

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2020**



Best Use of Media Relations



Phil Lynott Central Bank of Ireland coin 2019. Photo by Jason Clarke.

Campaign

Collector coins are back in town – the Central Bank commemorates

Description of Campaign

In 2019, the collector coin programme hit the right note with the launch of a coin featuring iconic Irish musician and Thin Lizzy frontman Phil Lynott. This strategic, in-house campaign encompassed a launch event and intensive media relations, resulting in unprecedented demand for a collector coin and impactful media coverage.



Banc Ceannais na hÉireann
Central Bank of Ireland
Eurosystem

Organisation

Central Bank of Ireland

Background to the Campaign

Issuing banknotes and coins is one of the Central Bank's key touch points with the public. The Collector Coin Programme has been running since 2003. Coins are issued to celebrate and pay tribute to figures of national importance and to commemorate significant events in Irish history. To date, over 60 coins have been issued highlighting moments of historical significance ranging from the 70th Anniversary of Peace in Europe and the Suffragette movement, to commemorating cultural and political figures such as W.B. Yeats and John F. Kennedy.

While its subject offering is diverse, the coin programme's following is niche and media attention was previously inconsistent. The 2019 coin campaign sought to change that.

The 2019 collector coin programme focused on the launch of three products:

- A €100 gold coin, launched in January 2019, to commemorate 100 years since the first meeting of the Dáil Éireann, launched at the Mansion House in Dublin by An Ceann Comhairle Seán Ó Fearghail.

- A €15 silver proof coin, launched in June 2019, was issued to mark 100 Years of Transatlantic Aviation, marking the centenary of the first non-stop transatlantic flight landing in Clifden, Co. Galway.
- A limited edition €15 silver proof coin, launched in November 2019, to commemorate 70 years since the birth of Irish rockstar and Thin Lizzy frontman Phil Lynott who grew up in Crumlin, Dublin.

The release of the Phil Lynott collector coin was a fantastic opportunity for the Central Bank to reach new audiences.

Statement of Objectives

Through a strategic communications campaign, the campaign's objectives were to:

- Promote sales of the Phil Lynott collector coin via traditional media and through targeted engagement with sector-specific media and Phil Lynott's existing fan base.
- Broaden the awareness of the collector coin programme for new audiences.
- Position the Central Bank as providing a unique and diverse coin offering by achieving prominent coverage across national newspapers and other strategic broadcast media opportunities.

Programme Planning and Strategy

As a state body, the Central Bank does not advertise in the traditional sense. To move away from the captive audience of coin collectors, it is reliant on achieving this through its owned social media and digital channels, influencers, and unpaid media exposure. This is dependent on a robust media relations and digital strategy, breaking through the saturated news environment to place pictures and stories which capture the imagination of new audiences based on a resource-only cost.

This campaign involved the development of a strategic, multi-layered media relations campaign.

Identifying influencers

From the outset we were aware that there was likely to be a keen interest in the Phil Lynott commemorative coin from coin collectors, die-hard Phil Lynott/Thin Lizzy fans and those that know them, more generic fans of 70s music, the public more generally. To achieve the campaign objectives, it was vital that audiences were researched, and appropriate channels identified to reach them. That meant we needed a deeper understanding of the media consumed by the fan base and music fans more generally.

Once identified, these targets were notified in advance of the launch and provided with press briefing along with a first-look design image of the coin. This was also tweeted to the Central Bank's 11,000+ Twitter following.

This resulted in coverage ahead of the launch in the NME, Hot Press and Guitar.com – not the usual outlets where you would expect to find news of the Central Bank.

Rocking the launch!

Having engaged with music media and Phil Lynott's fan base, the next step was to grab the attention of the rest of our stakeholders with several news hooks that would appeal to various media outlets.

We contacted Phil Lynott's former secondary school, St. Kevin's College, in Crumlin. Together we planned a launch event that was attended by students, media, Phil Lynott's family and invited guests. Opened by St. Kevin's brass band, who played various Thin Lizzy hits, the event saw President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, Central Bank Deputy Governor Sharon Donnelly, the school principal, and representatives of the Lynott family all taking to the stage to speak about the new coin, Phil's legacy, and the importance of following your passions, no matter where you are from.

Media engagement

To maximise coverage and impact on the days surrounding the launch, we planned a strategic media campaign that would leverage our news, content, and images.

To ensure coverage of the launch in real-time, we pitched and secured a feature with RTÉ Radio One's Today with Sean O'Rourke. The resulting segment lasted 10 minutes and included interviews with Central Bank Deputy Governor Sharon Donnery and the Principal of St. Kevin's, who reiterated our key messages, along with audio of the St. Kevin's brass band.

As well as giving media access to the launch event, they were also invited to a media event immediately afterwards. Held in the school's library, there was a photo call involving President Higgins with Lynott family members, school staff and pupils, Central Bank staff and celebrated musicians. Our own photographer syndicated photos post-event and were widely picked up in national and regional newspapers.

Immediately after the photo-call, we organised interviews with the Central Bank's Deputy Governor for television and national radio which were included in hourly news bulletins.

On social media, we drove traffic to our press release through a series of tweets that showcased the design of the coin and highlighted excerpts from our release. We also posted "behind the scenes" photos from the launch event, tagging the official President of Ireland account.

Results

The result was blanket coverage across print, broadcast, and online media.

On the day of the launch, we achieved significant national coverage across Ireland's main broadcast stations.

- Following a 10+ minute feature on RTÉ Radio One's Today with Sean O'Rourke, the coin was discussed on RTÉ Radio One's Liveline and on Newstalk's The Hard Shoulder with Ivan Yates.
- Radio features were supported with television coverage on RTÉ's Six-One News and Today with Maura and Daithí. Significant coverage was also secured on Virgin Media throughout the day, starting with a news update on Ireland AM and culminating in a segment on Virgin Media News with an interview with Deputy Governor Sharon Donnery.
- In total, we achieved seven TV news reports, three radio features and ten news reports on national radio.

News of the coin also spread on local radio, where we reached stations across all provinces.

The following day our print coverage was unprecedented, with coverage across all broadsheets and tabloids, some from outlets that have rarely, if ever, covered stories about the Central Bank. Pictures from the photo-call landed with all publications with our accompanying press release also receiving strong pick-up.

The collector coin also reached a younger audience through online coverage on outlets popular with millennial office workers.

The campaign was an unprecedented success in terms of coin sales.

Measurement

Our communications and sales objectives were completely surpassed.

Awareness of the collector coin programme was raised as seen by a spike in traffic on www.CentralBank.ie and www.collectorcoins.ie. Our Collector Coin page achieved 10,815 unique page views with users spending an average of 2m 45s on the page. The equivalent time spent on the Central Bank website for the same period averaged 1m 46s.

We also saw exceptional results on Twitter, where tweets exceeded our average monthly engagement rate during the period.

Prominent national media coverage was achieved across all target publications. The coverage was very positive and primarily focussed on the event, such as who attended and when the coin would go on sale. The positive and extensive coverage ensured there was a significant amount of interest in the coin when it went on sale. Target regional media radio multiplied our messages and we created a sense of excitement among fans through social and proactive engagement with influencers in the fan base, and brought the work of the Central Bank to an entirely new audience who previously would not have engaged with our work in any meaningful way.

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