

# Temporary Handstamps used in Dublin after the 1916 Uprising



## The Background

With the Acts of Union in 1800 (ratified in 1801), Ireland (which had been under some form of English control since the 12th century) merged with Great Britain to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. As a result, Ireland lost its parliament in Dublin and was governed by a united parliament from Westminster in London. During the 19th century, groups of Irish nationalists opposed this arrangement in varying degrees.

On Easter Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 1916, a group of Irish nationalists proclaimed the establishment of the Irish Republic and, along with some 1,600 followers, staged a rebellion against the British government in Ireland. The rebels seized prominent buildings in Dublin and clashed with British troops.

Among these buildings, and the focal point of the rebellion, was the Dublin Post Office. During the siege of the General Post Office, disruption of the mail services in the Dublin area was total, and the building itself, together with most of its contents was largely destroyed. This included the three Krag machines used to apply post marks to outgoing mail.

When services resumed at other nearby locations, a number of interim emergency measures had to be undertaken to keep the post flowing until proper equipment and facilities had been installed. These included the use of Temporary Hand-stamps to cancel mail.

**This exhibit** seeks to identify and catalogue the Temporary Handstamps into five (I-V) specific Types. Each Type has a number of specific Sub-types, of which all are identified. These postmarks are **rare** and seldom seen on postage stamps, let alone covers.

Covers considered very rare and outlined in red

## Layout

Type I – pages 2 to 7

Type II – Code 1,2,3,4,7,9,10,11, pages 8 to 12

Type III - Variety 1 and 2 page 13

Type IV - page 14

Type V - Dublin Office Roller, page 15

Krag and Hey-Dolphin examples – the Before and After 16

## Bibliography

The Éire Philatelic Association website and library

The Éire Philatelic Association - past copies of "The Revealer"

Irish Postmarks Since 1840 by James A. Mackay - Published by the author, Dumfries, 1982

The NEW Hibernian Catalogue 2014

Ireland – Modern Nations in Historical Perspective , (Oliver MacDonagh 1968)

De Valera – The March of a Nation (Mary C Bromage, Hutchinson & Co, 1956)

Catalogue of Postal Markings of Dublin 1840 to 1922 ,William Kane, Giffney 1981

The Sinn Fein Rebellion, as I saw it (Mrs Hamilton Norway, Vintage Classics 2016)

The History of the Post Office in Ireland (Stephen Ferguson, Academic Press 2016)

## Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising - Introduction

Most of the Equipment, Records and Mail on hand were destroyed during the occupation of the Post Office building. Among the remnants, **about forty telegrams were found**, mostly charred by fire and damaged by water. All were dated *22 April 1916, the Saturday before the Easter Uprising.*

**INSET – Daily Sketch photograph of the inside of the Post Office showing the destruction**

**SEE NOTICE AT BACK.**  
**POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.**  
(Inland Telegrams.)

**A.** Prefix Dng Code 22

Office of Origin and Service Instructions. DUBLIN


Words. 14 Sent 12.25 At 12.25 M.

**TO {**

**FROM {**

The Name and Address of the Sender, (This Paper Manufactured)

**Irish Rebellion - May 1916**  
*The General Post Office, Dublin (Rebel Headquarters) destroyed.*



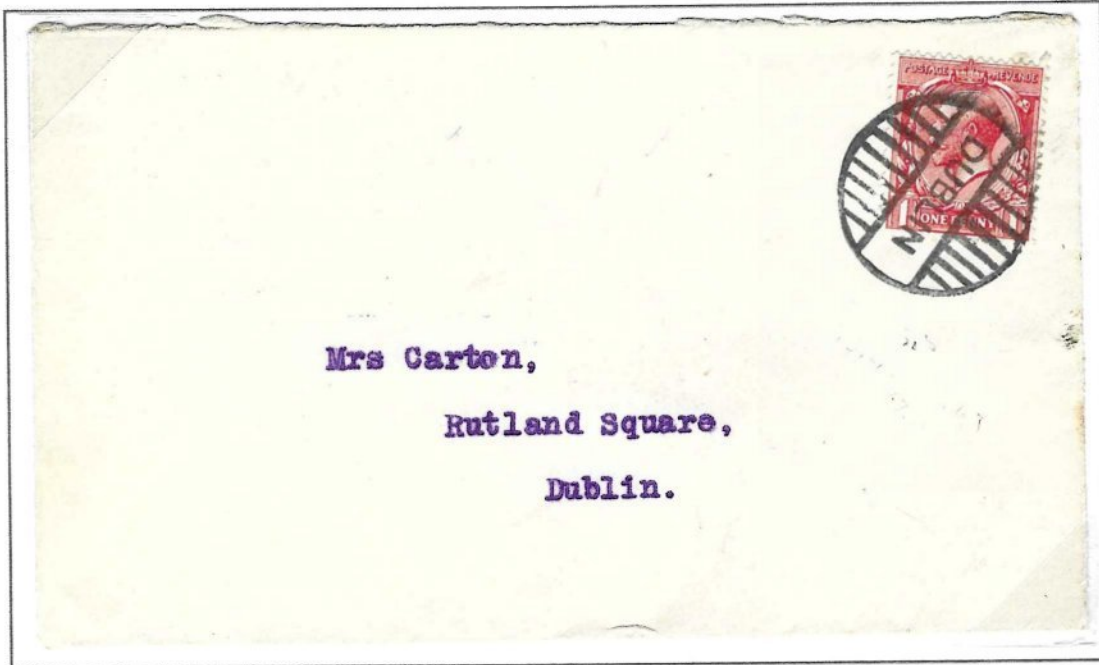
**For Postage Stamp**  
*To be affixed by the Sender. Any Stamp which is not a 'back of' should be cancelled.*

**on this Telegram**  
*Service One Penny.*

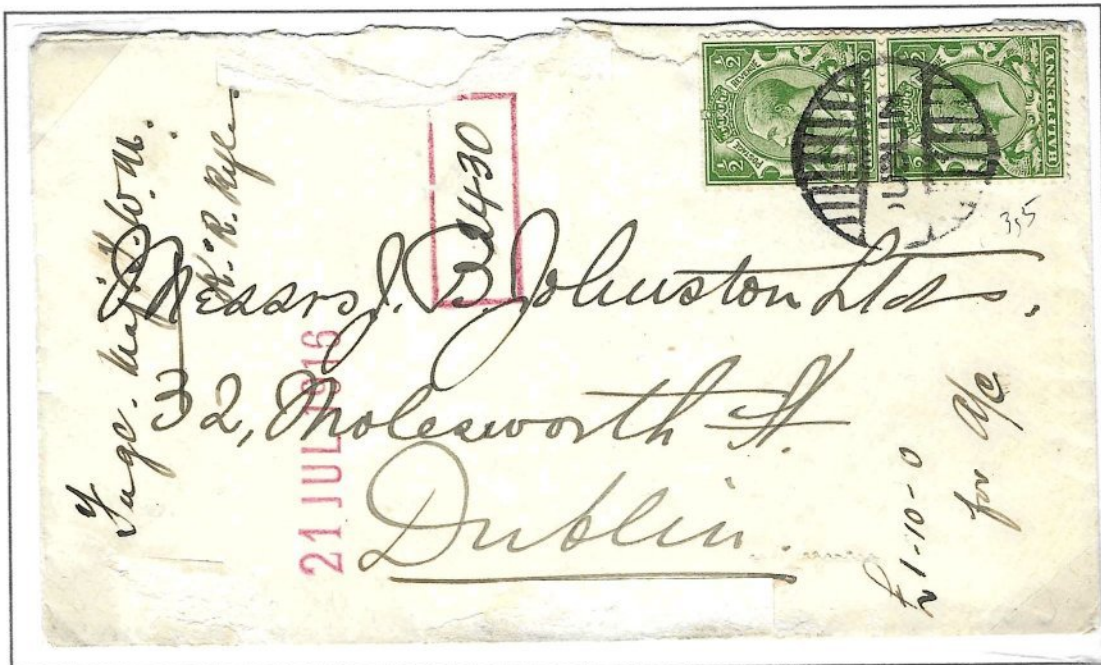
**at the Back of the Form.**  
21,500,000. 1/6/16. Set. 2

## Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type I

No cancelling machine or regular handstamps were immediately available and a variety of temporary substitutions were brought into service. Many, but not all of these were borrowed from the Parcel Office at Amiens Sreet. (which itself was half destroyed) and used with or without modification. **These handstamps can be categorized into five main Types.** The most common, and longest in use, was the barred handstamp, which can be found in a number of different varieties.

