

Journal of

THE MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Vol 37/2

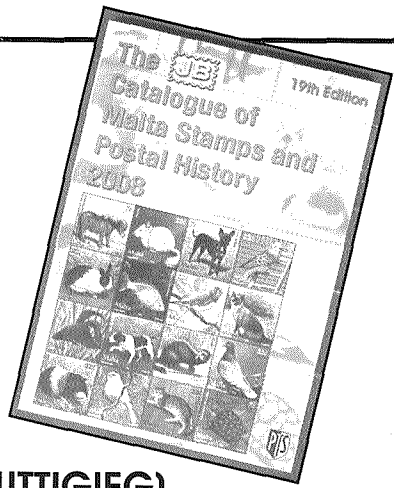
August 2008

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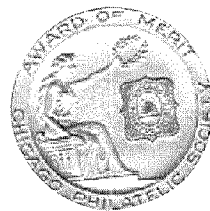
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Vol. 37/2

August, 2008

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Lazaretto of Malta

by Anthony Camilleri

Since the fourteenth century some European governments have attempted to prevent the introduction of plague and other epidemics by insisting on quarantine (from quaranta giorni or 40 days' seclusion), for persons from infected areas.

Suspect goods normally would be destroyed or, if valuable, fumigated in various ways. An infected ship in 1523 gave rise to an outbreak of plague in Birgu. The town was circled by a quarantine barrier, and the ship itself and all its cargo were burned and destroyed.¹

From early times the suitability of Marsamxett Harbour for the purpose of isolating ships was recognized. The little island in the middle of the Harbour being an ideal place for the segregation of contaminated cargo, passengers and crew. The beginning of the sixteenth century brought much activity into the harbours of Malta and, with its greater risk of the introduction of contagious diseases thus appropriate measures had to be taken for the protection of the population. It appears that ships arriving from the North African littoral were directed to anchorage at Marsamxett Harbour,¹ where they had to remain isolated for a certain period for purification. Quarantine was then unknown and the period of isolation was referred to as a period of purification (*purgazione*). Health guards were also posted in harbours and bays and coves wherever vessels could be illegally berthed.

In 1623, a case of plague occurred in the household of one of the Guardians of the Port. The contagion spread rapidly and infected other persons. The Commissioners of Health acted with alacrity; they sent all the patients and contacts to the Lazaretto, with the result that the disease was overcome after a loss of only forty five dead.

Another outbreak occurred ten years later, in 1633. The infection was traced to a trader whose house stood near the Harbour Gate (now Victoria Gate) in the vicinity of which ships arriving from the Levant were moored. The whole family was infected and the disease spread into the countryside, but prompt precautionary measures were adapted and the infection did not assume epidemic proportions.²

The islet was subsequently developed as a '*Lazaretto*' of San Rocco (a chapel dedicated to St. Roque the Protector against plague was also erected) and Quarantine Station by the Knights of St. John in 1643 for the disinfection of incoming goods and mail against cholera which was widespread throughout Europe at the time.

The principal officer at the Lazaretto was called '*Purificatore*'; he was appointed by the Grand Master on the recommendation of the Commissioners of Health and exercised wide powers. The Lazaretto was to become the island's isolation hospital for contagious diseases.³



A V V I S O

ANTONIO BORG è stato fucilato sta mane alle ore nove in esecuzione d'un giudicato inappellabile del Supremo Tribunale in data di jeri, fondato sull'essere stato jeri medesimo esso Borg scoperto d'aver nascosto la malattia pestilenziale da cui era da qualche giorno attaccato con manifesti sintomi, in contravvenzione all' Articulo 320. del Proclama del primo corrente Agosto, il che serva a tutti di salutar esempio per non commettere sì esecrabile delitto con cui si espongono a gravissimo rischio le vite de' proprij simili.

Malta, Segreteria del Governo 17 Agosto 1813



Grand Master Lascaris took definite steps to develop the little island in the middle of Marsamxett Harbour as a regular quarantine station. He negotiated an agreement with the Church Authorities, as the islet was the property of the Cathedral of Mdina. The order acquired possession of the islet in exchange for lands at Fiddien, a fertile valley west of Mdina.^{4,5}

Soon after the acquisition of Bishop Island, now Manoel Island, the Grand Master ordered the erection of suitable accommodation for the reception of patients and contacts, further buildings were put up from time to time and in 1670 Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner made improvements to the Lascaris Buildings which were just in time for the worst outbreak of plague ever to affect Malta.

On 24th December 1675 Anna Bonnici the eleven-year-old daughter of Matteo Bonnici a prosperous wholesale merchant from Valletta, suddenly fell ill with a high fever. The Proto Medicus, or Government Chief Physician, Gio Domenico Xeberras found her suffering from “an acute and malignant fever with a few red spots and a small pustule in the right side of the groin”.⁶ The girl died on 28th December 1675, being the first victim of the plague. Only Mdina, the old capital, the small village of Safi and the sister island of Gozo remained free of the plague.

The demand for beccamorti was very great; indeed some men were compelled to enroll for this hideous job.⁷ When no beccamorti were available, families buried their dead in their own garden or courtyard. The pay of a beccamorto varied from two to eight tari daily.⁸ At the time two tari were equivalent to the pay of a skilled worker, while eight tari daily were earned only by a few. It is understandable, however, why these high wages were offered to the beccamorti: they were defying death in the face; in fact many of them did meet an untimely end. They were called upon to perform various duties during the plague; they nursed the sick, served food to hospital inmates and fumigated infected houses. But their main task, as their name implied, was the carrying and burying of corpses in rural chapels or in the infetti cemeteries.

In the meantime all trade with Sicily and the Italian mainland was suspended. The epidemic died out in August 1676, but not before taking, 11,278 victims out of an estimated population of 70,000.

The quarantine regulations used by the Council of the Order were very comprehensive and strict; they were incorporated in the Statute Book of the Order and were enforced by an authority called the Commissioners of Health. The staff under the Commissioners of Health consisted of Guardians of Health, some of whom did duty afloat; others were employed at the Lazaretto. They exercised wide powers and made stringent regulations which implied severe punishment, even the penalty of death for those who disobeyed the health regulations.⁹

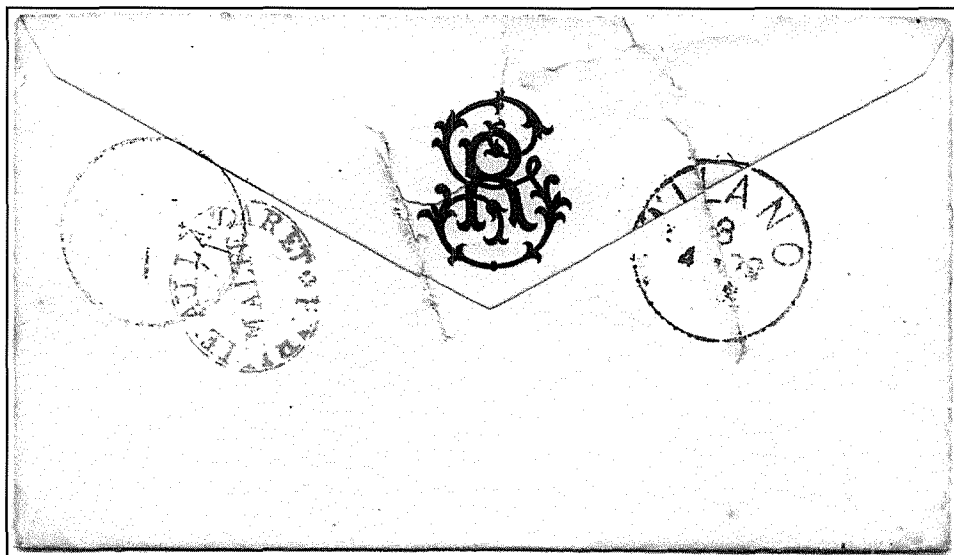
The Order always maintained the quarantine service in a state of efficiency. A complete record was kept of every ship subject to quarantine restrictions.¹⁰

In the archives of the Council of the Order one often meets with records relating to the management of the Lazaretto and to matters of quarantine, as well as measures authorized by the Council following advice by the Commissioner of Health such as quarantine restrictions for passengers and period of quarantine for ships arriving from the Levant.¹¹

In 1785 extra precautionary measures were adapted to prevent the spread of plague from an infested French ship that had arrived in Malta. In the same year assistance was sent to the inhabitants of Lampedusa where an epidemic of plague was raging and precautionary measures were taken concurrently with the dispatch of assistance.

During early British rule the same sanitary and quarantine precautions continued to be observed and proclamations were issued from time to time, first by Captain Alexander John Ball R.N. and later by his successors. On 7th November 1804, Sir Alexander Ball appointed a “*Comitato di Salute Publica*” for the Islands of Malta and Gozo. Other “*Comitati di Salute*” followed from time to time.¹²

When on the 5th October 1813 Sir Thomas Maitland (1759-1824) took over the reins of government, as the first fully fledged British Governor of Malta, he was saluted by a devastating plague epidemic. The situation was grim indeed and desolation reigned supreme over the entire island of Malta.



1879 (26 March) cover from Tripoli addressed to Milan franked by “ESTERO” 1878 20c orange tied by rectangular lozenge of dots accompanied by circular “TRIPOLI DI BARBERIA/POSTE ITALIANE” dated 26th March and “P.D.” all struck in BLUE. Disinfected at Malta with oval “PURIFIE AU LAZARET * MALTA” struck in blue and slitted. Milano arrival single ring handstamp dated 3rd April on reverse.

Anno III

Costantinopoli, Lunedì 22

L'INDICATORE

Questo foglio viene pubblicato
ogni sabato.

Il prezzo dell'abbonamento è sta-
bilito a 42 Colonna. per dodici mesi
6 per semestre, e 3 per trimestre.

PURIFIE AU LAZARET
MALTE

3885

Abbiamo trasferito la pubblicazione del presen-
te foglio al 22 per avere allegato dei Bastimenti e

GIORNALE

di Scienze, Arti, Varietà.

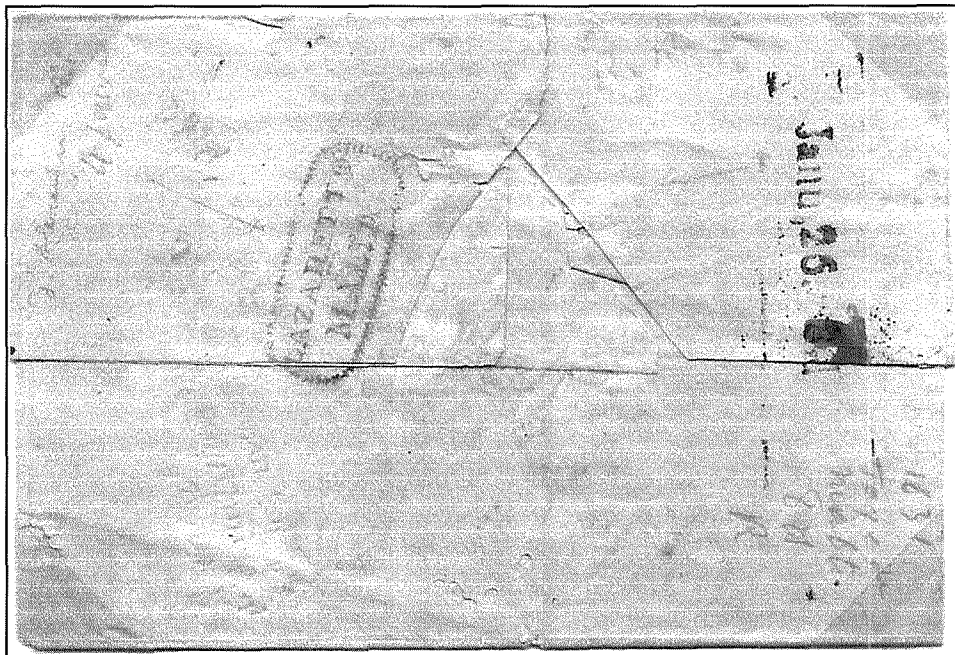
del Danubio Sera Perce
ieri e passeggeri

1844 newspaper 'L'INDICATORE BISANTINO GIORNALE' dated the 22nd January 1844 in Constantinople with disinfection slits and handstamped with two-line "PURIFIE AU LAZARET/ *MALTE*" in black.

