

Postal Diary

6 July 2008 – 6 December 2008

by Joseph Fenech

Corrigendum

With reference to the note on the special machine cancellation – “FinanceMalta / Delivering Excellence / www.financemalta.org”, which was reported as having come into use on all outgoing foreign mail with effect from Friday, 6 June 2008, in the Postal Diary appearing in Vol. 37/2 (August 2008) of the Journal of The Malta Philatelic Society, it has to be clarified that the first official day of use of this machine cancellation was in fact Monday, 9 June 2008. The machine cancellation was used before this date, but only on a trial basis.

18 July 2008

MaltaPost plc reported that the letterbox in Triq Wied Simar, Qala, Gozo, which had been temporarily inaccessible due to demolition works, was now back in service.

4 August

The Sub-Post Office at Exotika, Regent Place, Shop 2A, Triq Tumas Fenech, Birkirkara, was closed for business between Monday, 4 August and Thursday, 14 August 2008, both days included.

6 August

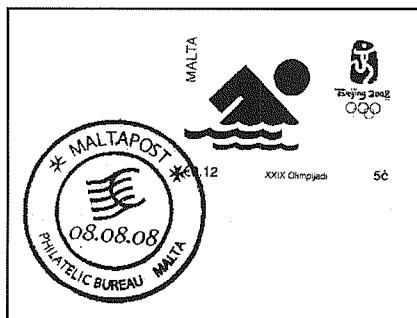
On 6 August 2008, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 140/2008 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the first quarter (January – March) 2008. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 12.6 million items of which the absolute bulk represented letters and other printed items (up from 11.2 million items for the last quarter of 2007). The total number of parcels sent through the national post in the period under review was 16,460 (compared to 12,917 in the last quarter of 2007).

7 August

The Sub-Post Office at Louis Stationery, 49, Pjazza San Nikola, Siggiewi SĠW 1070, was closed for business between Thursday, 7 August and Tuesday, 19 August 2008, both days included.

8 August

The eighth card in the series being issued by MaltaPost on a date when the day, month and year coincide – 08.08.08 – was issued on Friday, 8 August 2008. This card, retailing at Euro 1.00, carried a Euro 0.12 (5¢) stamp from the Beijing 2008 Olympics stamp issue, cancelled with a handstamp showing the 08.08.08 date. This card, marked PB 08, could be sent through the post to any destination without additional postage, provided it was posted by not later than Friday, 29 August 2008. Cards similarly cancelled and posted after this date had to carry stamps to cover the required postage.



8 August

MaltaPost plc notified that service from the letterbox situated in Triq Alamein, Pembroke, was temporarily suspended due to maintenance works. MaltaPost advised the general public that the nearest letterbox that could be used instead was situated at Triq Sant'Andrija, Swieqi (opposite Luxol Ground).

9 August

The Sub-Post Office at Fleet Stationers, Triq Testaferrata, Ta' Xbiex XBX 1402, was closed for business between Saturday, 9 August and Sunday, 17 August 2008, both days included.

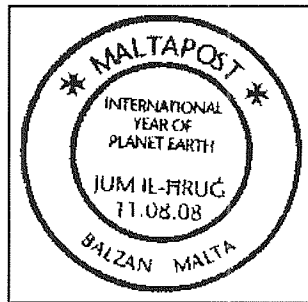
10 August

A special hand postmark – “1750 Sena mill-Martirju ta' San Lawrenz AD 258 – 2008” – was used at St. Lawrence Parish Church, San Lawrenz, Gozo, on Sunday, 10 August 2008 between 9.30 am and 12.30 pm, to commemorate the 1750th anniversary of the martyrdom of Saint Lawrence. The handstamp was designed by Gozitan philatelist Anthony Grech. Moreover, the St. Lawrence parish authorities, in collaboration with the Gozo Philatelic Society, also issued a special commemorative card to mark this occasion. This limited edition card (only 600 cards were printed) was designed by Gozitan artist Chev. Paul Camilleri Cauchi.



11 August

On Monday, 11 August 2008, MaltaPost plc issued a set of 4 stamps, the first with only the Euro denomination, to commemorate the International Year of Planet Earth, a joint initiative between UNESCO and the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). The stamps, designed by Paul Psaila, have a face value of Euro 0.07, Euro 0.86, Euro 1.00 and Euro 1.77. The stamps are 44.0mm by 31.0mm in size, 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 sheets of ten. The designs used represent the earth from its various perspectives, from the desert to the oceans, from vegetation to the beauty of the planet as seen from outer space. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 7). The handstamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA” in the outer ring and “INTERNATIONAL / YEAR OF / PLANET EARTH / JUM IL-HRUĠ / 11.08.08” in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 268.