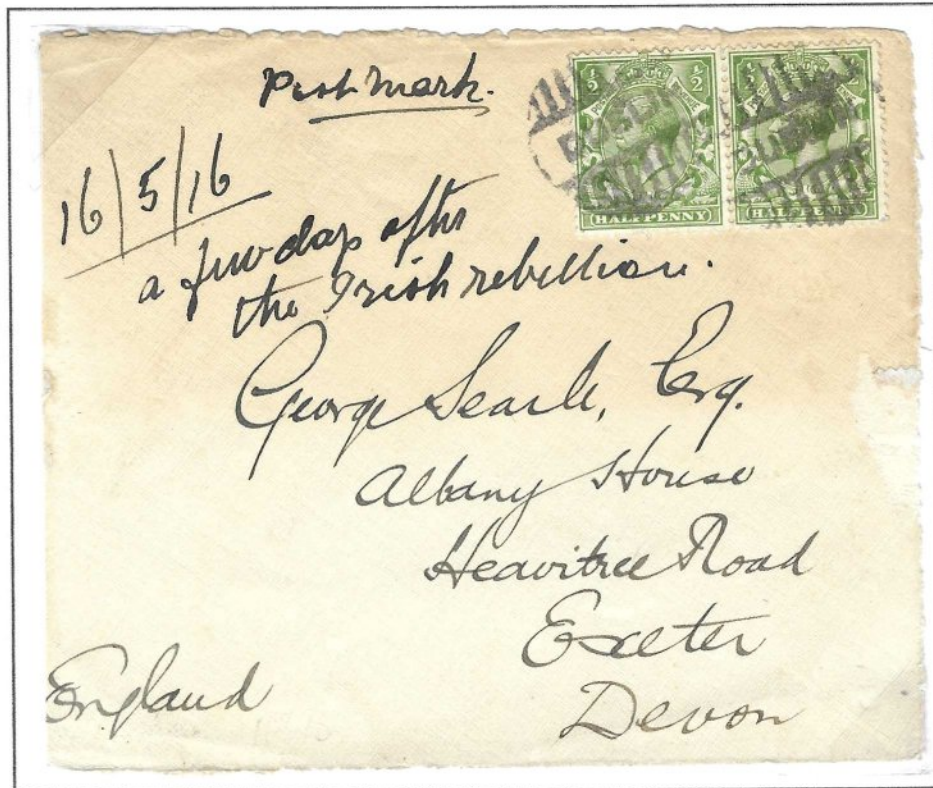


Temporary Handstamp: **Type 1 – Barred Variety A:** DUBLIN lettering 3.5 x 18mm long  
Sealed envelope with a 1d KGV postage stamp from Dublin to Dublin

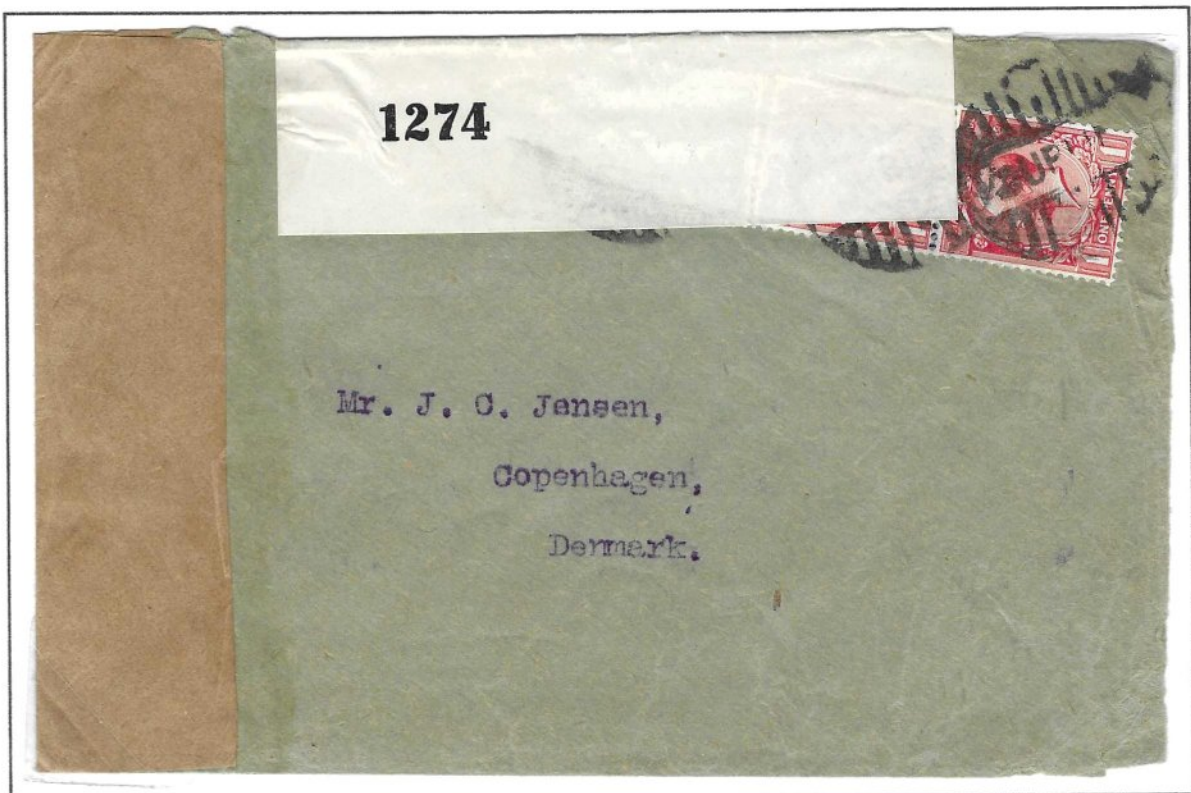


Temporary Handstamp: **Type 1 – Barred Variety A:** DUBLIN lettering 3.5 x 18mm long  
Signal Series Postcard with 2x 1/2d KGV stamps. Dublin to Dublin dated 21 JULY, 1916 .

Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type IA and IB

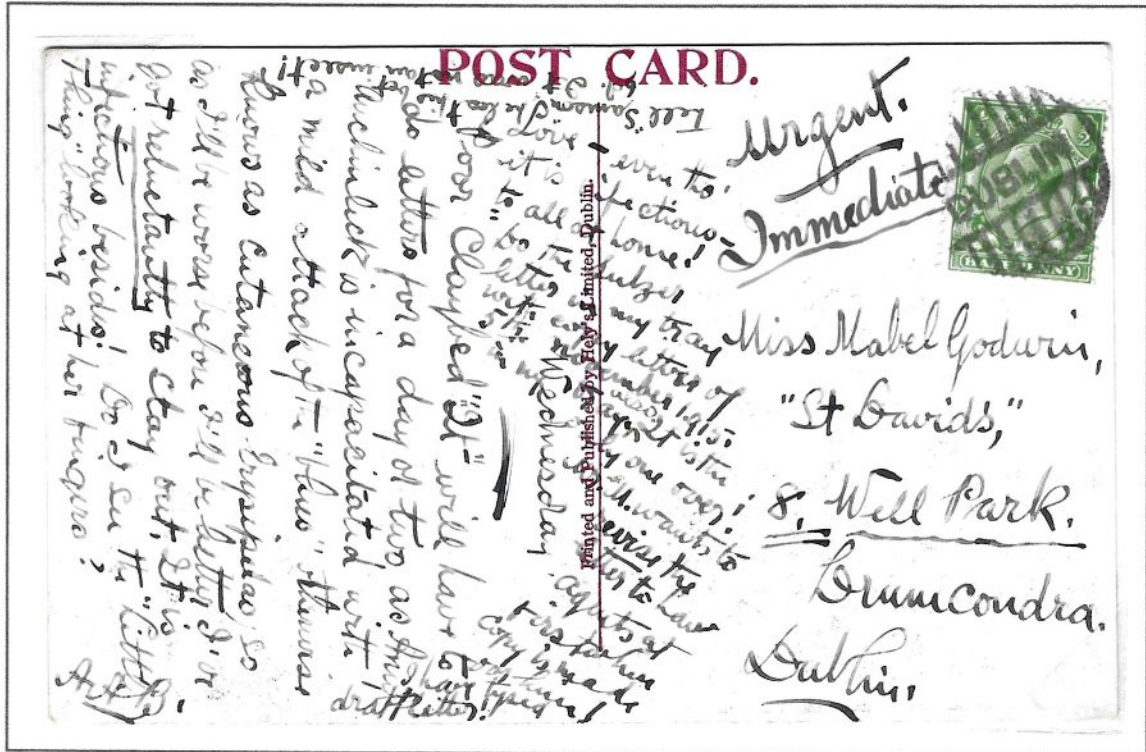


Temporary Handstamp: **Type 1 – Barred Variety B** with **DUBLIN** lettering 3.5 x 18mm  
Sealed Envelope Dublin to DEVON England with 2 x ½d KGV stamps dated 16/5/16 and annotated “a few days after the Irish rebellion” in script

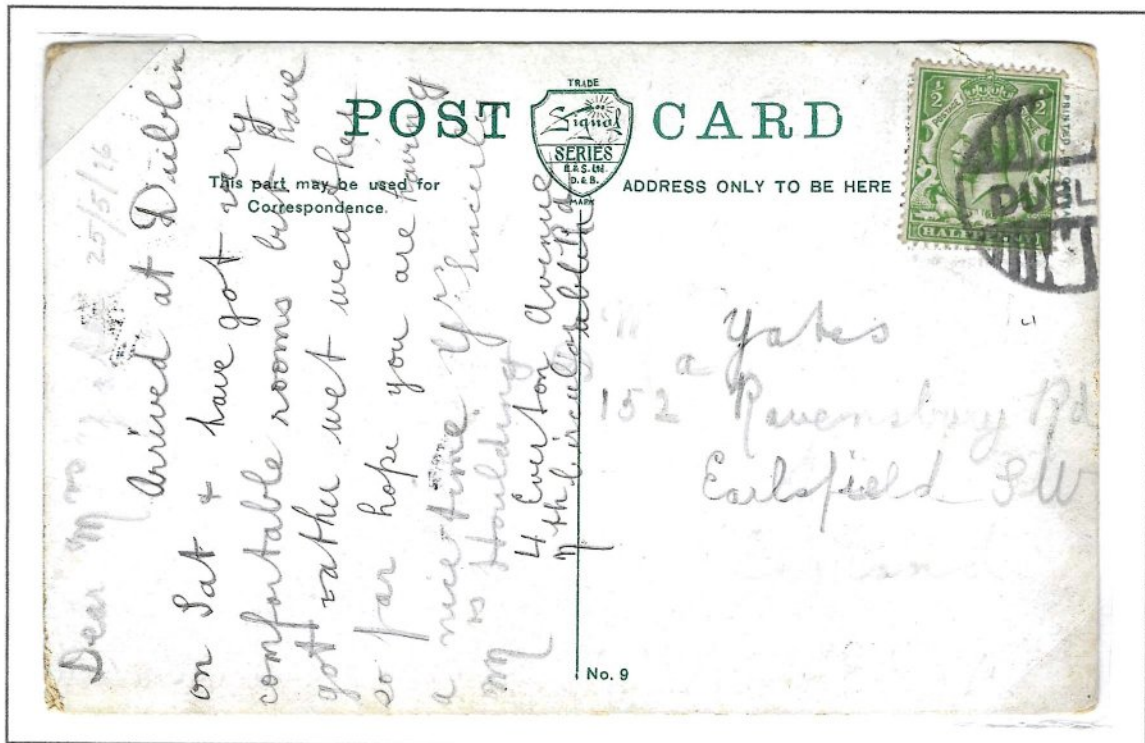


Temporary Handstamp: **Type 1 – Barred Variety B** with larger **DUBLIN** lettering 4 x 18 mm  
Sealed envelope with 2 x 1d KGV Stamp sent Dublin to Denmark. Censored both in Dublin and Denmark with respective seals. Backstamped arrival 5 June 2016

Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type IB



Temporary Handstamp: **Type 1 – Barred Variety B**: Similar to Type 1 – Variety A, but **DUBLIN** lettering larger 4 x 18mm  
 Signal Series Postcard Number 9 with ½d KGV stamp. Dublin to Enfield, UK dated 25 May 1916



Temporary Handstamp: **Type 1 – Barred Variety B** with **DUBLIN** lettering 4,0 x 18 mm  
 Real Photograph Postcard of Dublin after the Uprising, Dublin to Dublin with ½d KGV stamp

## Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type IC

More rarely, mail contains dated letters which, like dated messages on postcards, are much surer indications of usage dates. The cover shown contains a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 1916. It was written by the wife of Major-General Sandbach from the Shelbourne Hotel to her husband, the then commandant of the main British military camp in Ireland at Curragh.

*Historically, Major-General Sandbach is reputed to have signed the Warrants for the Execution of the principal leaders of the Easter Uprising after their surrender.*



I liked yr address & yr area.

SHELBOURNE HOTEL,  
DUBLIN.

Sept. 1. 1916.

My dearest Love.

Your letter of today  
is full of arrangements  
& plans.

Major General  
A. E. Sandbach. C.B. D.S.O.  
Ballyfai  
Curragh Camp  
Co. Kildare

