

Postal Diary

29 March – 30 June 2011

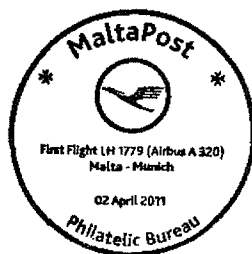
by
Joseph Fenech

30 March

MaltaPost plc informed that a number of letters in letter box numbered 278, situated in Triq il-Lunzjata, corner with Triq il-Kbira San Ġużepp, Hamrun, were damaged by fire. The last collection from this letter box was effected on Monday, 28 March 2011 at 7.31 pm, and MaltaPost officials became aware of the incident on Tuesday, 29 March 2011 at around noon. Service to this letter box resumed as normal. All the mail in the letter box, including the damaged mail, was duly delivered.

2 April

On the occasion of the inaugural flight of the new Lufthansa Airbus A320 on Saturday, 2 April 2011, a special hand postmark was used at the Philatelic Bureau on the same date. The special postmark was inscribed “MaltaPost – Philatelic Bureau/First Flight LH1779 (Airbus A320)/Malta – Munich/02 April 2011” and also included the Lufthansa logo.



7 April

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Professor Ġuże` Aquilina, a special hand postmark was used on Thursday, 7 April 2011 at the MaltaPost Victoria Gozo Branch. The special postmark was inscribed “Ġuże` Aquilina/Mitt Sena/minn Twelidu/1911 – 2011/7 ta’ April/MaltaPost – Victoria – Gozo”, and also included the image of Prof. Aquilina. This postmark was designed by Gozitan philatelist Anthony Grech.



13 April

MaltaPost plc informed that the Mobile Post Office was back in service.

14 April

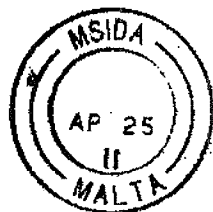
On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Gozo Civic Council, a special hand postmark was used on Thursday, 14 April 2011 at the MaltaPost Victoria Gozo Branch. The postmark was inscribed “Kunsill Ċiviku ta’ Ghawdex

– 50 Sena mit-Twaqqif – 1961 – 2011/14 ta’ April 2011/ MaltaPost – Victoria – Gozo”. The postmark was designed by Gozitan artist and philatelist George Vella.



15 April

On 15 April 2011, MaltaPost plc announced that it had opened a new branch on the campus of the University of Malta, Msida. The post office offers all basic postal services available at other MaltaPost branches as well as the encashment of Central Bank of Malta cheques, besides the sale of a wide variety of stationery and greeting cards. The branch is located in the ground floor of the Administration Building of the University and is open from Monday to Friday between 8.30 am and 1.30 pm and between 2.30 pm and 4.00 pm. Following informal contacts with the Philatelic Bureau, it transpired that this Branch actually opened for business, without any public announcement, on Monday, 28 March 2011. The date stamp used at this Branch was that previously used at the former Msida Branch Post Office.



18 April

An armed robbery took place at the MaltaPost branch post office in Sqaq tax-Xama`, St. Paul’s Bay. A sum of cash not exceeding €3,000 was stolen in this hold-up.

27 April

MaltaPost plc notified that the letter box numbered 265 in Triq Mikiel Anton Vassalli, Valletta, was damaged, and was temporarily out of service. None of the mail found inside suffered any damage.

29 April

On Friday, 29 April 2011, MaltaPost plc issued a philatelic commemorative set of four stamps presented in a miniature sheet, titled “WWF” 50th Anniversary”. The four stamps in the miniature sheet feature four different images of the ‘Chimaera monstrosa’, commonly known as rabbit fish in the Maltese Islands. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, this fish has ‘Near Threatened Status’ and will probably soon qualify as ‘Vulnerable’, as the population continues to decrease. The stamps in the miniature sheet, of which 70,000 copies were printed, carry face values of €0.51, €0.63, €0.67 and €0.97. The miniature sheet, which was designed in-house by MaltaPost, measures 130mm x 85mm, while the stamps measure 41.0mm x 30.5mm, with a perforation

of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available only as numbered miniature sheets. MaltaPost plc prepared a special commemorative hand-stamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 2/2011). The hand-stamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST----- - MALTA/”WWF”/50TH ANNIVERSARY/JUMIL-ĦRUG/29-04-11”, and also featured an image of the WWF logo. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 290.



4 May

The winners of the EUROPA Postage Stamp Design Competition were announced during an award-giving ceremony held on Wednesday, 4 May 2011 at the MaltaPost Head Office in Marsa. The winners of this competition were Ms Nicole Sciberras, a 14 year old student at the Malta School of Art, and Ms Brenda Camenzuli, a 14 year old student from the St. Ignatius College, Girls’ Junior Lyceum, Blata l-Bajda. The winning designs were to be featured in the stamp issue themed “EUROPA 2011 – FORESTS”, with the €0.37 stamp being designed by Nicole Sciberras and the €1.19 stamp being designed by Brenda Camenzuli. The said €0.37 stamp will eventually participate in the Best EUROPA Stamp Contest amongst EUROPA stamps issued by the 49 postal administration members of PostEurop.

