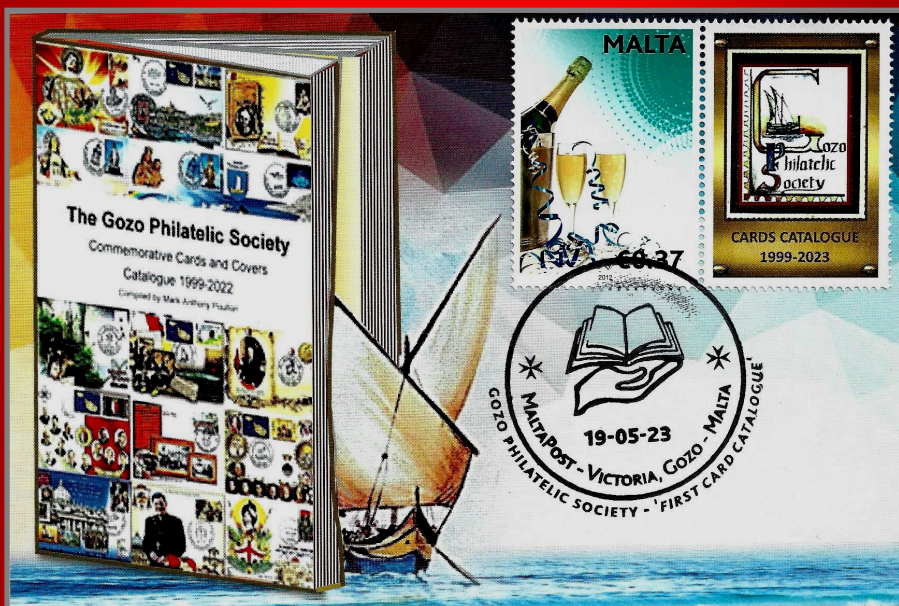


www.stamps-gozo.org



Like us on



GET IT SORTED WITH
SENDON 



The Gozo Philatelic Society was founded on 3 September 1999 for the promotion of the hobby,
the provision of a point of reference and co-ordination.

Front Page: Postcard with personalised stamp and special postmark
issued on the occasion of the launching of the
GPS Postcards and Covers 1999 - 2022 Catalogue

**PHILATELIC SOCIETY
OF CANBERRA**



Large Silver Medal awarded
to the Gozo Philatelic
Society Magazine

**GPS Newsletter — Official Organ of
The Gozo Philatelic Society**

First issued on 12 February 2000

Editor: Austin Masini — Designer Anthony Grech

Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the
Committee's official policy.

Correspondence (and material for publication)
should be addressed to:

*The Editor, GPS, PO Box 10,
VCT 1000, Gozo, Malta.*

e-mail address: secretary@stamps-gozo.org

© All rights reserved. Requests for reproduction of contents
should be addressed to the Secretary.

**Gozo Philatelic Society Patron His Excellency
Dr George Vella President of the Republic of Malta**

CONTENTS.

G.P.S. Diary No 80	G.P.S. Secretary Antoine Vassallo	4
ZIP codes	Anthony Grech	5
History Corner. Notre Dame Gate	Vincent Zammit	6
Philatelists' 10 Commandments	Georges Chapier	9
Numismatic Special (5)	Antoine Vassallo	10
Żebbuġ school children first mail	Mary Grace Xerri	14
Gozo on Malta stamps (updated series)	Anthony Grech	15
WHY? Latvia printed on maps	Antoine Vassallo	19
Junior exhibitor	Nicholas Curmi	20
Giuseppe Despott	Anthony Grech	22
Pictures of the Book Launch	Mary Grace Xerri	23
Malta Overseas - Wine	Antoine Vassallo	24
E & O <u>not</u> E - Pitcairn	Antoine Vassallo	26
Catalogue Launch and Lecture	Rachel Debattista	28
Promoting Gozo: San Blas	Antoine Vassallo	30
In Memoriam. Chev. John Micallef	GPS President	31

Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability.

Sam Kenn

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

(80) *G.P.S. Diary*

Antoine Vassallo Gozo Philatelic Society Secretary

VO/0546 secretary@stamps-gozo.org



1 March 2023 Il-Ħaġar showcase changed to “Lent to Easter” cards and stamps.

Issue 110 (**April-June**) of *L-Anzjani Llum* carries another instalment of our series covering Stamp Mistakes.

17 April Il-Ħaġar showcase changed to “Benedict XVI”.

29 April Committee finalizes arrangements for 19 May lecture and catalogue launch.

1 May Some 60 participated for an illustrated talk by GPS President Jesmond Borg at Hotel Calypso, organized by the British Residents Association, about letters by British residents (c1860-1900) postmarked M and A25.

17 May Another successful visit to Żebbug Primary School.

17 May Il-Ħaġar showcase changed to Anthony Grech’s Designs for Commemorative Postmarks (to honour the GPS book).

18 May Temporary exhibition set up at Il-Ħaġar showing pages from the new book.

19 May MaltaPost issues personalized stamp, designed by Anthony Grech with the relative postmark and covers, for the launch of the new GPS publication.

19 May Lecture at Il-Ħaġar and book launch (p23, 28).

20 May Secretary Antoine Vassallo takes part in Malta Study Circle virtual meeting and highlights the publication.

1-4 June Temporary Exhibition again available.

