like to lead into the next section of my paper, which takes a look at the second definitive series of Ireland issued in 1968.
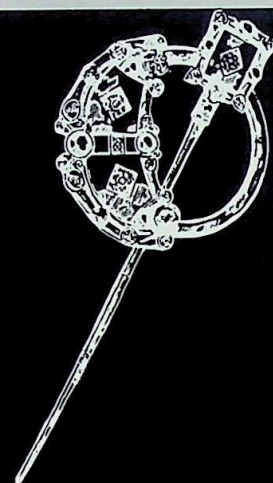
SECOND DEFINITIVE SERIES
1968 — 1982. (39 — 47)

(FIG.57) ALL FOUR ACCEPTED DESIGNS FOR DEFINITIVE SERIES (1968)

(FIG.58)

The stamp shown on the front cover was designed by Heinrich Gerl. The dog motif is taken from an ancient Irish brooch found in Killamery, Co. Kilkenny and now in the National Museum, Dublin. The detail of the brooch is reproduced below.

In 1968 the Irish Government organised an International Competition for new designs for the definitive series These designs were to take over from the 1922-23 definitives and just like the 1922 competition, which attracted hundreds of designs, so too did the 1966 competition. Many essays were submitted by designers from all over the world, and the eventual winner of the competition was Heinrich Gerl of Germany and the Irish definitive issues were produced to his designs. The series was issued in 1968 and remained in use until 1982 when a third definitive series was issued.

During the course of my research I came across a number of designs that were submitted for the 1966 competition and this enabled me to compare these designs to those of Heinrich Gerl's. Although I have only been able to acquire black and white copies of these designs, they do give some idea of the standard of design from this competition. It is also worth noting that this was an international competition and although I was unable to trace the names of any of the designers, it is highly probable that some of these desgins were by international designers.

Before discussing any of these designs that were refused, I would like to discuss the four chosen designs by Heinrich Gerl.

In the Gerl definitives, as they are so called, each design was based on motifs from early Irish art Fig.57. The first of the four designs is based on the 'Dog' motif which was taken from an ancient Irish broach found in Killamery, County Kilkenny and now in the National Museum, Dublin. I have included a detail of the broach Fig.58. which illustrates quite clearly where the designer got the idea for his design. There were some slight modifications made to this motif but, Gerl's design was basically the same as that on the Killamery Brooch.

The second of his designs featured the 'Stag' from a suspended bowl from Lullingstone, Kent, now in the British Museum. Unfortunately I do not have a detail from the bowl, but basically the concept was the same as the previous design.

The third design featured the 'Winged Ox' which is the symbol of St. Luke, Evangelist, from the Gospel Book of Lichfield in Lichfield Cathederal.

The fourth and final design shows the 'Eagle' symbol of St. John, Evangelist, from an Irish manuscript in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

In looking at all four designs together, I feel they work well as a set and I find it interesting that although they are not lavished with shamrock motifs, celtic design or use Gaelic typefaces, as in the 1922 definitives, they still evoke a cultural image which can only be associated with Ireland. I have placed the 1922 definitives along-side the Gerl definitives in order to compare the changes that were taking place in Irish stamp design. The most obvious change would have been the changes made in printing. It was in December 1963 that Ireland started printing stamps by photo-gravure. This process was much better than the letterpress or recess printing used to produce all Irish stamps right up to 1963. It meant that better quality printing could be achieved and stamps could be produced in multi-colour.

Although Ireland did not use the full potential of photogravure for many years to follow, it is still noticable the changes that were being made. If you compare the colours in the 1922 definitives to those in the Gerl definitives, you can see how the colours used in Heinrich Gerl's designs are much richer in hue than those used in the 1922 series. This was due to the introduction of photogravure, and although this process improved the quality of Irish stamps, I have got to say that there is somethingvery unique about the colours used on most of the early Irish stamps and I doubt if we shall see any of these colours used again in Irish stamps. In looking at both these sets it is quite obvious the changes that were occuring in the use of typography in Irish stamps. Most of the stamps from 1922 right up to the mid 1960's, including the 1922 definitives, all used a gaelic typeface to denote the name of the country and value of the stamp, and was just another element used in adding to the Irishness of the stamps.

By the time Government had organised this competition, which produced the Gerl definitives, changes were already happening among the Irish commemorative stamps. The use of gaelic type-faces throughout the designs was slowly being replaced by more modern and more universally used type-faces of that time. The commemorative stamps were not the only designs that were changing, so too were the definitives and this can be seen from the Heinrich Gerl designs. Compared to the 1922 definitives, the Gerl designs were more subtle in evoking part of a national image and in my opinion just as successful. There were no decorative borders, celtic knots or shamrock motifs surrounding the central motif of Gerl's designs, all of which were quite a feature in the 1922 definitives.

The only elements which are placed about the central motif of each design are the name of the country and the value of the stamp. As I have already mentioned earlier there were some changes occuring in the use of typography in the Irish commemorative stamps and these changes were also reflected in the Gerl definitives as mentioned earlier, a lot of the Irish stamps issued from 1922-60 all used gaelic lettering for most of the typographical elements of each design. However, with the introduction of the annual series 'Europa' (European Conference of Postal and Tele-Communications Administrations(C.E.P.T.) in 1960, which involved international designers, a more international outlook was taken to the use of type within Irish stamp design. The type-face used in the Gerl definitives was 'Alous' which was universally used and gave the Gerl definitives a more international flavour. Having said that it is worth noting that the man who designed these stamps was German, and obviously had his own opinion on what was to be the typographical layout of his designs. This input from international designers was vital to the development of Irish stamp design and this plus the 'Europa' series are two topics which I shall be discussing at a later stage in my paper.