4 May

MaltaPost plc notified that the letter box numbered 265 in Triq Mikiel Anton Vassalli, Valletta, which had been temporarily out of service, was once again back in use.

9 May

On Monday, 9 May 2011, MaltaPost plc issued the EUROPA stamp set for 2011. This set of two stamps was themed ‘EUROPA 2011 – FORESTS’. The €0.37 stamp was designed by Nicole Sciberras, while the €1.19 stamp was designed by Brenda Camenzuli, with the choice of these young artists’ designs being made following a Stamp Design Competition organized by MaltaPost in November 2010 for students between Forms 1 and 5 attending any secondary school in Malta or Gozo. The stamps depict the artists’ personal interpretation of “Forests” in the context of the Maltese Islands. The €0.37 stamp will participate in the Best EUROPA Stamp Contest amongst all official EUROPA stamps. 70,000 copies of each stamp in this set were printed. The stamps measure 44.0mm x 31.0mm, with

a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheetlets of 10 stamps (each sheetlet measuring 155mm x 165mm). Stamp booklets containing five €0.37 stamps from this EUROPA set, were also issued on the same occasion. The inside of the front cover of this booklet included an image of the special commemorative handstamp used to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue of this set.



The first day cover issued by MaltaPost for this set was marked FDC No. 3/2011. The special commemorative hand-stamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST----- MALTA/EUROPA/”FORESTS”/JUM IL- HRUĠ/09-05-11”, and also featured the image of a tree in the centre. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 291.

9 May

On 9 May 2011, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published the Communications Market Review (July to December 2010) – Doc. No. MCA/O/11-0312. This report outlines the key trends and developments in the Maltese communications and postal sectors for the second half of 2010. According to this report, total mail volumes handled in the second half of 2010 totalled 22.9 million items, 2.2 percentage points lower than in the second half of 2009. This decline is attributable to lower bulk mail and parcel mail volumes which outweighed higher letter mail and registered mail volumes. Letter mail items and registered mail items were up by 1.2% and 15% respectively. Bulk mail items and parcel mail items were down by 4.9% and 19% respectively. During the period under review, all Quality of Service (“QoS”) delivery targets set by the MCA for the delivery of postal items were met.

12 May

In a company announcement, MaltaPost plc informed that for the six months ended 31 March 2011, it had registered an increase in revenue of 1.4% to €10.7 million (from €10.6 million in 2010), but a decline in profit before tax of 9.3% to €1.7 million (from €1.9 million in 2010). Profit after tax decreased by 6.1% to €1.1 million (from €1.2 million in 2010). There were several factors contributing to this performance, when compared to the same period the previous year. The increase in revenue was principally due to increases in international inbound and outbound mail traffic volumes. These were partially offset by the continued downward trend of traditional mail volumes. Other non-postal revenue streams steadily increased over the previous year. Employee compensation and benefits increased marginally

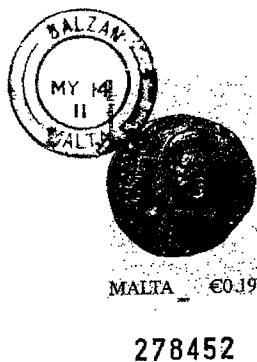
by 0.9% to €5.1 million. Other operating costs rose by 9.2% to €3.7 million. This was the result of higher mail costs, utility bills and Information Systems support costs. Finance income increased by 24.2% as a result of a gain on the sale of certain investments held in the company's portfolio. This was, in part, set off by lower interest income. Property, plant and equipment increased by 41.7%. A property was purchased to house a postal museum and additional improvements were made to the branch network as well as the Head Office building. Shareholders' funds increased to €22.5 million from €21.0 million as at 30 September 2010, principally as a result of a good number of shareholders opting to take the 2010 dividend in shares rather than cash.

12 May

Another armed robbery took place at the MaltaPost Branch in St. Paul's Bay on Thursday, 12 May 2011. In this hold-up, the second at this branch in three weeks, an armed and hooded robber made off with about €2,000 in cash from a man waiting at the post office.

14 May

The €0.19 stamp of the Definitive 2009 set issued on 29 December 2009 was reprinted and made available for sale from all post offices as from Saturday, 14 May 2011. The new run consisted of 1,620,000 stamps, in sheets of 10 stamps. These sheets bear the numbers 200,001 to 362,000, both numbers included. The stamp measures 44.0mm x 31.0mm with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were printed by the offset process by Printex Limited on watermarked paper bearing Maltese Crosses.