23 June Practical session at Żebbug Primary.

24 June Committee reports that all items in library scanned

26 June Contacts begin for a possible MaltaPost commemoration of the GPS silver jubilee in 2024.

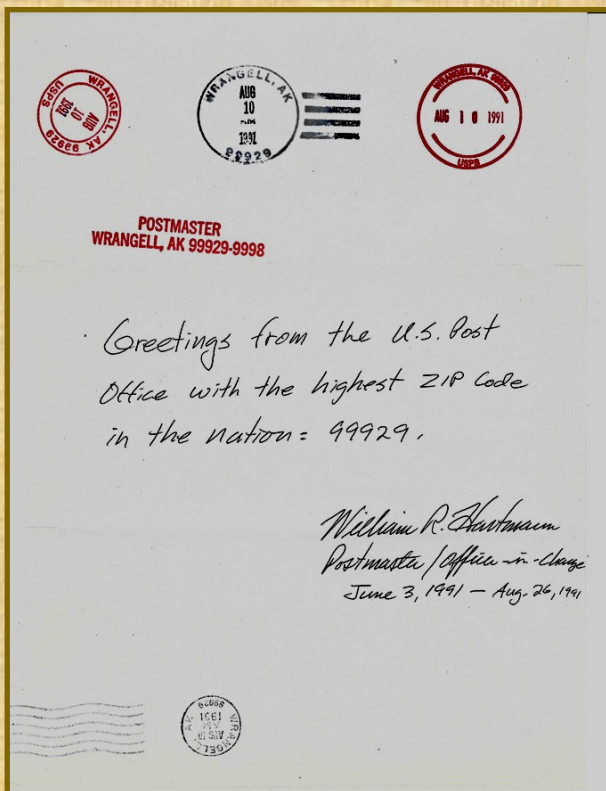
28 June Il-Ħaġar showcase changed to social philately items connected with the Napoleonic period in Malta.

Please note that our publications are included in Malta University’s External Research Collection and can be assessed on

<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/24814>

ZIP CODES IN THE USA. Fun Facts.....(Anthony Grech)

In 1991 the highest zip code in the USA was 99929 of the Wrangell AK Post Office. Today the highest zip cod is 99950 in Ketchikan, AK.



A greetings letter sent by William R. Hartman, Postmaster/Officer in charge of Wrangell, AK Post office to a philatelist in Malta. 26 Aug. 1991.

ZIP codes are numbered with the first digit representing a certain group of U.S. states. The second and third digits represent a region in that group of states or, in some cases, a large city. The fourth and fifth digits represent a group of delivery addresses within that region. The main town in a region (if applicable) often gets the first ZIP codes for that region. Other towns are often given ZIP codes in numerical order, usually numerically. Often, the biggest city in a prefix is given a zip code ending in 01.

The lowest and highest of these postal codes are both specific to areas in Alaska; The 00001 code is for the **N Dillingham area**. The easiest ZIP Code to remember is 12345, a unique ZIP Code for General Electric in Schenectady, NY.



Notre Dame Gate



and other kind of defence structures around the islands. Sometimes, new worries would surface, due to some other international event that would have occurred.

One of the preoccupations of the Order of St John was that of defence. Soon after they arrived in Malta in 1530, this was going to be their main worry. It was also going to be a drain on their financial resources. Yet, they always managed to build new lines of fortifications, towers,

In 1648 the island of Candia was besieged by the Ottomans. This siege



was to last till 1679, when finally, the island was lost. In Malta, this defeat did not go unnoticed. It was believed that Malta would be the next target. For that reason, the Order's Council decided to increase the defence of the island.

The military engineer,



Antonio Maurizio Valperga, was invited over to Malta to propose new fortifications. This was during the time of Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner. The Cottonera Lines were suggested, and in 1670 they started to be built. The whole system of fortifications was to be a drain on the Order's finances, and they were never completed as originally planned.

The postcard

The photo that we have here is showing the Notre Dame Gate. Sometimes it is also referred to as Cottoner Gate, or even, as indicated in the postcard, as Żabbar Gate. It faces Żabbar, and that is why it was named Our Lady of Graces, as it faces the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Graces of Żabbar.



One must keep in mind that during the 17th century, it was possible to see the sanctuary from that location, as there would not have been the present-day buildings between the church and the gate.

What is shown here is the proper gate, with the main entrance, down a slight slope, and two small entrances for pedestrians. Gates were not meant to



Stamp part of a set of 4 from the Treasures of Malta series *HISTORIC GATES* issued by MaltaPost on 26 September 2012 and designed by Cedric Galea Pirotta

be wide open, as otherwise the enemy would have a better chance of entering. Therefore, gates needed to be narrow and wide enough for a horse drawn carriage to pass through, small, and well defended on the sides. The guard room is located above the main entrance. Although there were other gates along the Cottonera Lines, this was the main one, and the most elaborately decorated, in the baroque style. At the top there can be seen a niche with a bronze bust of Grand Master Nicholas Cotoner. The niche is surrounded by a trophy of arms, indicating the military achievements of the Grand Master. Beneath the same niche there is a marble tablet with an inscription in Latin.

Behind the same guard house there are other structures which indicates that they would have been defended even from the inside of the fortifications. This would have made this area well defended. Basically, today everything is still there. The only difference is that the two pedestrian entrances have been blocked. The walls on each side of the gate have been removed to facilitate easier passage of the traffic.



