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## This Was the Year That Was: 2009 (Part 2)

Affiliate No. 21—The American Philatelic Society • Affiliate—Federations of Philatelic Societies of Ireland

## THE REVEALER

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### **President's Message By Paul Bento**

. I am pleased to report that EPA member Philip Kane's project to digitize the entire run of The Revealer from 1951 is now finished and we can now begin to sell the discs to members. Elsewhere in this issue is a brief biography of Philip and instructions for ordering the discs. Your officers have had the pleasure of previewing the disc and offering comments to Philip. If my own experience is any indication, members will be very pleased to have this new research tool in their hands. It includes all Revealer supplements and the index as prepared by Michael Priestley. I enjoyed jumping easily from issue to issue to locate articles connected to my collecting interest. As an added bonus, it has opened three feet of shelf space since I have moved my print copies to my backup library in my basement.

continued on next page....

### **CHAPTER COORDINATORS**

**Commodore John Barry Chapter** Members reside in NJ, NY, PA Coordinator: David J. Brennan. PO Box 704, Bernardsville, NJ 07924 14302 Oak Shadow.

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The Association Secretary will write the appropriate Coordinator when a new member joins the Association and provide the Coordinator with the name and address of the new member. The role of the Coordinator is to contact the new member, welcome the member to the Association, and invite the member to join the local Chapter.

**DEADLINE FOR ARTICLE SUBMISSION** Summer: May 1; Fall: Aug. 1; Winter: Nov. 1; Spring: Feb. 1 Each Issue published one month after above dates.

#### The Revealer ADVERTISING RATES

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#### **CAMERA READY COPY REQUIRED** Contact Richard Kelly at kellyrd@sbcglobal.net

### President's Message (contd)

Our Vice President for North America, Rich Kelly, has been doing extra duty recruiting advertisers for The Revealer and his effort have helped us to add color to each issue. He recently received an enquiry for an ad pricing from an EPA member. I wish to remind our non-dealer members that they are eligible to post an ad at no cost on our Trading Post. This has not been used much in our recent editions, but perhaps this reminder will stir some interest.

In my last message I mentioned a publication from member Barry Cousins and indicated that I was submitting it to a member expert in the subject area for review. I promised that the review would be published in this issue. The reviewer noted some issues with the author's work and has been working with Barry to resolve their differences in an amicable manner. I feel that it is in the EPA's best interest to await the outcome of their discussions and hold the review for the next issue.

Finally, I want to issue a public apology to Michael Priestley. Michael sent me an email in February stating that he no longer wished to be considered for the position of EPA Vice President, Europe. I failed to forward the email to our Secretary, David Brennan, in time to keep Michael's name off the ballot. He was elected unanimously and in his own humble manner has agreed to serve another year and also continue to distribute The revealer in Europe. Thank you, Michael.

#### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

#### New Members

- 2826 Mr. James S. Siganiec 81 Woodland Drive Vernon, NJ 07462
- 2827 Ms. Sharon M. Whitney 2410 Prairie Road Madison, WI 53711-4145

#### **Reinstatements**

- 2330 Collectors Club of Chicago 1029 North Dearborn Chicago, IL 60610
- 2068 Joseph M. Curtis 4064 Circlewood Drive Fairview Park, OH 44126
- 1726 Dwight A Wahr PO Box 281 Hingham, MA 02043-3613

#### Deceased

817 John A. Keogh

#### **Change of Address**

- 2132 Myron G. Hill PO Box 61436 Potomac, MD 20856
- 2246 Joseph P. Robertson 29 Longbridge Road Braley Hampshire RG26 5AN England

2537 Kuipers, Henry Beethoven Laan 1–215 7604 GC Almelo Netherlands

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- 1840 Andrew R. Ballard. arballard@hotmail.co.uk
- 2068 Joseph M. Curtis papajoe2gmail.com
- 2246 Joseph P. Robertson J.robertson5@btinternet.com
- 2826 James S. Saganiec James\_saganiec@yahoo.com

#### Membership Status

- Membership as of May. 12, 2010
- New Members +2 Deceased -1
- Reinstatements +3
- Membership as of August 1, 2010 ...382

#### **DUES NOTICE**

Please note that membership fees for the 2010-2011 fiscal year are due by September 1, 2010.

If the year 2010 appears next to your EPA membership number on the front cover, then you owe payment for 2010-2011 fiscal year.

A dues mailing envelope is included in this issue for your convenience. Please send your payment as soon as possible to avoid EPA sending out reminders.