Over the past two years there was a question. Where this handstamp was applied – In Malta or at Marseille.

According to K. F. Mayor *Disinfected Mail* page 278, Lit. Thomas Waghorn, after a serious diplomatic incident agreed with the British & French post office that an agent of the French post office would reside at Malta and he would proceed with all the details of disinfection. He would apply the circular cachet, with the wording: "PURIFIE AU LAZARET MALTE."

The infection was introduced by the British Brigantine San Nicola arriving from Alexandria on the 28th March 1813.¹³ As part of her crew had already died of plague on her voyage to Malta, the Yellow flag with a Black Ball in the middle, the sign indicating the actual existence of plague abroad, was hoisted.¹⁴ The San Nicola entered harbour on the 29th March and after the ship was properly sealed and isolated, the Captain and the crew transferred to Lazaretto, the Isolation Hospital. After thirteen days however the ill fated ship was permitted to leave the Island and sail for Alexandria.¹⁵ The first victims were two members of its crew, Captain Antonio Maria Muscara and the sailor who attended him were taken ill on the 1st April. Both died on the 7th April. This was followed by more deaths, the first on the 14th April, the victim being the daughter of Salvatore Borg a shoe maker from Valletta.¹⁶ The disease was not diagnosed until the 4th May when her mother also died. By the end of May the pestilence had spread to Mdina and other parts of Malta.



1831 entire letter from Alexandria to Malta showing oval strike “Lazzaretto/Malta’ and straight line “Janu, 26, 8d’ both just struck in black across join on reverse.

In an effort to control the spread of the disease the entire country was put under medical surveillance. Martial Law was declared, movements within the islands were severely restricted, infected houses were sealed off, the theatre and other public places were ordered to shut and even the Law Courts had to close.

Nonetheless the sickness continued to make progress bringing in its stride untold miseries and an alarmingly high mortality rate. Soon there were no more undertakers and convicts had to be employed to clear infected houses and bury the dead.¹⁷

Conditions were becoming desperate and in order to relieve the pressure at the Lazaretto, the little island of Selmun at St. Paul’s Bay was turned into a quarantine station and temporary hutments were erected for the reception of sick and suspected crews of vessels performing quarantine and for the purification of goods.¹¹

From Malta the epidemic was transmitted to Gozo reputedly in a box of clothes furtively introduced into that island. Only the walled town of Senglea miraculously remained unscratched. This was attributed to divine intervention and to commemorate the event a statue of the Madonna, sculptured by Vincenzo Dimech and paid for by Salvatore Debarro, was placed in the centre of the town.

The epidemic raged for eighteen months and mowed down 4,572 victims out of a population of over 100,000 people. The Government notified its arrest on the 8th September 1814.¹⁸

The cholera epidemic of 1837 did not spare Malta either and claimed 4,152 victims. It was diagnosed on the 9th June 1837 at the Ospizio Hospital in Floriana. Up to 10th October 1837 a total of 8,785 cases are known to have occurred in Malta and Gozo of whom 4,152 died. The population at that time being around 120,000.

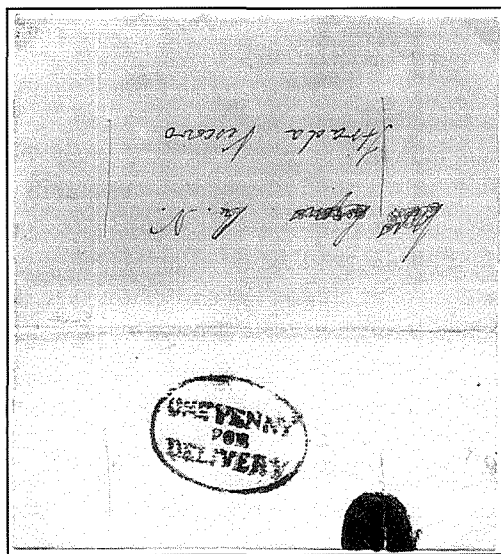
Although the Island was free from epidemic outbreaks the risk of introduction of contagion was ever present. Between 1810 and 1841 twelve ships arrived with infection on board, and several deaths occurred amongst the crew at the Lazaretto; sometimes members of the Quarantine staff and other contacts fell victim of the infection (1819 - 2 deaths, 1821 - 12 deaths, 1835 - 6 deaths, 1837 - 4 deaths, 1840 - 2 deaths, 1841 - 25 deaths). In view of the constant dangers, quarantine restrictions had to remain tight.

In 1837 regular French steamship services began to operate between Alexandria and Marseilles. Malta was selected as a quarantine station for westbound mail, and disinfection procedures and hand stamps, modelled on those of Marseilles, were adopted. The British Government also agreed to correspondence from India being disinfected there and a British official was ordered to accompany each mail from Alexandria to Malta to witness the process. The French Post Office Agent would then apply the appropriate cachet to letters which had been treated.¹⁹

The Lazaretto was very strict in the disinfection of letters. Letters sent from the Levant and from the Barbary Coast were subject to double disinfection – slit by two parallel cuts for fumigation and then slipped for an instant in vinegar.

At the Lazaretto there were special chambers each about five feet high and two feet wide built in the thickness of the walls for the fumigation of mail. Each

chamber was partitioned into two intercommunicating spaces: the upper in which there were racks and trays for holding letters, and the lower in which



Wrapper with addressee – ‘Mrs. Lyons R.N.’ – crossed out in blue ink, addressed to ‘Strada Vescovo’ in Valletta and having oval framed “ONE PENNY/FOR/DELIVERY” applied in black on the flap. The wrapper has disinfection chisel-slits and the address panel is toned – presumably by disinfection – at the Lazaretto Quarantine Station.

This mark is thought to have been used for local delivery from the Lazzaretto as it has only been recorded originating from there in 1830 and 1836.

1834

360



UFFICIO DI QUARANTINA.

Malta, 23. Gennaio, 1835.

Diretti di Quarantina dovuti dal Bordo
Lorenzo S. Gaetano, capitano Salvatore
Marulli, di tonnellate 60 - lire

Dal 3. al 23. corrente a 4/6 al giorno L. 4. 14. -

del restante periodo della Quarantina

Dal 24. del corrente al 9. Febbraio, a

7/6 al giorno ~~~~~ " 2. 2. 6.

L. 6. 6. 6

certificato apposto alla patente ~~~~~ " - 4. 2

L. 6. 10. 8

L. 6. 10. 8.

1. 4. - altri 29. Lire

Handwritten signature

L. 7. 14. 8.

there was a container for the disinfectant,²⁰ the sulphur being burnt inside the lower partition and the fumes dispersed into the upper partition. In former times fumigation was effected by sulphur fumes. Later on letters were disinfected by nascent oxygen resulting from the addition of formaldehyde to potassium permanganate. Letters were slit or perforated before being exposed to the fumes and were kept closed inside the chamber for thirty-forty minutes. Metal tongs were used to handle 'unclean' mail held over the fumes and these occasionally left their impression on the paper. An appropriate 'cachet' or 'wax seal' applied by the Health Authorities certified this procedure of purification.¹⁹

In 1911 cholera broke out yet again this time on the occasion of the immigration of nearly 2,000 refugees, mostly of Maltese nationality, from Tripoli and Benghazi following the outbreak of war between Italy and Turkey. Hundreds of these refugees who had no relatives or friends in Malta were temporarily housed at the Lazaretto, but on the sixth day of October they were transferred to Mgieret where tents had been erected to receive them in a field adjacent to the Poor House, the camp being administered and supplied with food from this institution. On 15th October the first case surfaced and the disease spread to the Poor House and then, gradually and unevenly in various localities, giving rise to local outbreaks. The Poor House, Żejtun and Qormi were most severely hit. Gozo escaped the infection. The epidemic came to an end after 67 days, the last case occurring on the 20th December. One hundred and sixteen cases were reported, of whom 85 died.¹⁸

Some alarm was raised in 1925 when smallpox was introduced into the Island; there was a brisk spread of the disease which however was rapidly contained. 104 cases were notified, of which 9 proved fatal. Compulsory vaccination as provided by the Sanitary Ordinance of 1908 was enforced over all the population and proved highly effective to cut short the incidence²⁰.

In 1936 the Lazaretto was roused into feverish activity for the last time. Plague was introduced in Malta and threatened to invade the Island. The patients were only 36 but for thirteen months their admission into hospital as well as the isolation of their contents caused a good deal of work and worry. That was the last flutter of the Lazaretto grim and foreboding as known to past generations. Two years later the Second World War was declared and the Lazaretto lost its pristine influence and individuality.

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Maltex 2008

7, 8, 9 November
Phoenicia, Floriana

The Exhibition will be inaugurated on the
6th November at 6pm
by the Chairman of Heritage Malta Mr. J. Said,
and blessed by The Rev. Mgr. Lawrence Gatt,
Chancellor of the Archbishop’s Curia.

Participants are to submit their Exhibition Application Form
to Mr. H. Wood, 52 St. Dominic Str. Sliema SLM 1405,
not later than 10th September 2008

Remembering Anthony Fenech

(1938 – 2006)

(second anniversary of his demise – 23 September 2006)

**A philatelist of international fame
Member of the Royal Philatelic Society (London)**

by Commendatore Dr. Phil. Olaf Hein, M.A., Acc.

and Cavaliere Rolf Mader, Acc.