1. Candia was the name how Crete was known at that time. It was under the rule of the Republic of Venice.

2. The Order of St John used to send help throughout the long siege of Candia.

3. Antonio Maurizio Valperga was a military engineer that was invited over to Malta to give his expert advice to the Order, how to make better the present fortifications, in case there would be a siege against Malta by the Ottomans. He was to be one of many military engineers that were invited over to Malta to suggest and supervise the buildings of fortifications during the long stay of the Order in Malta.

Philatelists' 10 Commandments

(Georges CHAPIER – established author
and member of the Académie de philatélie - 1932)

LES 10 COMMANDEMENTS DU PHILATELISTE

(écrit par Georges CHAPIER en 1932)

1- *Partout timbres rechercheras,
avec beaucoup d'acharnement.*

**You should look for stamps
everywhere, relentlessly.**

2- *Un catalogue achèteras, pour
bien faire les classements.*

**You should buy a catalogue,
for arranging the stamps.**

3- *Un album procureras, vaste et
solide assurément.*

**You should get an album,
surely big and solid.**

4- *Tes vignettes tu nettoieras en
les traitant soigneusement.*

**You should clean your
stamps, with greatest
attention.**

5- *Filigranes regarderas, les
dentelures même.*

**You should look at the
watermarks, as well as the
perfs.**

6- *Les surcharges étudieras, c'est
important assurément.*

**You should study the
overprints, surely important.**

7- *Les variétés conserveras, car on
en trouve rarement.*

**You should take care of
varieties, rarely found.**

8- *Mots étranger déchiffreras, plus
ou moins facilement.*

**You should translate foreign
words, easily or not.**

9- *Les tirages surveilleras, ne
spéculant que sûrement.*

**You should pay attention to
quantities, only risking when
sure.**

10- *Des faux tu te méfieras,
acquérant toujours prudemment.*

**You should doubt errors, only
buying prudently.**



NUMISMATIC Special (5)

Antoine Vassallo

In 2012 the **Marshall Islands** celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Euro through the issue of twelve 45 cent stamps showing €1 coins from, respectively, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. This set-tenant sheet from the sprawling central Pacific republic was designed by Zoe Seemel.



Austria's coins illustrated famous people from its history. Austrian artist Josef Kaiser created the designs. Depicted on



this coin is **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, the famous Austrian composer, in reference to Austria as a land of music.



Belgium's euro coins were designed by Jan Alfons Keustermans, Director of the Municipal Academy of Fine Arts of Turnhout. The first series depicts **King Albert II** who resigned in 2013, after some modification. In 2014 a new series showed **King Philippe**.



Finland chose designs based upon motifs similar to those used before on national coins.

The artist Pertti Mäkinen created a design depicting **Two Flying Swans**, taken from his competition entry for

a coin to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the independence of Finland.



The design chosen by **France** was the work of



artist Joaquin Jimenez. It featured a tree symbolising **Life, Continuity and Growth**, standing within a hexagon and encircled by the motto of the French Republic, "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité" (Liberty, equality, fraternity). In 2022 a second series was introduced, featuring oak and olive branches that symbolise strength, solidity and peace.



Germany chose its traditional sovereignty symbol, **The Eagle**. This motif was designed by Heinz and Sneshana Russewa-Hoyer.





The designer of the motifs for **Greece** was sculptor Georges Stamatopoulos. The image of **The Owl** was copied from a fifth century BC Athenian 4-drachma coin.



Ireland decided on a single national design for all denominations. They show the **Celtic Harp**, a traditional symbol of Ireland,



together with the inscription "Éire" – the Irish word for Ireland. The harp shown was designed by Jarlath Hayes.



In **Italy**, the designs were chosen from masterpieces by her famous artists. This coin shows the famous drawing by Leonardo da Vinci, displayed in the



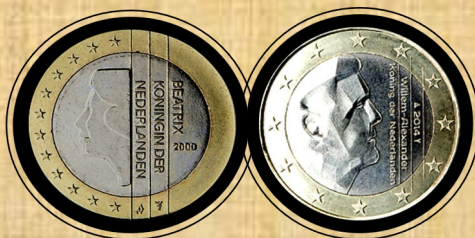
gallery of the Academy in Venice, illustrating **The Ideal Proportions of the Human Body**.



Yvette Gastauer-Claire designed all **Luxembourg** coins by agreement with the Royal Household and the government. All bear the



profile of His Royal Highness **Grand Duke Henri**, together with the country name written in Luxembourgish ("Lëtzebuerg").



The first series of the **Netherlands** showed **Queen Beatrix** (who resigned in 2013), designed by Bruno Ninaber van Eyben. The inscription "Beatrix Koningin der Nederlanden" simply means (Beatrix Queen of the Netherlands). The second series, introduced in 2014, shows **King Willem-Alexander** and bears the inscription "Willem-Alexander Koning der Nederlanden"



For the coins of **Portugal**, designer Vítor Manuel Fernandes dos Santos drew inspiration from historical symbols with the **1144 Royal Seal**



of the first king (Afonso Henriques *O Conquistador*) in the centre. The castles and coats of arms around it are meant to symbolise dialogue, the exchange of values and the dynamics of the building of Europe.



Spain, too, features her king: **Juan Carlos I de Borbón y Borbón**. The coins were slightly redesigned in 2010 and he abdicated in 2014. A new design showing **King Felipe VI** was introduced in 2015.



