

Like us on



easipik

24/7 Service

Easy, Convenient & Free

Improve Your
Online Shopping
Experience

34 LOCATIONS
All over Malta & Gozo
maltapost.com/easipik

malta post

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; 3 Gozo feasts commemorated.

PHILATELIC SOCIETY
OF CANBERRA



Large Silver Medal awarded
to the Gozo Philatelic
Society Magazine

**GPS Magazine —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 Emeritus of Malta**

CONTENTS.

G.P.S. Diary	Antoine Vassallo	4
Circular to all GPS members		5
Gozo Personality. H.E.Card. Mario Grech	Rachel Debattista	6
GPS Exhibition Participants	Mary Grace Xerri	9
E & O Not E. Colombus	Antoine Vassallo	10
Marian Coronations Stamps & Handstamps(1)	Rachel Debattista	12
Gozo on Malta stamps	Anthony Grech	15
US Christmas Art Stamps (1)	Antoine Vassallo	19
Malta Over Seas. Neptune's Courtyard	Antoine Vassallo	20
Not One but 2 Exhibitions-November 2025	Rachel Debattista	22
'A Poem by Mail'	NN	23
True/False—US First Airmail Femael Pilot	Antoine Vassallo	24
Development of Sede Vacante stamp design	Anthony Grech	26
GPS 'Philatelic Celebrations' Exhibition	Antoine Vassallo	28
'Thank You' Mr Jesmond Borg	Anthony Grech	29
Malta Postal 'PEPPI' in Uniforms . Advert	Maltapost	31

G.P.S. Diary

Antoine Vassallo Gozo Philatelic Society Secretary

VO/0546 stamps.gozo@gmail.com



- 27 July 2025** One of the publications for the Sannat titular feast includes an article by the GPS secretary featuring stamps connected with St Margaret.
- 29 July** Anthony Grech produces cover for Ġhajnsielem church stamp.
- 9 August** Anthony Grech produces cover for “Santa Marija” coronation handstamp (which he actually designed).
- 9 August** Saviour Grech has accepted the post of Vice-President and will continue to be responsible for filing administrative reports. The committee also discussed exhibitions.
- 11 August** We are informed that our proposal under the Ministry for Gozo and Planning’s Gozo VO Scheme has been accepted.
- 2 September** Il-Ħaġar exhibit changed to a Salesian theme, in welcome to Fr Fabio Attard SDB on his first visitation
- 6 September** Committee discusses November exhibitions and other projects.
- 12 September** Anthony Grech produces three covers for the three Gozitan statues included in the annual Festa set.
- October-December** issue of *L-Anzjani Llum* (#120) continues our colour series of Stamp errors.
- 4 October** Christmas Crib Society anniversary card issued.
- 4 October** Committee continues preparing for the November Exhibitions.
- 5 October** Fr Fabio inspects the Ħaġar exhibition at the end of his visitation.
- 6 October** Il-Ħaġar showcase now displays a range of stamps and covers related to the Music theme, within the “Opera in Gozo” Ministry initiative
- 8 November** Committee concludes Exhibition preparations.
- 10 November** Exhibition setting up begins.
- 11 November** Mass in Seminary Chapel and Exhibition inauguration.
- 12 November** Anthony Grech produces Exhibition Card, supported by MaltaPost as usual.
- 12 November** Three judges evaluate exhibits and visits by school groups begin.
- 14 November** Historical Exhibition set up by Anthony Grech and Mark-Anthony Poulton in Xewkija Windmill.
- 16 November** The Seminary Annual Exhibition dismantled.
- 17 November** Il-Ħaġar showcase now displays the range of *Milied f’Għawdex* covers and an assortment of vintage Christmas Cards, within the “Christmas in Gozo” Ministry initiative.
- 29 November** Anthony Grech again posts Christmas card (using the *Milied f’Għawdex* handstamp he designed) to members.

CIRCULAR TO ALL GPS MEMBERS

I have pleasure to invite you to our
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
at Il-Haġar museum & cultural centre
(*Pjazza San Ġorġ*, Victoria)
on Sunday **25 January 2026 at 9.30am** with this
AGENDA:

- 1= Minutes of previous AGM
- 2= Financial Statement
- 3= Secretary's Report
- 4= President's Address
- 6= Motions
- 7= Other Matters

Following the statute changes at the 2024 EGM, the current Committee continues in office but more paid-up members are welcome to offer their services. I also invite members to submit notice of **Motions**.