11 August

MaltaPost plc notified that the letterbox found at Triq Alamein, Pembroke, which had been temporarily out of service due to maintenance works, was now back in service.

14 August

MaltaPost plc advised the general public that, due to the festivities marking the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady (Santa Marija) being held in various localities, the collection of mail from a number of letterboxes was carried out by MaltaPost at 16.00 hrs and not at the customary 19.00 hrs, on Thursday, 14 August 2008. The twelve letterboxes involved were:

- Box No. 376 – Triq il-Kostituzzjoni, Mosta (near Mosta MaltaPost Branch);
- Box No. 391 – Triq il-Kbira, Mosta (near City Bar);
- Box No. 392 – Triq A. Pisani c/w Triq il-Katakombi, Mosta (Taz-Zokkrija);
- Box No. 409 – Triq il-Kbira, Attard;
- Box No. 420 – Near Police Station, Attard;
- Box No. 32 – Triq Rokku Buhagiar, Qrendi;
- Box No. 39 – Triq il-Parroċċa, Mqabba;
- Box No. 40 – Triq Mikelang Sapiano, Mqabba;

Box No. 130 – Misrah Santu Rokku, Ghaxaq;
Box No. 131 – Vjal il-Labour, Ghaxaq;
Box No. 115 – Triq Raymond Caruana, Gudja;
Box No. 141 – Triq Ġlozmu Cassar, Gudja.

MaltaPost affixed a notice on each of the above-mentioned letterboxes denoting the new collection cut-off time and the nearest letterbox where mail was to be collected at 19.00 hrs.

16 August

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, no mail delivery or letterbox collection was carried out, and the MaltaPost branches did not open for business, on Saturday, 16 August 2008. Normal postal service was resumed on Monday, 18 August 2008.

16 August

The Sub-Post Office at 51, Triq Ġorġ Borġ Olivier, Mellieha MLH 1024, was closed for business between Saturday, 16 August and Saturday, 23 August 2008, both days included.

18 August

The Sub-Post Office at Rose Bazaar, 133, Triq Santa Marija, Ghaxaq GXQ 1714, was closed for business between Monday, 18 August and Saturday, 30 August 2008, both days included.

2 September

The Sub-Post Office at Aquavel, Triq San Bartilmew, Gharghur GHR 1014, was closed for business between Tuesday, 2 September and Tuesday, 9 September 2008, both days included.

2 September

On 2 September 2008, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 157/2008 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the second quarter (April – June) 2008. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 11.0 million items of which the absolute bulk represented letters and other printed items (down from 12.6 million items for the previous quarter). The total number of parcels sent through the national post in the period under review was 17,793 (compared to 16,460 in the previous quarter).

6 September

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, no mail delivery was carried out, and the MaltaPost branches did not open for business, on Saturday, 6 September 2008. Normal postal service was resumed on Tuesday, 9 September 2008.

8 September

The Sub-Post Office at Alessio's Old Cottage, 12, Triq il-Parroċċa, Mqabba MQB 1511, was closed for business between Monday, 8 September and Monday, 15 September 2008, both days included.

9 September

The Sub-Post Office at St. Bees, 6, Wesghat il-Gublew, Mgarr MGR 1046, was closed for business between Tuesday, 9 September and Saturday, 13 September 2008, both days included.

9 September

On 9 September 2008 the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) launched a consultation exercise to seek input from stakeholders and the public on amendments to the Postal Services (General) Regulations, which amendments were being proposed to Government by the MCA. The amendments related primarily to the use of a postal identifier, business reply and freepost services, and a revision of the current authorisation fees paid by operators who provide postal services outside the scope of the universal services. This consultation process closed on 30 September 2008.

10 September

MaltaPost plc notified that the letterbox in Triq ir-Russett l-Abjad, Luqa, was totally damaged by fire. The last collection from this letterbox had been made on Tuesday, 9 September 2008 at 9.28 pm, and MaltaPost officials received a report about the incident at around 11.00 am on Wednesday, 10 September 2008. Some mail items may have been totally destroyed. MaltaPost therefore advised those members of the public who may have posted letters between the times indicated above, to verify receipt or otherwise with the relative addressees. MaltaPost also informed that this letterbox was now temporarily out of order, and it advised the general public that instead it could make use of the nearest letterbox which was situated at Triq Hal Qormi, Luqa (Hal Farruġ).