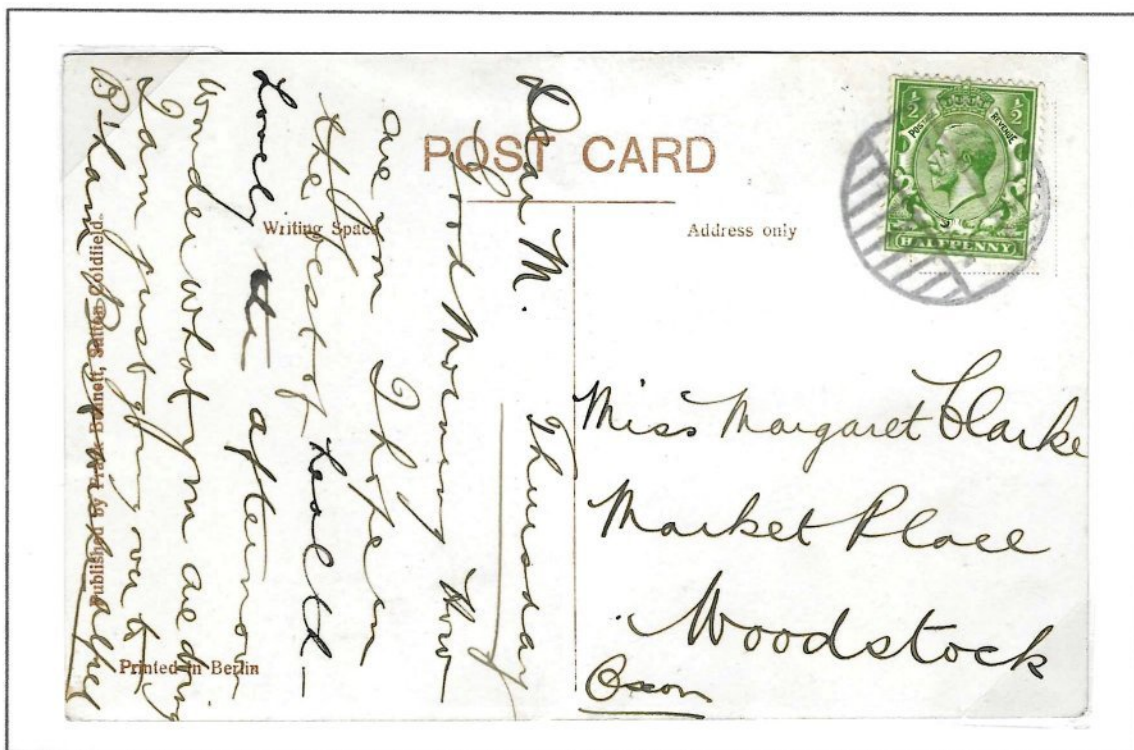


Barred Cancellation – Temporary Handstamp Type 1 Variety C which is similar to Type 1 Variety B but has no rim.  
Sealed envelope with 1d KG V postage stamp.  
Dublin to Curragh Camp (County Kildare) sent 1 September 1916

Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type IC & ID



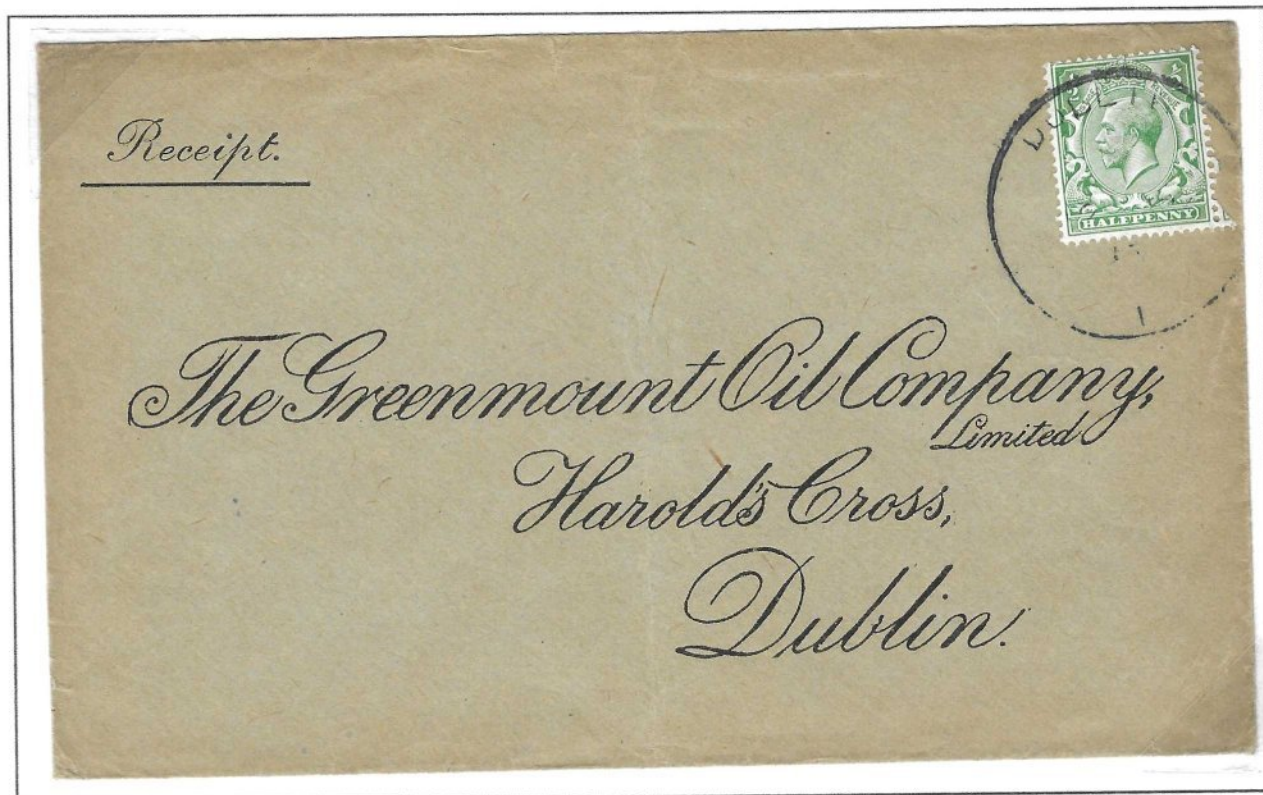
Temporary Hand-stamp: **Type 1 – Barred Variety C: DUBLIN** lettering As per variety B but with no rim  
 Postcard produced by Curran Publishers in Dublin, Printed in Scotland and posted from Dublin to Manchester at post card rate of ½ d . It has a ½D KGV postage stamp attached



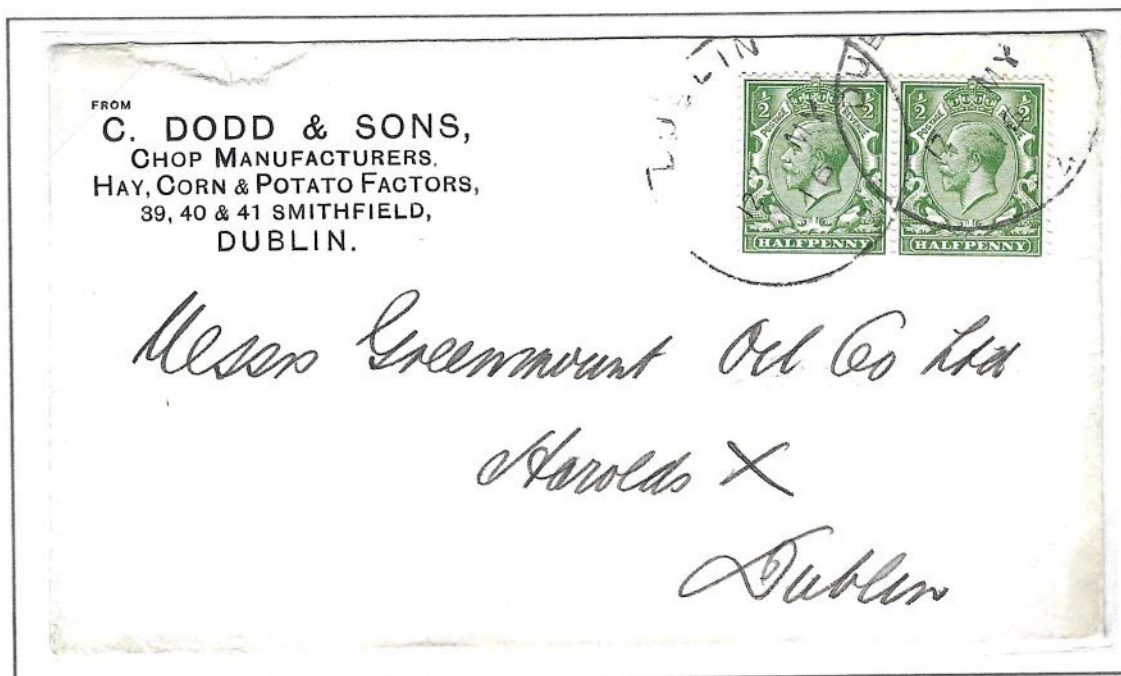
Temporary Hand-stamp: **Type I – Barred Variety D: DUBLIN** lettering **ABSENT**  
 Postcard from Frank Bennett Publishers in Sutton, Coldfield, printed in Berlin, Posted from Dublin to Sutton at post card rate of ½d with a ½d KGV postage stamp.

Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type II Code 1 and Code 2

A second group of handstamps brought into use were the **Dated Skeletons**. These had been used (and would be used again on their return) at the Parcel Office. However, unlike their use at that office, all cancellations on Letter Mail during their emergency use at the Rotunda, **show a code indication in the stamp.**



**Temporary Handstamp: Type II – Ringed Skeleton Single Ring: Code 1**  
Unsealed receipt envelope with ½ d KGV postage stamp from Dublin to Dublin dated 2 May 1916



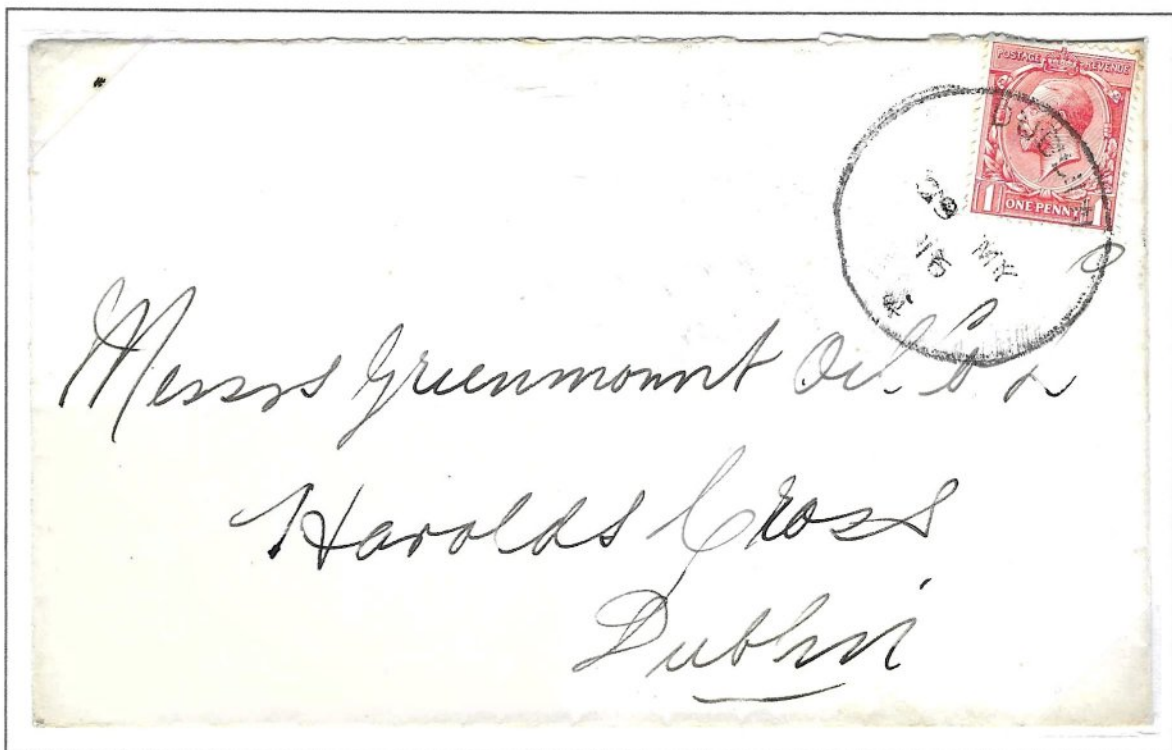
**Temporary Handstamp: Type II – Ringed Skeleton Single Ring: Code 2.**  
Sealed envelope with 2 x ½d KGV postage stamps  
from Dublin to Dublin dated 12 May 1916

Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type II Code 3 and Code 4



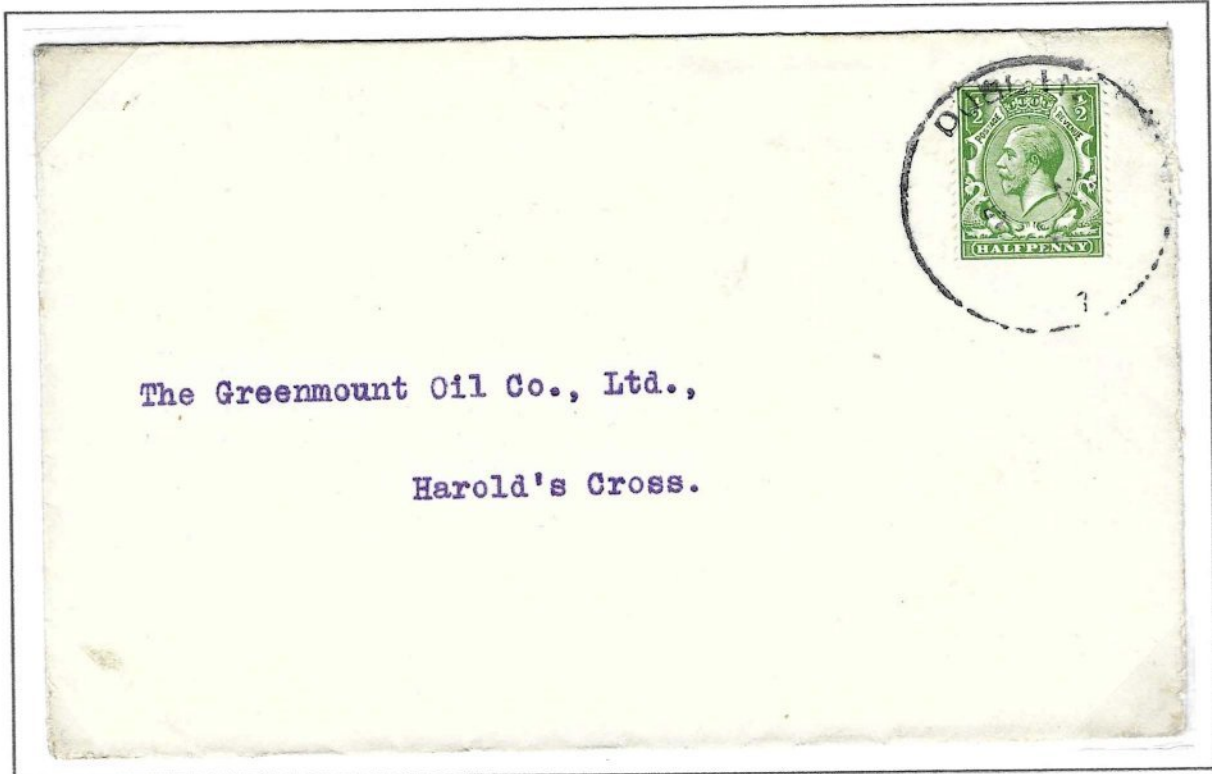
Temporary Handstamp: **Type II** – Ringed Skeleton Single Ring: **Code 3** dated 2 May 1916

on a stampless Forces Mail envelope with 1d Tax cachet in black. The tax was paid on 8 May 1916 using a 1d GB Postage Due stamp cancelled Nottingham. **This is odd because Forces Mail was allowed to be carried free.**