The AGM continues with
the **Distribution** of Certificates, Medals and
Prizes
(mainly sponsored by MaltaPost plc)
to all November 2025 **Exhibition** participants.

Junior exhibitors can invite their family too

Members can propose Statute amendments (copies of which are available from the Secretary) or other Motions.

All members are heartily encouraged to attend.

Secretary Gozo Philatelic Society VO/0546

GOZITAN PERSONALITIES ON OUR CARDS *Rachel Debattista*

HIS EMINENCE MARIO CARDINAL GRECH

Mario Grech was born in 1957 in the Gozitan village of Qala, later moving with his family to

Kercem.

After completing his secondary education, he pursued studies in philosophy and theology at the Gozo Seminary in Victoria, laying the foundations for a lifelong vocation in the Catholic Church. In May 1984, he was ordained priest by Bishop Nikol Cauchi, marking the beginning of his pastoral ministry.

Eager to deepen his knowledge of Church law, Grech furthered his studies in Rome, earning a Doctorate in Canon Law at the University of St Thomas Aquinas.

While in Rome, he combined academic work with pastoral duties, serving the Parish of Our Lady of the Ascension and working at the Vicar General's Office and the Sacra Ruota.

Upon returning to Gozo, Grech took on a



From a Parish Priest to a Cardinal
Set of 5 personalized stamps designed by Anthony Grech and issued by MaltaPost for the Gozo Philatelic Society

variety of responsibilities within the Diocese. He worked at the Bishop's Curia and served as Judicial Vicar at the Gozitan Ecclesiastical Tribunal, where his expertise in canon law proved invaluable. His dedication to pastoral care was further recognized in 2004 when he was appointed parish priest of



F'hem il-Konsagrazzjoni
u l-Ingresa Solenni ta'
Mons. Mario Grech
bhalta l-god ta' Għawdex (Malta)



Painting by Chev. Paolo Camilleri Cauchi. Postmark designed by Anthony Grech.
Card issued on 22-01-2006 from Museum of Archaeology, the Citadel, Victoria,

Kerċem, returning to the village where he had spent much of his youth. On 26 November 2005, Pope Benedict XVI appointed him as the eighth Bishop of Gozo, succeeding Bishop Nikol Cauchi. His episcopal ordination was celebrated on 22 January 2006 in a ceremony presided over by his predecessor, an event that brought great joy to the people of Gozo. As bishop, Grech guided the diocese with a pastoral approach rooted in compassion, dialogue, and a commitment to the spiritual and social needs of the community.



GPS President Anton V Said presenting a hand painted scroll made by Anthony Grech to the new Bishop of Gozo

Mgr Grech served as Bishop of Gozo until 2019, when Pope Francis entrusted him with greater responsibilities in the universal Church and elevated him to the College of Cardinals. This recognition marked both a personal milestone and a historic moment for the Gozitan Church, as one of its own took on a role of global significance. Throughout his ministry, Cardinal Mario Grech has been noted for his pastoral sensitivity, intellectual depth, and dedication to service —

qualities that have shaped his leadership both in Gozo and within the wider Catholic Church.



Card issued by the G.P.S on 28-11-2020 to commemorate the Creation of H.Em Mario Grech as the First Gozitan Cardinal. Card & postmark designed by Anthony Grech



The grand celebratory cake designed and crafted by Chef George Borg for the Gozo Bishop's appointment ceremony.

Gozo Philatelic Society Annual Exhibition 2025

‘PHILATELIC CELEBRATIONS’

Held at the Gozo Seminary Conference Hall from 12
to 16 November 2025

SENIOR SECTION

JESMOND BORG
MARK ANTHONY POULTON
ANTHONY GRECH
LARA GRECH
REV ANTON SCHEMBRI
RACHEL DEBATTISTA
ANGELO AGIUS
VINCENT GRECH
FRANKIE VELLA

JUNIOR SECTION

KAROL ABELA
PAUL BORG SCICLUNA
AIDEN BUTTIGIEG
SAMUEL CAMILLERI
DIEGO XUERB CAMILLERI
CLIVE GATT
ZANE GRIMA
GABRIEL BORG
LUCAS JOE BORG
JEROME JOHN BUTTIGIEG
LUKE CAMILLERI
JAKE DEGIORGO
JUAN GRIMA
MATTIAS ATTARD
SAMUEL BROOKE