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### A Special Invitation to the EPA Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, Oct 1-3, 2010

Bill O'Connor and David Brennan

As the Eire Philatelic Association representatives to the SESCAL organization we would like to extend a warm invitation to all EPA members to visit Los Angeles this coming October for our annual meeting. The show runs from October 1-3, 2010. The new venue for this year is the Los Angeles Hilton Hotel, 5711 W. Century Blvd, Los Angeles, 90045, telephone number 310-410-4000. The rates are \$85.00 per night plus tax (this **is a great rate for this year**). These rates are also in effect for three days prior to and after the show. A reduced parking fee is available at \$7.00 per day

A number of activities are in the planning stage for our annual meeting. The traditional Friday dinner is always a welcomed event. Additionally, most attendees to the annual meeting enjoy participating in the Saturday awards dinner to cheer on our Irish exhibits. This event must be prepaid and is \$49.00 this year. Additionally, all of the Southern California members are looking forward to hosting this event, and will be most happy to see a large Irish contingent.

## Trading Post

To trade: I have Ireland used Irish stamps to trade using latest Scott's or Hibernian catalogue to figure out our cost. I prefer getting used, but will take mint. I do not want covers. I don't use computers, so please contact me at: Donald F. Westfahl, 207 Wilshire Ave, Michigan City, IN 46360 EPA 2757; APS 091733

To trade: If anyone is interested in trading stamps, they can contact Gus Winters at gus1931@gmail.com.

Wanted: a £5 orange telegraph stamp, 1877, mint or preferably with an Irish cancel. Contact David Brennan, P.O. Box 704, Bernardsville, NJ 07924, USA

For Sale: Complete set of Irish yearbooks, hard cover, from 1988 (first issue) through 2002 in mint condition, \$500 or best offer. David Brennan, P.O. Box 704, Bernardsville, NJ 07924, USA

### Arrangements are between the individuals concerned and the ÉPA does not accept any responsibility.

#### News from Germany:

Heidelberg, 15th July 2010 (CJ) – In July 2010, the newest issue of DIE HARFE has been published, the magazine of the German Study and Research Group on Irish Philately (FAI - Forschungs- und Arbeitsgemeinschaft Irland e.V. im BDPh e.V.). The current summer issue (no. 111) contains 42 pages.

If you have any questions, please contact: Clemens Jesenitschnig (Editor of DIE HARFE) Bahnhofstraße 9, 69115 Heidelberg, Germany E-Mail: cj.fai@gmx.net



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### A Kilmainham Madonna Cachet by Charles E. Deusner

Well known are the circumstances surrounding the wedding and marriage of grace Gifford and Joseph Plunkett around midnight on 3 May 1916 in the Kilmainham Jail in Dublin, Ireland. Joseph Plunkett was executed by firing squad a few hours later at 3:30 a.m. leaving his briefly wedded wife a widow at the age of 28. Plunkett, a poet and leader of the 1916 Easter Rising, was among those heroic rebels in the General Post Office in Dublin where the fighting was the most intense and horrific. Not as well known is the life and career of Grace Gifford Plunkett following the court martial and execution of her husband.

Grace Plunkett was trained as an artist. She struggled financially as a commercial artist in the years following the Easter Rising. Her only income came from cartoons and caricatures she sold to magazines, journals, and newspapers in Ireland. In 1919, seventeen of her cartoons were published in a book entitled *To Hold as Twere*. Ten years later a book of her drawings was published entitled *Twelve Nights at the Abbey Theatre*, and in 1930, she illustrated the publication of W.B. Yeats' one act play *The Words Upon the Window Pane*. She never married again, and insisted on living alone and moved frequently from apartment to another in Dublin. Often her friends, who found her living conditions not always acceptable, helped her to survive.

Grace Plunkett was active in republican causes following her husband's death. In 1917, she was elected to the executive committee for the Sinn Fein Convention where she served along with 3 other women, Kathleen Clarke, the widow of Thomas J. Clarke, and Constance Markievicz, and Dr. Kathleen Lynn. Grace opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921, because she believed it betrayed the republic that was declared at the GPO in 1916 for which her husband was martyred. During the Civil War, as result of her activity in republican efforts, she was arrested and confined for 3 months in Kilmainham Jail in 1923.

With the establishment of the de Valera regime in 1932, Grace Plunkett was placed finally on a Civil List which resulted in a pension that gave her, along with her earnings as an artist, some financial stability. The 1930s were productive and reasonably good years for her, but her health declined began to decline in the following decade. She died alone in her apartment in Dublin on 13 December 1955. She was buried with full military honors at Prospect Cemetery, Glasnevin.

