

Cork Postal History 1696 to UPU

Synopsis (February 2025)

Exhibit Plan

Section 1: Early Post Period from 1696 to 1784

Section 2: Independent Post Period 1784 to 1831

2.1 First Rate Period 1784 – 1797

2.2 Second Rate Period 1797 – 1805

2.3 Third Rate Period 1805 – 1810

2.4 Fourth Rate Period 1810 – 1813

2.5 Fifth Rate Period 1813 – 1814

2.6 Sixth Rate Period 1814 – 1826

2.7 Seventh Rate Period 1826 – 1827

2.8 Eighth Rate Period 1827 - 1831

Section3: Unified Post Period 1831 to 1839

Section 4 Postal Reform Period 1839– 1850

4.1 Interim 4d Rate 1839 – 1840

4.2 Uniform 1d Rate 1840 – 1850

5.0 Adhesive Stamp Period 1840 to 1850

5.1 Adhesive Stamp Period 1850 to UPU

5.2 Adhesive Stamp Transatlantic Mail

5.3 Adhesive Stamp Period UPU

6.1 Ship Letters 1d Rate

6.2 Ship Letters 6d Rate

6.3 Ship Letters 4d Rate

The postal history of Ireland is distinctive but closely related to that of Great Britain. Although under the jurisdiction of the British Post Office, the Irish postal system was administered from Dublin up until 1784. It was at this date that the Irish Post Office became autonomous and began to produce its own special handstamps as distinct from following the English procedure. However, the gross abuse of franking, high rates of postage, different length of miles, different currencies and lack of control from senior management forced the amalgamation once again of the British and Irish Post Offices by the Duke of Richmond in 1831. Under this new jurisdiction Free Franking was heavily curtailed, Penny Posts were extended leading to the Postal Reforms of 1839 and the issue of adhesives in 1840. This exhibit details the increasing postal rates from inception until 1840 and the decreasing international rates from 1840

until these were stabilised with the establishment of the General/Universal Postal Union.

The postal history of Cork is essentially that of Ireland. There were four post towns in County Cork in 1659: Cork city, Bandon, Kinsale and Youghal. The post offices of Charleville and Mallow were then added between 1659 and 1682. In 1659, the post between Cork and Dublin (and onwards) ran once a week and took several days, while by 1830 this had increased to a twice daily connection by coach which took only 10¼ hours and by 1830 a further 11 post towns in County Cork had been added to the network. The postal rate set in the 1660 Parliamentary Act was 2d for a single sheet sent less than 40 miles and 4d if a single sheet was sent greater than 40 miles (rate within Ireland, British rates applied in England, Scotland and Wales).

Scope and Objective: The objective of the exhibit is to trace the postal history of Cork, city and county, from 1696, through the increasing postage rates to the rate reform period of 1839/1840 and the decreasing postage rates and there to the establishment of the UPU.

Note

Mail sent from Cork to Great Britain was required to travel first to Dublin and the rate applied to the letter face was the rate to Dublin. This was then replaced with the rate for the next leg and the initial rate was crossed, e.g. if travelling to Edinburgh, the next leg would be as far Donaghadee, where a further rate would be applied. This latter rate would include the cost of the Packet transfer to Portpatrick, the cost of the Scottish wheel tax and the mileage to Edinburgh. Hence a letter face would show multiple rates crossed out as the journey progressed.

Postal History of County Cork, 1696 to Universal Postal Union

The earliest Acts of Parliament relating to postage required that ships landing anywhere in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland would hand over their letters to the post office for onward delivery. The length of the County Cork coastline and the deep water ports outside Cork city, established Cork as a gateway for postage to Europe and particularly the United Kingdom.

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Importance: The location of County Cork as a central shipping hub and the remoteness of the location from London and Dublin, allows the full story of the development of the mail service in Ireland and Great Britain to be clearly illustrated,

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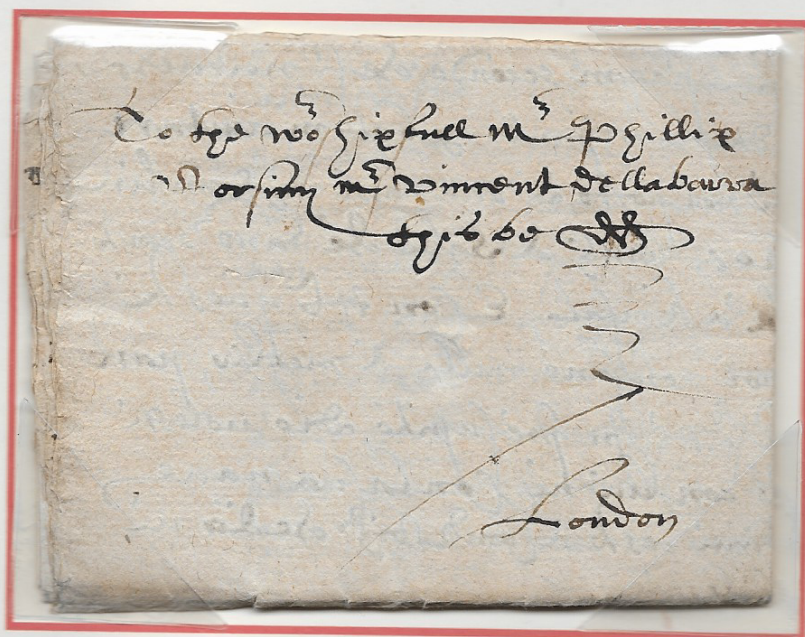
5.2 Adhesive Stamp Period UPU

6.1 Ship Letters 1d Rate 6.2 Ship Letters 6d Rate

6.3 Ship Letters 4d Rate 6.4 Ship Letters 8d Rate

6.5 SL Uniform 8d Rate without inland postage

6.6 Transatlantic mail



Early Mail Prior to Rates being set.
1591 (June 9th) Entire letter from Cork to London. Most of the merchant post from the 16th century had no postal markings, such as this letter from Guglielmo Petala, who worked for Filippo Corsini, a London merchant who made his own arrangements to have his letters delivered.

The Corsini correspondence contained eleven letters from Ireland, this being the only one from Cork and the earliest known letter from Cork.

Bibliography

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Rare items
outlined by
red box.



Ship letters
denoted by
Ship
symbol.