10 September

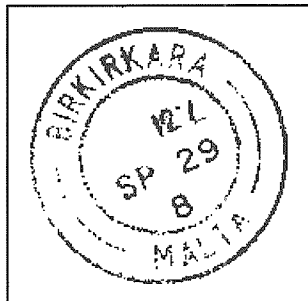
The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published its Decision Notice and Response to the Consultation Paper which was launched in April 2008 and which

discussed the obligations incumbent on MaltaPost plc as the Universal Service Provider (USP) and addressed the rights of the consumer with respect to access to services, the guarantee of daily delivery and the publication of information of what is on offer. Access points for services falling within the universal service include: the USP's public letterboxes, retail counters operated by the USP (referred to by MaltaPost plc as branch post offices), Sub-Post Offices operated by third parties and the facilities provided to deposit bulk mail. The consultation document evaluated the existing density of the above-mentioned access points and put forward proposals that aim to establish parameters to be used to ascertain the minimum density of postal access points to ensure that the USP's obligations in this area are being met and the rights of the consumer addressed.

The MCA has established distance-related criteria for access to public letterboxes depending on the density of the population within each particular locality. It has also established a minimum number of retail counters offering basic counter services that should be made available throughout Malta and Gozo. As regards access to bulk mail facilities the MCA was of the opinion that the current provisions are adequate and no further requirements are warranted. A procedure to be followed by MaltaPost for the permanent closure or re-siting of existing access points has also been established. Other related but important aspects that improve accessibility to the universal postal service were also examined in the consultation document. These included the availability of facilities to purchase postage stamps within the vicinity of every letterbox and the frequency and timing of collections from MaltaPost's access points. With respect to the former the MCA has defined the term 'vicinity' as found in the regulations. With respect to the frequency and timing of collections from MaltaPost's access points the MCA is of the opinion that no further provisions are required. The USP has an obligation to guarantee at least one collection from each postal access point and one delivery of mail to each postal address or other delivery point (household and business) on each working day. The consultation document examined whether the current arrangements are satisfactory and whether changes in this area were warranted. On the basis of its findings the MCA decided not to introduce further provisions in this respect. It is important that customers are clearly informed about the universal postal services which are provided, the prices and conditions pertaining to them, and are sufficiently knowledgeable in their use. The consultation 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, postal service schemes and access points. The MCA decided to define how and on what media information on the universal postal services should be published. It also decided to provide general guidelines on how postal service schemes should be published.

30 September

As from Tuesday, 30 September 2008, the Sub-Post Office – Exotica, Regent Place, Tumas Fenech Street, Birkirkara, ceased to operate as a Sub-Post Office. The official last day of operation of this Sub-Post Office was Monday, 29 September 2008. The date-stamp found to be in use on the last day of operation included two particular features which distinguished it from other date-stamps. As illustrated, it included the number 127 in the inner ring of the date-stamp, instead of the letter ‘A’ which was originally assigned to this Sub-Post Office when it opened on 12 November 2007. The Sub-Postmaster informed that the ‘A’ had gone missing a few months before, and the 127 was inserted instead to act as a distinguishing feature. ‘127’ happened to be the MaltaPost account number assigned to the Sub-Post Office in question. Another particular feature of the date-stamp found in use on the last day of service was that the year was indicated by the number 8 instead of the customary 08. The Sub-Postmaster informed that the ‘0’ was missing because it had been mislaid some time before.

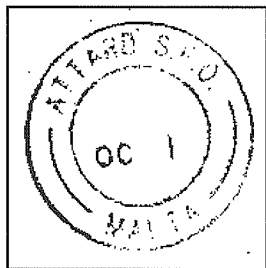


1 October

A new Sub-Post Office was opened with effect from Wednesday, 1 October 2008 to provide all postal services, as well as bill payment services, at 51A, Troy DVD and Stationery, Triq ix-Xatt, Kalkara KKR 1502 (Telephone No. 2180 8057). As from that date, a metal hand date-stamp inscribed with the words ‘Kalkara S.P.O’ started to be used at this Sub-Post Office.



1 October



A new Sub-Post Office was opened with effect from Wednesday, 1 October 2008 to provide all postal services, as well as bill payment services, at 93, Higher Grades Stationery, Triq Kananea, Attard ATD 2703 (Telephone No. 2141 7831). As from that date, a metal hand date-stamp inscribed with the words ‘Attard S.P.O.’ started to be used at this Sub-Post Office. An interesting feature of this date-stamp as used on the first day was that it showed the day and month, but did not show the year. The Sub-Postmaster informed that this was due to the fact that she had not yet been provided with the ‘08’ to use in the date-stamp.