*I intend looking at more
Euro coins in the future
in the future.*





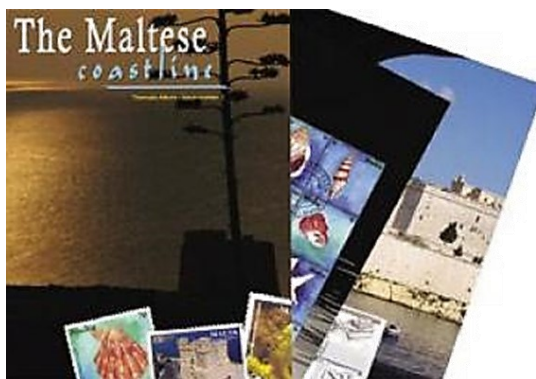
PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS SEND THEIR FIRST MAIL THROUGH THE POST

Mary Grace Xerri

More than once, members of the Gozo Philatelic Society were invited by Mr Saviour Tabone headmaster of the Żebbuġ Primary School, to give lectures to the students about the hobby of stamp collecting. During one of the visits, we realized that almost none of the children had ever sent a letter or a postcard to anyone. After discussing the matter with the headmaster and teachers, it was decided that we should organize a small activity and give the children an opportunity to write and send a postcard to whoever they wished. An attractive postcard {designed by Anthony Grech} was prepared and printed. Together with the teachers we explained how and where to write the address and the message and where and how to affix the postage stamp. Since quite a few of the children are foreigners living in Gozo, we gave them the option to write their message in any language they wanted. The children alternated their messages in a carousel of different languages, English, Maltese Arabic, Polish etc. and a beautiful one in Chinese characters.

The purpose of the day was attained as all students seemed extremely engaged throughout. At the end of this initiative an attractive THE MALTESE COASTLINE THEMATIC ALBUM was awarded to each student. These albums were produced and donated by MaltaPost plc as part of this project. Later the students were taken out to the postbox at the village main square to post the cards themselves. I am quite sure most of them will remember the day when they sent their first mail, in the years to come. On behalf of Angelo Agius, Anthony Grech,

myself and the GPS, I wish to thank Mr Saviour Tabone, the teachers the students and Ms Mary Grace Simpson Head of MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau for giving us the golden opportunity in showing the pleasure of sending a message by post through a postbox.



GOZO ON MALTA STAMPS

Issued by Malta Postal Administrations through the years

Continued from issue 88

Anthony Grech



WORLD TELECOMMUNICATIONS DAY MAP OF GOZO & MALTA

Face Value: 1c. Shades of Green White, Black & Orange. 6c. Shades of Blue & Black. 8c. Shades of Red & Black. 17c. Shades of Purple & Black.

Issued 17/05/1977

Perforation 14 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses (pointing upwards on vertical stamps, sideways on horizontal stamps).

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer: Harry Borg



RESTORATION OF MONUMENTS GOZO CITADEL

Face Value: 8c. Multicolour

Issued 15/02/1980

Perforation 14 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing sideways.

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer: J.A. Vella.



COMMONWEALTH DAY MAP OF GOZO & MALTA

Face Value: 8c. Multicolour.

Issued 14/03/1983

Perforation 14 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing sideways.

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer: Charles Cassar



EUROPA 1983 ĠĠANTILJA MEGALITHIC TEMPLES

Face Value: 8c. Beige, Blue & Black

Issued 5/05/1983

Perforation 14 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing upwards

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer: Richard J. Caruana.



10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC

MAP OF GOZO & MALTA

Face Value: 3c. Multicolour.

Issued 12/12/1984

Perforation 14 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing sideways.

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer Luciano Micallef.



7JUNE 1919 ĠUŻEPPI BAJADA

Face Value: 3c. Sepia, Red, Gold & Light Yellow.

Issued 7/06/1985

Perforation 14 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing sideways.

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer Luciano Micallef.



**EUROPEAN YEAR OF THE
ENVIRONMENT
OUR LADY OF LOURDES
CHAPEL OVERLOOKING
MGARR HARBOUR**

Face Value: 5c. Multi colour.

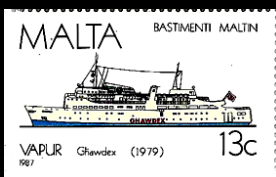
Issued 18/08/1987

Perforation 14 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing sideways.

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer Antoine Camilleri.



**MALTESE SHIPS
MV GHAWDEX**

Face Value: 13c. Multicolour.

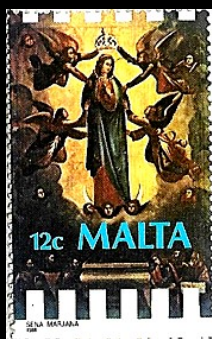
Issued 16/10/1987

Perforation 13.9 x 13.6 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing upwards.

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer Norbert Attard.



**RELIGIOUS
COMMEMORATIONS
MAIN ALTARPIECE AT
“TA’ PINU” SANCTUARY**

Face Value: 12c. Multicolour

Issued 5/03/1988

Perforation 13.6 x 13.9 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing sideways

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer Frank Portelli



**PRESIDENTS BUSH &
GORBACHEV MALTA SUMMIT
MAP OF GOZO & MALTA**

Face Value: 10c. Multicolour.