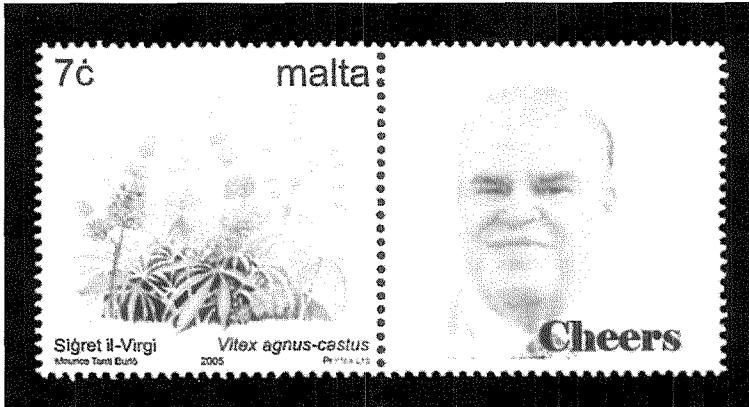
(Wiesbaden/Germany)

We became acquainted with Mr Anthony Fenech more than ten years ago in the stamp-shop of Mr Joseph Buttigieg in Malta (Sliema/Manwel-Dimech-Street), which we frequented at regular intervals during our sojourns on the island, devoted not only to scientific research but also to recreation. A man, sitting there every Tuesday morning on a small tabouret at the side of the counter with numerous scribbling sheets of paper before him, at the first moment we took for a customer, having special wishes, apparently as difficult as time-consuming. Not wanting to press forward ourselves (the performance of our own shopping empirically took even more time than an hour), we gave Mr Buttigieg to understand, he first of all might serve this customer; we would wait, of course, as long as necessary.

Smiling, Mr Buttigieg responded: “He is a permanent resident.” At the first moment, we did not know, what this answer should mean, but then we were informed, that this ‘customer’ was not a ‘customer’, but a famous specialist in Malta-philately revisiting Mr Buttigieg’s shop every Tuesday-morning in order to discuss special philatelic questions and to give or to receive multifarious stimulations in the field of stamp-collecting.

With the years, multiplying our visits in Mr Buttigieg’s stamp-shop, we became more and more familiar with Mr Anthony Fenech too and finally, in the course of time, on the occasion of our multiple meetings, it generally happened that we exchanged small philatelic presents with him, mostly peculiarities, not easy or never to find in the field of commerce. On the occasion of these ceremonies, Mr Fenech turned out to be an agreeable person to talk, full of extensive knowledge, a fine sense of humour and noble-hearted helpfulness. When, full of sincere enthusiasm, starting a sentence with the word “Look...”, we knew, that a little more than interesting, philatelically minded scientific lecture would follow.

But not only philatelic themes were discussed. When eg. trying to visit the famous prehistoric Hypogeum Hal Saflieni in Paola (Burial Street); cf. Buttigieg-catalogue-numbers 188, 188a, 211, 211 a = Michel-catalogue-numbers 179, 193,



*Personalized stamp, issued by Maltapost,
showing the portrait of Mr Anthony Fenech*

202, 227) during a stay on the Maltese islands in the year 2002 (the archeological relics, unique of their kind, have been entered in the “Unisco-World-Heritage-List” since the 5th of September 1980 and the conceded number of visitors is extremely limited; petition with respect to exceptional permissions are refused in the most non-obliging manner), it turned out, that such a visit entails a lot of bureaucratic troubles, being necessary for the future visitor to announce himself on a waiting-list with already exactly fixed visit’s date some weeks in advance, that means, at a moment, normally not yet knowing when to stay in Malta again; moreover the ticket has to be fetched a couple of days before the long-desire survey would be taking place, that means, on a point of time, when we had not yet arrived in Malta at all.

With ample amiability and exemplary helpful, Mr Fenech offered to take the burden on his shoulder and to arrange whatever would be needed, when we did arrive again in Malta some months later, he had prepared the visit of the Hypogeum in the best possible manner and kindly handed over to us the tickets of admission. – Thus, his goodness and his selfless effort covered even such fields having nothing to do with philately at all and not touching his own interests.

When we intended to honour the famous polystoric savant of the baroque-period, Athanasius Kircher SJ (1602-1680), having been at work in Malta 1637/1638, with a Maltese commemoration-stamp, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of his birth, Mr Fenech (for many years a “Member of the plc Maltapost Stamp Advisory Board”) did not hesitate in acquainting us with the competent personalities of the Maltese post-administration; beyond this, he set in for the project in such an intent manner, that the Kircher-commemoration-stamp is now listed in the Buttigieg-specialized catalogue Nr 1920 = Michel Nr. 1245.

For more details concerning this stamp cf. our account in the bulletin *Die Melita*,

published by the German *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Malta e.V.*”, fascicle Nr. 4, 2005, p. 6-7 and even in the “PSM-Journal”, Vol XXXII, fascicle Nr. 2, 2003, p. 22-24).

Mr Anthony Fenech was a philatelist as full of knowledge as of enthusiasm. In 1966 he had been one of the founders of the Philatelic Society of Malta, lifelong he participated in numerous philatelic exhibitions and events and he published a vast number of contributions for philatelic journals, handbooks and catalogues. The column “Postal Diary”, which he had founded many years ago, containing a complete day by day survey of all such event having some relation with the Maltese post, had become a very legend already during his lifetime. With special enthusiasm he had devoted himself to his collection of Maltese Zeppelin-Flights, items of which are to be found as coloured illustrations in the PSM Journal, Vol XXXV (2006), fascicle Nr 1 on the pages 7, 24, 27 (2), 35, 38, 42, 45, 49, 53, 57, 61. Besides this, he was deeply interested in the very difficult speciality of early Great Britain used in Malta (being in use before 31st of December 1884).

His membership in the German *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Malta e.v.* was self-evident for him and a great enrichment for the society; his loss therefore is felt only the more grievously.

But above all, we many cast our glance upon his exemplary attitude of mind and his noble way of thinking, enabeling him to be and to become more and more even an ambassador and a representative of real humanity which he generously spread out all over hidebounded national limits.

PS

On the occasion of our last sojourn in Malta during November 2007, visiting a stamp-exhibition in the noble Ministry Exhibition Halls on the island of Gozo (8th Gozo Philatelic Society Philatelic Exhibition), we were deeply impressed when seeing a glass show-case with exhibits in commemoration of Mr Anthony Fenech, set up on the very place (first left corner, seen from the entrance) where Mr Fenech was accustomed to have his stand during former philatelic events.

The Malta Philatelic Society
needs new members
especially young ones

Preservation and Care of a Philatelic Collection

by Mr. Joseph Schirò

Conservation encompasses 3 explicit functions:

1. **Examination** which is the preliminary procedure taken to determine the original structure and materials comprising an artefact and the extent of its deterioration, alteration and loss.
2. **Preservation** which is action taken to retard or prevent deterioration or damage in cultural properties by control of the environment and/or treatment of their structure in order to maintain them as nearly as possible in an unchanging state.
3. **Restoration** which is action taken to return a deteriorated or damaged artefact as nearly as is feasible to its original Form, Design, Colour and Function with minimal further sacrifice of aesthetic and historic integrity.

Conservation Phases:

Conservation of artefacts has two phases:

1. preventive conservation, including cleaning and repair of artefacts and environmental controls in display and storage spaces, and
2. conservation intervention, which is more treatment oriented and can be expensive.

What is paper?

Paper may be defined very simply as fibres that have been reduced to pulp, suspended in water and then matted into sheets.

During the hand papermaking process suitable fibres are soaked in water, macerated or beaten so that fibres flatten out and are added to a vat of water.

A paper mould is dipped into the vat and when it is lifted out the caught slurry on the mould is the formed paper sheet.

Fibres

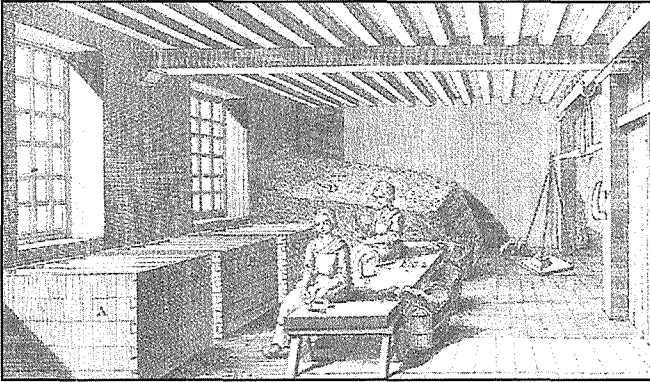
The fibres used for papermaking are chosen for their specific qualities i.e. strength, softness, flexibility, texture, natural colour and absorbency.

Paper

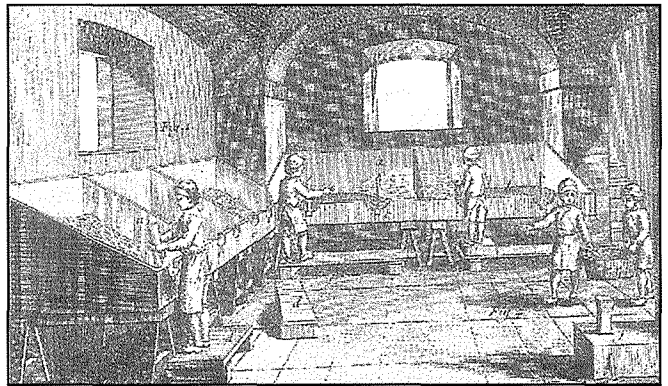
Cellulose is the main constituent of paper. However other substances are also present in the paper:

Sizing which allows the use of aqueous inks, by making cellulose less hygroscopic,

Fillers that add opacity and texture to the paper sheet, and
Dyes and Inks.



Women graded and sorted cotton and linen rags according to quality.



Sorted rags were broken down by hand-stamping the fibres.

Beating

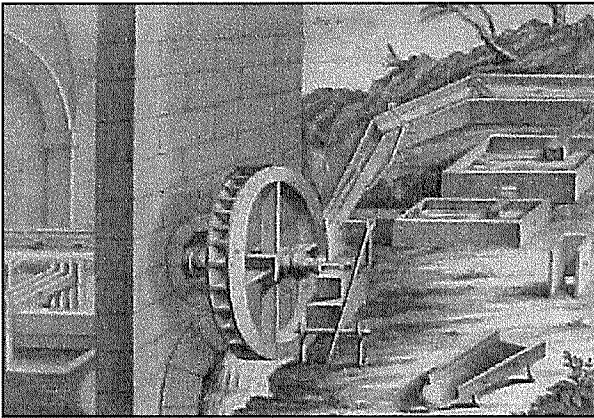
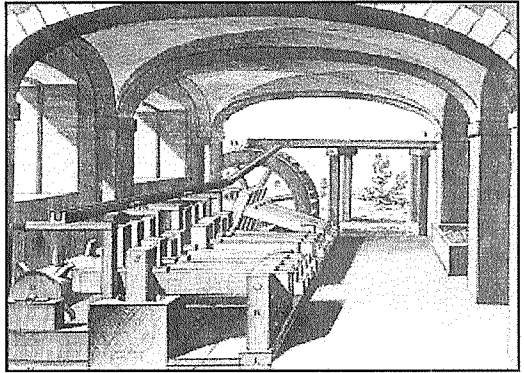
Beating serves to break the thin outer wall of the fibres and to fray the delicate elements exposed, thus producing fibrils.

The fibrils, being of much smaller diameter than the fibres are more flexible and more capable of bonding together. Many more points of contact between fibre and fibre are formed, so that the paper becomes stronger.

In the early days of papermaking, fibres were manually treated. China, for example used wooden mallets. In Europe, Fabriano used water-power driven hammers (the stamper).

