

THE DUBLIN CENSOR OFFICE 1939-1945

IRISH CIVIL CENSORSHIP: 1939-1945 "THE EMERGENCY"

SYNOPSIS

The aim of preserving neutrality during World War II, 1939-1945, known in Ireland as **The Emergency** manifests itself in the Irish mail system through the workings of the Dublin Censor Office.

While the focus is to display a specific censor topic, it is part of a thirty-five-year plus study and collection of all aspects of Ireland's civil postal censorship. No other exhibit is as detailed as this one: **it is the most comprehensive showcase** of the work done by the Dublin Censor Office. Incoming and outgoing civil mail was dealt with by the staff who, at most, numbered around 160.

This is one of the most interesting subjects of twentieth-century Irish postal history. With both recent and older **discovery items** these have **added substantially to the knowledge and study of Irish censorship**. First shown at Stampa '90 in its infancy and at other national and international shows, was awarded a **Large Gold and David Feldman Trophy for Best-in-Show** at Stampa 2023 in Dublin and a **Large Gold at GASS 2024**.

The distrust between Winston Churchill and Eamon de Valera, President of Dáil Éireann, goes back to the 1921 Irish Treaty negotiations as a major reason for British sweeping censorship of neutral Irish mail as seen on many covers.

Except for a few recent journal articles, some written by me, little new has been published in the philatelic press during the last two decades other than a few specialist articles with a narrow focus, such as Hans Moxter's AGZ article on a "fly-speck type" study of the S.P.1. censor labels. **The general censorship concepts are my primary interest:** the who and why, rather than small differences likely the result printers day-to-day work.

Several **one-of-a-kind items** are shown, in part due to the acquisition of some of F.E. Dixon's material and a tenacity to search out new items. Perhaps one might find more, or better, examples but they have not yet been found to improve this collection's minor gaps. I expect other memoranda to exist between the highest official documented slip, S.P.7., and the unique S.P.16 & S.P.18 shown. Other than my 1983 discovery of the S.P.10., **I aspires to eventually also find some of those items**, if they exist.

Some blemishes are to be expected with this type of mail but **covers are the highest quality available** and few might be improved on.

Discovery and notable items are distinguished by a green keyline around the item and/or its associated text box.

Sources: Journals

Some Irish Censor Discoveries, **Irish Philately**, Winkelmann, **Vol 2023, No. 1, April 2023** p 24-27
Irish "PASSED BY CENSOR" handstamps, **CCSG Bulletin**, Winkelmann, **Vol 46 No. 3 (July 2019)** p 118-120
Irish Censorship of Civil Mail, **The Revealer**, ÉPA, Moxter, **Vol 52 No. 3 #229, (Winter 2002)** p 42 & 51
Censorship on Irish Mail in World War II, **Postal History Journal**, Wittreich, **June 1990** #85 p 33
'SP10' enclosure memo, **CCSG Bulletin**, Winkelmann, **Vol 12 No. 3 (February 1985)** p 37
Irish Airgraphs, **O.E.78, Irish Airmail Society, Vol 5 #4, April 2001**, p 80-81

Sources: Books

Censorship of Mail in Ireland, Moxter, **2003** p 43-74
The Irish S.P.1. Censor Labels 1939-1945, Verge, **1989**
Censorship in Ireland 1939-1945, Ó Drisceoil, 1996, p 61-89
That Neutral Island, Willis, 2007 p 163-166, p 239-240

The journal sources can be downloaded directly with this link: <https://bit.ly/DCOSources>
& most can be downloaded from the Irish Philatelic Circle website: <http://www.irishphil.com>

Selected key items are:

- the oval **Árd-Scrúdóir na bPost**, the Chief Postal Censor handstamp on an undercover address item is the **only known postal use** of the mark. It took me 18 years to acquire this singular item.