2 October

MaltaPost plc informed that it was issuing a reprint of the Euro 0.37 EUROPA 2008 stamp originally issued in May 2008. This stamp, part of a set of two stamps, had been designed by Edward D. Pirotta. The stamp is 48.0mm x 39.5mm in size, with a perforation of 14.0 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed by Printex Limited on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper and available also in sheets of ten.

5 October

A special hand postmark – “50 Sena Bażilika San Ġorġ 1958 – 2008” – was used at the St. George’s Basilica Parish Office, Triq il-Karità, Victoria, Gozo, on Sunday, 5 October 2008, between 9.00 am and 12.30 pm. The handstamp, which commemorates the Golden Jubilee of the official announcement of the



elevation of St. George’s Parish Church into a Minor Basilica by decree of Pope Pius XII, was designed by Gozitan philatelist Anthony Grech, adapting Michael Formosa’s 50th anniversary logo. The St. George’s Parish Office also produced a special limited edition card (only 1000 cards were printed) to mark the occasion.

7 November



A Temporary Branch Post Office was set up at the Hotel Phoenicia, Floriana, between Friday, 7 November and Sunday, 9 November 2008, during the opening hours of the MALTEX IX Philatelic Exhibition organised by the Malta Philatelic Society. The Temporary Branch was open between 9.00am and 6.00pm on Friday and Saturday, and between 9.00am and

12.00 noon on Sunday. Services on offer at this Temporary Branch included the sale of stamps and postal stationery and other postal services. All mail posted at this Branch was cancelled with a special cancellation hand postmark which was inscribed “Maltex 2008 / 7 – 9 November / Hotel Phoenicia – Floriana – Malta” and included the logo of the exhibition.

7 November

The Philatelic Bureau of MaltaPost plc issued a limited edition Occasion Card and Postal Card during the Maltex 2008 Philatelic Exhibition held at the Hotel Phoenicia, Floriana, between Friday, 7 November and Sunday, 9 November 2008. The Occasion Card, numbered 20 in the series, and limited to 3,000 copies, commemorates the participation of MaltaPost plc in the said Maltex IX Stamp Exhibition. The card reproduces the poster of the “Annus Paulinus” stamp set issued on 28 June 2008. The Postal Card, number 29 in the series, also limited to 3,000 copies, commemorates MaltaPost plc’s participation in the EUROPA 2008 stamp competition. The card features the old mail room in Valletta, with the two stamps (Euro 0.37 and Euro 1.19) from the EUROPA issue “Letters” imprinted and pre-cancelled with the first day handstamp (the EUROPA 2008 set was issued on 9 May 2008). Both cards were available in mint and cancelled format from all MaltaPost branches, from the Mobile Unit, the Philatelic Bureau, as well as from the temporary Branch Post Office during the Maltex 2008 exhibition opening hours at the Hotel Phoenicia in Floriana.

15 November

The MaltaPost mobile retail branch was stationed at Ghajn Tuffieha during the 34U national tree planting campaign on Saturday, 15 November 2008, between 8.30am and 12.30pm. On this occasion, the mobile unit sold the 34U Commemorative Miniature Sheet, and also offered all postal services, including payment of bills. The 34U Miniature Sheet had originally been issued on Thursday, 18 October 2007 to assist in the 34U campaign.

18 November

On Tuesday, 18 November 2008, on the occasion of the arrival in Malta of the RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 on its way (on its last voyage) to Dubai, MaltaPost plc issued a set of 4 stamps in the maritime series, entitled ‘Cruise Liners’. The RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 is to be converted into a floating hotel, with retail and entertainment outlets, at Palm Jumeirah, Dubai. The stamps, designed in-house by MaltaPost’s Daniel Mangani, have a face value of Euro 0.63, Euro 1.16, Euro 1.40 and Euro 3.00. The stamps are 44.0mm by 31.0mm in size, 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 sheets of ten. The stamps reproduce four world-class liners that regularly visit the Grand Harbour in Valletta.



The Euro 0.63 stamp shows the MSC Musica (the latest flagship of the MSC Cruises fleet), the Euro 1.16 stamp depicts the M.S. Voyager of the Seas (the first of five Voyager class cruise ships from Royal Caribbean International), the Euro 1.40 stamp reproduces the M.S. Westerdam (the third of Holland America Line's Vista Class ships), while the Euro 3.00 stamp shows the RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 (Cunard Line ocean liner). For the occasion, the MaltaPost mobile retail branch was stationed at the Valletta Waterfront, close to the quay where the RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 was berthed. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 8). The handstamp was inscribed "MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA" in the outer ring and "MARITIME / CRUISE / LINERS / JUM IL-HRUĠ / 18.11.08" in the inner ring. The Maltapost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 269. On the same date when these 'Cruise Liners' stamps were issued, a copy of these stamps was presented to the Captain of the RMS Queen Elizabeth 2, Captain Ian McNaught, by the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications, Dr Austin Gatt.