TYLER CAMENZULI
JAYDEN CASSAR
CONOR KEENAN DEBONO
GIANLUCA DEBRINCAT
NATHAN GALEA
SERGIO GALEA
JUAN LEGROS
MAX MALLIA
GABRIEL MICALLEF
JULIAN MIZZI
BENJAMIN WOJAK AGIUS
FRANCESCO MERECIECA
BENJAMIN CARUANA
JEAN ABELA
MIKAEL MERECIECA MUSCAT

JUDGES; Samuel Parnis—John Debattista—Carmel Navarro
SET UP; John Attard—Mary Grace Xerri
CURATOR ; Antoine Vassallo

E&OnotE

Antoine Vassallo glances at stamps with design or printing mistakes

(well-known or obscure)

Columbus

A substantial number of countries celebrated – not just in 1992 only – the fifth centenary of the “discovery of America”. This name is usually used for the event even though not quite correctly since it had long been an inhabited continent. The United States postal authorities were quite prolific but Malta remained prudent.

I would like to focus on Italy which proudly considers Cristoforo Colombo as an important son; others claim him too, with variable spelling! Besides Italy’s “usual” set, the Poste added an adaptation of stamps issued by the USPS. The latter had reused designs issued originally in 1893, one of which showed the explorer’s flag ship (a single word in modern English). **1** As is well known, the flagship is the fleet’s main ship and has a prominent flag or pennant proclaiming the presence of an admiral or similiar commander. In Italian, this comes out as nave ammiraglia.



Unfortunately someone made a strange slip, translating “flag ship” literally into *bandiera e nave* which is actually meaningless (flag and ship)! **2** Even more interestingly, noone seems to have noticed. The error appears both in the loose stamp and in a miniature or souvenir sheet with two other different stamps (where the translations went smoothly). **3** We see here the prominent name of Maurizio Robiati who adapted the design; I do not know if the lettering was in his able hands too!

I add a tangential point: the same picture was used in 1897 by Newfoundland (at a time when this island had not yet become a Canadian province) purportedly showing John Cabot’s *Matthew*. This was the Italian Giovanni Caboto who sailed around North America towards the end of the

fifteenth century. ⁴ In the Columbus stamp, it of course represents the more famous *Santa Maria*. Obviously no photos exist, thus making it impossible to



decide which is correct. In any case, the flag (changed slightly) seems to be designed flying against the wind.



This important personality has been shown in quite a few stamps, exactly or not. In 1903 St Kitts-Nevis (Kitts being a corruption of Christopher), among the Caribbean Antilles islands, became a stamp issuer and decided to show Columbus using a telescope: I need hardly note that this is an anachronism since this instrument was only discovered or invented a century later.⁵



There must not have been any objections since this design remained current for fifty years!

MARIAN CORONATIONS

STAMPS & HANDSTAMPS

PART 1

Rachel Debattista

The idea and custom of crowning enjoyed primacy in ancient times and persevered in its sway through the Catholic Church, where crowning was not purely limited to a prince or a pope but also included effigies. This practice of officially crowning Marian images with popular devotion originated informally in the early 1600s with a Capuchin friar. By 1636, the Vatican formally adopted, supported, and regulated this practice. The process ensured that the highest honour of coronation was reserved for images that truly served as powerful centres of devotion, as demonstrated by popular faith and local history.

These venerated Marian icons and images of Malta, considered miraculous by the faithful, bear witness to the Islands' profound Marian devotion.

Coronation of the Madonna ta' Pinu Basilica of the Blessed Virgin of Ta' Pinu, Għarb



The altarpiece, of the Basilica of the Blessed Virgin of Ta' Pinu, Għarb, depicting the Assumption of Our Lady was done in 1619 by Amadeo Perugino. The Bishop of Gozo, Monsignor Mikiel Gonzi, wrote to Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, the Archpriest of the Vatican Basilica, requesting permission from the Chapter of Saint Peter for the image of the Madonna Ta' Pinu to be crowned. On May 24, 1933, Bishop Mikiel Gonzi wrote to Monsignor Giovanni Bressan, again forwarding the proposal for the crowning of the painting insisting that it would be a

historical moment for the Diocese of Gozo. Based on the many graces and miracles reported at the shrine, In May 1935, Pope Pius XI, with the Pontifical decree “Marianum exstat Sanctuarium”, granted the coronation.