(FIG. 59) THREE DIFFERENT SET OF REFUSED ESSAYS (1968 DEFINITIVE)
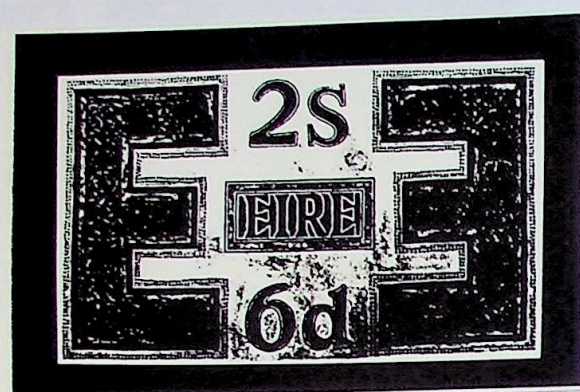

(FIG. 59A)

(FIG. 59B)

(FIG. 59C)

Having discussed the Gerl definitives I would now like to take some time to discuss some of the essays that were submitted for the same competition but were not among the chosen designs.

REFUSED ESSAYS.

During the course of my research I was quite fortunate to come across a small number of these designs and was able to acquire copies of the artwork in each case. Those which I have chosen to talk about help illustrate the sort of images that were being put forward for the series, and also the use of typography throughout the various designs. Although the designers are unknown, it is reasonable to assume that some of these designs were probably by international designers, as it was an international competition.

I have grouped together three different sets of designs and will refer to each one by the corresponding illustration number. The over-all opinion which I have derived from looking at these essays is that the Heinrich Gerl designs were the better essays and deserved to be chosen. In each of the three sets which I have included Fig.59. a particular style and format has been used. The first of these sets Fig.59A. shows how the designer has manipulated the one image to suit each denomination. I do not find this set very interesting from the point of view of the images being used, and certainly the higher value which repeats the image three times is the more balanced of the three designs. The use of typography in this set seems to me to have its problems. Although the word 'Eire' works fine running verticle, the value on each design is slightly too large and does not balance in any way with the country's name. Also the way in which the 'd' has been placed under each value seems very sloppy and out of place.

(FIG 60) THREE ESSAY WHICH ILLUSTRATE THE USE OF TYPOGRAPHY AS THE CENTRAL MOTIF OF EACH DESIGN.

The second of these sets Fig.59 B. had somewhat more potential than the previous set. The images used in each denomination were different, yet the two lower value designs show some similarities in the style of illustration. Although they were quite simple illustrations they were stylised and would have been easy to work as a set. The third design of this set is a bit too ornate and does not seem to work as well as the other two. Just like the previous set the typography was not very well executed. Firstly it seems to be squashed in some corners and because it is so bold it tends to detract from the image which in turn detracts from the appearance of the over-all design.

The final set Fig.59C. shows that not all of the essays submitted to this competition featured images of the Evangelist's as their main subject matter. This particular set was based on architecture and famous Irish monuments, and while the idea was good the design was not very well executed. Of the three designs the 2/6 and 9d. contains the better illustrations, and had they been handled correctly within the design, this could have proved an effective set. When I say handled correctly within the design, I mean more emphasis should have been given to the illustrations, and this could have been done had the designer not allocated one third of each design to celtic patterns. I do not think these motifs do any justice to the over-all designs and in fact they seem to function purely as decorative elements, as was the case with so many of the essays from the 1922 competition. What interested me most about this set was the actual use of subject matter, because the third definitive series which was issued in 1982 uses architecture as its theme. So it is possible that the idea of using Irish architecture as subject matter for a new definitive series could have come from this set of essays.

(FIG.62)

(FIG.62A) DESIGNED BY
HENRI CHEFFER, AND
WAS USED FROM 1967
ONWARDS.

Finally, with regards to those essays that were refused in this competition, I have included three designs Fig.60 . which simply allowed the typography to form the designs. The idea of using the word 'Eire' to form the design was something of a first for Irish stamps and really none of these three essays proved that the concept could be successful. Ideas such as this were probably the influence of inter-national designers, and really when you consider that many designs were submitted by international designers, the over-all standard of those essays that I have seen and illustrated was quite poor. Having said that I feel that Irish stamps did benefit from certain aspects of these essays, especially in the area of typography. Although the use of type was not that good in most essays, there was quite a variation of type-faces used and this helped in making Irish designers more aware of the different type faces available when designing for future issues.

In order to place the Gerl definitives into some sort of international context I have included copies of Italian and French definitives. These definitives would have been issued or already in use around the same time as the Gerl definitives. The first of these designs Fig.62 . shows the two different French designs used for the definitive series from 1967 onwards. The first of these Fig. 62A, designed by Henri - Cheffer was originally recess printed, but in July 1969 a letterpress version was released. This is exactly the same printing process that was used on the 1922 Irish definitives and, as was the case with the 1922 definitives, the colours were a bit dull and washed out in the French designs. Compared with the Gerl definitives, which were printed photogravure, this particular French design seems quite bland which is obviously due to the limitations within the printing process. When I say bland I mean lacking in strong colour and, one point I should mention now is that the two Gerl definitives which are printed multi-colour are somewhat

(FIG. 62)

(FIG. 62B) PART OF THE MARIANNE
SERIES ISSUED IN 1967 AND
ARE STILL IN USE TODAY.

(FIG. 63) A SELECTION OF THE ITALIAN 'SIRACUSA' DEFINITIVES.
THIS IS ONLY SOME OF THE COLOURS
USED IN THE OVER-ALL SERIES TO DISTINGUISH
EACH PARTICULAR VALUE.

unusual. The reason both these designs are
unusual is that most countries print their
definitive issues in monochrome, whereas both
of these have up to four colours in each design.