During her incarceration in the Kilmainham Jail in 1923 she painted a mural on the wall of her cell. The mural became known as the Kilmainham Madonna. The painting provided great comfort to women confined in the jail. Later in 1923 the jail was closed and abandoned. Through the following years, the old structure deteriorated with its windows broken and its interior exposed to the elements. As a result the Kilmainham Madonna faded and its beauty debased. In 1960 a group of veterans from the 1916-1923 war years began to restore the jail and finally in 1986 the state took over and it became a national museum. In the process of restoring the jail, the Kilmainham Madonna was rehabilitated and restored. Today the cell where Grace Plunkett was held id open for viewing and on its wall is open for viewing an on its The catcher is attributed to "Mrs. J. Plunkett." Marie O'Neill noted in her biography that grace Plunkett often wall is the restored Kilmainham Madonna (figure 1)

The cachet is attributed to "Mrs. J. Plunkett." Marie O'Neill noted in her biography that Grace Plunkett often



Figure 1: The restored Madonna in the Kilmainham Jail.

On 28 July 1958, the post office commemorated the centenary of the birth of James J. Clarke by issuing 2 stamps in his honor: for domestic mail a green 3 pence stamp and for airmail a brown 1 schilling 3 pence stamp. Clarke was a member of the Provisional revolutionary Government proclaimed during the Easter Rising in 1916. Among the first day covers that were prepared for this issue, Figure 2 shows a cover with both Clarke stamps as well as the stamp issued on 27 October 1941 in celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Easter Rising showing a volunteer soldier and the front of the GPO. The stamps are canceled with a Corcaigh (Cork) hand stamp with the date 28 VII / 58.

The cachet on the cover is a crayon hand colored Kilmainham Madonna with the inscription "Kilmainham Jail / By Mrs. Plunkett." Except for the outer border the cachet is identical to the mural on the cell wall in Kilmainham Jail. The cachet and cover were produce prior to the restoration of the mural. A biography of Grace Plunkett by Marie O'Neill includes a copy of an old photograph of the Madonna on the jail wall before restoration. This photograph is not available for publication, but is clear enough to show that the cachet on the first day cover duplicates the mural even appearing like the restored mural.

signed here work "Mrs. J. Plunkett." The signature on her work was always printed, as it is on the cachet, rather than being in a cursive style. These observations raise the question: Did Grace Plunkett have a hand in the preparation of the first day cover shown in Figure 2? Certainly the cachet would have appealed to her with its patriotic tone, the list of the 1916 martyrs, including her husband's name, the idea of memoriam and the colored national flag. She was known to do small projects in an effort to supplement her meager income. The problem,

however, is that the cachet was used to celebrate the Clarke centenary 2 ½ years after Grace Plunkett died. Is it possible that the cachet was prepared before her death? The cachet would have been appropriate for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Easter Rising stamp issued in 1941. Perhaps a remainder of old, unused cachets was brought forward to be used in July 1958 for the Clarke stamps. Another suggestion is someone else prepared the 1958 cover with cachet by duplicating Grace's Kilmainham Madonna and giving her credit on the cachet. These questions about the first day cover and its cachets have not been answered.

In an article in the January 2010 *Digest* of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, the Irish writer Mike McCormack casts doubt on the originality of the restored Kilmainham Madonna. McCormack maintains that the restored Madonna was based on an "embroidery done by Grace Gifford," and given to a friend before her death. Then, in 1995, McCormack avows, the real Madonna was found in a private collection of artifacts and that the newly found sketch did not match the Madonna "that restores had repainted on the first floor cell wall." The sketch as shown in Figure 3 was signed by Grace Plunkett, dated, and given to a cell-mate in 1923 to console the cell-mate, who was being moved to another jail. This sketch, McCormack believes, is the "the true Kilmainham Madonna."

The debate will probably continue, but the cachet on the shown cover that was posted 2 ½ years after Grace's death and the old photograph in O'Neill's biography showing the faded Madonna on a deteriorating cell wall in Kilmainham Jail seems to support the belief that the restored Madonna now on the cell wall in Kilmainham Jail Museum is a restoration of the original painting done by Grace Plunkett in 1923.





Figure 3: The sketch McCormack believes is the true Madonna

Figure 2: The first day cover with the hand, crayon colored Madonna and Irish flag.

#### Refrences

McCormack, Michael. Newsletter, Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, January 2010
Coogan, Tim Pat. 1916: The Easter Rising, London, Phoenix, 2001
O'Neill, Marie. Grade Gifford Plunkett and Irish freedom: tragic Bride of 1916, Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2000. Quotations found on pages 73-74 and 77.

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### ÉPA SPECIAL OFFERS

The following may be ordered from Timothy O'Shea, 58 Porter St. Granby MA 01033-9516 USA toshea1@comcast.net. Except where noted, prices include postage & handling within U.S. Outside the US write or email me for postage costs. Payment in US \$. Checks, payable to

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#### Hibernian Handbook and Catalogue of the Postage Stamps of Ireland 2009

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## Keeping In Touch, Communication through County Kildare before 1860

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#### Handbook of Irish Postal History to 1840

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## Plan to attend the EPA Annual General Meeting SESCAL 2010