

Early Use of the Divided-Back Postcard

by Mr. Hadrian Wood

An article on the subject of the Malta Post Office's acceptance of the *divided-back* postcard on 2nd March 1906, by Dr. Giovanni Bonello, appeared in the PSM Journal of December 2003 (Vol.32 No.3). This meant that as from that date written messages were to be allowed on the back of a picture postcard, along with the address. Dr. Bonello then goes on to mention the early use of one such card as a *divided-back* some ten months prior to the official consent.

The card referred to by Dr. Bonello comes from a series of divided-back postcards, published by photographer S.L. Cassar, well in advance of their acceptance by the local Postal Authorities. Several of these cards are found postally used prior to 1906, (my earliest being 8th January 1905) (*Fig. 1*). But as Dr. Bonello rightly points out, they were used as *undivided-back* cards, since messages are found on the picture-side, and only the address appears on the back of the card.

The locally used card mentioned and illustrated by Dr. Bonello, which also carried a message on the back besides the address, was an exception which went against the then current postal regulations. It was the only card known to Dr. Bonello to have been used in this way at the time of his article. Another similar example has surfaced since (*Fig. 2*). This one though is addressed overseas to England. It was cancelled at the Sliema Post Office on 7JU 05 and shows a Valletta transit mark of the same date.

This card has been kindly forwarded by Mr. Robert (Bob) Kitchen and comes from his fine collection of early Maltese postcards.

(Mr. Kitchen is well known to local members for his generous contributions of stamps, first-day-covers, postal history, etc. to our Society over the past few years.)

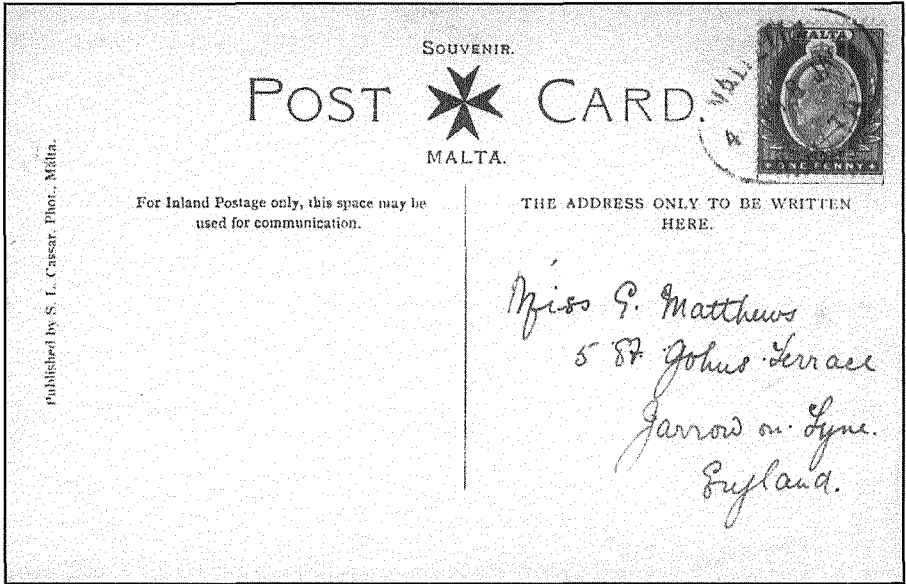


Fig. 1 Divided back postcard used as an undivided-back on 8 January 1905. This meant that only the address would be written on the back of the card.

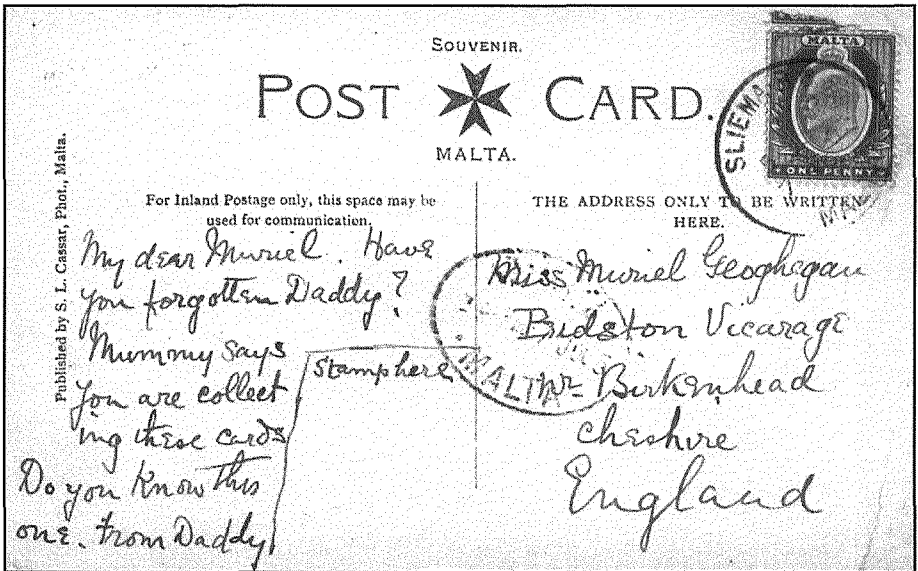


Fig. 2 Divided-back postcard used on 8 June 1905 with a message alongside the address. The message on the back was against Post Office regulations.