23 May

The sheet of stamps incorporating all the 17 stamps of the Definitive 2009 set issued on 29 December 2009 was reprinted and made available for sale from all post offices as from Monday, 23 May 2011. The new run consisted of 4,000 sheets, numbered 7,501 to 11,500, both numbers included.

27 May

MaltaPost plc notified that a new public letter box was installed in Dawret il-Gzejjer, Buġibba, San Pawl il-Baħar. Service to this letter box commenced on Friday, 27 May 2011. The last collection time for this letter box was after 7.00 pm on weekdays and after 3.00 pm on Saturdays.

31 May

MaltaPost plc continued with its upgrading programme with the opening of a new post office at 6, Triq id-Dolmen, Buġibba, San Pawl il-Baħar; this post office replaced the post office which was situated at Triq it-Turisti, Qawra, San Pawl il-Baħar. The new post office offers all basic postal services as well as the encashing of Central Bank of Malta cheques and the sale of a wide variety of stationery and greeting cards. This post office is open from Monday to Saturday, between 8.00 am and 1.30 pm.

3 June

The Sub-Post Office at ‘Welcome Bazaar’, 1, Misraħ Frenċ Abela, Dingli DGL 1081, was closed for business between Friday, 3 June and Monday, 6 June 2011, both days included.

6 June

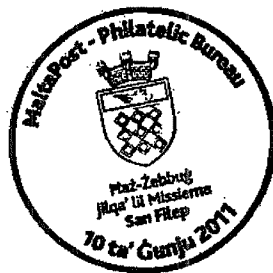
On 6 June 2011, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 108/2011 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the first quarter (January – March) 2011. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 10.8 million items, a marginal increase when compared to the corresponding quarter in 2010. The total number of parcels and other items sent through the national post in the period under review was 15,833, a drop of 27.7% over the first quarter of 2010 (21,910 parcels/other items sent then).

8 June

The Sub-Post Office at ‘Step In’, Misraħ ir-Rebħa, Birgu BRG 1300, was closed for business between Wednesday, 8 June and Saturday, 11 June 2011, both days included.

10 June

On the occasion of the feast of St. Philip of Agira, a special hand postmark was used on Friday, 10 June 2011 at the Haż-Żebbuġ Post Office. The special postmark commemorated the initiative of the Haż-Żebbuġ Local Council in bringing over to Malta the silver urn with the holy remains of St. Philip of Agira. The postmark was inscribed “MaltaPost – Philatelic Bureau/Haż-Żebbuġ/jilqa’ lil Missierna/San Filep/10 ta’ Ġunju 2011”, and also included the coat of arms of Haż-Żebbuġ.



10 June

On 10 June 2011, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) issued Consultation Document MCA/C/11-0366 on the Review of MaltaPost’s tariff adjustment proposals

on Domestic Letter Mail, Registration of Domestic Articles, and Foreign Outbound Parcels Requests. In 2009, MaltaPost had submitted a number of tariff requests to the attention of the MCA, covering domestic letter mail, registration of domestic postal articles and foreign outbound parcels. The tariff requests were evaluated separately and where it was deemed that a request is fully justified and there is no risk of jeopardising the future price mechanism, the MCA proposed that such an adjustment is granted. The scope of this consultation paper was to give a status report on the work streams involved, as well as to put to consultation the MCA's proposed decisions on MaltaPost tariff requests, which in turn represents the main focus of the consultation document. The consultation period for this proposed decision was to run until noon on Thursday, 7 July 2011.

15 June

MaltaPost plc announced changes in the opening hours of the St. Julian's and University Post Offices. Between the 15 June and 30 September 2011, the St. Julian's Post Office situated within the Lombard Bank plc in Triq Paceville, St. Julian's, was to open for business from Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 1.00 pm. On the other hand, between the 16 June and 30 September 2011, the Post Office situated within the University of Malta, Msida, was to open from Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 11.30 am.

16 June

MaltaPost plc announced that between the 16 June and 30 September 2011, customs clearance service at the Parcel Office at the MaltaPost plc Head Office in Marsa was to be available from Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 1.15 pm and 1.30 pm and 5.00 pm. MaltaPost could also clear items from customs on the customers' behalf at a nominal fee upon receiving the relative authorisation from clients.

30 June

MaltaPost plc notified that due to the Isle of MTV concert being held in Floriana on Thursday, 30 June 2011, the letter box numbered 252 at Triq San Pubilju, Floriana, would not be accessible. Therefore, in agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, collection from this letter box was to be effected at 3.00 pm instead of the customary 7.00 pm.

30 June

The Sub-Post Office at 'Aquavel', Triq San Bartilmew, Hal Għargħur GHR 1014, was closed for business between Thursday, 30 June and Saturday, 2 July 2011, both days included.