Issued 2/12/1989

Perforation 13.8 x 13.64 Comb.

WM Maltese Crosses pointing upwards

Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.

Designer Department of Posts officials.



**COMMEMORATIONS
U.E.F.A. CONGRESS IN MALTA
MAP OF GOZO AND MALTA**

Face value 20c. Multicolour
Issued 07/04/1990
Perforation 13.9 x 14 Comb.
WM Maltese Crosses pointing upwards.
Printers: Printex Ltd., Malta.
Designer Tony Bugeja



**DEFINITIVE POSTAGE SET:
NATURE AND ARTISTIC
HERITAGE OF MALTA.
MĠARR HARBOUR AND GOZO
CHANNEL**

Face Values: 14c & 50c
Multicolour.
Issued 09/12/1991
Perforation 13.6 Comb.
WM Maltese Crosses pointing upwards
Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta.
Designer Frank Portelli



**GOZO (& MALTA)
LOCAL COUNCILS
COAT OF ARMS.
XAGHRA, XEWKIJA,
ŻEBBUĠ**

Face Value 5c. Multicolour.
Issued 20/11/1993
Perforation 14 Comb.
WM Maltese Crosses pointing sideways
Printers: Printex Ltd. Malta. .
Designer Joseph Mizzi.

WHY were Latvia's 1918 stamps printed on Maps?

continuing a series by Antoine Vassallo to clear up uncertainties

On 18 December 1918 war-torn and recently independent Latvia issued its first stamps, printed on the back of German military maps. Why not on normal paper?

Looking back, Latvia had become part of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century. Discontent in various areas of the empire led to the Russian Revolution in 1905. Then on 1 August 1914, Germany declared war on Russia, catapulting Russia - and thus Latvia - into World War I.

In the coming years, German forces invaded most of Latvia. Latvian rifle-men units were raised to fight the Germans, while Latvian leaders began making calls for independence. Over the course of the war, more than half of Latvia experienced war damages: thousands of destroyed buildings and some quarter of the land ruined. A million people fled the country, not intending to return. The war officially ended on 11 November 1918, and Latvia declared its independence just a week later: on 18 November. During the war, Latvia had used overprinted German stamps. As a new nation, Latvia needed to create its own, but the war had caused a severe paper shortage. Practically the only stocks of top-quality paper were military maps left behind by Germany's Imperial Army, complete with name, scale and map grid position!

And that was what was used: according to records kept, 79 different German maps of Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, as well as 62 of southern Latvia and northern Lithuania. It was thus possible for the newly autonomous Latvian authorities to issue their first stamps a month after the declaration of independence: exactly on 18 December 1918.

Not to waste precious paper, the stamps were printed (by Riga-based Konrad Emil Heinrich Schnakenburg) in an unusual format: 12 rows of 19 stamps, for a total of 228 stamps per sheet. Just under twelve thousand sheets were actually printed, mostly unperforated.



Painter and graphic artist Ansis Cirulis designed these first stamps, basing on the Latvian coat of arms. The sun symbolizes statehood, with seventeen rays representing the districts. The design also includes three ears of grain and three stars, representing the three historic districts of the new nation.

Unfortunately this excellent effort did not really herald a stabilized future since Russian troops invaded at the beginning of 1919 (and quite possibly destroyed some of the “map” stamps!) In fact it was only in 1991 that Latvia could definitely become a completely independent nation.

A Junior Exhibitor in the Gozo Philatelic Society's Annual Exhibition



My first exhibit



My latest exhibit

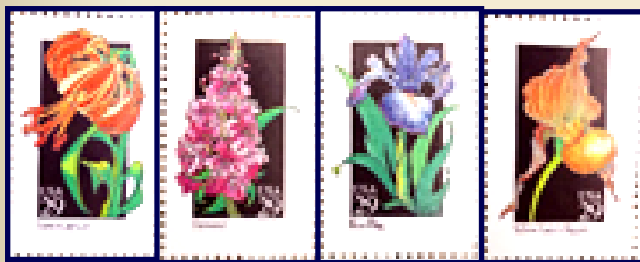
By Nicholas Curmi

I am a fifteen year old Form 5 student from Malta who participated in The Gozo Philatelic Society's 23rd Annual Exhibition in November 2022. I presented a thematic exhibit entitled *Flora and Fauna in United States Stamps. It is the second occasion I have had the opportunity to exhibit after having been introduced to philately at a young age by my mother who has been an exhibitor in Gozo and Malta throughout the years. She in turn had been introduced to the hobby by her expat parents who lived in New York City and received regular correspondence from friends and family in Gozo. My mother collected the colourful stamps on these letters placing them in tins and stockbooks. She would also visit a post office in her neighbourhood regularly with her own mother to buy new United States stamp issues as well as to purchase stamps for airmail replies.*

After having attended several local exhibitions throughout the years, I learned that - first and foremost - it is necessary to focus on a subject for participation. The first step was selection of a theme close to heart. After having gone through my mother's collection, I noted a large amount of United States stamps related to the great outdoors and nature. I had also recently taken up the activity of trekking, further enticing me to select an exhibition topic related to nature. While trekking, I take pleasure and find peace in appreciating the natural environment when coming across wild plants or unexpected streams after rainfall, as well as encountering birds and animals.