The Stamping Mill

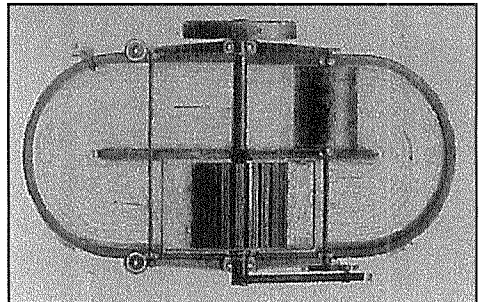
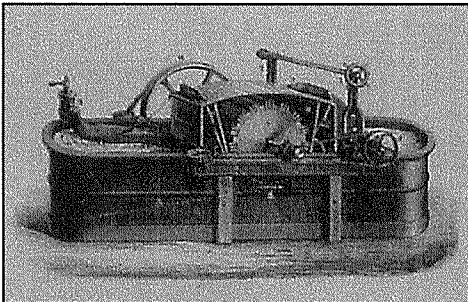
The stamping mills consisted of rows of big wooden hammers or mallets, which were caused to rise and fall by means of a series of cams on a stout axle. These hammers or pestles operated up and down in troughs into which the rags were placed.



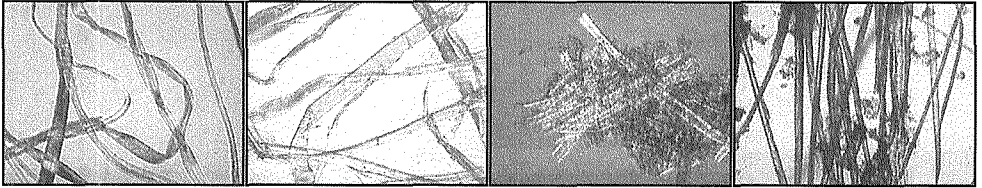
The engraving shows how water turned the wheels which in turn activated the hammers.

The Hollander Beater

The most significant development in the technology of hand paper making was the invention in Holland of the beating machine in the 17th century using windmills as a source of power.



Fibres (Cotton, Gampi, Wood pulp and Linen).



Cotton fibres

Gampi

Wood pulp

Linen fibres

Moulds

The “Wove” Mould. It seems that the first mould used by Ts’ai Lun (China 105 A.D.) and his helpers was only a square of coarsely woven cloth held with a four-sided bamboo frame.

This kind of mould could have been used in two different methods. The first method being when dipping the mould perpendicularly into the water in which macerated fibres floated and turned up horizontally under the fibres, to lift the matted fibres as in a sieve. The water would drain through the meshes of the cloth.

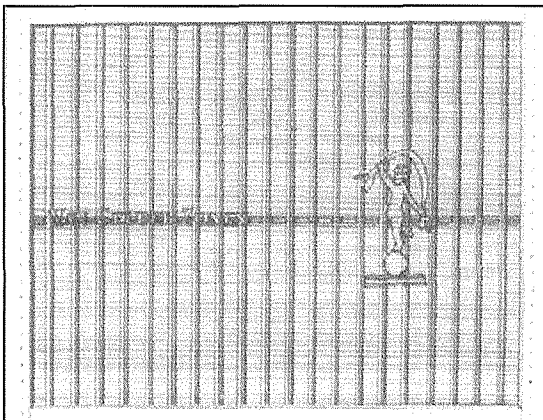
The “Laid” Mould

An ancient artisan conceived the idea of a mould from which the wet sheet of paper could be removed while still moist.

For this purpose the mould covering had to be constructed of a smooth and firm material from which the wet sheet could easily be removed.

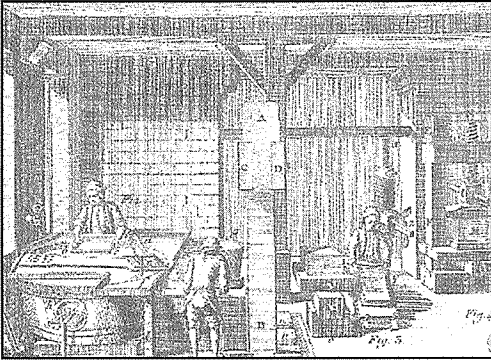
European Moulds

In place of the Oriental flexible laid mould cover which was removable from the mould frame, the European papermakers adopted the “rigid” mould.



Metal wires replaced bamboo and horsehair. The laid mould cover was secured to a wooden frame or to a metallic frame (mould frame). Frame and mould were inserted in another frame from which they could be removed.

A paper mould.



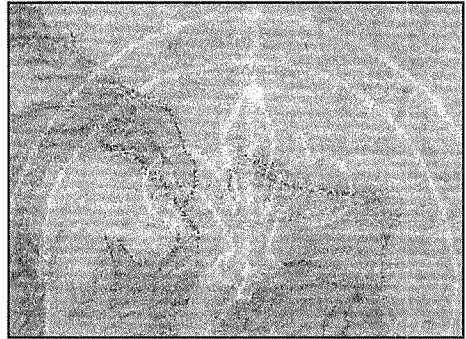
A vatman prepares to dip a paper mould into pulp Fibre. Heavy presses used to remove the remaining water from the paper are in the background.



An engraving of a papermill



The watermark was a piece of brass which was stitched to the mould.



Two chiaroscuro watermarks. Queen Elizabeth II and Madonna and Child

“Velin” type of Mould

In the middle of the 18th century a woven mould was reinvented, but instead of using a cloth, a woven brass screen was employed which formed a firm and rigid surface.

The Vat

This is a large waterproof vessel used to hold the diluted pulp during the paper making process. In the 15th century, a vat was a round or oblong wooden tub. The vat must obviously be bigger than the mould and was narrower at the bottom than at the top. If made of wood, a vat had to be lined in lead to ensure that it was waterproof. Some vats have been found made of stone.

An important aspect during the manufacture of paper is circulation of the water and the suspension of the fibres. The vatman used to do this by simply stirring with a pole.

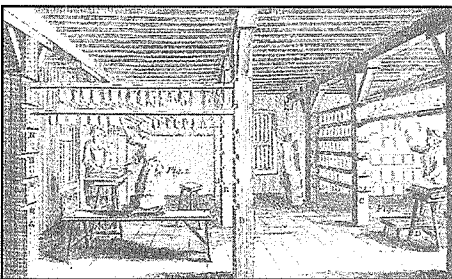
The mould, together with the correct pulp, a good vatman and a good coucher, make up the four essential requirements for producing a good sheet of paper.



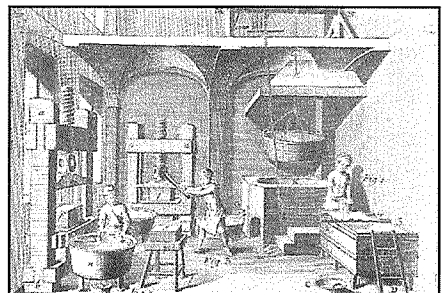
An early woodcut of a papermill

Sizing

Vegetable sizing was used in China and the Arab World. Gelatine was used for the first time in Europe by Fabriano and these substances did not induce any chemical damage to the paper.



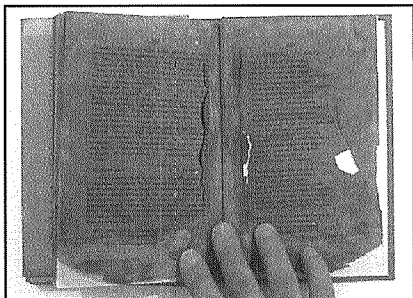
Women and a male apprentice at work in the drying loft. After processing, the paper sheets were hung to dry on waxed ropes woven from cow or horse hair.



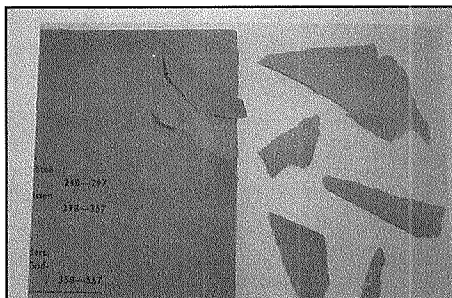
Newly-made paper is burnished to remove unevenness and pressed for a final time.

In the 17th century alum, which gives acidic hydrolysis was added to gelatine to harden it and reduce penetration and spreading of aqueous inks.

In the middle of the 1800's "vat sizing" with rosin and alum was introduced. This kind of sizing induces acidity into the paper (ph goes down to about 4.5 and even lower).



Acidity coming from poor quality woodpulp paper Alum rosin sizing.

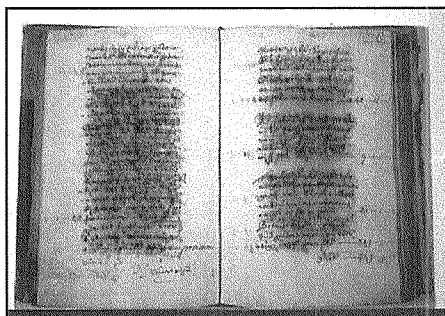


The deterioration could be a combination of wood pulp Paper and rosin sizing.

Metal in Paper

1. They can be present in the wood from which modern paper is obtained.
2. They can come from the machinery used in paper fabrication.
3. They can be present as impurity in water.
4. They are the main components of inks for manuscripts and of many pigments for illumination or graphic art.

Foxing



Iron-gall ink used on manuscripts was usually acidic.

Foxing is a phenomenon which is the result of high humidity and impurities in the paper during manufacturing.

Causes of Deterioration and some solutions

Composition of the Postage Stamp

A postage stamp is commonly composed of several layers including the adhesive,

the fibrous paper,

a coating or sizing on the printed side,

the printing ink itself,

and frequently a phosphorescent tagging overlay.

a cancelled stamp.

a further element which can sometimes be a factor is the proximity of the stamp to (or even over) ink used for writing.

All of the above elements can dramatically affect the preservation of the stamp.

Factors that affect deterioration of collections are:-

A. Inherent Causes or Vice – nature of the paper itself, nature of the ink used.

B. Biological Causes –

- Insects
- Rodents
- Mould

C. Human Causes – theft or vandalism

D. Mechanical Causes – improper stacking, shelving, overfull cabinets and poor storage systems.

E. Environmental Causes:

- Fire
- Water
- Pollutants
- Light
- Uncontrolled temperature
- Relative humidity

Temperature and Humidity

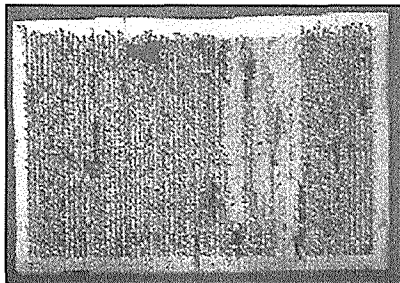
Philatelic collections should be stored at a temperature under 18°C and with relative humidity of between 55 and 60%. Recent research has shown that gummed and perforated material is under less stress at these slightly more moist conditions than had previously been recommended. Dampness is probably one of the main dangers to paper and especially to gum. Ventilation of a room or storage container is likely to reduce the level of moisture.