The coronation performed by the Papal Legate, Cardinal Alexis took place on June 20, 1935. The ceremony started with a procession through the

streets to the Cathedral for a Pontifical Mass. In the afternoon, thousands of pilgrims made their way to the Sanctuary, where the image of the Assumption was placed on a special platform; Cardinal Lépicier arrived to huge cheers, entering the Sanctuary for the Solemn Vespers before the coronation ceremony officially began.

On a final note, when Pope Benedict XVI conferred the Godin Rose to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu the design was sent to the rector for his approval. However it was noted that the leaves were not those of roses plants. To describe how



exactly the roses leaves look like some from the Basilica gardens were picked, scanned and email to the manufacture in Rome. The result was that the leaves of the golden rose of Ta' Pinu are an exact replica of leaves from its own garden.

20.06.2015- 80 Years from the Coronation Our Lady of ta' Pinu, Gharb.

For the 80th Anniversary of the coronation of the painting of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu, MaltaPost issued a special hand stamp designed to be used on Saturday 20th June at Victoria Post Office. The occasion commemorative hand stamp was inscribed "MALTAPOST" – "VICTORIA, GOZO - MALTA 20-06-15" in the outer ring, and "80 ANNIVERSARJU INKURUNAZZJONI" – "KWADRU TAL-MADONNA TA' PINU". An image of the crown is included in the inner ring.



Postcard issued by the Gozo Philatelic Society on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of crowning of Our Lady of Ta' Pinu. Both the postcard and the postmark were designed by Anthony Grech.

PHILATELIC CENTENNIALS

glances – and longer looks – at events from a hundred years ago

presented by Antoine Vassallo

Greenland Great (1925)

This short article could in fact also be shown in the Art series since I am highlighting Jens Christian Rosing, born in July 1925. He became one of Greenland's most prominent cultural figures - author, visual artist, reindeer herder, archeologist, and museum curator. He also wrote books (and produced films) on Greenlandic culture - and designed his homeland's coat of arms. Greenland is of course a Danish autonomous territory and this personality (1925 – 2008) was born in Jakobshavn (today's Ilulissat in Greenland).

Rosing created over 150 stamp designs over some fifty years. All his stamps are marked by his deep respect and fascination for Greenland's native culture and the Arctic landscape. A recurring theme in his works was in fact traditional Greenlandic life - especially the hunter culture, sled dogs, kayaks, and hunting scenes - which he portrayed with great detail and authenticity. He had deep insight into the life of hunters and the way of life of the indigenous people (nowadays formally referred to as "Inuit"), which is reflected in the genuineness and warmth his designs still convey today.

His first stamp (1957), in the typically small format, tends to stand out in memory. His beautiful interpretation of the legend of the Mother of the Sea and the animal world she rules offers a glimpse to today's viewer of the rich cultural heritage and stamp artistry Jens Rosing would go on to create over the next half-century.

Technically, Rosing's work evolved from a more classical engraving style to watercolors and drawings, resulting in great variety in expression over the years. Common to all his works, however, was a keen sense of proportion, composition, and storytelling - all condensed into the tiny format of a stamp, which Jens mastered to perfection. However his last stamp, released in 2007, is exceptionally wide: it shows his beloved dogs pulling his sled. Collectors appreciated the intricate design so much that it was voted the most beautiful that year.



The stamp featuring Jens Rosing's portrait, included in the miniature sheet, is illustrated by Martin Mörck (based on a photograph by Ivars Silis).

GOZO ON MALTA STAMPS

Issued by Malta Postal Administrations through the years
continued from issue no 95

Anthony Grech



EUROPA-LEGENDS

Face Value; €0.59 Multicolour

Legend of Calypso

Issued 9 May 2022

Watermark Maltese Crosses. Printers; Printex Ltd

Design; Fabio Agius



EUROMED MARINE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORIC CITIES

*Issued 11 July
2022*



Face Value; €0.26 & €5.50 Multicolour

Shipwreck off the coast of Xlendi—Gozo Citadel

Watermark Maltese Crosses. Printers; Printex Ltd. Design MaltaPost



MALTA FESTA SERIES

Face Values; €0.37, €0.37

Ghajnsielem Our Lady of

Loreto

Kecem Our Lady of Perpetual
Succour

Issued 12 August 2022

Watermark Maltese .

Printers; Printex Ltd. .

