

THE THOM SAORSTAT WIDE DATE OVERPRINT ON THE 2 1/2 SHILLING VALUE

by Hans G. Zervas

Irish Free State Stamps and their Varieties



For some time serious students of the overprinted issues of the Irish Free State have combined the study of the overprints with the study of the British stamps to which they were applied. I have chosen the above stamp to demonstrate what can be accomplished by such a study, because it probably produced more collectible varieties than any other stamp issued by the Irish Post Office Department.

This small study concerning but a single stamp, it is hoped, will demonstrate what can be done. It is not intended to be definitive, but to direct the serious student toward further discoveries that may interest him or her.

The study was prompted by the description of two lots described in Robson Lowe's catalogue of the sale of the Marquess of Bute's collection of the stamps of the Irish Free State, held on May 6th 1959. The two lots were described as follows:



Lot 485 - 2/6 chocolate, a mint sheet of the early printing which includes two with accent omitted (Nos. 10 & 30), but the last stamp in the seventh row (No. 28) has the final "T" and the accent normal, before damage; stated to be one of the rarest high value sheets in existence.

Lot 487 - 2/6 chocolate brown, a mint sheet which includes the major re-entry on No. 2 as well as one stamp (No. 28) with accent reversed and two with accent missing (Nos. 10 & 30).

(please turn to page 545)



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RANDOM NOTES

By. F. E. Dixon

Essay Mystery. A recent bundle of miscellaneous to come my way includes a yellowing newspaper cutting illustrating "one of the designs accepted for the new Free State issue of stamps". The design is that of Perkins Bacon & Co., depicting Hibernia seated and holding a torch, but the country name is shown as "EIRE" instead of the "SAOR STAT NA hEIREANN" on (12¢) and (12d) of the R.L. Encyclopedia. Is it possible that the design was approved sufficiently for the firm to be asked to resubmit it with the changed name? O'Donovan & O'Curry. The first variety to report is a thick line left of 1802 on No. 2 of row 6 of a right-hand pane of 3d. The gutter ornaments, very like those of St. Patrick issue, suggest that there are at least four panes of 3d. Father Brennan reports, and I can confirm, a smudge on the 1/3 between Nos. 31 and 37 of the upper right pane, lost in the perforation holes if the printing is off centre upwards. N. Langton has discovered plate 2 and Fr. Brennan Plate 3, evidenced by traces of the numbers in the top margin, on the 3d. 1933-34 Annus Sanctus. Mr. Harradin reports a prominent dot in the U of ANNUS on the 3d value - on the first stamp of the second row. Customs Entry Duty Stamps. I can now confirm, from official sources, that there were two printings and five values. The Saorstat Eireann design was issued August 1924 in 6d green, 1s blue, 2s yellow, 2s 6d ruby and 5s violet. The Eire version did not appear until April 1954 and comprised only the 6d green, followed by the 1s blue in June 1956.

WILLIAM KANE WINS PRAGA AWARD

Our good friend and fellow member William Kane, of Dublin was awarded a bronze medal for his Irish overprints on Great Britain at PRAGA 1962, the international exhibition held at Prague from August 18th to September 2nd, 1962

SUPPORT E.P.A. BY PAYING YOUR DUES

The Thom Saorstat Wide Date Overprint on the 2 1/2 Shilling Value (continued)

It will be noted that the two sheets to which the overprints were applied are not identical British plates. No mention is made of a major re-entry in Lot 485, whereas it is mentioned in Lot 487. This major re-entry, in position No. 2 of this particular sheet, is a very extensive one, and is considered to be one of the scarcer stamps, both overprinted, as for the Irish Free State, or unoverprinted as for Great Britain, and would hardly have been overlooked by the describer if it had occurred in the sheet of Lot 485. The question now arises, can some overprinted stamps from these two sheets be distinguished. It is the intention of this study to prove that this can be done, at least to a limited extent.

In an article published by Dr. J. Stafford Johnson in Stamp Collecting of July 7, 1923 he describes a sheet of the 2 Shilling purchased in early January of 1923, scarcely over a week after they appeared at the Post Office counters, detailing the characteristics of many stamps in the sheet, of which there are forty, based on re-entries and doubling of lines in the basic British stamps. This sheet has since been numbered by Beaumont & Stanton in their splendid book, "The Postage Stamps of Great Britain - The Issue of King George V" as Plate #3. This information was indicated to me by our good friend T.E. Field of England, one of our senior members. This B & S numbering will be followed in this study wherever it can be tied in.

