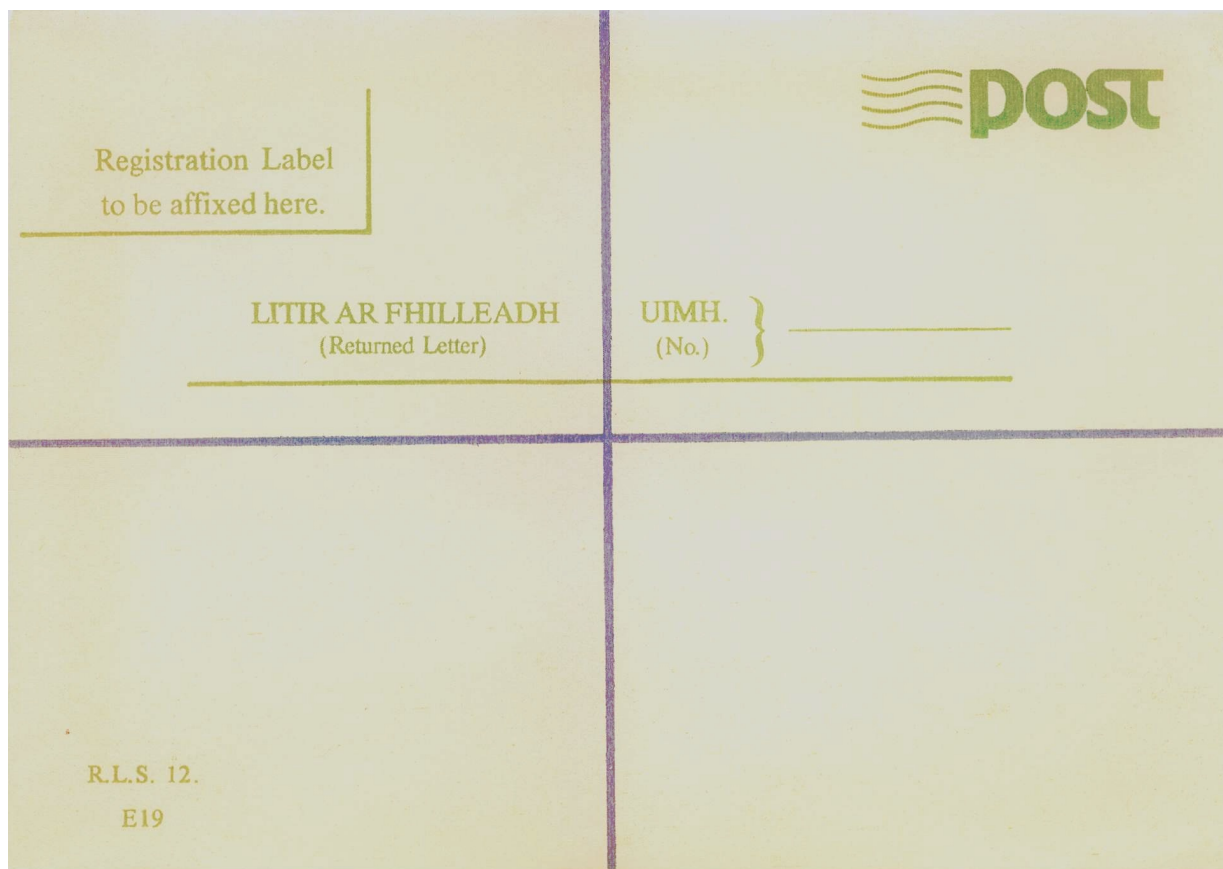


# RETURNED LETTER OFFICE

Unlike letter writers in the United States, who faithfully put their return address in the upper left or rear, Europeans, for the most part, do not. It is said this stemmed from previous government censorship of mail where people might be arrested for expressing opinions in a private letter. The lack of a return address provided a bit of anonymity or deniability. While protecting privacy, this lack of a return address creates problems if, for some reason, the letter is undeliverable.

The **Returned Letter Section** or RLS is charged with attempting to effect delivery, or return the letter to the sender. It would appear a relatively simple task to find a sender in a country of 4.5 million people if the population was spread out somewhat evenly. Unfortunately, of the 4.5 million, about 22% live in the Dublin area and 5% in Cork which changes the odds. The RLS is authorized to open mail, and read the contents in an attempt to locate the sender. If successful, the letter is repackaged in a marked cover from the RLS and dispatched. It is reported that their success rate is relatively high.

As with most official mail, covers were not usually retained since there are no stamps, thus of little interest to the average collector.



Returned Letter - Registered Mail