I fancied the bright colours and variety of United States floral stamps. Thus, a pane which I presented was U.S. Wildflowers. This USPS issue of fifty stamps

dates back to 1992. A wildflower is a plant that happens to grow by chance. Many wildflowers were initially brought to the U.S. by the first European settlers by accident as seeds in the soil under their shoes or even unknowingly stuck to clothing. Flowers were named using a system of matching with items of structural likeness. Plants have two Latin names with the first - capitalized - indicating a group to which it belongs and the second referring to its physical likeness. Each of the fifty wildflowers in this sheet is so labelled. Four of my favourite stamps from this pane are labelled as: Firewood, Blue Flag, Turk's Cap Lily and Yellow Lady's Slipper.



The U.S. Wildflowers issue proved to be so popular that thereafter booklets of garden floral stamps for each season of the year were issued. I displayed the 29c Spring

Garden stamps set at the GPS exhibition. Four of the flowers displayed in this 1993 issue are grown from bulbs, whilst the lilac is a shrub.



Another set of booklet stamps I exhibited was that issued in 1986 depicting different fish common to U.S. waters. Each booklet contained two identical panes of five stamps with 22 cent denominations. Saltwater cod and tuna are sold for consumption whilst the freshwater muskellunge, catfish, and bass are popular for outdoor sport fishing. Fish are an important source of food as well as a source of entertainment and relaxation!

Stamp collecting definitely provides a link to life. The opportunity to exhibit proved, not only to be a learning experience, but also to offer a platform permitting continuity of both my outdoor hobby and my family's lineage of keeping philately alive.



Giuseppe Despott *Anthony Grech*

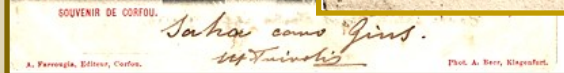
A particular undivided back postcard from my collection was sent from Corfu and arrived at Cospicua on 30 August 1903 to Giuseppe Despott. The sender whose signature appears on the front, addressed Giuseppe Despott as '**pittore**' and this made me wonder who this individual was. Here is what I found.

Giuseppe Despott was born in Cospicua on the 24 July 1878, the son of a renowned lawyer Dr. Carmelo Despott LL.D., and Giuseppina nee' Schembri. He received his education at St. Ignatius College and Flores College. In his early years, Giuseppe loved painting but this was not approved of by his parents. In 1900 he was admitted to the University of Malta for a 3 year course in Literature. He studied English, Italian and Latin, History and Philosophy. Although in the first year of the course he obtained good results, Giuseppe decided not to continue the remaining two years and dropped out of University. He was never interested in following in his father's footsteps. Aware of his son's artistic talent and ambitions - in oil painting - his father sent him in 1902 to study at the Institute of Fine Arts in Rome, Italy.

After successfully completing his course, Giuseppe returned to Malta. Despite his painting abilities, he never possessed a full time job as an artist. His real love and passion was for nature. He spent his time, watching birds, reptiles and collecting seashells. His 'note books' were packets of cigarettes on which he used to scribble his field observations.

Giuseppe Despott was just 35 years old when appointed Curator of Natural History at the University and entrusted with the Curatorship of the newly formed Museum of Natural History. Giuseppe also served as the First Superintendent of Fisheries. He held both positions until 6th June 1933 when he had to retire because of ill health.

Giuseppe Despott MBE
died in 1939.

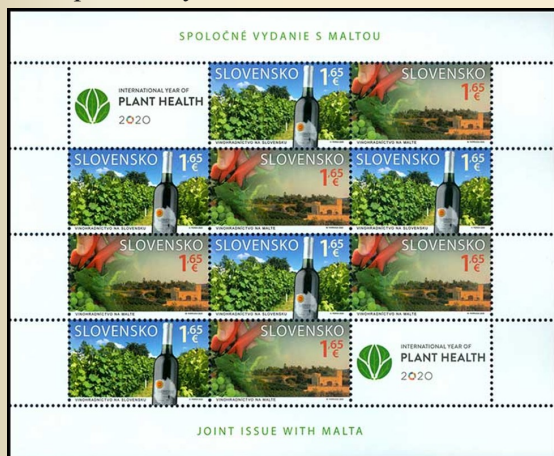


HIGHLIGHTS IN PICTURES OF THE LAUNCHING OF GPS BOOK & EXHIB *Mary Grace Xerri*





The 2020 joint issue with Slovakia featuring viticulture (for the International Plant Health Year) consisted of two stamps, respectively showing vineyards in Skalica and Girgenti. This latter is specifically a boutique winery, Ta' Betta.



Wine has been produced in Malta for thousands of years, probably beginning with the Phoenicians; but we are sure that both Greeks and Romans perpetuated this typical Mediterranean crop. The arrival of the Knights in the sixteenth century brought a strong revival, overcoming the negative effects of Arab rule. Unfortunately the British colonizers preferred emphasizing the cotton industry, uprooting huge areas of vines. Limited replanting only began at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Home production strengthened and then expanded strongly to retail and eatery outlets, the direct effect of the “new” tourism industry after World War II. However there was limited quality control and most commercial bottles did not actually contain local wine!



Apocryphal tales abound of wine producers confessing on their

deathbeds that “wine can also be made from grapes”! In particular, native varieties (such as Ġellewża reds and Ġirgentina whites) once again began generating interest.

