

Ancient Treasures Set Ireland 1990



Ancient Ireland Treasures And Culture

- **Ireland issued a set of 23 stamps including 3 self adhesive stamps in 1990.**
- **A few values were reissued in 1995.**
- **There were 3 stamps prepared but never issued.**

- **These stamps feature treasures that go back to the Neolithic era, c. 4000-2500 B.C. and continues up to the 12th century A.D.**
- **This set features metal objects through the ages.**
- **The clarity of the stamps and the beauty of the objects enchanted me.**

Eagle

From Ancient Manuscript



HISTORY

- **Ireland was not always an island. During the last ice age about 12000 years ago, Ireland was connected to Britain and Europe by expanses of glacier covered land. Much of the northern half of Ireland was covered by glaciers, but the southern half was covered with an expanse of cold, inhospitable tundra. Further south, in areas now covered by water, lay areas where plants and perhaps animals may have taken refuge.**
- As the planet warmed, the ice melted and the land bridges between Britain and Europe disappeared. Much flora and fauna, distinct to Ireland, developed during this time. The forests of birch, alder, hazel and finally oak developed during this time.

One Of The Unissued Stamps



Settlement

- **There is no evidence of human settlement in Ireland before 7000 B.C. which is relatively late compared to Europe. The earliest inhabitants were the hunters, fishers and food-gatherers in the period in Europe known as the Mesolithic or middle stone age.**
- One of the earliest hunting camps was excavated at Lough Boora, county Offaly, while a more substantial settlement was revealed at Mount Sandel, county Derry. Their characteristic artifacts were diminutive points and rods of flint carefully made to top arrows and spears. Later, large crudely shaped blades became predominant. There is no evidence of artifacts that were plant based. We know nothing of their language, their rituals, their chants and lore. By the end of the period, they had extended their settlements to the entire island. Their achievements laid the basis for future colonization. They were the first Irish people.



ÉIRE £10

Neolithic Age c. 4000-2500 B.C.

- **A revolutionary change took place around 4000 B.C. New arrivals from Europe brought with them the arts of food production – animal husbandry and agriculture.**
- With the Neolithic settlers came the first Irish architecture, the building of megalithic stone tombs. Later, complex architecture with enigmatic carvings appeared. These occurred sporadically in the Byrne Valley, co. Meath and Carrowkeel and Carrowmore, co. Sligo. Towards the end of the period the more common wedge tomb appeared. Excavation has revealed large, rectangular wood-built homes. In the great areas not covered by bogs were divided into regular fields. “Factories” existed for the manufacture of polished stone axe heads near suitable stone outcroppings, beautiful tool kits have been uncovered. New crafts, including pottery and weaving were developed. Regional identities emerged.
- The earliest metal objects in Ireland were imported in the later Neolithic period.

CELTIC CROSS



Another Unissued Stamp



The Earlier Bronze Age

c. 2500-1200 B.C.

- **A range of skills and technologies had to be imported -- the ability to prospect, mine, smelt ores and manufacture finished metal objects.**
- **Ireland was rich in copper, especially in the south-west. Bronze age copper mines survive on Mount Gabriel , co. Cork. The copper excavated could have supplied the native population as well as been exported for trade.**
- **True bronze appeared (copper with 10% tin) and refinements in tools and weapons can be traced to around 1200 B.C.**
- **Burial pits or urns appeared around 2000 B.C. A refinement in the artifacts found in these tombs increased. These burial urns disappeared around the start of the later bronze age.**

The Earlier Bronze Age

c. 2500 – 1200 B.C.

- Ceremonial “battleaxe” Clonmore, co. Carlow, 1700 B.C.
- These types of ceremonial battle axes were common in burial chambers until around 1200 B.C.



**Disc of beaten gold of a type called “sundiscs”
from Tedavnet, co. Monaghan, early Bronze Age**



The Later Bronze Age

c. 1200 – 600 B.C.

- Ireland was affected by the dramatic changes that swept across Europe and the Mediterranean (think Greece)
- **A new range of socketed tools and sophisticated metal and wood working objects appeared..**
- **The appearance of a new range of gold ornaments appeared –twisted gold torcs as neck ornaments, bracelets and earrings and of beaten gold decorated with ribbing hammered up the back (repousse work) appeared.**
- **A gradual intensification of the metal industry after 1000 B.C. led to an astonishing outburst of creativity in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C.**
- **Named the Dowris Phase, after a great ritual deposit of artifacts was discovered near Birr, co. Offaly. During this phase sites which were to become important during and after the iron age saw significant activity.**



Funerary Vessel, c. 1800 B.C.



Funerary Vessel c. 1800 B.C.