Temporary Handstamp: **Type II** – Ringed Skeleton Single Ring: **Code 4** – Distorted Rim Sealed envelope with 1d KGV postage stamp from Dublin to Dublin dated 29 May 1916

Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type II Code 7 and Code 9  
(There is no Recorded usage of Code 5 and 6)



Temporary Handstamp: **Type II** – Ringed Skeleton Single Ring: **Code 7** (radial shift of 7 to 5 o'clock).  
Unsealed envelope with ½d KGV postage stamp from Dublin to Dublin dated 5 May 1916

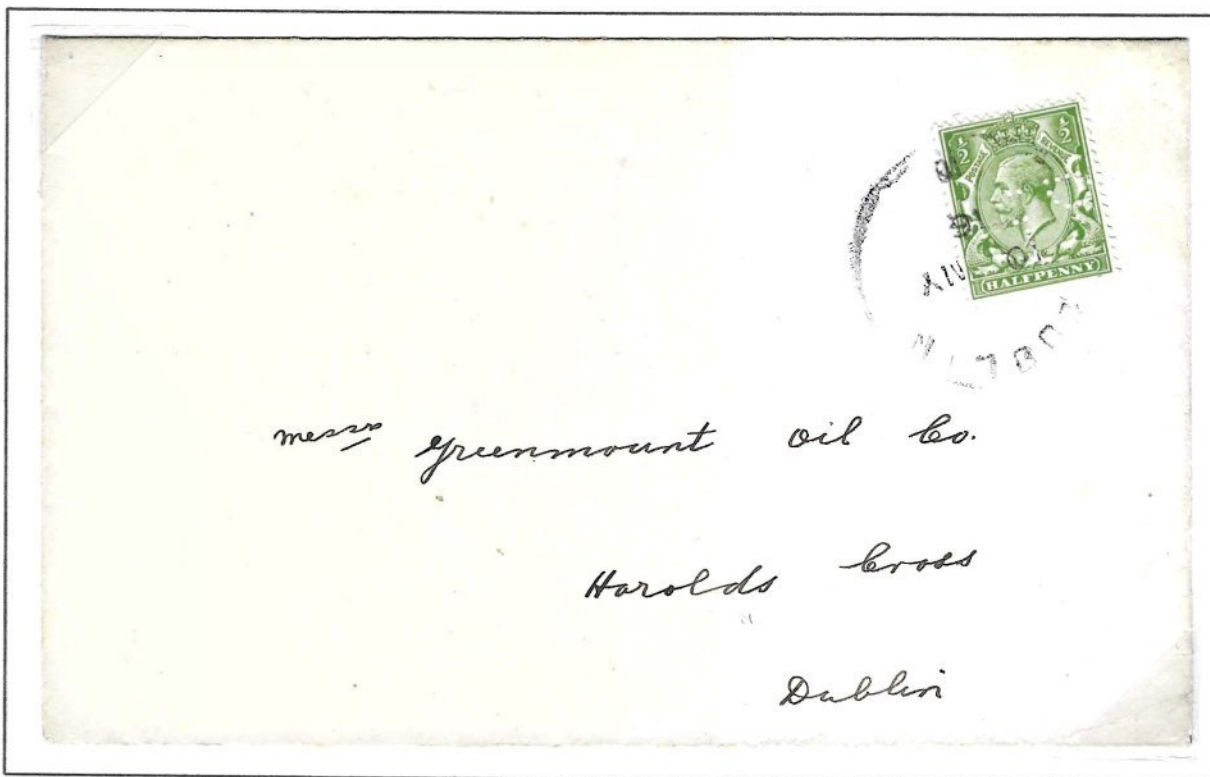


Temporary Handstamp: **Type II** – Ringed Skeleton Single Ring: **Code 9**  
Sealed envelope with 1d KGV stamp from Dublin to Manchester dated 6 May 1916.

## Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type IIa (Double Ring) Code 10

Similar skeleton Hand-stamps with a double ring were also used. They were smaller than the single ring types, having a rim diameter of **34mm (as opposed to 35.5mm)**

It is also recorded that the double ringed types were reserved for night duty, although an absence of time slugs makes this difficult to verify.



Temporary Handstamp: **Type II – Ringed Skeleton Double Ring : Code 10**  
Un-sealed envelope with ½d KGV postage stamp from Dublin to Dublin dated 10 May 1916

Mackay records that only a numeral '1' in a double ring temporary hand-stamp had been recorded by 1982 (the year of publishing of his catalogue of Irish Postmarks).

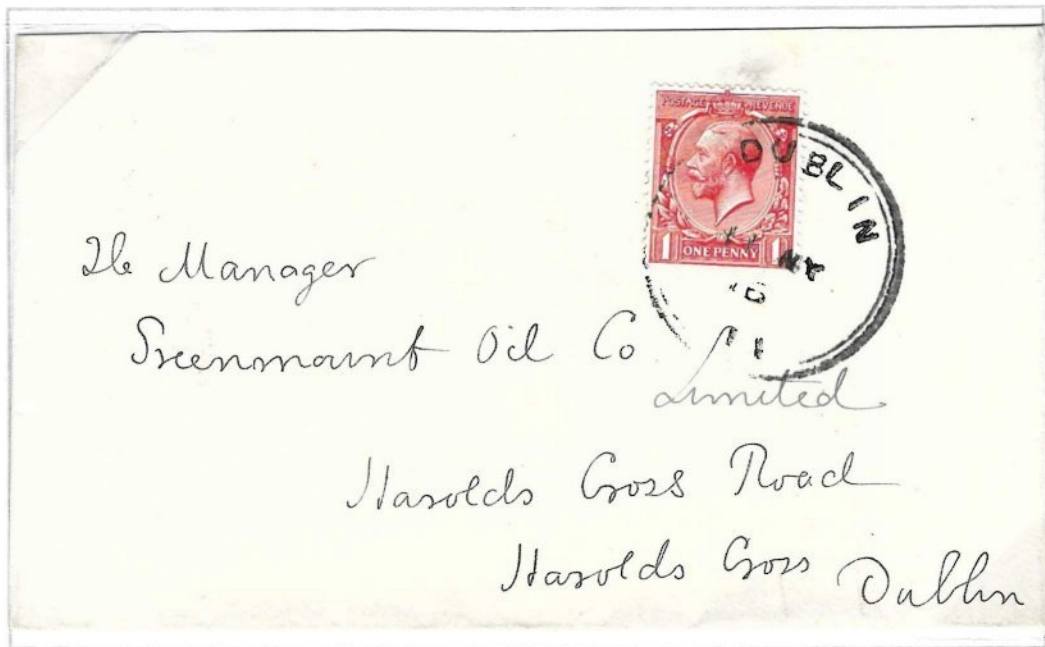
The double ring temporary cancellers Code 10 and 11 may well have been variations of the one he identified as '1' because there are two varieties of Code 11, neither looking very professional. Further, the L in DUBLIN is out of line in all examples .See following page.



Copy of example of the drawing on page 189 of Mackay catalogue.

## Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type IIa Code 11

The double ringed **Type IIa Code 11** Skeleton Handstamp is easily characterised by the spacing of its lettering, particularly the **U** and the **L** in **DUBLIN**. This is the only skeleton of the series which appears to have been altered during its duty at the Rotunda. Initially, in early May, the digits of **11** in the Code number were widely spaced, and the second **1** is invariably angled.