Photos by

Mark Micallef Perconte





SEPAC-LOCAL BEVERAGES

Face Value; €2.00

Multicolour

San Blas Bay, Nadur

13 September 2022

Watermark Maltese

Crosses. Printers;

Printex Ltd

Design; Daniel Spiteri



SEPAC-TRADITIONAL MARKETS

Face Value; €1.50 Multicolour

Victoria Open Market

Issued 8 August 2023

W/rmark Maltese Crosses. Printers; Printex Ltd

Design; Daniel Spiteri



MALTESE FESTA SERIES

Face Value; €0.38 Multicolour

Munxar St Paul Shipwrecked—St Lucy, Santa Luċija - Xagħra Nativity of Our Lady

Issued 13 August 2023

Watermark Maltese Crosses.

Photos by

Mark Micallef Perconte



EUROMED 2024

Face Values; €2.00

Multicolour

Il-Brilli Game

Issued 8 August 2024

Watermark Maltese Crosses.

Printers; Printex Ltd,

Designer; Daniel Spiteri



SEPAC 2024 MAIN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Face Values; €0.45, €1.91.

Multicolour

Mgar Harbour, and Mixta Cave

Watermark Maltese Crosses . Printers; Printex Ltd,

Photos Daniel Cilia



MALTESE FESTA SERIES

Face Value; €0.45. Multicolour

St Lawrence, San Lawrenz, Sannat, St Margaret, Victoria, St George

Issued 30 September 2024

Watermark Maltese Crosses. Photo by Mark Micallef Perconte



CATS SERIES

Face Values; €0.20, €1.00

Multicolour.

Backgrounds of The Citadel

Ta Lourdes at Mgarr

Issued 4 April 2025

Watermark Maltese Crosses .

Printers; Printex Ltd, -

Design; Andrew Micallef



EUROMED 2025

Face Values; €1.50 Multicolour.

The Banca Giuratale

Issued 4 April 2025

Watermark Maltese Crosses .

Print Printex Ltd,

Design; MaltaPost



SEPAC 2025

Face Values; €1.91

Multicolour.

Ghajnsielem Parish

Church

Issued

29 July 2025

Watermark Maltese

Crosses .

Print Printex Ltd,

Design;

Maiah Grech



US Christmas Art Stamps (1)

Antoine Vassallo

The United States issued its first Christmas stamp in 1962. Since 1970, designs have had two general trends: “contemporary” with a secular or non-religious subject and “traditional” which are usually based on religious paintings. In this series I intend looking in some detail at the latter.



Both the stamps for 1966 and 1967 were cropped from the same oil: Memling's “Madonna and Child with Angels” - from the late fifteenth century - at the National Gallery of Art (Andrew W. Mellon Collection) which actually exists in variations elsewhere. Hans Memling (1430 – 1494) was a German-Flemish painter who worked in the Early Netherlandish tradition.



Hans
Memling
Self
portrait
detail

The actual stamps as printed were the result of work by Howard Mildner, Edward Felver, and Kenneth Wiram. It is the custom for the Postal Service to organize First Day ceremonies in places connected in some way with the issue: in these

cases, Christmas (in Michigan) and Bethlehem (Georgia) were chosen.

MALTA OVERSEAS

local connections on foreign stamps

Antoine Vassallo

Neptune's Courtyard



One of the most important and interesting buildings in Valletta is the Magisterial Palace - the residence of the Grand Masters and then of the Governors - which currently houses the Office of the President of Malta, our Head

of State. Parliament was there too, before the creation of the City Gate site. It is shown on one of the stamps in the French Valletta sheet which is being treated piecemeal (#76, 78 and 85).

The history of this palace dates back to the construction of Valletta, planned on a grid layout which allows clear identification of locations.

The stamp actually focusses on one of the two courtyards around which the palace is built: Neptune's. The other is Prince Alfred's - or "of the Clock Tower" which includes the Moors Clock; this was supposedly brought from Rhodes in 1530 but really designed by Gaetano Vella (possibly recycling older parts), inaugurated in 1745 and modified by Michelangelo Sapiano in 1894.

For many years the featured yard was dominated by the fountain named after Grandmaster Ramon Perellos Y Rocafull – simply "Perellos" - who in 1713 embellished the Palace with the only complete and intact set of the famous 18th century French Gobelines tapestries in the world. The fountain was designed by Romano Carpecchia (one of the most versatile architects that Malta has ever known) the year before. He arrived with little experience but

ended up transforming many of this island's smaller churches – and the Palace itself. He was also a great baroque designer: furniture, chandeliers and all that was necessary. He has been described as the epitome of the Baroque spirit, with a pronounced integrative approach and a rare control of the whole design process.