Interestingly, Alexis Lichine wrote thus in his 1967 Encyclopedia of Wines & Spirits:

Vines are grown mostly along the southern coastal strip of the island but, since the climate changes from torrential early rains to scorching heat, the resulting wine is generally harsh and rough, an ordinary wine, either red or white. An attempt is being made to produce sweet, rich dessert wine from Muscat grapes, principally for exportation to the United Kingdom...the greater part of production is devoted to table grapes.



D.O.K.

DENOMINAZZJONI TA' ORĠINI KONTROLLATA
IS YOUR GUARANTEE OF ORIGIN.

European Union membership in 2004 substantially changed the scenario, resulting in a clear improvement in quality. It was decided to create two designations of origin: DOK (Protected Designation of Origin) and IĠT (Protected Geographical Indication). DOK Malta is produced on the main island and DOK Gozo on the smaller sister; IĠT Maltese Islands encompasses the whole country, with higher yields allowed.

Enologists note that white wine is king on the clay-limestone soils to the north of the island of Malta, with the south being the heartland of reds. Gozo's relatively diverse soils support all types of production. The archipelago's very dry climate enables sustainable cultivation, requiring limited artificial treatment – positively from an environmental point of view. One should note also that international honours began being won decades ago, by both minute and established wineries.

You are invited to send write-ups (or even just suggestions) about other foreign stamps with themes or designs related to Malta



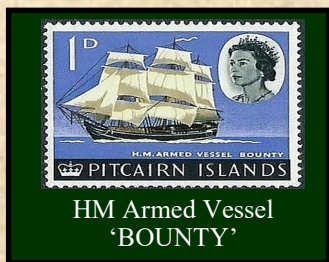
E & O not E

*glances at stamps with design or printing mistakes
(well-known or obscure)*

FAR AWAY!

Antoine Vassallo

Today I would like to visit the remote Pitcairn Islands (especially known because of the Bounty mutineers) – but I was still able to find a Malta connection!



A first set of 19th century paintings appeared in 1985, the top value showing a work by William Smyth. He was actually Admiral William Henry Smyth KFM DCL FRS FRAS FRGS FSA, born in



1788 in Westminster. He entered a naval career (merchant and Royal Navy), serving in the Mediterranean during the Napoleonic wars.

William had a range of interests, including astronomy. In 1817 he visited Giuseppe Piazzi (in Sicily) who had discovered the first asteroid known. After retiring in 1825, he built a private observatory, equipped with a 6-inch refractor. He published his observations in “Cycle of Celestial Objects”, awarded a gold medal by the Royal Astronomical Society. Though he died in 1865, Smyth has not been forgotten and his surname is hosted on the moon (“Mare Smythii”).

Besides being the grandfather of the founder of the Scout Movement (Lord Robert Baden-Powell), Smyth was also an antiquarian, author, and hydrographer. His technical skills in hydrography were exercised through his many surveys of the Mediterranean, resulting in an 1822 book “The Hydrography of Sicily, Malta and the adjacent islands surveyed in 1814, 1815 and 1816”. MUŻA’s Cartographic Collection includes a few of his hydrographical maps, not excluding “Plan of the Harbours and Fortifications of Valetta In The Island of Malta”.

I will not attempt to continue summarizing the biography of this sailor, not even to list the ships he was involved in. I will just mention that his

voyages covered waters around the world: Adriatic, Indian, Chinese, Australian. These various locations offered him attractive opportunities to produce works as a painter: a dilettante, not really professional. One can also mention that the famous painter and traveller Augustus Earle was a half brother!

Before reverting to the stamp, I think I should add that William Smyth had a lifelong interest in coins and wrote a lot about the subject. He was in fact instrumental towards the foundation of the Royal Numismatic Society.

Smyth's "A View Of The Village at Pitcairn Island, December 1825" was an attractive choice to be included in the set but an error cropped up in the date: 1835 instead of 1825. All stocks were printed when this was noticed; the Crown Agents decided to destroy them and hurriedly print a corrected version. As happens in numerous similar instances, some copies did slip through. Though technically unissued, they reached the market within months!

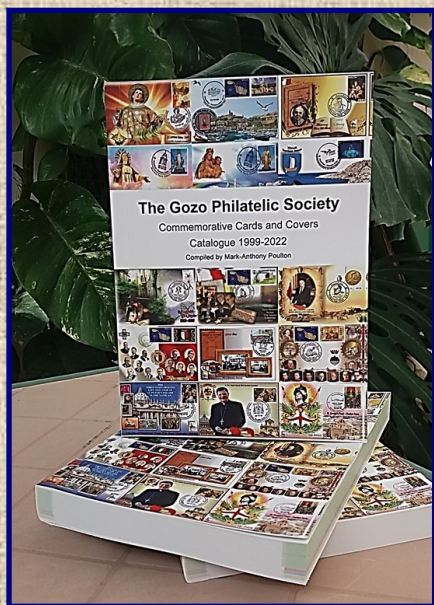
The singular "Island" is not actually an error: although the group includes four volcanic islands, only Pitcairn itself is inhabited – with just one village and a population considered as the smallest of any democracy in the world!