18 November

A special hand postmark – "Commemorating – QE 2 Last Voyage – Valletta – Malta – 18th November 2008", was used at the Valletta Waterfront on Tuesday, 18 November 2008 between 8.00am and 6.00pm.



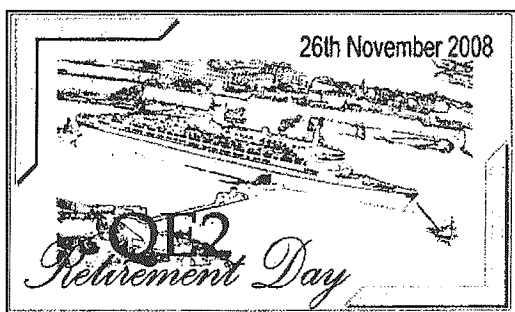
20 November

The first Annual General Meeting of MaltaPost plc since the company's listing on the Malta Stock Exchange, was held on Thursday, 20 November 2008. Shareholders had been informed that the Annual General Meeting for 2008 was being held mainly to satisfy statutory requirements. The company Chairman, Joseph Said, dwelt on the core activities of MaltaPost plc, as well as its intended expansion into new areas, such as financial services. After the floatation on the Malta Stock Exchange, Lombard Bank Malta plc acquired a further 3.8% stake in the postal operator, taking its majority shareholding to 63.8%. Messrs. David Stellini and Philip A. Tabone were re-appointed as Directors and, together with Joseph Said (Chairman), Joseph Azzopardi and Aurelio Theuma form the Board of Directors of MaltaPost plc. Another Annual General Meeting is scheduled to be held on the 17 February 2009, when the audited financial statements of the company for the year ended September 2008 will also be presented.

22 November

A special hand postmark – "5 Snin Anniversarju – Għaqda Mużikali Viżitazzjoni – 22 ta' Novembru 2008" – was used at the MaltaPost Branch in Għarb, Gozo

on Saturday, 22 November 2008 between 8.00am and 12.30pm, on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of the Għaqda Mużikali Viżitazzjoni of Għarb (which is named after the titular feast of the local Parish Church). This Society's first committee was set up on 14 July 2003, and was made up of 15 members. On 22 November 2003, High Mass was celebrated by Mgr. Nikol J. Cauchi, then Bishop of Gozo (and a son of the same village, Għarb), the Society's premises were inaugurated and blessed, and the Society's musical instruments were also blessed.



26 November

A special hand postmark – “QE 2 Retirement Day – 26th November 2008” – was available from the Philatelic Bureau of MaltaPost plc as from Wednesday, 26 November 2008, to mark the occasion of the last operational day of the RMS Queen Elizabeth 2.

27 November

On Thursday, 27 November 2008, MaltaPost plc issued the set of Christmas stamps for 2008. This set, which was designed by Daniel Mangani, features details from three nativity paintings from the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta. The stamps, with face values of Euro 0.19, Euro 0.26 and Euro 0.37, are 48.0mm by 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 Euro 0.19 stamp reproduces a painting by Francesco Trevisani (1656 – 1746), namely the “Madonna and Child with infant St. John the Baptist”. The second stamp, denominated Euro 0.26, is a Nativity panel by Maestro Alberto (fifteenth century Italian artist), and is a detail from a painting on panel featuring the Nativity of Christ. In this detail, the Virgin and Christ child take centre stage in front of a makeshift shed where St. Joseph rests. One of two unidentified personalities, wearing 15th century contemporary costume, kneels in homage. The painting on the Euro 0.37 stamp is entitled “Virgin and Child with Infant St. John



the Baptist”, and is the work of Carlo Maratta (1625 – 1713). MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 9). The handstamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA” in the outer ring and “CHRISTMAS / JUM IL-HRUĠ / 27.11.08” in the inner ring. The Maltapost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 270.

3 December

MaltaPost plc informed the general public about the temporary closure of the Sub-Post Office at Malton Stationery, Triq Ċensu Xerri, Sliema SLM 3062.

4 December

On 4 December 2008, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 212/2008 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the third quarter (July – September) 2008. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 10.8 million items of which the absolute bulk represented letters and other printed items (down from circa 11.0 million items for the previous quarter). The total number of parcels sent through the national post in the period under review was 16,131 (compared to 17,793 in the previous quarter).