The fountain is now hidden by British-era developments, including a garden landscape. The present name of the courtyard is due to the Neptune statue brought by British Governor John Gaspard Le Marchant from near the present Victoria Gate.

In 1615 Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt had ordered the construction of an aqueduct to provide the new city with an easier access to water. In celebration, a large fountain was built near *Porta Marina* (the – lost - sea gate of Valletta), with a bronze Neptune at its centre. Attributions are varied, including Flemish sculptor Giambologna (Jean Boulogne) and Pietro Tacca or some other of his assistants. The 3 shilling stamps in the three George V definitive scenic sets (1926, 1928 and 1930) feature an interesting angle. In 1861 the fountain was disassembled; the basin relocated to Floriana and the statue placed in the Lower Courtyard of the Grand Masters Palace.

This figure was easily identifiable, being called popularly *il-Ġgant* (“the Giant”). It even got to symbolize what is probably the most well-established local beer.

The area and corridors around the courtyard offer interesting items, such as escutcheons with Grand Masters' coats of arms affixed to one the walls. These formerly adorned buildings of the Order, were removed in the 19th century and retrieved by Governor Sir Arthur Lyon Fremantle in 1897: a marble slab indicates why they finished there ("for their better preservation").

It is obviously impossible to give due coverage to *Il-Palazz tal-President* – such a popular tourist attraction, still more so after the recent restoration and upgrading – with its impressive halls such as the Ambassadors' Room, the Page's Waiting Room, the Throne Room and the Chapel. So I will limit myself to just further mentioning the Armoury (among the world's largest), the collection of portraits of Malta's leaders and the Great Siege frescoes by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio. And, as befits an old institutional building, ghost stories do exist!



Not one but two exhibitions **in November 2025!!!** ***Ghawdex Fil-Bolli – Memorja Dejjiema***

Stamps - Gozo Philatelic Society Exhibition held at Il-Mithna (the Windmill) in Xewkija, Gozo between 15th of November to the 8th of December 2025.

As NGO, our society committee was delighted to accept the invitation from the Cultural Heritage Directorate for Gozo to hold a philatelic exhibition at Il-Mithna in Xewkija. This windmill, a Gozo landmark, serves as a hub where folklore and other activities linked to Gozo's heritage take place.

The two exhibits featured a chronological timeline of Maltese history. The first exhibit is an artist representation of the 2009 definitive set, which tracks Malta's historical phases and milestones by depicting their related iconic images, with personalised covers by local artist, Mr Anthony Grech.



The second exhibit, by Mr Mark Anthony Poulton, is a chronological history of Gozo as featured through a selection of commemorative cards and covers issued by the Gozo Philatelic Society.

Rachel Debattista





A Poem by Mail

*To write a good letter,
take a handful of grit,*

*A plenty of time and a little of wit;
Take patience to "set" it, and stir it all up
With the saddle of energy.*

*Then fill a cup
With kind thoughts and
helpful thoughts, merry
thoughts too.*

*With bright words, and
wise words, and words
strong and true.*

*Mix all these together, and then add for spice
Some good news, some funny news, all news that's nice.*

*Then seal with a love kiss and stamp it with care;
Direct to your friend's heart, and presto! 'tis there.*

*anonymous "free" poem to encourage
letter-writing and thus more use of
stamps!*





Is it really true that...

1918 saw the first Female US Airmail Pilot?!

Antoine Vassallo



On 23 May 1918, Katherine Stinson became the first woman hired by the United States post office to deliver airmail. She actually had several other notable firsts and records in her short flying career.

Born in 1891 in Alabama, Katherine's family played an important role in early aviation. In fact her brother Eddie was an airplane manufacturer and her family ran a flight school.

In 1912 – thus, at just 21 - Stinson became the fourth woman in the country to earn her pilot's license. The following year she became the first woman to carry the US mail when she dropped mailbags over the Montana State Fair. Her sister Marjorie also flew an early experimental airmail route in Texas in 1915, for which she is sometimes considered the first female airmail pilot.

Katherine Stinson became known as the “Flying Schoolgirl” and earned widespread attention for her daring aviation feats, earning up to \$500 per appearance. In 1915, she became the first woman to perform a loop and created the “Dippy Twist Loop,” a loop with a snap roll at the top. Stinson also performed tricks at night, using flares attached to her plane's wingtips. She was the first person – before any man! - to fly at night and to perform night skywriting.