- Many of the **harmful chemical reactions** that speed up the deterioration of paper are both temperature and water dependent.
- Library and archival materials including stamps are **hygroscopic**, readily absorbing and releasing moisture.
- They respond to daily and seasonal changes by **expanding and contracting**.
- **Dimensional changes** accelerate deterioration.
- **Natural ageing** is a slow and inevitable process. While measures can be taken to slow natural ageing by providing a **sympathetic environment**, it is impossible to halt it altogether.
- The rate of deterioration is dependent upon the **inherent chemical stability of the material**, in combination with external influences such as the environment, storage conditions, and handling procedures.
- Some organic materials will age more quickly than others stored in exactly the same environment as a result of their **chemical make-up**, which may be **inherently unstable**.

Why do Collections Deteriorate?

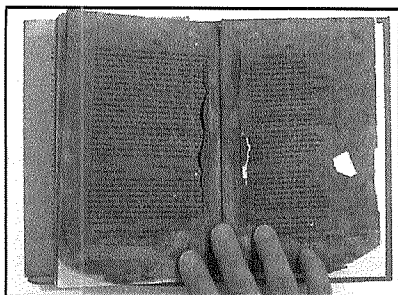
Inherent Causes

- Old writing ink such as iron gall ink can be so acidic that it “burns” through a sheet of paper.
- Others may have faded or become illegible.



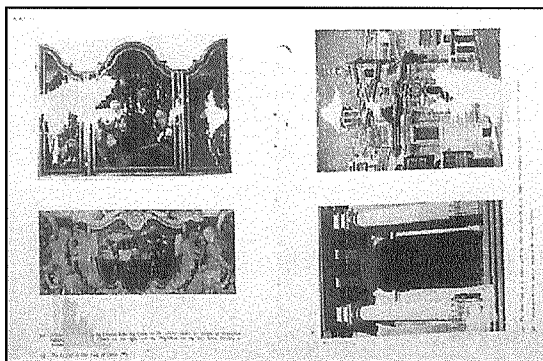
- Papers composed of wood pulp may turn yellow and brittle in just a short period of time.



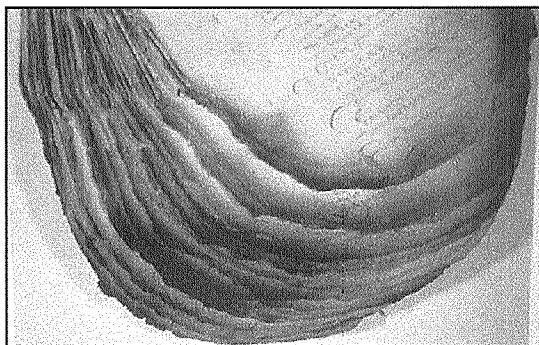


- Poor quality woodpulp paper was the main cause of this deterioration.
- This kaolin coated paper caused the pages to stick together during the printing process whilst the ink was still wet.

- While archivists can do little to alter the natural characteristics of record materials gathered into collections much can be done to control **external factors** that can accelerate the ageing process.
- **Environmental factors** that can hasten the deterioration of paper and other materials include **temperature, humidity, light, pollution** and **biological agents**.



- Independently, each of the above factors, if uncontrolled, can cause specific types of damage to record materials, but they also have **distinct relationships** to one another.
- For example, the rate of many chemical reactions is dependent on both **temperature and water**. Thus, the combination of high temperature and high humidity accelerates the action of alum-rosin sizing to generate sulphuric acid in paper.
- Other actions include **abuse** and **mismanagement**, as well as **disasters**, which can cause untold damage or utterly destroy collections in a brief span of time.



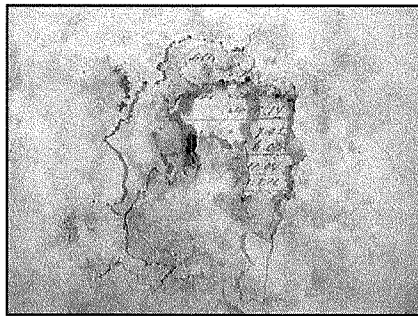
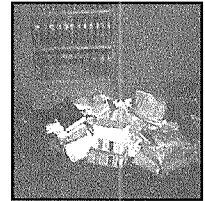
Although this manuscript was damaged in a fire the damage would have been much worse if it were made of parchment

Biological Agents

- Biological agents that can damage archival materials include **mould, insects and rodents**.
- **Mould spores** are always present in the air. They will grow whenever environmental conditions (*temperature* generally above 40°C and *moisture* relative humidity above 60°C), **darkness** and **little air circulation** encourage the growth of mould.
- Mould will **weaken** and **permanently stain** paper, causing both physical deterioration and cosmetic damage. If left unchecked, mould can obliterate **images** or **text**.

Mould

- In their dormant state, low populations of spores pose little threat. But if humidity levels are high (70% RH or higher) or if collections get wet from flood, leaks, seepage etc, and the moisture goes unchecked, mould growth is inevitable.
- Other factors that contribute to mould growth are high temperatures, stagnant air and darkness.



Fungal activity leads to complete loss of paper structure and consequent loss of text.

- Under conditions of high humidity + high temperature, the growth of mould and mildew is increased, and insect infestation is increased.
- Under conditions of extremely high humidity, water soluble inks can offset and coated papers can stick together.
- Low relative humidity causes materials to become dry and brittle. Paper that is dried out can break and crumble if it is handled and flexed.
- Bound items, composed of a variety of materials will suffer more damage than will unbound single sheets.

Solution

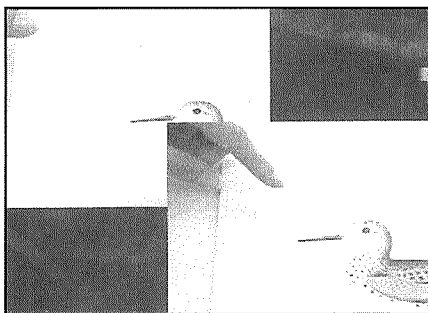
- **Controlling air quality** is difficult and complex.
- **Good housekeeping** and a regular schedule of maintenance is essential.
- **Good air exchange** is recommended but ensure that air vents are not located near sources of heavy pollution.
- Keep exterior **windows closed**.
- Where possible **store materials** in archival quality enclosures.
- Keeping a stable temperature not higher than 24°C and a relative humidity no higher than 60% and monitoring them.
- Dimensional changes can be buffered by certain types of storage enclosures.
- Installation of adequate climate controls and operation of them, maintain preservation standards.
- Routine building maintenance.

Light

- Light, or **radiational energy**, also effects the longevity of collection materials.
- Light speeds up the oxidation of paper and thus its **chemical breakdown**.
- Light has a **bleaching** action: it can cause paper to whiten and to cause coloured papers and inks to fade.
- Exposure to light can radically alter some photographs and other **light-sensitive images** such as blueprints.
- Upon exposure to light, lignin reacts with other compounds in paper, causing it to **darken**.

UV Light

- **All light** is potentially damaging, but ultraviolet radiation, **which we cannot see**, is most active and thus causes serious damage.
- The **shorter the wavelength**, the more active or energetic the radiation (measured in nanometers).
- Primary sources of ultraviolet radiation are sunlight and fluorescent light; sunlight may contain as much as 25%, while fluorescent light may emit 3 - 7% radiation.
- Radiation is cumulative and chemical reactions continue even after the light source is removed.



Solutions

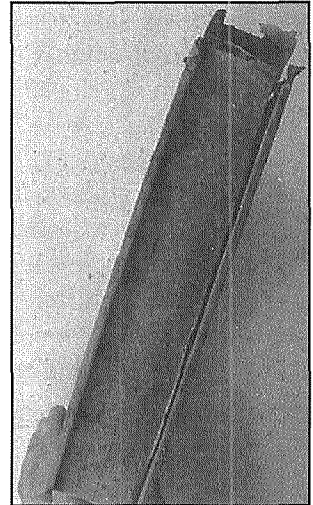
- Light should preferably be from **incandescent source** but remember they generate heat.
- Light levels should be as **low** as possible.
- **Exposure** should be for the shortest time possible.
- Windows should be **covered** by drapes, blinds.
- **UV filtering** can be used for windows and tubes.
- **Permanent exhibitions** of materials should be avoided.

Physical Damage

That care should be taken in handling material should not be taken for granted. Clearly material should be handled with clean hands, but even so the moisture and oil on all skin will transfer to the stamp or cover. This is why in libraries and archives, rare materials are often handled with **cotton** gloves.

Particulates

- Dirt, dust and other solid particles can damage materials through **abrasive action**. Not only are the surfaces of paper and photographs damaged, but over time, the particles become **embedded** in the paper fibres, causing them to break down.
- Dirt and dust, when viewed under a microscope, appear with **sharp cutting edges**.
- In the presence of moisture, dirt and pollen can cause **permanent** stains.
- Oily soot is especially **disfiguring** and difficult to remove.
- Dirt and other solid particles also **absorb acidic gaseous pollutants**.



This book shows years of neglect with dust accumulating on the top edge. This book is supposed to have a gilt edge.

Plastics

A great deal has been written about plastics in philately which are used as mounts and protectors. Top museums, libraries and archives only use polyester (**Mylar** and **Melinex** are commercial names) without any anti static coatings with paper or similar materials.

PVC is not used because it can ooze plasticisers and forms acid as it decomposes.

Stamp Hinges

Stamp hinges if applied correctly are safe to use. In any event minimal moisture should be used and the hinge should only be applied to the very top of a stamp. Plastic mounts are a safe alternative if made of polyester. These should be stored in conservation quality boxes with a waterproof buckram covering, and kept upright on the shelf.

The writing in pencil on covers of a price by dealers and others should be avoided as every time it is removed by eraser it will damage the paper.

Insects

Insects which damage archival collections can be divided into two groups namely,

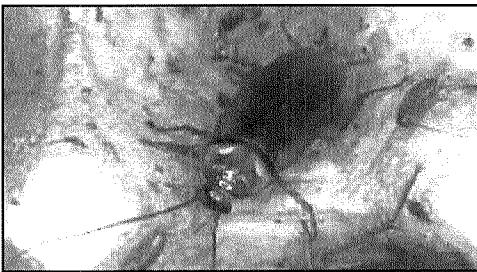
1. 'habitual' visitor, lives on archival material and eats paper, glues, leather and parchment, and
2. 'occasional' visitor which usually lives on other materials (wood, fabric, etc) and infest only occasionally.

Occasional visitors are unlimited. At the National Library the occasional visitor was a pigeon which came in through a window. A dead pigeon was once found behind a shelf.

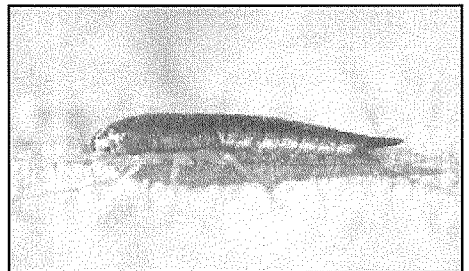
Insects (Biological Causes)

It is important to learn to identify conditions that are conducive to infestation, and take measures to prevent and control problems before they become widespread.

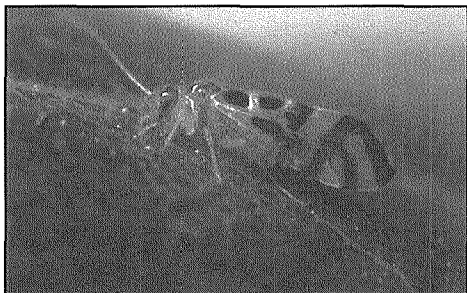
More than 70 different species of insects have been identified as enemies of paper – the most common affecting library and archive materials being silverfish, booklice (psocids) and cockroaches.