Now to the stamps themselves. Let us take up Lot 487 (Plate 3) first. This British Plate, as described by Dr. Johnson, mentioned above, combined with the Thom overprinting plate, produced quite a number of collectible items:-

Position #2 in the sheet; Major re-entry - this is a very extensive re-entry. Almost the entire design is doubled - the shield at the right, is doubled as are the face and body of Britannia, the face and hair of the King are doubled, as are the upper part of the wreath surrounding the King's head. The festoons across the top of the stamp, and the tassels hanging down from it, the stippling on both white horses and the lines depicting the sea surrounding the black horse all show doubling. The inner and outer frame lines show doubling throughout most of their length. The value tablet and the word POSTAGE shows doubling along the bottom of each letter, being more pronounced in the letters TAGE. The overprint on this stamp is normal.

Position #10 - accent missing - shows the upper outer frame line double from the trident to the right hand corner. The upper inner frame line is doubled more or less throughout its entire length. The dash-like background between the loops of the garland and the upper inner frame line show doubling, most noticeable in the second loop from the left hand corner. From the trident to the upper right corner the background lines between the loops of the garland and the top inner frame line are doubled, becoming more prominently so between the helmet of Britannia and the upper right hand corner. There is a slight doubling of the upper right ball at the top of the tassel. Otherwise the stamp appears normal.

Position #9 - this is the stamp to the left of Position #10, if a pair is involved, has a normal overprint with the accent. There is a slight doubling of the right inner and outer frame lines extending from about the middle of the shield to the lower right corner.

Position #30 - accent missing; here we have a real re-entry that is worthy of recognition. It shows the upper outer and inner frame lines doubled from the upper left hand corner to the top of the wreath surrounding the King's head. The first loop of the garland from the left shows all lines doubled, as are the horizontal dashes filling the space between the loop and the upper inner frame line, as are the lines between the wreath and the extreme left hand tassel. The outer right hand frame line is double from the top to about 2/3 the way down. The inner and outer lower frame lines are double from the lower

right hand corner to about under the P of POSTAGE. The lines of Britannia's robe from around the bottom of the shield to the bottom right corner doubled as are the lines of the chariot and the lines depicting the sea. The letters TAGE of POSTAGE are also double. The lines of the upper arm of the St. Andrews cross show a slight doubling.

Position #29 - which is the stamp to the left of position #30, if a pair is involved, and which has a normal overprint, shows the same doubling of lines as does position #30 but they do not stand out quite as clearly.



Position #28 - Accent reversed and the top of the final "T" bent down (damaged position). The top outer and inner frame lines doubled at left. Outer left frame line slightly double at bottom, outer right frame line double for almost its entire length.

Position #27 - which is the stamp to the left of position #28, if a pair is involved, has normal overprint. The top outer frame line is intermittently double and the outer right frame line is double for almost its entire length. There is no doubling of the left outer frame line.

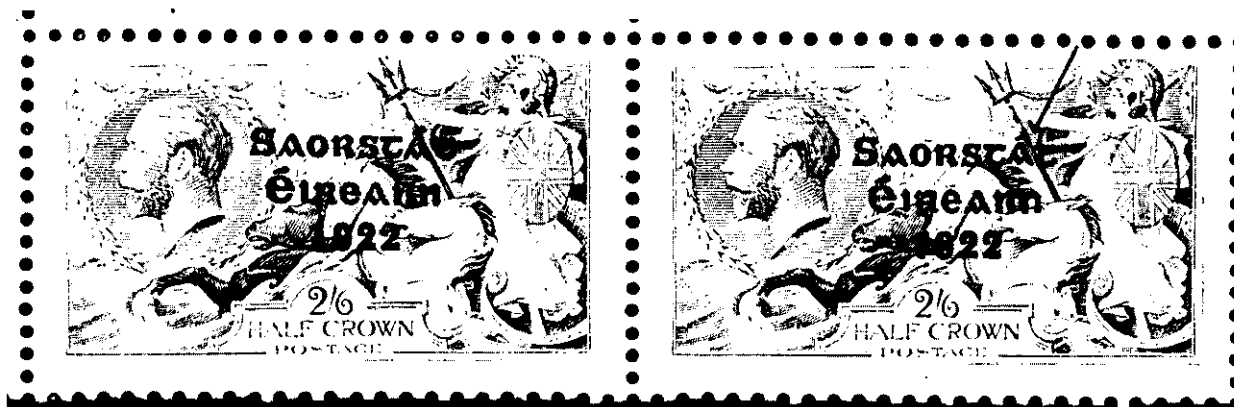
This concludes the description of the varieties of collectible caliber on this Plate #3, Lot 487, which at the end of this study will be recapitulated along with others still to be discussed.