Stinson tried to serve as a combat pilot during World War I, but was denied. Instead, she helped train pilots at her family's school and flew fundraising tours for the American Red Cross. On 11 December 1917, Stinson set the American non-stop distance record, flying 606 miles from San Diego to San Francisco. She also set a Canadian distance and endurance record.

Since previous flights were experimental or not officially sanctioned, in 1918 Stinson became the first woman commissioned by the US post office to carry airmail. On this first occasion, Katherine departed from Chicago and flew 783 miles in 10 hours before landing in Binghamton, New York. She had hoped to make the complete flight to New York City that day to break the world's nonstop distance record but had to stop in Binghamton for



The airmail stamp in use at the time of Stinson's flight.



The rare 'Inverted Jenny' stamp printed in error with the plane upside down.. When the error was discovered the production was stopped. Making such stamp incredibly valuable.

fuel. Unfortunately, the field she had landed in was very muddy, making it hard to make a smooth landing and the plane toppled, smashing the propeller and damaging a wing. Although she was disappointed, she had still accomplished a major feat.

Stinson's airmail flight beat the previous distance record set by Ruth Law in 1916. It also bested her own previous endurance record from the previous year. Stinson had to wait eight days for replacement propellers to complete her flight, which she finally did on May 31. Later that year, Stinson would become the first female pilot to deliver airmail in Canada too.

Though she had been unable to fly for the military during World War I, Stinson was accepted as an ambulance driver. Unfortunately, the cold weather and poor wartime conditions took a toll on her health. After she returned to the United States, Stinson was struck with tuberculosis and needed a less active profession, leading her to retire from flying in 1920. She went on to work as an architect in Santa Fe, New Mexico, before her death in 1977.



Commemorative Cover honoring Katherine Stinson

The development of the ‘Sede Vacante’ stamp design of the Vatican

Anthony Grech

The Vatican "Sede Vacante" ("the see being vacant") stamps are special postage stamps issued by the Vatican Post Office for the specific time of a papal interregnum, that is to mark the period when the papacy is vacant, between the death or resignation of one pope and the election of the next. They are valid for mailing letters, postcards, and packages only during the vacancy period after which the sale is stopped and their postal value become invalid. This increase their collectible value and are somewhat rare.

The design is typical showing a symbolic image like crossed keys under an umbrella. The first such design appeared as part of the 1929 definitive issue. Some of the stamps were overprinted 'Per Pacchi' (For packages) and others 'Segnatasse' (Postage Due)



The first stamps overprinted 'Sede Vacante' were issued in 1939 with the death of Pope Pius XI.



In 1958 after the death of Pope Pius XII a set of 3 was issued in different format

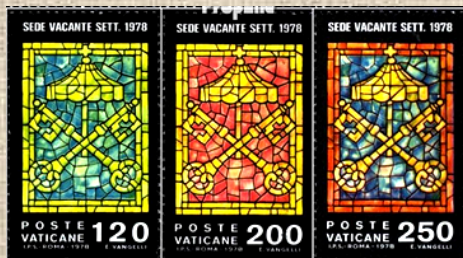


In 1963 "Sede Vacante" a set of 3 stamps were issued with the same motif but with different format by the Vatican Post Office following the death of Pope John XXIII the stamp.



On the death of Pope Paul VI the 'Sede Vacante' stamp design was totally changed to a more modern and simple one.

Pope John Paul I was elected on 26 August 1978 and died on 28 September of the same year. The 'Sede Vacante' stamp design were totally changed to a more colourful and stained glass style design with the same motif.



Karol Józef Wojtyła was elected as Pope John Paul II. On his death in 2005 a totally new set of 'Sede Vacante' was issued with the same motif but in much more elaborated and colourful design with angels holding the umbraculum (large parasol)



Pope Benedict was elected pope in 2005 but resigned in 2013. A set of 4 stamps with the same motif of the Umbrella and the Keys of Peter being carried by an Angel was issued.



Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J. became Pope Francis after Pope Benedict resignation. On his death, on Easter Monday, April 21, 2025, 'Sede Vacante' set of 4 stamps were issued with common design and same motif but different face values

Gozo Philatelic Society's 26th Annual Exhibition—‘PHILATELIC CELEBRATIONS’



The Gozo Philatelic Society's 26th Annual Exhibition was held at the Sacred Heart Seminary Hall in Victoria between Wednesday 12th November to Sunday 15th November. The official inauguration was held on Tuesday 11th November. Mass was celebrated in the Seminary chapel by Fr. Joseph Attard Chaplin of the Society, for the repose of deceased members and for the needs of members of the



GPS. This was followed by a simple inauguration ceremony and the blessing of the exhibits.