The second of these two French designs Fig.62B
which by the way are part of the 'Marianne'
series which is symbolic of the spirit of the
Republic of France, shows the treatment of the
portrait in a completely different style to
the previous design. This time the portrait
occupies less area of the stamp and the
dominance seems to be falling on the value
of the stamp. Designed by a man called Bequet,
and released in 1971 the designer used a fairly
large area to be filled with the type donoting
the value of the stamp. This particular design
is very simple and yet very strong which is
mainly due to the excellent handling and laying-
out of typography within the stamp design. In
both French designs the type-faces used are
exactly the same, except that they have been
positioned differently in each design. Of the
two I would class the second French stamp Fig.62B
as the better design and before drawing any
comparisons or make any other statements I would
like to say a few quick words on the Italian
definitives.

This particular series is called the 'Siracusa'
definitives, which were introduced in 1953, Fig. 63
and after some small changes the same design is
still in use today. This series has showed many
other countries how to use one design and simply
by changing it's colours, to help distinguish
each value, it was possible to put together a
very attractive series. This Italian series
used the full capabilities of photogravure in
reproducing the tonal ranges within the design
To pick up on a point made earlier on, Ireland
were slow to use the full potential of photogravure
and as can be seen from many of the early stamps
printed through this process, the reproduction
of tone was not pushed to the limit as in the
Italian definitives.

Finally, in comparing the Gerl definitives to their contemporaries throughout Europe, they proved just as effective. Most of the definitives issued throughout Europe used only one design, which very often contained a portrait of a monarch, President or allegorical figure as in the 'Marianne' definitives of France. Having finalised the one specific design they would then print it up in many different colours, with each value having its own specific colour printed in monochrome. The Gerl definitives proved to be a little different in this respect. Firstly there was not one design in the series but four and unlike most Europeans definitives which were printed monochrome the Gerl definitives had two designs which were printed multi-colour. This as I have already said was very unusual for definitive issues and in a sense puts Ireland ahead of most countries in printing multi-coloured definitives.

With regard to the typography I would say that Ireland was somewhat behind most other European countries. When the Gerl definitives were issued, Irish stamp design was just going through a transitional period in typography. Up to this point most Irish stamps used a form of gaelic lettering to denote all the necessary information on the stamps, and it took some time before designers started using more internationally used typefaces on Irish stamps. On the other hand European stamps had been very much in vogue with typography, at that time, and were starting to use the type as a central feature of their designs, an example of this being the French definitive Fig. 62B which uses the value as a fairly dominant part of the design.

As time went on Irish stamp designers became more aware of what other countries were doing in this area, and began using what they'd seen and applying it to Irish stamp design. It is obvious that from the time the first definitive series was issued in 1922, the Gerl definitives had made advances in the field of typography and although they were not as advanced as some of their European counterparts, things were beginning to change for the better.

The introduction of photogravure made a lot of
difference in the quality of the printed job,
and allowed more complex imagery to be reproduced
within the design. Ireland were ahead of some
countries in their use of photogravure, but in
general most countries were using the process at
about the same time or before its introduction
to Ireland. The Gerl definitives showed that
attitudes within Irish stamp design were changing
and just how much remains to be seen in the
commemoratives that followed.

COMMEMORATIVE ISSUES
1960's — 1985. (48 — 56)

SOUTH AFRICAN ISSUE (1963)

ITALIAN ISSUE (1963)

AUSTRALIAN ISSUE (1963)

IRISH ISSUE (1963)
FIRST IRISH STAMP TO
BE PRINTED IN MORE THAN
ONE COLOUR (PHOTOGRAVURE)

(FIG. 64) SELECTION OF FOUR DESIGNS, INCLUDING IRISH DESIGN,
ISSUED TO COMMEMORATE 'INTERNATIONAL RED
CROSS CENTENARY' (1963)

The 1960's was a period which marked a number of changes in Irish stamp design. One of the most inportant of these changes, was the introduction of photogravure.

Introduced in December 1963, this process allowed the designer to use more complex and colourful imagery within the design. The first Irish stamp to be printed photogravure was the one issued to commemorate the International Red Cross Centenary, and really this stamp design did not use the full capabilities of this particular printing process. Nevertheless this was the first Irish stamp to have been printed in more than one colour and for this reason it stood out against all other Irish commemoratives issued prior to the introduction of photogravure.

There were two stamps issued in this set, the lower value stamp was printed in two colours, with the higher value design printed in three colours. The same design was used on both stamps, which featured the centenary emblem, a stylised ship and Red Cross set in a circle. The gaelic name for the movement 'An Chrois Dhearg' was inscribed in the Roman alphabet and the dates of the commemoration were given below.

Most countries from all over the world celebrated the centenary of the Red Cross by issueing stamp designs at around the same time as Ireland. In order to show how other countries solved the problem of design, I have included alongside the Irish issue, stamps from South Africa, Italy and Australia respectively Fig. 64 . Each of these represent the design as issued from each of the three countries, and not only do they show how each country tackled the problem of imagery, but also they give a good idea of what was happening with the typography of stamp design throughout the world.

Just like South Africa and Australia, the Irish stamp used the centenary emblem (stylised ship and Red Cross) as the central motif of the design. The Italian design proved to be somewhat different, instead of using the centenary emblem as the central

motif, they used the Red Cross, and manipulated
it in such a way as to come up with a very
effective three-dimensional design. The centenary
emblem did appear in the Italian design, but
appeared very small in the bottom left-hand
corner.

All four designs were printed photogravure, with
Ireland using the process for the first time,
and really it seems very strange that all four
countries should only use a maximum of three colours
in their designs, considering that photogravure was
more than capable of printing high quality multi-
coloured designs. It would seem that Ireland was
not the only country that did not avail fo the full
potential of photogravure, at least not in the
beginning. There were a small number of countries
that printed a multi-coloured design for this
particular issue and having said that I feel that
those countries such as the four in Fig.64 , who
only used two or three colours in their designs
proved to have had the more effective solutions.
The reason for this was, all those designs which
were printed multi-colour obviously had an
abundance of colour and when the Red Cross Centenary
emblem was put against these colourful images,
the effect was very diminishing.