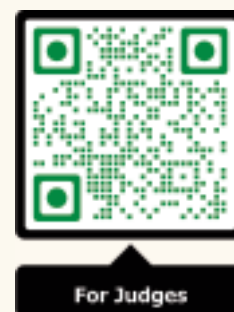
- oval **PASSED BY CENSOR** mark in English text only, is the **lone non-Irish-language mark** used by Irish censorship: discovered in 1998 with four more reported to date.

- cover **censored on first day** though mailed pre censorship initiation: (Sept 2 & 4).

- proof censor labels were produced in sheets and not as individual labels is shown.

- the S.P.12., S.P.16., and S.P.18. insert memoranda are mostly **one-of-a-kind** and extend the numbers well past those officially recorded.

- Virtually all the different items recorded by Irish censor experts, together with several unrecorded items, are shown; *military and internee mail, from this collector, are excluded:* it took place elsewhere under different authority.



Recent revisions based on EEF suggestions and Judges' advise:

- 1: Title page rewritten and rearranged
- 2: Replaced title page image with superior one
- 3: Purpose, scope and importance reorganised
- 4: Added details of Irish censor system to synopsis
- 5: Moved some pages to more appropriate section
- 6: Added colour code for sources: **ARPL**, **RPSL**, **IPC**
- 7: Added **QR** code to notable items and exhibit for pre-judging viewing convenience

THE DUBLIN CENSOR OFFICE 1939-1945

IRISH CIVIL CENSORSHIP: DURING "THE EMERGENCY" AT PHOENIX HALL, EXCHEQUER STREET, DUBLIN

PURPOSE: To show all aspects of Irish civil mail censorship, from the first day on 3 September 1939 until its end on 30 May 1945.

SCOPE: As the most complete study of Irish civil postal censorship carried out by the Dublin Censor Office during "The Emergency", as WWII 1939-1945, was known in Ireland, this exhibit has a detailed censor tape study, a wide range of the censor handstamps and insert memoranda, several unique and discovery items. It ends with examples of late censorship and the termination press release. Internal mail was not censored and any internee mail is incidental; being military mail.

INTRODUCTION: Mail censorship was established on 3 Sept 1939 under the *EMERGENCY POWERS ORDER, 1939*, following the Prime Minister, Éamon de Valéra's, neutrality address to Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament) on 2nd September, in which he said: *It is necessary at every step to protect our own interests in that regard, to avoid giving to any of the belligerents any due cause, any proper cause, of complaint.*

The Irish Government's Censorship Committee existed since March 1937 and an *Handbook for the use of Postal Censors* printed in September 1938, and by 10 July 1939 "...had accommodation and key personnel earmarked" and "the necessary orders, warrants, forms etc, ...ready for issue at short notice."

IMPORTANCE: Censorship was the most significant and publically notable development of the Irish postal service in the 20th century. It was well planned, despite Ireland remaining neutral and remote from the belligerents. Much of the material and information has added to the philatelic knowledge, *based on my extensive 35+ years of personal research.*

ORGANISATION: The exhibit is divided into six main sections as follows.

Organisation: (by page number)	
Establishment of Censorship	2 - 6
S.P.I. Labels	7 - 37
Censor Identity	7 - 12
Types	13 - 32
Usages	33 - 37
Censor Handstamps	38 - 60
Other Censor Markings	61 - 68
Stopped Mail	61 - 63
Export Licence	64
Currency Control	65 - 67
Wax Seal	68
Insert Slips & Labels	69 - 76
Postal Relations	77 - 79
Postal Staff	77
Postal Handstamps	78 - 79
Termination of Censorship	80

Missorted to Ireland and opened by Irish censor ID #88 on Australia to France cover.

Posted 14 Oct 1939 from Brisbane to Bayonne, France

Bayonne forwarding backstamp is dated 9 XII 1939 & applied over the Irish censor tape. Backstamp of Rouillé dated 12.10.39 so took two months to arrive at destination



* **Discovery** and other notable items have a thin keyline around the cover, and associated text box.

Note: To avoid damage, some illustrations of pink censor labels are same-size photocopies on pink paper.