Temporary Hand-stamp: **Type II** –Ringed Skeleton Double Ring: **Code 11** – **Widely spaced version**

Sealed envelope with 1d KGV stamp from Dublin to Dublin dated 11 May 1916



Sometime after mid-May an alteration was made in the Handstamp Type IIa - Code number 11 and a different '1' was substituted as the second digit. The substituted digit is considerably thicker than its neighbour and evidently came from a different type font.

Temporary Handstamp: **Type IIa** –Ringed Skeleton Double Ring: **Code 11** – **Closely spaced version**

Sealed envelope with 1d KGV stamp from Dublin to Dublin dated 26 May 1916

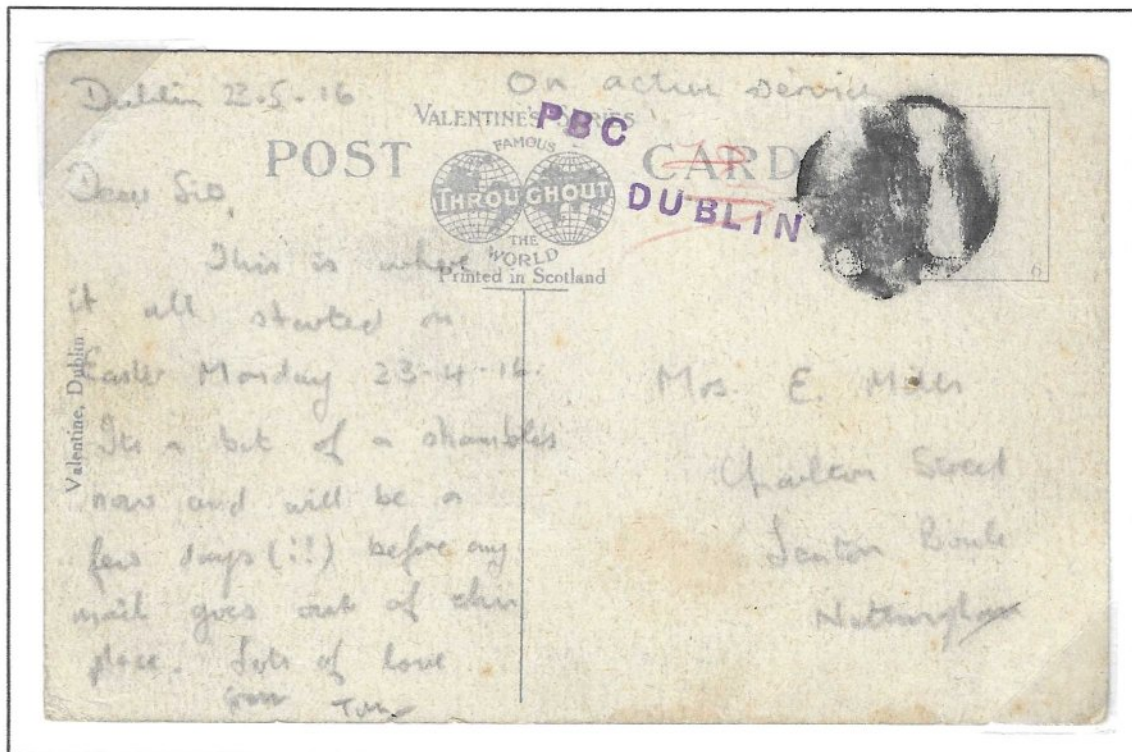
Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type III – Empty Ring

A third type of Handstamp used was the **empty Ring Handstamp**. This was of the crudest kind, having no lettering indication and Was probably in use for the shortest period.

The area where the place and date indication of names and dates should have been can only be discerned **by the smudge** of the cancellation



Temporary Handstamp: **Type III Empty Ring dumb canceller**  
Unsealed envelopes with ½d KGV stamp from Dublin to Dublin assumed May 1916



This is a further example of Type III dumb canceller, this time on a postcard by Valentine's dated 23 May 1916. This card was sent marked "On active service" so attracted no taxing. The card was however stamped "PBC DUBLIN" in purple, indicating that it had been censored. At the start of WW2, censorship was not required due to Ireland's Neutrality. However, the Uprising made the British nervous so censorship was implemented after mid 1916.

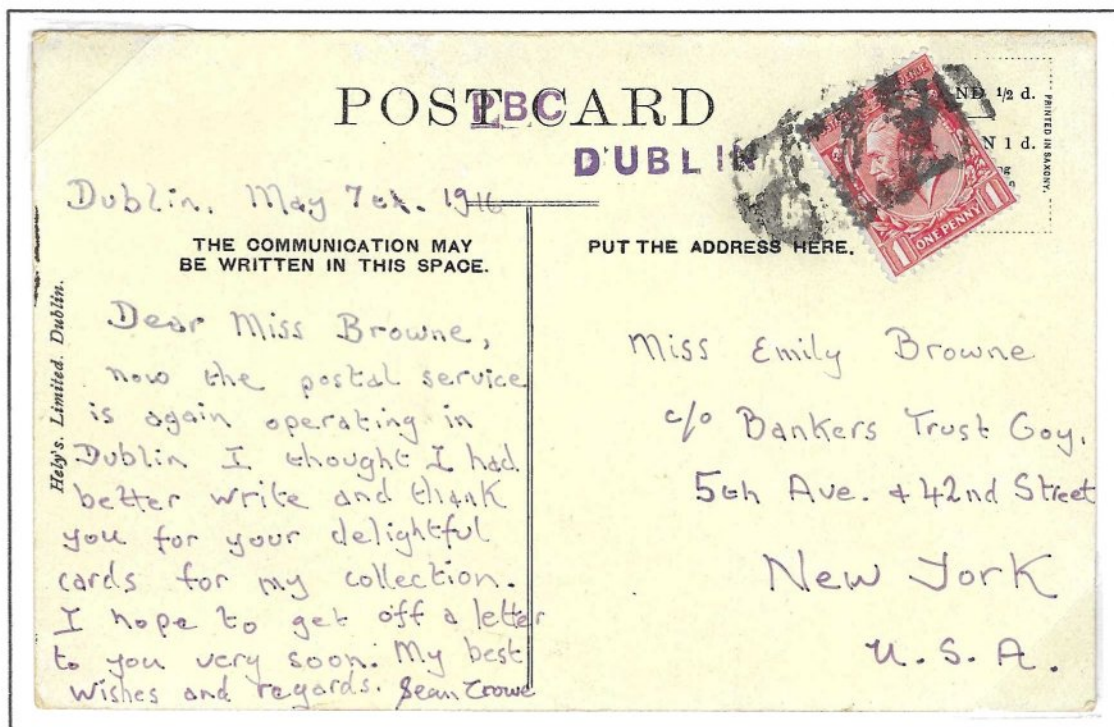
Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type IV – Butterfly

A Fourth type of Hand-stamp used was the **Butterfly Handstamp**. This was also crude having no lettering indication and probably also in use for the shortest period. The area where the place and date indication should have been, can only be discerned **by the smudge of the cancellation**, thus difficult to date.