Therefore it is possible that some of the countries
who chose to print in two or three colours, had
some preconceived ideas about the effect of using
multi-colour printing for this issue, and because
of this changed their minds. Equally it can be
said, and Ireland fits the category, that many
countries were only coming to grips with photo-
gravure and for this reason would not have been
advanced enough to use multi-coloured printing.

Although the stamp was not printed in multi-colour
this was still quite a development for Irish stamps.
As a set of choice of colours was quite effective
and compared to the Italian, Australian and South
African designs, the Irish design proved just as
strong. Of the four, the Italian design was
probably the strongest and most interesting. This
is mainly due to the very striking three-dimensional
use of the Red Cross, which in this case symbolised
strength and unity and really this design could have
been a very strong logotype for the Red Cross
Organisation.

The use of typography in all four designs Fig.64. is quite different, with each stamp design using a different typeface and differnet typographical layout. Unlike the bulk of the early Irish commemoratives which nearly always used a form of gaelic lettering for all typographical elements - this particular Irish issue had used a serifed type- face called 'Century'. The same type-face, in a heavier weight was used to denote the name of the country on the Australian design. In fact the Australian design uses a combination of serif and sans serif typefaces, both of which work very well within the design. The type used within the Italian design seems very well balanced throughout the stamp, and the way in which the dates are placed on either side of the design, help in a way to contain the three-dimensional image, which otherwise might have looked as though it were floating.

Although most countries in the world issued stamp designs to commemorate the international Red Cross Centenary, this Irish stamp was as strong as most in design and typographical layout. Due to the involvement in commemorating international events, Irish stamp design was rapidly changing for the better.

EUROPA.

Probably the most influential of all these inter- national commemoratives was the introduction of the Europa series. Introduced to Ireland on September 19th. 1960, this was to be the first of an annual series issued by Member Postal Administrations of CEPT (European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations).

The idea behind this annual series was a uniform stamp design was issued by all countries particularing in the issue of Europa stamps from 1960 to 1972, a symbolic depiction of the theme of unity. Since 1973 it has become customary to adopt a policy of individual interpretation of themes, as a result of which much greater variety has been introduced into the stamp issues with each country retaining a certain national flavour in its designs.
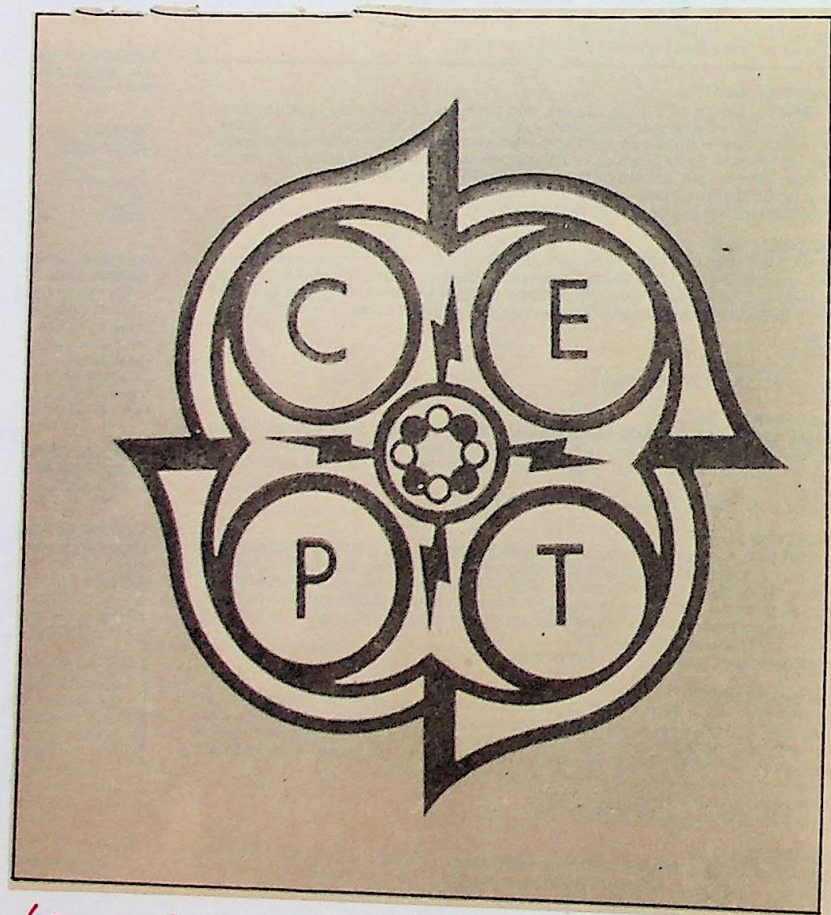
(FIG. 65) EUROPA ISSUE 1968 - DESIGN USED BY ALL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (CEPT)

GERMAN ISSUE (EUROPA 1968)

IRISH ISSUE (EUROPA 1968.

(Fig. 66) ACTUAL LOGO FOR CEPT - WHICH HAS BEING INCORPORATED INTO MOST EUROPA ISSUES SINCE THEIR INTRODUCTION.

During the course of my research I was able to photograph a number of those Europa issues which were among the designs that had to conform to a uniform stamp design. The first of these designs which I would like to discuss was issued in Ireland on April 29th. 1968. Designed by Hans Schwartzenbach (Switzerland) the design symbolises the opening of an era of European unity. Fig.65 . It is worth making the point at this stage that from the first Europa issue in 1960, right up to 1972, all the designs issued over those twelve years were designed by international designers. To get back to Schwartzenbach design, it features the key with the CEPT logo worked into the top.