- This food pot was found in Dunamaise, county Laois.
- These funerary vessels were found, along with urns, weapons and implements in excavated sites throughout Ireland.

The Later Bronze Age

c. 1200-600 B.C.

- Gold dress fastener, Clones, co. Monaghan, 8th century B.C.



Gold Collar Or “Gorget” 8th Century B.C.

- Gleninsheen, co. Clare



Pair Of Hammered Gold Armbands
1200 B.C.

- **From a hoard at Derrinboy, co. Offaly**



The Iron Age

c. 300 B.C. - A.D. 450

Collar of beaten gold

Broighter, co. Derry, 1st century B.C.



Before A.D. 450

- Boat of beaten gold, probably for votive purposes
- Broighter, co. Derry



The Early Medieval Period

c. A.D. 450 - 1200

- Bronze “latchet” brooch, decorated with spirals ending in crested bird-heads, originally seen against an enameled back ground. 5th - 7th century A.D.



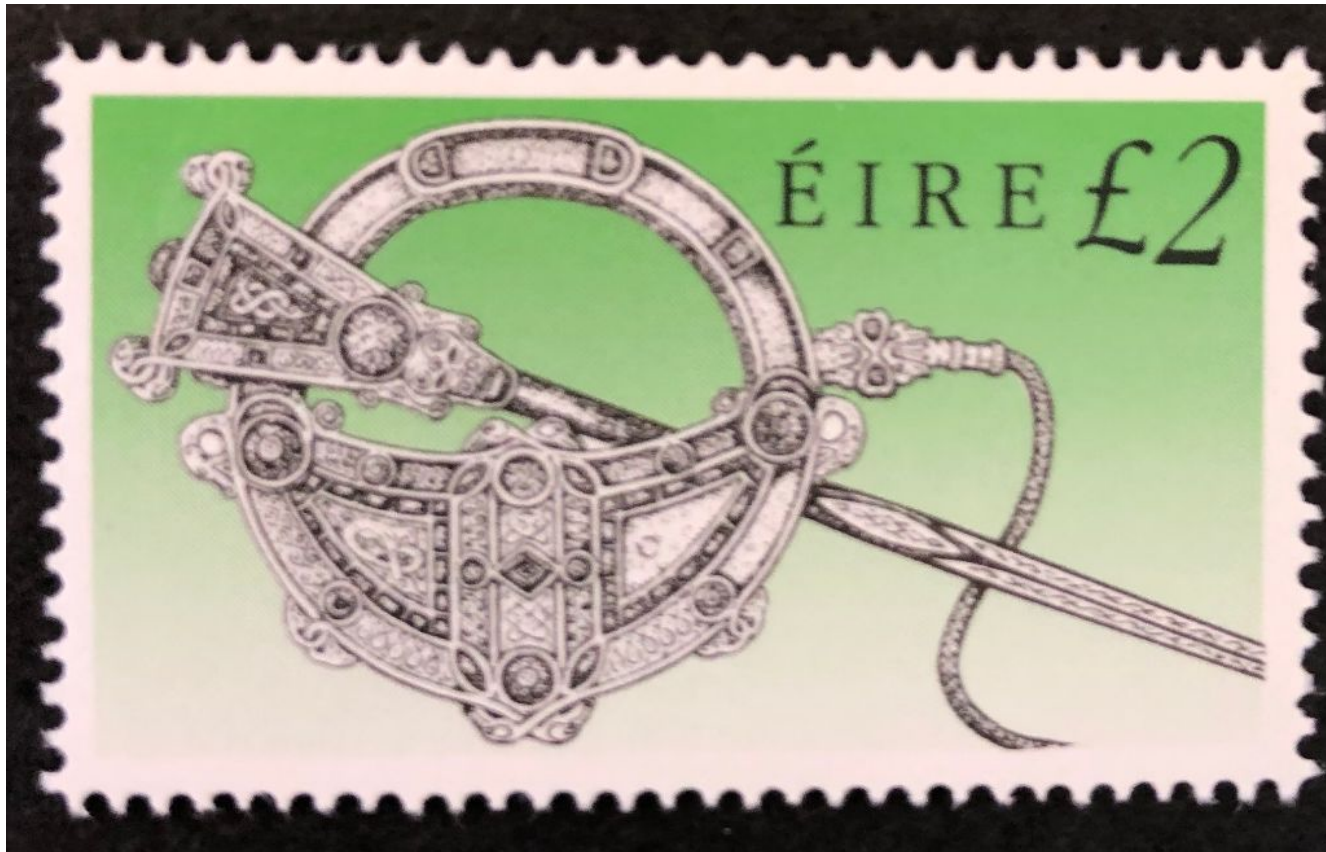
Silver Chalice With Enamel, Filigree And Other Complex Ornament

- Reerasta Rath, near Ardagh, co. Limerick
- Later 8th century A.D.