Temporary Handstamp: **Type IV - Butterfly canceller**

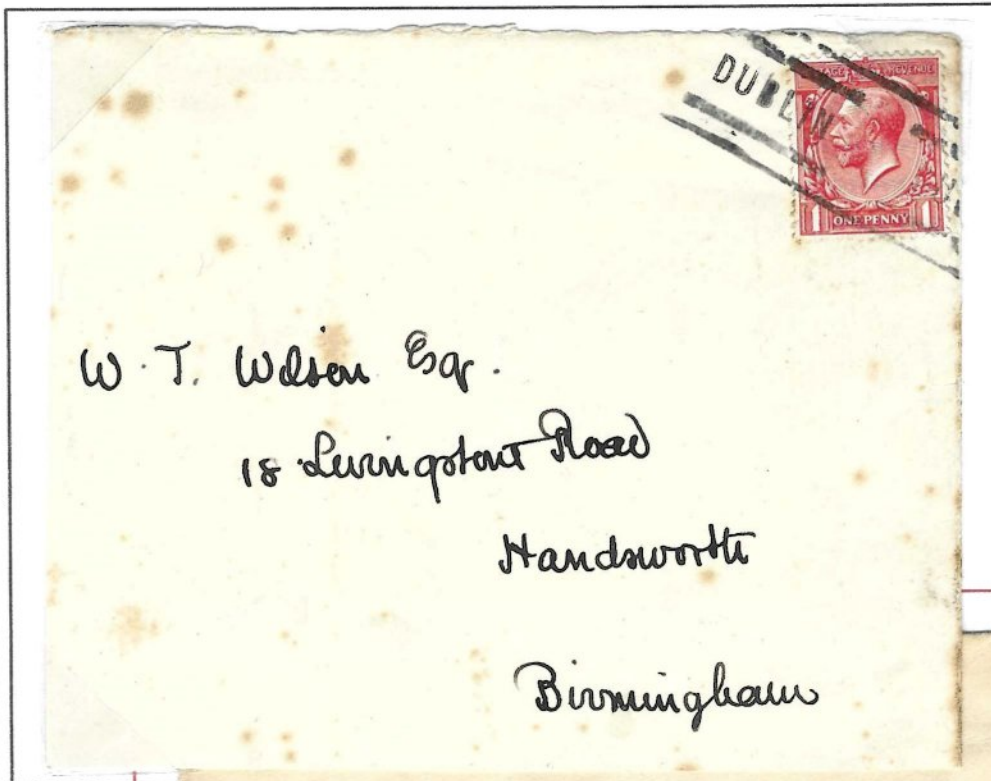
Unsealed envelopes with 1d KGV stamp from Dublin to a soldier in France. Opened and sealed by official army censor, and then given the PBC DUBLIN cachet.



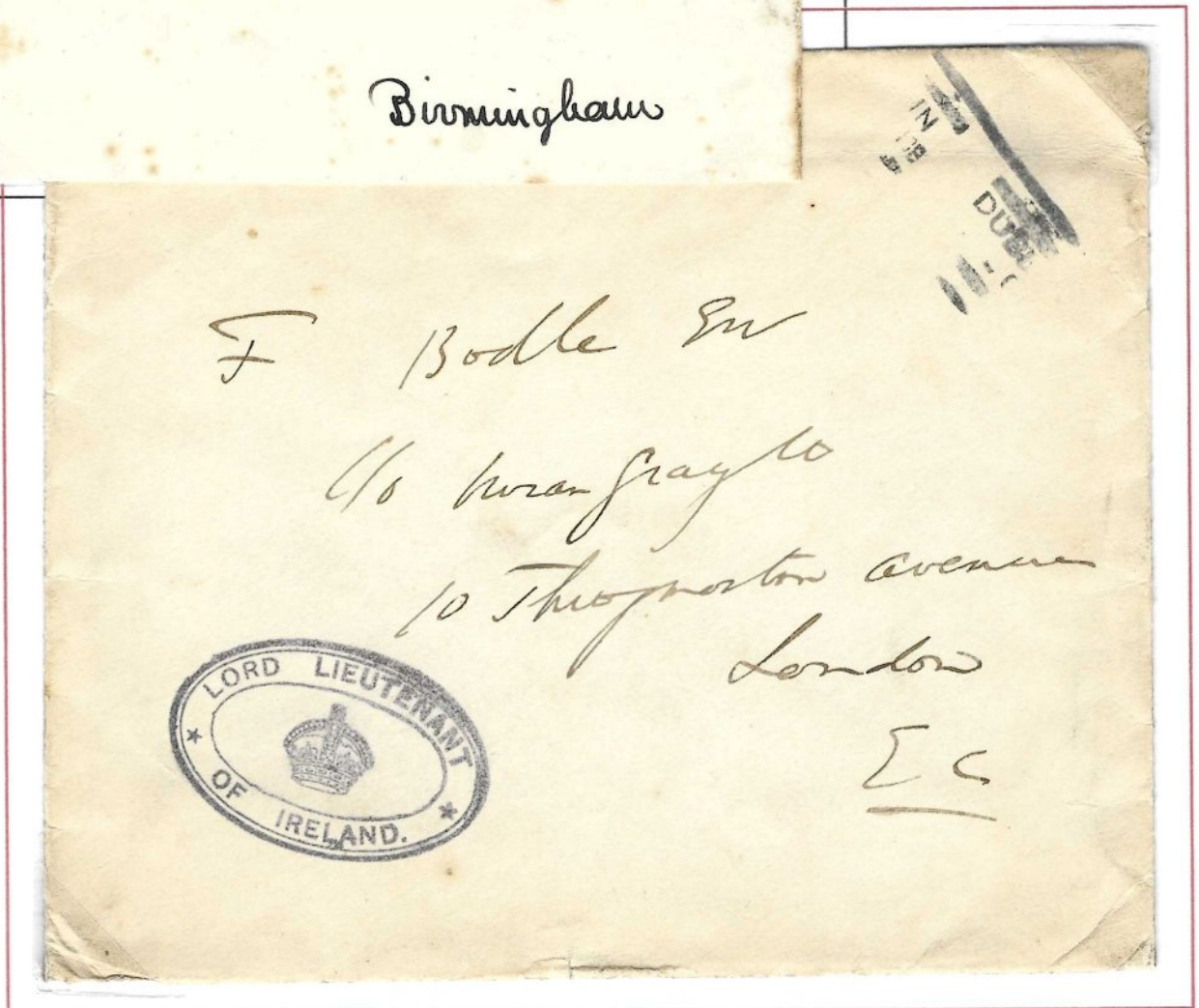
This is a further example of Type IV butterfly canceller, this time on a Holy's postcard from Dublin to USA, dated 7 May 1916. This card is marked 'Normal post to USA' so attracted no taxing. It is however stamped 'PBC DUBLIN' in purple indicating that it was censored

## Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Type V – Modified Roller

A fifth type of Handstamp, **Type V**, was a modified roller canceller normally used for **Parcel Post only**.



The first type of roller canceller from the Parcels Office had only one word, DUBLIN, in it and so **Type Va** could be used without modification on letter mail. On this cover it cancels a KGV 1d stamp as the envelope was sealed.



**Type Vb**, roller canceller, was the Dublin Parcel Office roller used in **Amiens Street Parcel Office**, from which the word "Parcel" was erased from the rubber stamp pad. Here it is used on the corner of an official postal cover from The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to London whose official cachet appears on the cover in purple. On the reverse is printed "Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin" located at the Castle.

Temporary Handstamps used after 1916 Uprising – Before and After



**BEFORE** - The Dublin Post Office had three Krag cancellers in use before the Uprising. **When the siege of the Dublin Post Office ended, there was little to salvage, all three Krag machines being unusable.** In 1922 they were cannibalised on a temporary basis and used during another emergency situation. Cover is marked Unpaid in script with a Cachet in black indicating 2d Due. The two GB Tax stamps are cancelled 'James Street' Dublin 21 September 1914. The KRAG machine cancel is dated 20 Sept 1914.



**AFTER** - Authenticated last date of the Temporary Handstamps is still largely unknown. Examples of the Barred Handstamps extend into November 2016. **As early as August 1916 the new Hey-Dolphin cancelling machines were used in Dublin's Rotunda Office** ( Its round city/date box is distinctive, and five killer bars were used.) The cover is addressed to **Major-General Sandbach** from his wife, and is dated Aug 29 1916. The Hey-Dolphin machine cancel is dated 29 August 1916.