The actual CEPT logo was worked into the design of most of the Europa issues since their inception in 1960-72. Since 1972, when it was no longer necessary to conform to a uniform design,the CEPT logo has appeared in all of the Europa issues. The logo itself Fig.66 .represents posts and telecommunications by means of four posthorns linked in a circular design and enclosing the initial letters of the organisation. From the centrally situated cross-section of a telecommunications cable are emitted four radio signals to every corner of the world.

Getting back to Fig.65 you can see how the Irish design has used a very modern form of Gaelic lettering which was designed and rendered by Michael Biggs. Although there had been a total move away from using gaelic lettering from about 1960 onwards - which as a matter of interest was the year of the first Europa issue - the fact that it was used in Schwartzenbach's design did not take anything away from the design itself as can be seen from Fig.65 . The German design for the same issue is a different format to the Irish design, yet it basically uses the same typographical layout.

One year later the ninth issue in the Europa series was released, April 28th. 1969 Fig.68 . designed by Luigi Gasbarra and Giorgio Belli of Italy, the word Europa was depicted as an architectural composition to symbolise the cohesion and unity of a united Europe. This particular design was very strong and it is interesting to see how Great Britain and Switzerland

(FIG. 68) DESIGNED BY LUIGI GASBARRA AND
GIORGIO BELLI OF ITALY. (EUROPA 1969)

GREAT BRITAIN ISSUE (EUROPA 1969)

SWITZERLAND ISSUE (EUROPA 1969)

IRISH ISSUE (EUROPA 1969)

handled the surrounding typography along with
the positioning of the central motif. Both
Switzerland and Great Britain have added their
own little trademark to the overall design.
In the case of Great Britain it was the use of
a green band which runs vertically through the
letters CEPT, which emphasised the name of the
organisation and also the dates which are sitting
at the top and bottom of the design. Unlike
most other countries who were involved in this
annual series, Great Britain used the CEPT
logo, which was placed directly under the profile
of the Queen. In most cases it was easy for
Britain to carry this logo on their Europa issues
especially when it is the only country in the
world that does not use its country's name on its
stamps.

This obviously would allow the designer more space
to play around with in his design, which was not
the case with the Swiss and Irish designs. I have
already mentioned that Switzerland's design was
slightly different to the rest, this was due to
the brick-work effect on the architectural
composition. In actual fact this concept adds
more strength to the image, which almost seems to
to be bursting out of the stamp.

The approach was slightly different with the Irish
designs, in that there were no green lines or brick-work
running through the image. The architectural
composition was printed in a light grey, which
was set against a fairly bright coloured background
and the result was that the image stood out very
clearly from the background. This was probably the
best of the Irish stamps at that time, because not
only was there a strong image but also a very well
balanced use of typography, and when both were put
together they produced a design that was as good
as its contemporaries throughout Europe.

Before finishing with Europa issues, there is one
other issue that I would like to discuss. Issued
on May 3rd. 1971 this was the eleventh issue,
designed by M.H. Haflidason (Ireland) and the design
was a chain symbolic of fraternity, co-operation and
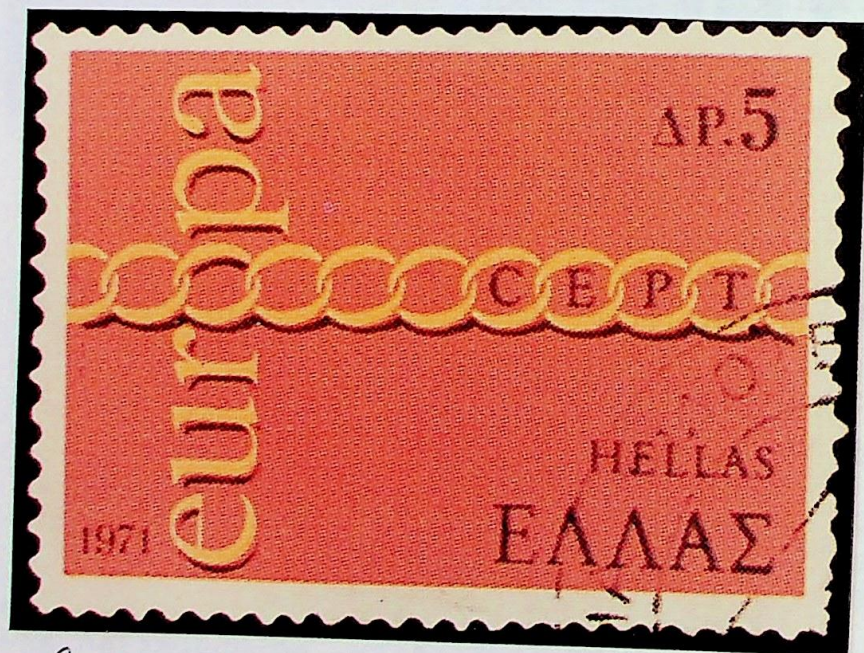common purpose.

(Fig.69) EXAMPLES OF THREE DESIGNS FOUR (EUROPA 1971)

IRISH ISSUE (EUROPA 1971)

SWITZERLAND ISSUE (EUROPA 1971)

GREEK ISSUE (EUROPA 1971)

It is clear from this particular design that designers were beginning to try out the possibilities of using the type as a major part of the finished design. This is an excellent design and along with the Irish issue I have also included copies of the Greek and Swiss designs Fig.69 . in order to show how other countries work. All three designs were a different size and format, and in the case of the Swiss design the designer had to crop the chain and move in the letters CEPT. It was also quite unusual to find a serified typeface all in lower-case characters denoting the name of the country. This in effect adds to the delicacy of the chain and also the overall design.

The whole design is so delicate and if in actual fact theword CEPT was taken out of the links in the chain then the whole balance of the design would be upset. While I think the idea behind this design is very good and the typographic layout is well balanced in each design, I do dislike one element of the Irish design. The use of colour within the design could have been a lot stronger - especially when you consider that all three designs were printed by photogravure - and both the Greed and Swiss designs were quite colourful and pleasant.