Lot 485 was printed on a sheet of British stamps that is not Plate #3, above discussed. Unfortunately it cannot be tied in with the B & S listing, (Note to T.E. Field, can you give us any information on this plate?), as we do not have any descriptions of the marginal markings of this sheet by which it can be tied in. It is to be hoped that the present owner of this sheet will give it a thorough study, not only of the marginal markings, but also the stamps themselves for any abnormalities in them, so that the sheet can be tied in with the B & S listing.

There is in my collection a single copy of the accent missing variety, only recently come by, that is very sharply entered and shows no duplication of any lines in the design. It cannot, therefore, be from the sheet of Plate 3 above described. For the present it must be assumed that it is from the sheet described in Lot 485, see above, plate position not known. Judging from the infrequency of its occurrence this variety could turn out to be much scarcer than the same variety described as coming from Plate # 3.

In the Gaelic language the omission of an accent over a letter is equivalent to a mis-spelling. The Irish Post Office did not take kindly to the stamps issued without accents, as witness the insertion of accents by hand on the lower values where the accents were omitted. On the engraved stamps, as for the shilling values, where the surface was uneven this was not as feasible as it was on smoother surfaces of the typographed lower values, and the printers set up a new overprinting plate correcting this mis-spelling. In this new plate they were successful, having all accents present

and producing only one setting variety, namely "raised A" in position 2 of the plate, the second A of SAORSTAT being raised above the line common to all other letters in SAORSTAT.



This "raised A" variety occurs in two forms. The commonest form shows the variety on a normal British stamp and is most frequently encountered. However, it also occurs overprinted on the major re-entry as described for British plate #3, see above. This a most desirable item. This sheet, B & S Plate #3, also produced two other items, positions 10 and 30, showing re-entries but with normal overprints. Of course position 29 shows normal overprints from both overprinting plates and cannot be distinguished.

Coming back to the normal British stamp with the "raised A" variety, this was overprinted on three different British plates, namely on B & S plate #3, plate #6, and on another British plate which I have not been able to tie in with any plate described by B & S. They cannot, however, be distinguished one from another except by strips of four across the top of the sheet, with sheet margins attached, and observing the upper right marginal lines, which are distinctly different one from the other.



We now come to still another overprinting plate which produced the S over E variety. This occurs in sheet position 34. Having only a block of four with this variety I have not been able to ascribe it to a B & S plate. It did not occur on the "raised A" plate as I have a complete sheet with this variety and position 34 shows the overprint normal. Thus the conclusion that we have another overprinting plate. Perhaps this variety should be described more precisely, because it is rather an elusive item. In the normal overprint the "ea" of Eireann is set slightly to the right of "rs" of Saorstat which leaves the "E" of Eireann about below the space between the S and a above it. In the variety the

overprint was set so that now the "ea" of Eireann is directly below the "rs" of Saorstat above it and the "E" of Eireann has moved to the left slightly making the variety. As stated the variety is rather elusive, but the discern-

ing eye can readily pick it up. The variety is not as distinct as the same variety in the lower values, where it also exists.

We now come to another re-entry, the Nissen re-entry. This variety has been recognized by B & S, and is illustrated in their book, and is known as B & S Plate #2, position 3. The re-entry is mostly confined to the upper right quarter of the stamp. Its chief characteristics are the doubling of the lines of the two crosses in the shield. The upright St. Georges Cross shows the lines of both arms double throughout, more prominently so in the upper part of the vertical arm. The two upper arms of the diagonal St. Andrews cross also show doubling. In addition the plume of the helmet, the helmet, the profile of Britannia, the clasp or brooch fastening the upper part of Britannia's robe also are double. The two tassels, just in front and behind the head of Britannia also show doubling as do the inner and outer right frame lines of the stamp. The overprint on the stamp is normal.