The main sections of the exhibition on display, featured traditional, thematic, postal history and social philately. From the senior's category, 10 participants contributed. Visitors could enjoy an array of early Malta air mail, Personalities on Maltese stamps, Grand Master cards, World War II censored mail, international philatelic exhibitions commemorative stamps, First Day sheets from





Gozo Seminary students with their teacher
admiring the junior section exhibits
Photo Mr Paul Galea teacher librarian.

the former South African “Bantustans”, US miniature sheets, local Marian coronations, 19th century tradesmen in Malta and hand-decorated maximum cards.

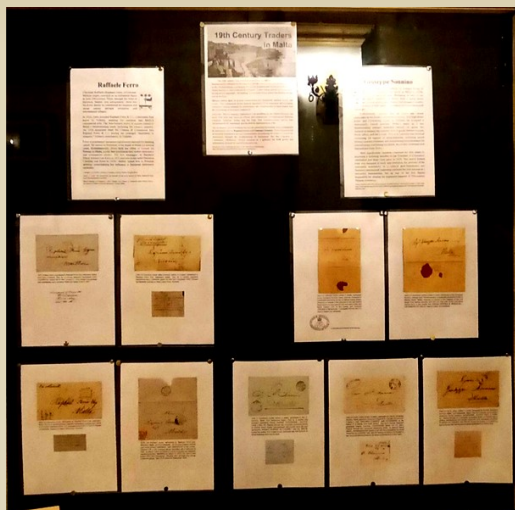
Thirty secondary school students also participated in the exhibition.

The exhibits were judged by Mr Samuel Parnis, Mr Carmel Navarro and Mr John Debattista. John Attard, Mary Grace



Xerri and Antoine Vassallo were responsible for the exhibition set up. Congratulations to all exhibitors and especially to Jesmond Borg who’s exhibit finished up as the **BEST ITEM ON SHOW**.

Thanks to MaltaPost the main sponsors of the exhibition who issued

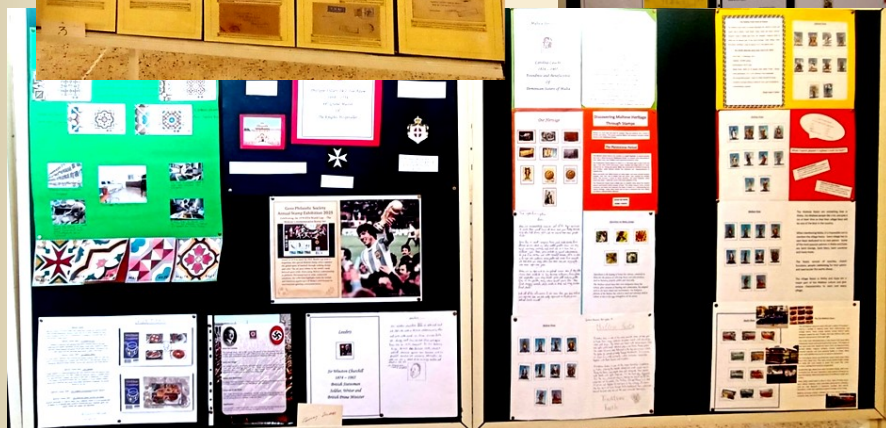


a special postmark, while the GPS issued a commemorative postcard for the occasion. Postmark, Personalised stamp and card were designed by Anthony Grech, President of the Gozo Philatelic Society.

The Society extends its gratitude to the seminary rector for providing the hall for the exhibition and the

chapel for the inaugural mass.

You can find the complete list of participants on page 9



MALTA POSTAL UNIFORMS

A **charming** set of 4 miniature Peppi Pustier figurines!

Each Peppi dressed in a different uniform worn by posties through the years.



Available from Post Offices or visit
maltaphilately.com

COLLECT MALTA STAMPS

SLIEMA STAMP SHOP

THE BOOK AND STAMP SHOP IN GOZO

De Soldanis Street Victoria, Gozo.

The only proper stamp shop in Gozo and one of the best in the Maltese Islands with a vast collection of local postage and philatelic material for sale.



The current opening hours are:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8.45 to 12.45

Saturday: 8.45 to 12.45.

Wednesday and Sunday CLOSED

Reception Telephone
21551211