By 1973 the use of a uniform design for all European countries partaking in the Europa issues was to dissapear. It was replaced by a new policy of individual interpretation of themes, as a result of which a much greater variety has been introduced in stamp issues, each country thus retaining a certain national flavour in its designs.

The intorudction of the Europa series proved to be of immense value to the development of Irish stamp design. The knowledge gained through seeing the work of famous international designers reproduced on our country's stamps, has slowly been applied to Irish stamp design. This is obvious from the changes such as those made in typography which before the intro- duction of the Europa series in September 1960 - was totally dominated by the use of gaelic hand lettering to denote all text.

(FIG. 70) CHRISTMAS ISSUES WHICH SHOW THE FULL POTENTIAL OF PHOTOGRAVURE.

Of course, the introduction of photogravure allowed higher quality work to be produced, and during the month of October 1971 another printing process called lithography was introduced to the printing of Irish stamps.

Lithography had the advantage that if could cope with very fine line work and with multi-coloured printings. Unlike the introduction of photogravure, lithography was used to its full potential from the moment it was introduced.

This meant that most stamps of the 1970's were printed multi-colour because by this stage photogravure was being used to its full potential which was to reproduce the many different oil paintings Fig. 70 which were regular subject matter for the Christmas issue every year. From those examples which I have included in Fig. 70. it is easy to see that high quality reporduction was possible with photogravure, and it seems ludicrous that this same process spent almost ten years after its introduction, printing stamps that were mainly monochrome or at best three or four flat colours.

Without getting too deeply into this, I would just like to make one point with regard to these Christmas commemoratives. When I went to see Peter Wildbur, who has been designing Irish stamps for the last twenty years, he made the point that in most cases where a painting has been reduced to fit the size of a postage stamp, then that is wrong, His feelings on the subject were that when those artists were painting they never had it in mind to have their work reduced to the size of a postage stamp. I would totally agree with his point, that in most cases where a painting is reduced to the size of a postage stamp, it loses all impact. Nevertheless this has been an annual issue since 1971 and is still going on today, including in most other countries all over the world.

To go back to my point about the fine line work and multi-coloured printing abilities of lithography, I would now like to illustrate and discuss some of this work.
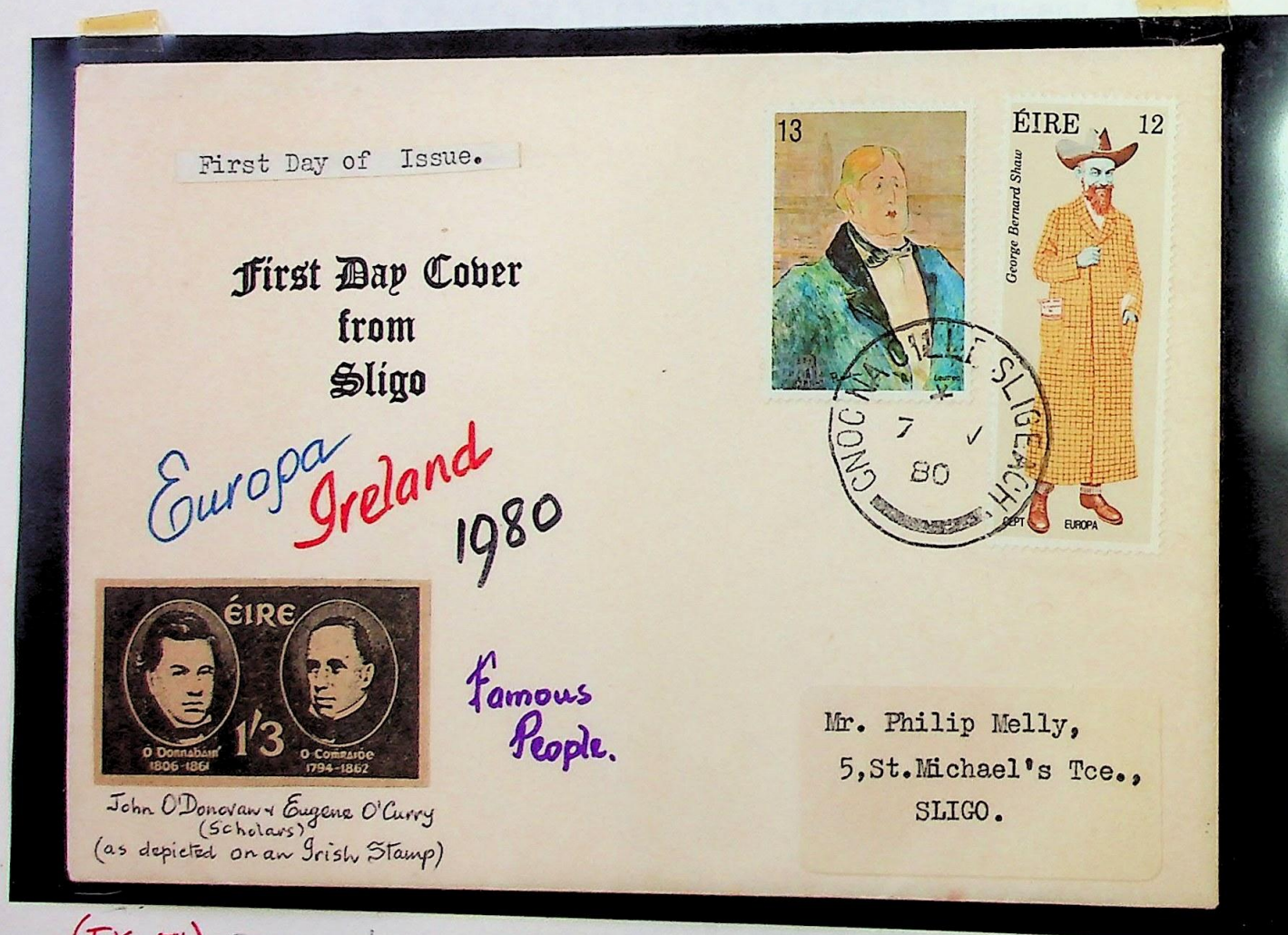
(FIG. 71) EUROPA ISSUE 1980 - FAMOUS PEOPLE. BOTH THESE DESIGNS ILLUSTRATE THE PRINTING CAPABILITIES OF LITHOGRAPHY - WHICH WAS FIRST INTRODUCED IN 1971.

