

# 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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:

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2002 ~ 30<sup>th</sup> August 2002

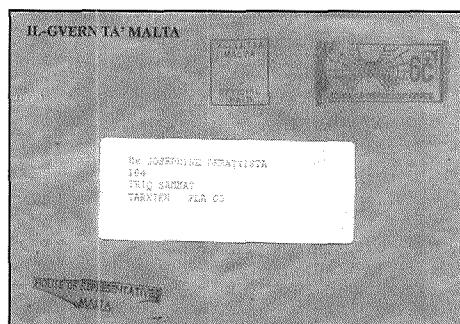


Fig. 1

*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:

31<sup>st</sup> August 2002 ~ 18<sup>th</sup> 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.*

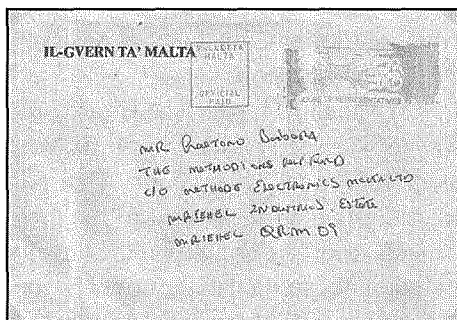
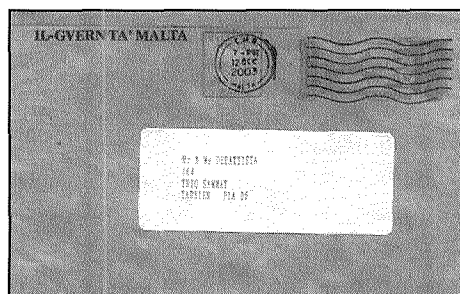


Fig. 2a

*House of Representatives*

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



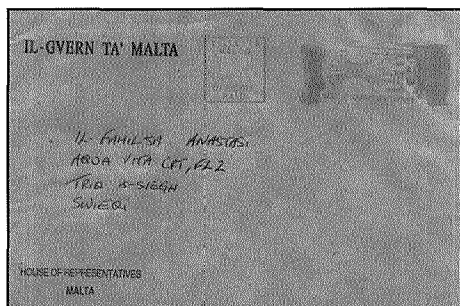


Fig. 2b

### 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.*

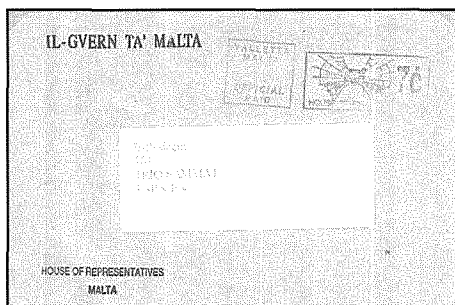


Fig. 3

### 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**

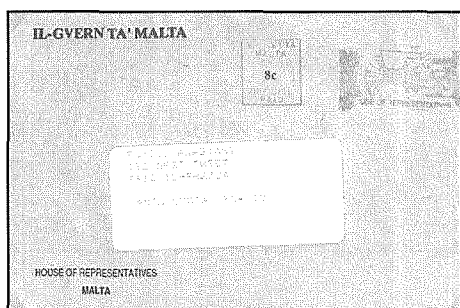


Fig. 4

### 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.*

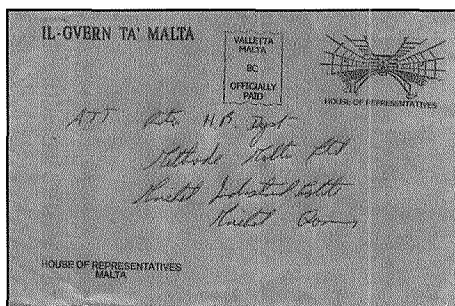


Fig. 5a

*House of Representatives*  
**BLACK 8C**

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

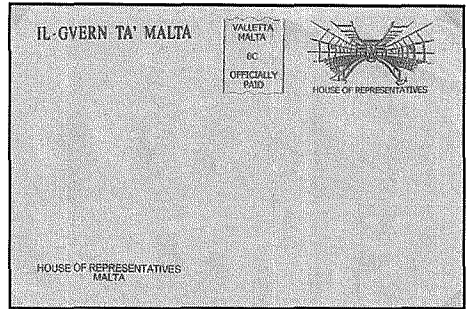
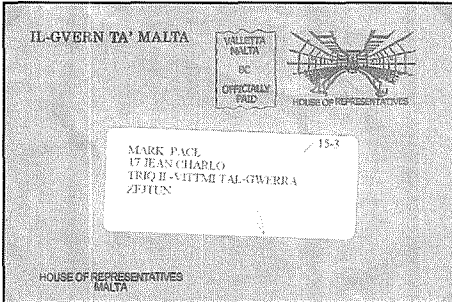


Fig. 5b

*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.*

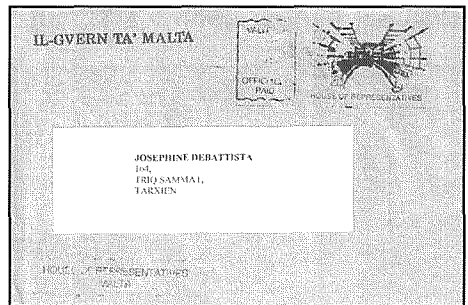


Fig. 7

*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.*