The above should suffice to demonstrate what can be done by a study as indicated in the first paragraph of this study. Undoubtedly other collectible varieties can be discovered by other students along the lines indicated. This also holds true for the other engraved shilling values.

Now let us recapitulate what has preceded. We have at least three overprinting plates; #1 with the accent missing in two states, with the accents missing only, and later with the damaged accent and "T", Plate #2 the raised "a" Plate, Plate #3 the S over E plate. We have at least five plates of the British stamps, Nos. 2, 3 and 6, and two, at present unidentified plates.

From the combination of the above overprinting plates and the British plates we have developed the following varieties : -

1. Overprint and stamp normal, shades
2. Accent missing, two positions on British plate #3, and at least one position from the as yet unidentified British plate (Lot 485). Maybe future study will enable us to identify both positions on this plate also.
3. Accent reversed and the final "T" of Saorstat damaged. Plate position #28.
4. Re-entries, the major re-entry on position 2 of Plate #3, as well as re-entries in positions 10, 29 and 30 of this same plate. Positions 10 and 30 are found with accent missing overprint and also with normal overprint as well as the Nissen re-entry on British Plate #2, position # 3.
5. Raised "a", found with the major re-entry, and also on normal British stamp, plate not identified. Position #2 of the overprinting plate.
6. S over E on an unidentified British plate, and overprint plate Position #34.
7. Dull black overprint, may occur on any or all the above.

There is a constant broken letter variety in which the "o" of Saorstat appears as a "c" namely, Sacrstat. According to Meredith this variety occurs in the fourth stamp of the fifth row in the sheet. Neither overprinting or British plate have been identified.

All of the above overprint varieties also occur in the 5 and 10 Sh. values. The 2 1/2sh. value was chosen for this study because it is more frequently come by because of its wider use, and its production, as a result, of more collectible varieties.

At this point mention should be made of a similar overprint "accent missing", produced by the Government Printing Office, Dublin Castle, in 1927 known as the Castle Wide Date overprint. This overprint was issued in black and grey black ink in contrast to the blue black and dull black ink used by Thom to produce their overprints. Aside from the ink distinctions, which suffice for the discerning eye to separate the two issues, there is another

characteristic that serves to separate the two overprints. It seems that Thom did their printing against a fairly firm blanket which resulted in a sharp impression of the overprint and only a slight embossing of the overprint on the back of the stamp, whereas Dublin Castle used a much softer blanket resulting in a deeper and fuzzier impression and a very prominent embossing of the overprint on the back of the stamp.

On one of the Castle wide date plates a damage occurred to position #34 causing the accent over the second "a" of Saorstát to appear like a circumflex " " and the "a" below it to have a flat and even slightly concave top as compared with the usual rounded top as will be noted in the first "a" of Saorstát. During the use of the plate the circumflex gradually wore down until it practically disappeared. In this condition the stamp is frequently offered as the Thom variety "accent missing". Close examination of the stamp will



usually show a very slight trace of the circumflex remaining, and, of course, the flat top of the second "a" in Saorstát will surely give it away. The stamp is interesting in this condition, but it is not the "missing accent" variety when it is so offered, and is also worth considerably less.

This concludes this small study. As was stated at the beginning it is not intended to be definitive, but to demonstrate what can be done in serious collecting of these most interesting issues. To those students who pursue their studies along these lines, "good Hunting".

Bibliography

- Beaumont & Stanton - "The Issues of King George V".
 W.G. Meredith - "The Postage Stamps of Ireland 1922-1927". 4th Edition.
 Kohl Handbook - Collectors Club Philatelist translation, 1941 Vol. XX, Nos. 1, 2 and 3.
 Stamp Collecting - "The Current 2 1/2 Sh. Great Britain" by Dr. J. Stafford Johnson, July 7th, 1923.
 The Strand Stamp Journal - "Great Britain High Values" R. E. Darnton. Vol. IX Dec. 1957 No. 3.
 Robson Lowe - Catalogue of the Marquess of Bute's Irish Collection, Sold May 6th, 1959.

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR NOVEMBER
 E.P.A. extends its deepest gratitude to Linn's Weekly Stamp News for its coverage in the August 20th issue of E.P.A. From inquiries received, E. P.A. welcomes a large number of new members.