(FIG. 74) FLORA AND FAUNA SERIES (1985)
TO BE COMPARED WITH BRITISH DESIGNS
ON (Pg. 56.) OF THIS PAPER.

I have chosen two designs which were issued on
May 7th. 1980, and of course were printed by
Lithography. Although 1980 is quite a jump forward
in time, from the introduction of lithography,
I feel that I have not left anything out in doing
so. As I said earlier the full capabilities of
lithography were realised and put to use almost
immediately after it was introduced. Therefore,
whether I discuss designs from the 1970's or
1980's does not make much difference when illustrating
the quality of the process.

My reasons for choosing both these designs are two-
fold, firstly to show the capabilities of the printing
process and secondly because both these designs tie
in with what I was saying about Europa issues
adopting a new policy of individual interpretation of
themes. These designs were the 1980 Europa issues
with the theme of 'Famous People'. The 13d. stamp
features a portrait of Oscar Wilde by Toulouse -
Lautrel, and the 12d. was based on a cartoon by
Alick Ritchie of George Bernard Shaw Fig.71.

Personally, I think the most amusing factor about this
particular Europa issue is the format of the stamp,
featuring George Bernard Shaw. If a designer had
tried to get away with a format like that during the
early commemorative designs he would have been
laughed at. This is without doubt the influence of
working on international commemorative designs.
This need was within the designer to capture
the attentions of an international audience. Something
which did not exist in many of the earlier commemoratives.

One final set of designs which I would like to give a
mention are the Flora and Fauna series 1985 Fig.74.
Part of an annual series, and designed by Wendy
Walsh, this particular set probably best illustrates
the advances made in printing and typography over
the sixty years or more of Irish stamp design.
The actual subject matter or theme is very much an
international one and although they are not butterflies,
I have included a recent set of designs from Great
Britain in order to give some idea of how the Irish
designs measure up.

(FIG. 74B) BRITISH COMMEMORATIVES FOR COMPARISON
WITH 'FLORA AND FAUNA' SERIES (Pg 55).

I have got to admit that on first appearances I would go for the British designs. Having said that I think that this is mainly due to the difference of subject matter in both sets of designs. Whereas Wendy Walsh had to represent the subtlty of butterflies her English counterpart had to represent the mightly strength of the British cattle. Both sets of designs have certainly captured the correct atmosphere, and really I find the British designs very strong.

The use of typography in the Irish designs is very clean and extremely well balanced against the rest of the illustration. The typeface used here is century schoolbook, which is one of about four typefaces being used throughout Irish stamp design at the moment. I asked Peter Wildbur, the designer who handles the graphics as well as designing for Irish stamps, why he had chosen to stay with a selective number of typefaces over the past fifteen to twenty years in Irish stamp design. He simply felt that it was necessary if people were going to be able to associate in any way with the appearance of Irish stamps. In other words it was necessary to have some sort of consistency amongst the designs, and typography can certainly do that.

The sort of consistency I am talking about is very easily achieved in British designs. First of all they are the only country in the world who do not have to place their country's name on the stamps, which is a mark of respect as Britain were the inventors of stamp design. Secondly and probably the most easily indentifiable motif, is the use of the monarch's profile on every stamp they produce. Many people have said that this image looks awkward within a stamp design, my feelings on that would be that its a lot easier to work into a design than the name 'Great Britain' would ever be, and it is also very easy to balance off against the space occupied by the value of the stamp.

I am not saying that what we need is a monarch's head or to take the country's name off the stamp. What I am saying, and it probably complies with Peter Wildbur's intentions, is that we do need some consistency among our stamp designs, and the most subtle way of doing that is by keeping some regularity in the typography - that is not to say that gaelic lettering should be brought back!

THIRD DEFINITIVE SERIES
Issued in 1982 and still in use. (57 – 59)

In 1982 the Gerl definitives were superceded by a third definitive series. This series was designed by Michael Craig, who has also designed a number of the Irish commemorative stamps.

The new series was based on Irish Architecture down through the ages, and in all there were nine different designs which comprised of a set each. Each design featured a different piece of architecture, and this particular definitive series proved to be a new concept in definitive designs of Ireland. The first Irish definitives, issued in 1922, were based on an historical background. The Gerl definitives were on a more or less religious theme, but this particular definitive series was based on a worldwide theme, architecture Fig.75.

Personally, I feel this series is better than the previous two, and illustrates the progress that has been made in the area of Irish definitives. First of all it is very noticable the change in attitudes towards the sort of images that were being used within these designs. Just as attitudes changed in the design of commemorative stamps, so too did the attitudes towards the definitive series, and the subject matter used in the third definitive series was more inter-national in its appeal. Unlike the 1922 definitives there was no celtic ornamation, shamrock motifs or any other of these images which were so predominant amongst many of the 1922 essays, used in any of the designs from the third definitive series.

Irish stamps were beginning to be more subtle in their approach towards projecting a national image, and as can be seen from most of the commemoratives after 1960, and indeed this third definitive series, the need to give Irish stamps some sort of inter-national appeal was becoming very important to all those involved in the production of these designs.