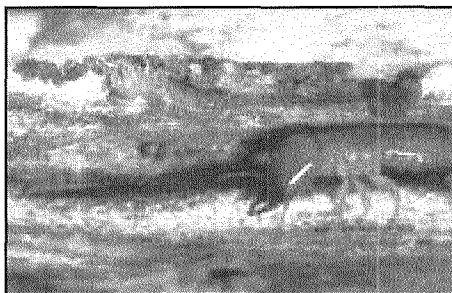
Blattidae or cockroach. Eats mostly the surface and is particularly fond of starch. Leaves excrement which is difficult to remove and clean.



Lepismatidae or silverfish. This insect eats the surface of the paper and consequently eats also through the printed areas causing loss of text.



Corrodentia (psocoptera) or booklice.
Creates very small holes.

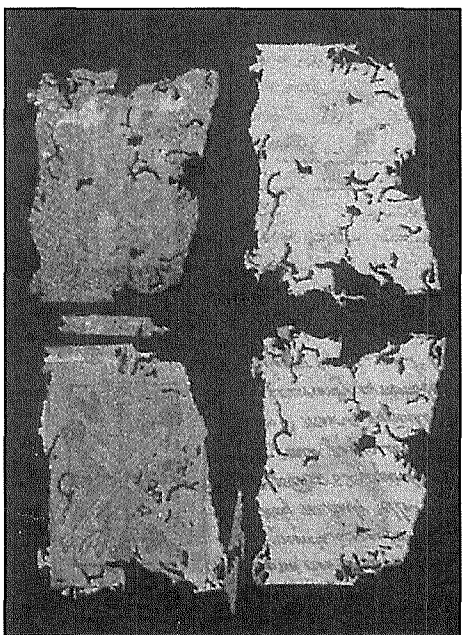


Isoptera or termites.
Imported into Malta recently.

Insects generally prefer dark, warm and damp environments and usually will be **active at night** when people are not present.

The damage they cause is irreversible. **Silverfish can eat the whole surface of a picture** and rodents can nibble away at collections and eat them in their entirety.

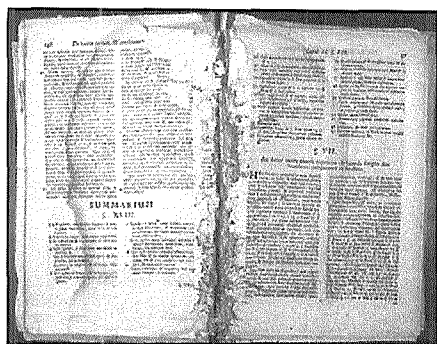
Rodents like to use shredded paper as a nesting material. Their **droppings** are also corrosive and can leave permanent stains.



These heavily wormed cards together with the inner cores were found inside a book which was attacked by insects.



This is a rat nest. You can note the teeth marks around the borders of the eaten pages.



This is a urine stain. A cat?, A dog?, A mouse?

The Dont's

To preserve and conserve our philatelic treasures, **DO NOT USE:-**

1. Ballpoint pens.
2. Cellophane or plastic (Scotch) tape.
3. Rubber cement.
4. Paper clips and other metallic paper fasteners.
5. "Magnetic Albums". These are adhesive coated pages with plastic covers. Most are made out of PVC plastic and acidic adhesives.
6. Rubber bands.
7. Masking tape.
8. Peelable labels used on stock sheets and album pages. Some types of these adhesives labels deteriorate over time and materials from them migrate into the album page.

Treatment

Philatelic material that needs any kind of treatment should be shown to a paper conservator. Not all treatments are advisable, indeed some will cause damage. This may not at first be apparent but it may emerge in time. The bleaching of items is not recommended and many of the methods or techniques carried out in the past have ruined stamps and covers. **Do not be tempted to do it yourself. Consult a professional conservator.**

General Note

The captioned heading was the subject of a talk given by Mr. Joseph Schiro' at a meeting of the Society's members held at St. Publius Hall, Floriana on Wednesday, 5th March 2008.

Mr. Schiro' is a Manager and Lecturer at the Department of Books and Paper, Textiles and Paintings Conservatory at Heritage, Malta's Conservation Division at Bighi.

The above notes were prepared by Mr. Schiro' and are published with his authorisation.

Thanks goes to John A. Cardona, who prepared this article for printing (Editor)

The Malta House of Representatives

“Official Paid” Slogan

by John De Battista

In the Autumn 2007 “Melita” issue published by the Malta Study Circle (UK), on page 272 Mr. Alan Bannister shows a *House of Representatives* envelope sent to him by our president Dr. Alfred Bonnici (Member of Parliament 1962 – 1976. Speaker House of Representative 1966 – 71). He mentions that as far as he is aware, the type of paid marking on it “has not been recorded before”. In view of this I thought it would be a good idea to share some information about these markings with our members, as the only other record on the subject I know of was published way back in 2002 when these markings were introduced.

From the outset it is best to note the difficulty for one to concretely prove when most of these types of “Official Paid Mail” envelopes were first issued to or were actually used by the Members and Ex-Members of the House. The reason for this is that unfortunately the norm is that no dates or other such markings are applied on them. Another factor which further complicates the matter is that these envelopes are issued in batches to these persons, who obviously do not necessarily make use of them immediately – such usage could be months or even years later. In view of this handicap what follows should only be considered for what it is; an attempt at listing and putting the different versions of the markings in a chronological order. I have only been able to piece this information together solely because I have been following the different versions as they appeared during the last six years, and through a little bit of research from primary sources I did on these markings earlier on this year.

(1) Fig. 1 shows a cover bearing the 6c local postage rate. This is the first type of such a postal marking and the only one for which we have a definitive date of issue. According to the Malta Philatelic Society Journal, Volume 31/3 published in December 2002, page 24, the following is reported under the Postal Diary section:

“02 January

With effect from today, an Official Paid slogan consisting of a square boxed VALLETTA / MALTA / OFFICIAL / PAID followed by a rectangular design incorporating the Parliament Chamber and the 6c value tablet has started to be used in black or red ink, on all correspondence emanating from the Malta House of Representatives.”

A copy of the slogan referred to is also included.

Although mention is made of the possibility that this version of the first type of marking could have been used in black ink and I personally have a copy in my

collection bought at an auction, I doubt if it was ever actually postally used in this color. The fact that this particular version could only have been used for a short period of eight months, since on the 30th August 2002 the internal postal rate was increased to 7ċ, makes the chance of it being used in different colors as originally anticipated slim.

(2) Fig. 2 shows a cover with a marking used during the currency of the 7ċ rate. This marking could in effect be the same one previously used for the 6ċ but having the value part tampered with, thus causing the “blurred” effect where the value cannot be distinguished. A detailed study still needs to be carried out on it to conclusively establish if this hypothesis is correct. The marking is applied in red ink and I think it is safe to suggest that if there was tampering this must have occurred shortly after the above-mentioned revision of the local postage rate. From a study of covers it results that this version was in use for four years up till almost the end of the period when the 7ċ rate was applicable, namely up to the summer of 2006.

An interesting item from my collection is the cover shown in Fig. 2a. Here the marking has a CMR machine cancellation applied in black ink superimposed over it with the date of 12th December 2003. This confirms that the alleged removal of the 6ċ value from the marking should have occurred before this date and could also point towards the late entry of the next version of the marking bearing the clearly distinguishable 7ċ rate. I also have in my possession another “blurred marking”, Fig. 2b, used on an envelope which has the revised larger “IL-GVERN TA’ MALTA” type similar to that of Fig. 3. This detail is a further indication of its long period of usage and again supports the indications for the late entry of the next 7ċ version.

(3) During the years when the 7ċ rate was applicable a watch was kept for a marking having a clearly distinguishable 7ċ value incorporated in it. As nothing surfaced for a long time, the general impression is that the “blurred marking” was used throughout all these years. However, it should be pointed out that copies of this elusive 7ċ marking in red ink do exist (Fig. 3). From a close look at some covers and their contents I have come across, it looks as if this third version of the marking was almost certainly introduced sometime towards the end of the period of when the 7ċ rate was current. Another telltale for this is the fact that one is inclined to find more covers bearing this scarce marking uprated by an additional 1ċ stamp to bring it to the 8ċ rate. This suggests that some of the unused envelopes bearing this marking which were still in hand after the increase in rate to 8ċ, were made use of some months later when 1ċ stamps became available. A variety of this marking exists with a slightly narrow “Official Paid” box section. One is led to believe that this version of the marking must have been intended to replace the “blurred” one, however its scarcity suggests that it must have had a very short life span.

(4) The fourth and last version of this type of House of Representatives marking is that shown in Fig. 4. It looks as if following the rate change from 7c to 8c which was introduced on the 19th September 2006, the “blurred marking” used before was brought back into service for a short transitory period until a new marking incorporating the 8c value became available. As before, it was also applied in red ink, but this time as an added feature to distinguish and to dispel any doubts regarding the officially paid rate, we find an 8c value clearly printed separately in black inside the “OFFICIAL PAID” box.

(5) Fig. 5 shows a cover which has a significantly different ‘House of Representatives’ marking altogether. This second type of MHR marking is different from the previous one as the wording in the now differently shaped box reads VALLETTA / MALTA / 8C / OFFICIALLY / PAID. Also, the design of the Parliament Chamber has been enlarged and is no longer placed inside a rectangle. In addition to these differences the marking is also applied wholly in black ink. This type of House of Representatives marking was issued before the 5th March 2007 as I have a copy with a CMR machine cancellation superimposed on it bearing this date.

Fig. 5a & 5b show what could probably be considered as varieties of this marking. The main differences consist in that both the lettering type and design are bolder, with the Parliament Chamber design being significantly closer to the “OFFICIAL PAID” box section.

(6) The third type of the House of Representatives marking is in black ink (Fig. 6) and was seen for the first time after the transition from the Malta Lira to Euro as of 1st January this year. One point which should be noted in respect of this marking is that in contrast to the previous markings, which were either machine cancels or offset printed on the envelope during the original printing process, it is individually applied to the cover by means of a handstamp. Generally this marking is found as a dirty partial cancel with the value not showing.

(7) The fourth and latest type of the House of Representatives marking (Fig. 7) bears the 19 Euro cents rate in black ink (Fig. 7) which is offset printed directly on the envelope during the original printing.

One final note is that these markings may be found used on different sized official “Il-Gvern ta’ Malta” envelopes, the main ones being sizes 162 x 114mm, 195x130mm and 164 x 230mm. Also, not all envelopes on which these markings are found carry the handstamp or wording “House of Representatives / Malta”, as may be seen from some examples accompanying this articles. I hope this information and attempt at establishing the chronology of the different types and versions of the markings would help to shed some light on them. Hopefully other members might add and possibly update it futher.”