“Tara” Brooch, c. 700 A.D.

- Actually found near Bettystown, county Meath



700 A.D., Detail, Tinned Bronze Disc
With Engraved Ornament, Donore, Co. Meath



Silver Kite Brooch

- At 51 cm. long, this brooch may have caused inconvenience for the wearer
- County Kilkenny
- Probably 11th century A.D.



The Viking Age

- **Thistle brooch, Cashel, co. Tipperary**
- **In Viking times, penannular brooches came back in style**
- **Late 8th or 9th century A.D.**



The 11th and 12th Centuries A.D.

- **Bronze crozier, Lismore, county Waterford, between 1090 and 1113 A.D.**



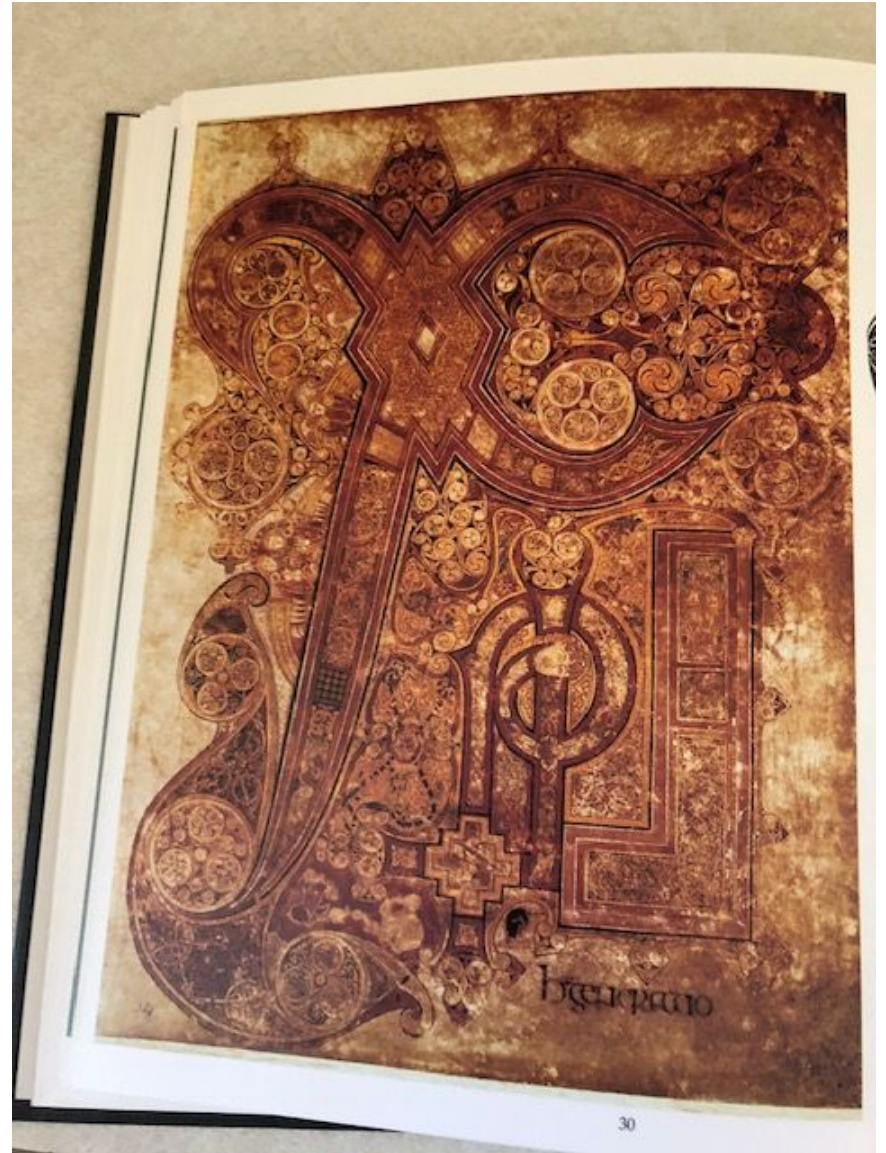
Shrine at St. Patrick's Bell Made by Cudulig Ua Hinmainen

- Made for the church at Armagh, 12th century A.D.



Book of Kells, c. 800

- **The Chi Rho or monogram of Christ**



CONCLUSION

- Ireland is an island of 5 million
- **Ireland has a long tradition of art, poetry, other writings, music and live art, going back millennium.**
- It has been overrun and occupied by many different cultures.
- **One can suggest that Ireland “saved” European civilization by preserving and exporting monks, books, and culture after the dark ages.**