LAUNCHING OF THE GOZO PHILATELIC SOCIETY'S CARDS & COVERS CATALOGUE

Rachel Debattista



Friday 19th of May 2023 will be remembered as a memorable day for the Gozo Philatelic Society. The dedication and enthusiasm of the members of the society led the way to the very first publication of a full-colour detailed publication entitled, *The Gozo Philatelic Society : Commemorative Card Catalogue 1999-2022*, compiled by one of the committee members, Mark-Anthony Poulton. This publication details the commemorative cards and covers produced by the GPS since its inception in 1999. The cards commemorate events, history, art, culture, folklore and Gozo personalities. The GPS produces covers and cards whenever a “Gozo related” stamp and/or a special

commemorative handstamp is issued by MaltaPost plc. Furthermore, these special cards are also issued for the annual GPS exhibitions. The cards are all designed by one of the GPS founder members, resident artist Anthony Grech.

Preparations for this event had started early in April. The press was

informed and promotion of the event was done on social media, posters and flyers were printed and sent to parishes, schools and Local Councils. Mr Vince Zammit was invited to deliver a talk on the occasion. Seating was secured through an e-mail sent to the society.



The GPS book launch special event was held at Il-Haġar - Heart of Gozo Museum, a museum and community space, in Victoria, Gozo. At 6.30 p.m. guests and GPS members started gathering on level 3. At 7.00 p.m.

sharp the hall was packed with guests. The GPS secretary, Mr Antoine Vassallo greeted and welcomed the guests, whilst GPS president, Mr Jesmond Borg proceeded with an overview of the publication.

Mr Vincent Zammit, who lectures at the Institute of Tourism Studies in Maltese and a researcher in Maltese cultural heritage, delivered an interesting speech about the social and historical details that readers can obtain from the



commemorative philatelic covers in this publication.

At the end of the speech, two copies of the publication were presented to Mr George Cassar, Librarian of the Gozo Public Library. The Library, University of Malta, represented by Mr Mark-Anthony Poulton was

presented with a copy of the publication.

The evening continued with the inauguration of a temporary exhibition on level 2, showcasing a sample of commemorative cards and covers included in the catalogue. The GPS showcase on level -1 of the Museum was used to



showcase a very nice collection of original drawings designed by Mr Anthony Grech used for the commemorative handstamps.

Refreshments and canapés were served after the inauguration, whereat the guests and GPS members mingled.

This event was a great success, thanks to the GPS committee and all those involved. Special thanks goes towards the volunteers of Il-Haġar - Heart of Gozo and the Erasmus students from Poland studying at the college, *Zespół Szkół Technicznych i Ogólnokształcących nr 2 w Katowicach*.

For this occasion the Gozo Philatelic Society issued a commemorative postcard franked with a personalised stamp and cancelled with a special postmark issued by MaltaPost plc, all designed and prepared by Anthony Grech. (see front cover)

Promoting Gozo

Antoine Vassallo

SAN BLAS



The 2022 Sepac set offered four interesting designs by Daniel Spiteri, including a look at the smallish sandy beach of San Blas on the top value. This secluded area is a highlight of Nadur's natural attractions, on Gozo's northeast coast.

San Blas, surrounded by fertile grounds, is at the end of one of Gozo's most beautiful valleys – most probably an exclusive hunting ground for the Knights. Different shades of green surround this pretty little beach outside of summer. The topography can be seen as quite similar to Ramla Bay with its reddish-orange sand and rocky landscape. Its clear turquoise waters are surely ideal for those looking for a relaxing swim – even if they prefer to snorkel around the rocks and boulders on either side of the bay.



This area is often used for family picnics in periods when the sea is considered too cold for a swim. Its secludedness actually ensures that the beach is less crowded than neighbouring bays which are obviously more accessible. People may give it a wide berth because of accessibility restrictions but the hike downhill from Nadur may well be an attraction in its own right!

A historical attraction is the seventeenth century coastal tower (built by the Knights) overlooking the place: *Ta' Soppu* or *Isopu*. Grandmaster Nicolas Cottoner was reigning then but the construction was financed by the



Università, Gozo's administration. Interestingly, the guns here were used against the invading Napoleon's fleet in 1798. However it got progressively derelict, only getting professionally restored a few years ago – with the intention to create a trail around these areas.

San Blas refers to Saint Blaise, a fourth century Armenian bishop whose *cultus* became so huge after his martyrdom that legends began appearing – up to the *Legenda Aurea*. These stories include the miraculous healing of a child with a fishbone stuck in his throat. In the Middle Ages, when throat infections were especially dangerous and common, he was a most popular patron against these ailments – and included among the fourteen Auxiliary Saints. In Malta his intercession was asked for in still further circumstances – and blessed loaves distributed. So it is unsurprising that Nadur had a chapel dedicated to him (unfortunately lost) and public statues. He can be commemorated liturgically – usually as *San Bjagju* - on 3 February.



The craft beer bottle prominently shown is “Gozitan” too since it is produced by the Lord Chambray brewery located at the Gozitano Agricultural Village in the limits of Xewkija – but I leave this aspect to a future occasion.



It is with our deepest sorrow that we inform our members of the passing away at the age of 80 of

Chev John Micallef OSJ

who went to rest in the Loving Arms of his Creator on 3 May 2023. Loved and never forgotten by his wife Victoria and all the family members, friends and by the Gozo Philatelic Society of which he was a long standing member.



Welcome To

THE BOOK AND STAMP SHOP IN GOZO

De Soldanis Street
Victoria



Call Manwel;
21342189



The current opening hours are:

Mondays: 14:45 to 18:45

Tuesday, Thursday, Fridays and
Saturdays: 8:45 to 12:45

Wednesday: Closed