House of Representatives "Official Paid" Slogans

6 Malta Cents Rate authorised period of use:
2nd January 2002 ~ 30th August 2002

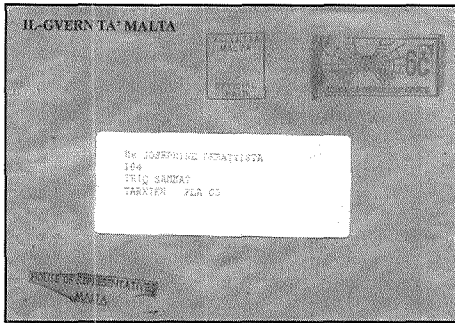


Fig. 1

House of Representatives RED 6c

With effect from 2nd January, 2002, an Official Paid slogan started to be used in black or red ink, on all correspondence emanating from the Malta House of Representatives. Reference: PSM volume 31 / 3 pg. 24 Dec. 2002.

7 Malta Cents Rate authorised period of use:
31st August 2002 ~ 18th September 2006

Fig. 2

House of Representatives
BLURRED RED (7c)

With effect from 31st August, 2002, the rate for local post increased from 6c to 7c. It is believed that this was the time when the 6c value was removed from the Parliament Chamber design incorporated in the Official Paid slogan.

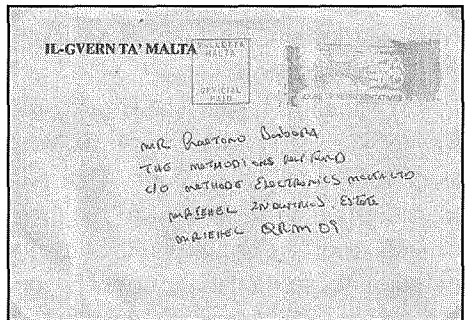
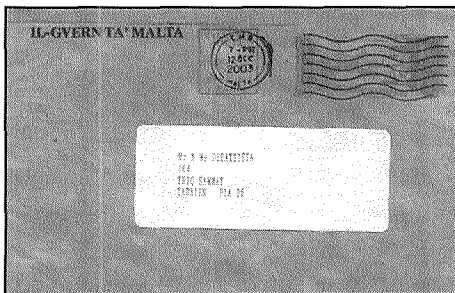


Fig. 2a

House of Representatives

The BLURRED RED Slogan superimposed with CMR machine cancellation bearing the date 12th December, 2003.



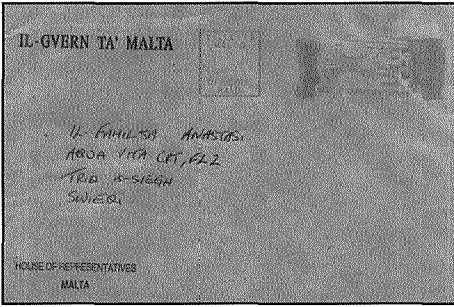


Fig. 2b

House of Representatives

Late usage of the **BLURRED RED** slogan.
Note the revised larger **IL-GVERN TA' MALTA** text at top left hand corner of the cover.

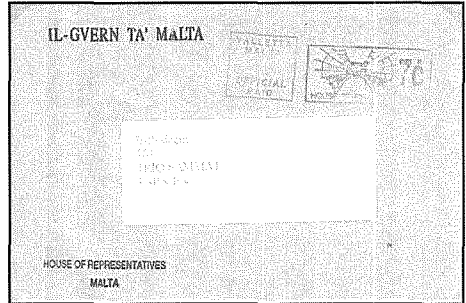


Fig. 3

House of Representatives **RED 7c**

The scarce Red 7c marking, which is thought to have been brought into service years after this postage rate came into being

8 Malta Cents Rate authorised period of use: 19th September 2006 ~ 31st January 2008

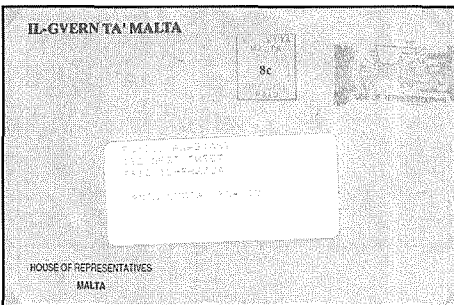


Fig. 4

House of Representatives
RED / BLACK 8c

With effect from 19th September, 2006, the rate for local post increased from 7c to 8c. The **BLURRED RED** slogan was reintroduced with the 8c value incorporated in the boxed Official Paid section through a separate printing in black ink.

Fig. 5

House of Representatives
BLACK 8c

Officially Paid slogan in black, incorporating the 8c value in the boxed **VALLETTA / MALTA / OFFICIALLY / PAID** section.

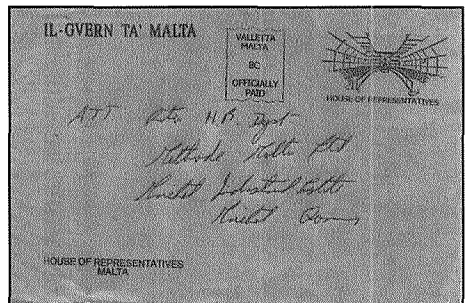


Fig. 5a

*House of Representatives
BLACK 8C*

*Officially Paid slogan in black, incorporating
the 8C value in the boxed
VALLETTA / MALTA / OFFICIALLY / PAID
section. (Variety I)*

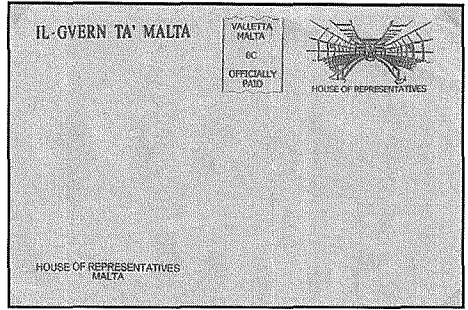
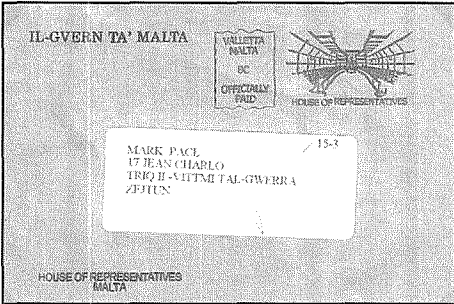


Fig. 5b

*House of Representatives
BLACK 8C*

*Officially Paid slogan in black, incorporating the
8C value in the boxed
VALLETTA / MALTA / OFFICIALLY / PAID
section. (Variety II)*



19 Euro Cents Rate authorised period of use: 1st January 2008 ~

Fig. 6

*House of Representatives
BLACK 19 Euro Cent*

*Officially Paid handstamp in black,
incorporating the 19c value in the boxed
VALLETTA / MALTA / OFFICIALLY / PAID
section,
generally found applied as a dirty cancel.*

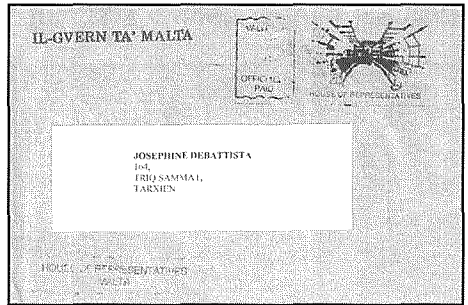
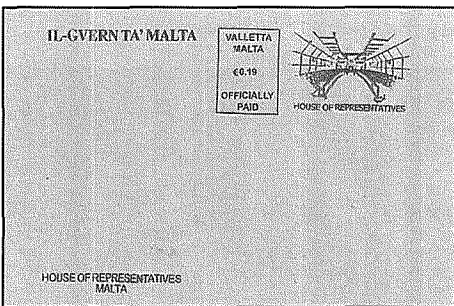


Fig. 7

*House of Representatives
BLACK 19 Euro Cent*

*Officially Paid slogan in black, incorporating the
€ 0.19 value in the boxed
VALLETTA / MALTA / OFFICIALLY / PAID
section.*



Postal Diary

15 March 2008 – 5 July 2008

by Joseph Fenech

4 April 2008

The Malta Communications Authority published a Consultation Document relating to MaltaPost plc's Universal Service Obligations. This document discussed the obligations incumbent on MaltaPost plc as the Universal Service Provider on three main areas of the universal service: access to services, the guarantee of daily delivery and the publication of information on the universal services offered. On the areas of access to services, this document evaluated the existing density of access points for services falling within the universal services and puts forward proposals that aim to establish parameters to be used to ascertain the minimum density of access points. This is done in order to ensure that MaltaPost plc's obligations in this area are being met and the rights of the consumer addressed. On the aspect of guaranteeing MaltaPost plc's obligation to secure next day delivery of postal items, this document examined whether the current arrangements relating to the collection and delivery of postal items are satisfactory and whether changes in this area are warranted. As regard the publication of information the document put forward proposals on what information should be provided and what media should be used in relation to the universal postal service, including amongst others, postcodes and postal service schemes. The consultation period ran until 30 May 2008.

Amongst other details, the Consultation Document indicates that there is a total number of 468 letterboxes throughout Malta and Gozo (421 in Malta and 47 in Gozo), available to the general public. There exist an additional 52 private letterboxes installed in private and public premises throughout Malta and Gozo. Currently there are 32 branch post offices and 27 sub-post offices throughout the Islands providing a basic counter service. There are also 456 stamp vendors spread across Malta and Gozo (including MaltaPost plc's outlets and sub-post offices).

14 April

On 14 April 2008, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 61/2008 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the quarter October – December 2007. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 14.3 million items of which the absolute bulk represented letters and other printed items (up from 14.03 million items for the last quarter of 2006). The total number of parcels sent through the national post in the period under review was 15,198 (compared to 13,692 in the corresponding period of 2006).

9 May

The EUROPA 2008 stamp set, entitled LETTERS, and designed by Edward D. Pirotta, was issued by MaltaPost plc on Friday, 9 May 2008. The stamps, with face values of Euro 0.37/Lm0.16 and Euro 1.19/Lm0.51, are 48.0mm x 39.5mm in size, with a perforation of 14.0 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten. The two stamps in this set carry identical images, in monochrome and sepia respectively, and depict a postman on his mail round, and holding his bicycle, with the old Mail Room at the Valletta Central Post Office in the background. Stamp booklets containing five Euro 0.37 stamps from this set, were also issued. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 5). The handstamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA” in the outer ring and “EUROPA/LETTERS/JUM IL-HRUĠ/9.05.08” in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in ‘The Malta Stamp’ bulletin No. 266.



14 May

The Sub-Post Office at 51, Triq Ġorġ Borġ Olivier, Mellieha MLH 1024, was closed for business between Wednesday, 14 May and Tuesday, 20 May 2008, both days included.

22 May

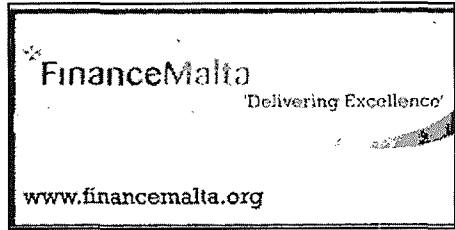
According to a press release issued on 22 May 2008, for the six months ended 31 March 2008, MaltaPost plc registered a profit before taxation of Euro 2.60 million as compared to Euro 1.01 million for the same period the previous year. Earnings per share increased to Euro 0.060 from Euro 0.023 in 2007. Turnover increased by 13.41% from Euro 9.66 million to Euro 10.96 million. MaltaPost plc indicated that, apart from an overall increase in business, the performance during this period was enhanced by two events, namely increased volumes during the General Elections and sales from philatelic/numismatic issues commemorating the introduction of the Euro.