(FIG. 75) THIRD DEFINITIVE SERIES — DESIGNED BY MICHAEL CRAIG AND BASED ON IRISH ARCHITECTURE DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS.

It was this need to give the stamps some sort
of international appeal that helped to raise
the standard of Irish stamp design. To give
some sort of idea of how this definitive
series measures up with the definitives of other
countries, I have included two stamps from a
set of five designs from Germany Fig. 76. These
particular designs are interesting from the
point of view of them being based on the same
theme as the Irish definitive series.

Compared to the German designs, the Irish
definitives are every bit as good and are
certainly more detailed in their illustrations.
In fact the detail acquired by Michael Craig is
amazing when you consider that he actually
worked to the size of the finished postage
stamp, when producing his illustrations. The
German designs used a more simplified and
graphic form of illustration, and as in the
case of most definitive series the one design
is used for different values, and are printed
in a different colour for each value. Ireland
were no different in this respect, with the
nine designs by Michael Craig being used for
twenty stamps.

All nine designs from this series were very
well balanced and the use of typography in
each one is very carefully positioned within
the overall design. In fact in the case of
the smaller format, the word 'Eire' is depicted
in a smaller and lighter version of the typeface
used to denote the value of the stamp. This
was a clever ploy used by the designer to help
balance the overall design.

The two higher values in this series have been
printed in two colours - which was the same as
the Gerl definitives, where the two high value
stamps were printed multi-colour and really
this is not very regular with most other countries.
Usually the definitive series are printed mono-
chrome, which has a lot to do with the number of
different values in a set, and the cost of
actually running large sets in more than one
colour.

(Fig. 76) TWO STAMPS FROM A GERMAN
DEFINITIVE SERIES, WHICH WAS ALSO
BASED ON ARCHITECTURE.

Finally, I would just like to repeat that this third definitive series has been the result of changing attitudes among Irish stamp designers and those who actually choose what the final design will look like. Designers are more aware now of what is happening in stamp design around the world, and are applying many of these concepts to Irish stamp design, and with word going about that there is soon to be another definitive series, which will supersede the Michael Craig designs, it is reasonable to assume that we are likely to see even more new concepts in Irish definitives.

CONCLUSION. (60 – 62)

Ever since the introduction of the first Irish postage stamp on February Ist. 1922, Irish stamp design has gone through many stages of development. Basically these changes can be broken down into three specific categories.

1. TYPOGRAPHY.

    From 1922 right up to the 1960's most Irish stamps used various forms of gaelic lettering, with only a small number of stamps using typefaces that were universally used. After the introduction of the annual Europa series in September 1960, typefaces that were in universal use were introduced into Irish stamp design. These typefaces helped to give Irish stamps international appeal and although many of these typefaces were introduced in the 1960's, some of them are still being used in Irish stamps today. In fact there are a small number of typefaces such as Caslon, Century Schoolbook and Helvetica that are constantly used in Irish stamps today.

    While Irish stamp design was still developing in the typographical field, many countries had already started using typography as the central motif of their designs, this is something which has not appeared, as of yet, in Irish stamp design, but I feel that with Ireland's involvement in international commemoratives that it is only a matter of time before Irish stamps start to experiment in this area.

2. PRINTING PROCESSES.

    In all there have been four different processes used in the printing of Irish stamps, photogravure, recess, letterpress and lithography.

    All of the early designs (1920-60) were printed letterpress and recess, and each stamp had a nice period quality, which is due to the washed out colours attained from both printing processes.

With the introduction of photogravure in 1963 Irish stamps were printed in more than one colour. Although a number of the earlier stamps, printed in this process were produced in multi-colour, in general Irish stamps did not use the full potential of photogravure for many years after its introduction. When this did happen, photogravure was mainly used for high quality reproduction of paintings which are mainly used on all the Christmas issues.

Lithography was the last of the four processes to be introduced; and has been used to print most multi-coloured Irish stamps since 1971. Since the introduction of this process, very fine line-drawings and high quality multi-coloured work has been reproduced on Irish stamps.

With regard to the development of printing processes, Ireland was not that far behind most countries, and in some cases were ahead of their contemporaries. Either way the quality of Irish stamps today is as good as any being produced from around the world, from the point of view of printing.

3. SUBJECT MATTER.

There has been a dramatic change in the use of subject matter on Irish stamps over the past sixty years or so. Initially most of these designs commemorated notable anniversaries and events, all of which were directly related to the political struggle of the country at that time. Very often many of these designs proved somewhat obscure and as result did not have much appeal to many prople, especially those of an international background.

As more and more Irish stamps commemorated international events, the variety of subject matter used in these stamps began to widen. Until, very soon Irish stamps had got the international appeal that was sadly lacking

in many of the earlier designs. Nowadays, the variety of subject matter used in Irish stamps is enormous,especially when you consider the early commemoratives.

Most of these themes,such as the 'Flora and Fauna' series have a lot of international appeal and interest, and along with the developments made in typography and the printing techniques, Irish stamp design has managed to raise its standards to those enjoyed by most countries around the world.

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All other necessary information was attained from members of
Irish Philatelic Society, Dublin Stamp Society and Federation
of Irish Philatelic Societies. Within each society I was able
to meet with a number of people who allowed me to view their
own private collections on Irish stamps. Most of these collections
contained a lot of useful information on various stamps that have
been issued over the years, and also a lot of information on many
of the designs that were refused in the competitions for the
1922 Definitives and the 1968 Definitives. Along with being able
to discuss certain aspects of these particular designs, I was
allowed to photograph many of the refused essays that are now in
private collections.

Finally, I also accquired quite a lot of information from Peter
Wildbur(London), who has been designing Irish stamps for the last
twenty years. After arranging a meeting with Peter,in London,I was
able to discuss many aspects of Irish stamp design, which were very
important to my research and writing of this paper.