Miss Betty V. Miller, 108 West Ivy St., East Rochester, New York would like to hear from any interested col-

lector of Covers from the Irish Battalions serving with the United Nations Forces in the Congo. She has one volume of Irish covers from the various Battalions.

Had an enjoyable time with fellow members of EPA at BALPEX. The material exhibited by EPA was the envy of any collector. It is hoped that at BALPEX 1963, EPA will have a larger exhibit.

Seán S. Cléirac,
 947 An 32ú Spádo Coip,
 Druactinn 10. N.E.



John J. Clark
 947 East 32nd Street
 Brooklyn 10, N. Y.

MEETING OF THE ÉIRE PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION AT BALPEX '62

The meeting was convened at 1:30 p.m. by Mr. William P. Hickey, sect. of the E.P.A.

Mr. Hickey showed a portion of his collection of Irish Revenues from the early embossed issues to the present stamps.

A discussion of the association publication "The Revealer" took place. It was the general opinion of the group that the quality of the publication should be improved. Unless the illustration of a stamp is greatly enlarged, the offset method of reproduction is inadequate. Inasmuch as the important detail of the stamp is lost when the stamp is not enlarged, it was proposed that line cuts be used exclusively to illustrate stamps. It was realized that this would be more expensive, however those present felt that they would prefer to pay more in dues or cut the number of pages in order to improve the quality of the illustrations. It was also suggested that the illustrations could be printed on glossy paper and supplied as an insert, properly annotated and the remainder of the magazine, printed in the present manner. The quality of the articles was also a subject of discussion. The opinion of the group was that only articles of a strictly philatelic nature should be published in "The Revealer". Presently considerable more space is given to new issues than is necessary. Historical and geographical articles should not be published unless there is a close tie-in with philately and then only used when philatelic articles per se are not available. The group realizes that an editor can only do so much in originating articles. Mr. J.J. Walsh has done an excellent job. The task is now to obtain more philatelic articles from the membership.

It was reported that the possibility of a merger between the E.P.A. and the Irish Philatelic Study Group has been considered. The majority of those present were in favor of a merger. The advantages would be: elimination of duplication of effort between both societies; publication of one periodical which could be expanded and would draw from more contributors; possible cost reduction which could result in additional services to members; and one society for all collectors with a common interest. The excellent work in philatelic research now being undertaken by the I.P.S.G. was brought out. It would

be desirable to give this research the widest possible dissemination among philatelists. Inasmuch as those present did not constitute a decision making body of the E.P.A. it was recommended that the officers of the association take definite action to: 1. determine if the majority of the members favor such a merger; 2. if the members are in favor of such a merger, formally propose this merger to the I.P.S.G. 3. make arrangements for the conclusion of a merger.

A suggested method of determining the opinion of the society would be to publish the proposal in "The Revealer" and invite comments both pro and con. The majority of those submitting their opinions would decide the issue.

Mr. Joseph E. Foley, the E.P.A. agent for BALPEX '62 invited the E.P.A. to participate in BALPEX '63. The opinion of the group was that while E.P.A. participation this year was not great, it was a start in the right direction and should be followed up by accepting the invitation. BALPEX '63 will be held in the same location during September of next year.

A general discussion of Irish philately followed. Mr. Foley showed some of his Irish Stampless covers. A general question and answer session took place, with Mr. Hans Zervas and Mr. Svend Yort supplying most of the answers.

The awards for BALPEX '62 were announced at the banquet held in conjunction with the exhibition. The E.P.A. awards were as follows:

- Gold: 12" silver plate
Svend Yort
"Stampless Covers and British Stamps used in Éire to 1880."
- Silver: 10" Silver plate
H.P. McEntee
"Overprinted Issues of the Provisional Government and the Free State."
- Bronze: "The Batsford Colour Book of Ireland" by John D. Sheridan (donated by His Excellency, the Ambassador of Ireland)
Joseph E. Foley
"The Provisional Government and Early Free State Issues."

September 15, 1962.

Respectfully submitted

JOSEPH E. FOLEY

E.P.A. Agent for BALPEX '62

EDITOR SUBMITS HIS RESIGNATION

The editor of The Revealer has submitted his resignation to the President of E.P.A., effective December 31st, 1962.