1 June

The MALTAPOST news issue no 14 of June 2008 reported that MaltaPost plc had allocated the first personalised postcode to the residents of Tigne` Point in Sliema. Following an application by MIDI consortium, MaltaPost plc allocated the personalised postcode TP01 to these residents, thereby replacing the postcode which had been given to the area following the introduction last year of a new postcode system. MaltaPost plc is offering a personalised postcode service for particular addresses in identifiable zones.

6 June

A special machine cancellation – “FinanceMalta/Delivering Excellence/www.financemalta.org”, started to be used at the Central Mail Room, Marsa, on all outgoing foreign mail, with effect from Friday, 6 June 2008.

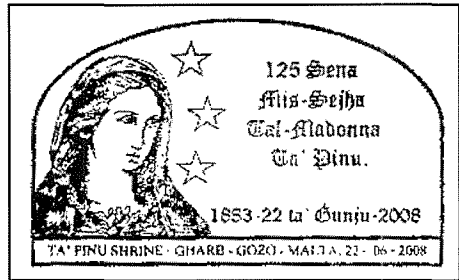


17 June

Through Department of Information notice No. 0862, it was announced that following Cabinet approval, the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications appointed the new Stamp Design Advisory Board, which is set up under the terms of the Postal Service Act. Dr Philip Farrugia Randon is Chairman of the Board, with the other Board members being Ms Claudia Taylor East, Mr Joseph Said, Mr Michael Borg and Ms Mariella Pisani Bencini.

22 June

A special postmark – “125 Sena mis-Sejha tal-Madonna ta’ Pinu/1883 – 22 ta’ Gunju – 2008/Ta’ Pinu Shrine – Gharb – Gozo – Malta. 22-06-2008” – was used at Ta’ Pinu Sanctuary, limits of Gharb, Gozo, on Sunday, 22 June 2008. The handstamp was designed by Gozitan philatelist Anthony Grech. Moreover, the



ecclesiastical authorities at Ta’ Pinu Sanctuary also issued a special commemorative card to mark the 125th anniversary of the calling of Our Lady of Ta’ Pinu. This limited edition card (only 1000 cards have been printed) was designed for the occasion by Gozitan artist Chev. Paul Camilleri Cauchi.

23 June

Due to the ‘Isle of MTV Malta Music week’ festivities, an early collection (at 4.30 pm) was effected by MaltaPost plc, instead of the customary 7.00 pm collection, on Monday, 23 June 2008, in Paceville, on street letterbox No 217 – Elias Zammit Street, Paceville (MaltaPost plc St Julians sales outlet). MaltaPost plc affixed a notice on the said letterbox denoting the new collection time and the nearest 7.00 pm collection letterbox.

24 June

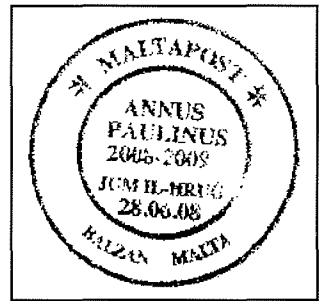
Due to the 'Isle of MTV Malta Music week' festivities, an early collection (at 4.30 pm) was effected by MaltaPost plc, instead of the customary 7.00 pm collection, on Tuesday, 24 June 2008, in Buġibba, on street letterbox No 299 – Bay Street, Buġibba. MaltaPost plc affixed a notice on the said letterbox denoting the new collection time and the nearest 7.00 pm collection letterbox.

25 June

Due to the 'Isle of MTV Malta Music week' festivities, an early collection (at 4.30 pm) was effected by MaltaPost plc, instead of the customary 7.00 pm collection, on Wednesday, 25 June 2008, in Floriana, on street letterbox No 252 – St Publius Street, Floriana. MaltaPost plc affixed a notice on the said letterbox denoting the new collection time and the nearest 7.00 pm collection letterbox.

28 June

On Saturday, 28 June 2008, MaltaPost plc issued a set of stamps marking the celebrations commemorating the 2000th anniversary of the birth of St Paul (at the start of the year of St Paul – Annus Paulinus). The stamps, designed by Paul Psaila, have a face value of Euro 0.19/Lm0.08, Euro 0.68/Lm0.29 and Euro 1.08/Lm0.46. The set also includes a miniature sheet with a face value of Euro 3.00/Lm1.29. The stamps are 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size, with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb), while the miniature sheet is 120mm x 86mm in size, and the stamp size 44.0mm x 31.0mm, and perforation 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten. The four titular statues reproduced on the stamps are found in the Conversion of St Paul Church, Hal Saï (Euro 0.19 stamp – wooden statue of St Paul made by artist Xandru Farrugia), in St Paul's Shipwreck Church, Munxar, Gozo (Euro 0.68 stamp – papier mache' statue of St Paul made by artist Agostino Camilleri), in St Paul's Shipwreck Church, Rabat, Malta (Euro 1.08 stamp – wooden statue of St Paul made by artist Giovanni Caruana) and in St Paul's Shipwreck Church, Valletta (Euro 3.00 stamp – wooden statue of St Paul made by artist Melchiorre Gafà). For this occasion, MaltaPost plc also issued a commemorative folder, marked Commemorative Folder No 1. This folder, printed in a limited quantity of 7500, and sold at a retail price of Euro 15, includes all the stamps in the set, as well as information and illustrations on the titular statues depicted and their respective churches. Each commemorative folder is numbered, and carries the same number



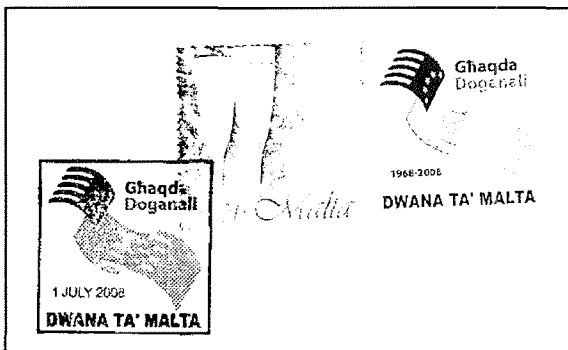
as the miniature sheet enclosed in it. Maltapost issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 6). The handstamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA” in the outer ring and “ANNUS/PAULINUS/2008-2009/JUM IL-HRUGĠ/28.06.08” in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in ‘The Malta Stamp’ bulletin No. 267.

30 June

MaltaPost plc informed the public that a bundle of mail containing letters intended for addressees in Rabat, Malta, had been retrieved from the seabed at Ċirkewwa on Sunday, 1 June 2008. Following internal investigations the matter was reported to the Police and to the Malta Communications Authority for any action deemed necessary. On its part, MaltaPost plc dismissed the employee responsible for the delivery of the mail in question and initiated civil proceedings accordingly. At the same time, MaltaPost plc apologised for the incident.

1 July

MaltaPost plc notified that a special postmark – “Ghaqda Doganali – 1 July 2008 – Dwana ta’ Malta” – was available on personalised covers at the Department of Customs, Lascaris Wharf, Valletta, on Tuesday, 1 July 2008. Envelopes cancelled with this special postmark could also



be obtained from the Philatelic Bureau of MaltaPost plc. The special postmark on the personalised envelope was used to cancel a Euro 0.19 stamp which included a personalised stamp commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Customs Union. The special cover itself carried the logo of MaltaPost as well as the logo of the Malta Customs, as well as an inscription denoting the 40th Anniversary of the Customs Union (1968-2008).

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The Malta Philatelic Society is a non-profit organisation set up on 7th March 1966 and aims to encourage the study of postage stamps and the educational hobby of stamp collecting.

Being Malta's national society supporting the study and collecting of stamps, a major part of the Society's effort is in fact concentrated upon the education of collectors and the general public.

The Society specifically promotes the specialised study of Malta, its stamps, postal history and related areas. Within its own limitations, the Society attempts to preserve this part of our heritage, particularly (but not exclusively) by publishing and circulating its own prestigious award-winning Journal, at least twice a year.

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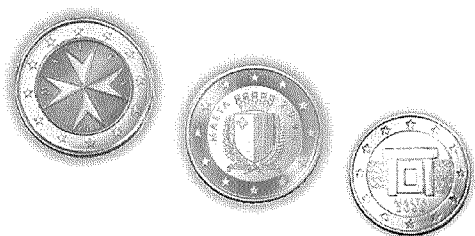
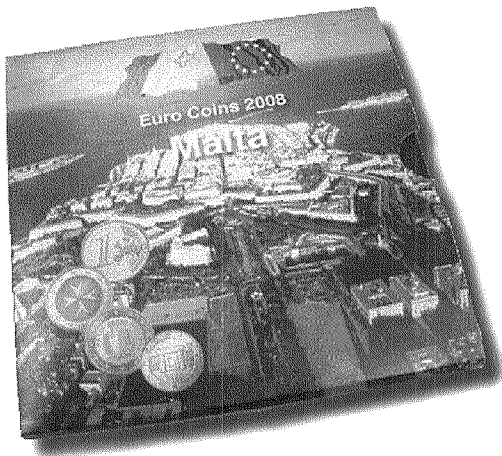
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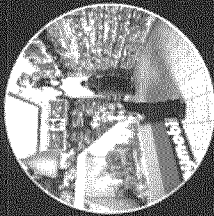
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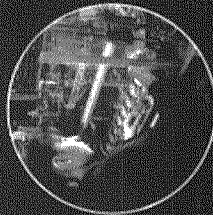
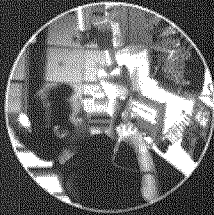
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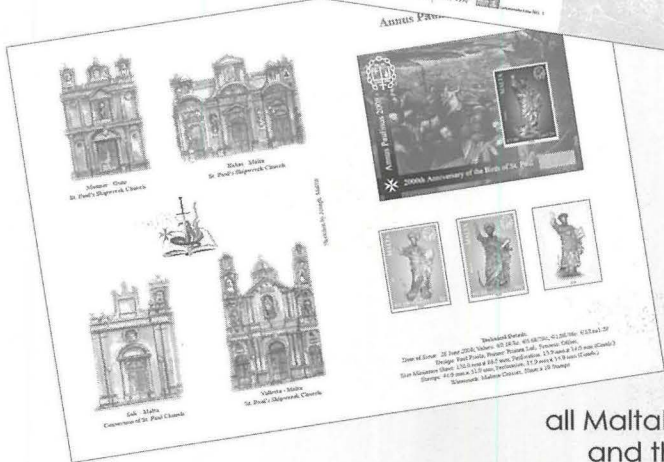
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Annus Paulinus

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The aim of the Pauline Year was to rediscover the spirit of the apostle and his work, and to recognize their contribution to the development and progress of the Church and the world. It was a time when St. Paul was imprisoned in Malta.

The event is organized by St. Paul's and St. Peter's and is open to all. It is a time when St. Paul was imprisoned in Malta.

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