

The Growth of the Malta General Post Office 1802 – 1886

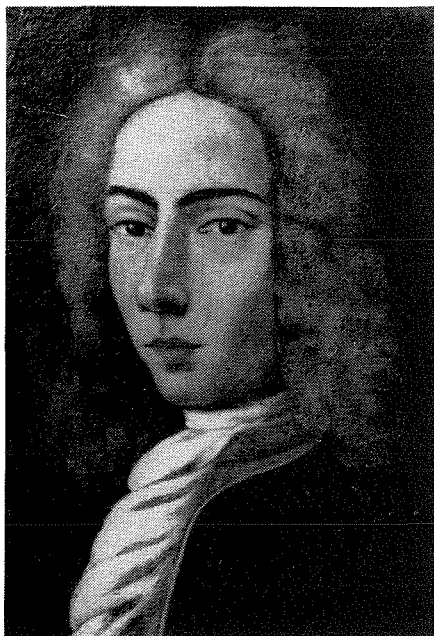
By Dr. Albert Ganado

During the time of the Order, the *Officina della Posta* carried out its duties under the aegis of the Treasury (*Il Comun Tesoro*), and the head of the Post Office was called *Il Commissario della Posta*, invariably one of the professed Knights. From 1797, Domenico Montanaro was the First Clerk in the Department, which post he retained during the first two years of British rule.

In 1802, Gio Antonio Micallef was appointed *Commissario dell'Ufficio della Posta*, which Office also gave employment to Montanaro as Senior Clerk and Vincenzo Mamo as Junior Clerk. Micallef resigned on the 12th April 1804 and his post was abolished. Less than a year later, Domenico Montanaro became *Direttore della Posta*. He was assisted by one clerk, the said Vincenzo Mamo, and a *Portiere*, Giuseppe Azzopart (1). At this period, the Post Office was in charge of both inland and overseas mail.



Giovanni Antonio Micallef
1802 – 11.4.1804 *Commissario*



Domenico Montanaro
c1805 – 31.12.1816 *Direttore*

In May 1806 the Board of Admiralty decided that a Packet Service should be established to carry the mails from England to Gibraltar and Malta. Privately-owned vessels, on contract to the Post Office, were to sail from Falmouth on the

first Wednesday of each month. The Gibraltar and Malta Postage Bill was passed by Parliament on July 3, 1806, and sixteen days later the first Packet boat, the *Cornwallis*, left Falmouth for Gibraltar and Malta arriving here on August 20. During the trip, the vessel was attacked by French gunboats but it reached port safely. The Post Master General in London was responsible for the safe and regular carriage and delivery of mail, and the inauguration of the Packet service necessitated the appointment of a Packet Agent to represent him at the two receiving ends – Gibraltar and Malta. James Chabot, a local merchant, became the first Packet Agent in Malta, appointed by Commission dated 9th July 1806. At the beginning, it was the duty of the Packet Agent to find the means of conveying the letters destined for Sicily, but it was decided quite soon after that the Packet Boat should touch at Palermo or Messina or Syracuse on its way to or from Malta (2).

It appears that the appointment of a merchant, rather than a civil servant, as Packet Agent gave rise to some apprehension. A visitor to Malta in 1812, E. Blaquiere, criticised this arrangement in no uncertain terms. He wrote:

“The agent for packets, or in other words English postmaster, is, by a highly improper arrangement, a merchant having very extensive concerns; the facility with which such a person, if so inclined, might considerably hurt the interests of his contemporaries, is very great; this is, happily, not the case at present, although the circumstances of his appointment is far from agreeable to any of the trading people here. To the other numerous objections of the public to this place being in the charge of a mercantile man, it might be added that his own avocations prevent him from paying the least attention to sorting letters and forwarding them to individuals (3).

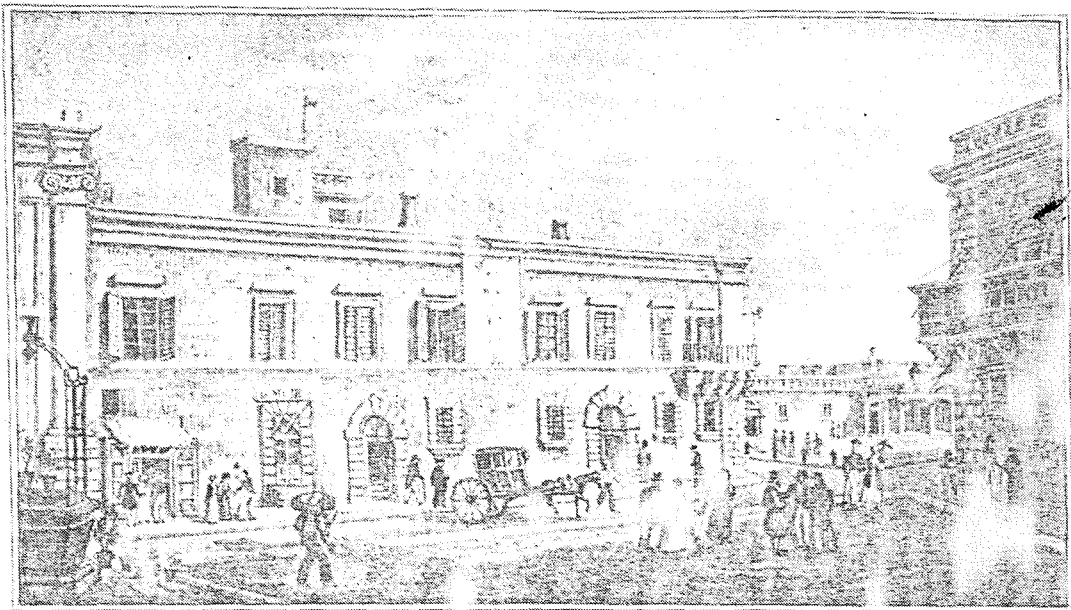
Blaquiere also thought it unnecessary that there should be two post-offices in Malta. One properly administered, he wrote, would answer the purpose of distributing letters much better than the two existing, and it would “save an expensive establishment to the revenues of the island”.

Blaquiere may have been unaware of the fact that the Packet Agent was paid by the General Post Office in London and therefore his salary was not a burden on the local Treasury.

Before 1841, both post offices were housed in the same building, where the *Casino Maltese* (now *The Casino (1852)*) stands together with the underlying shops. The building, at the time, had only two doors, 246 and 247. No. 246 gave access to the Chief Secretary’s Office, the Treasury and the Public Registry (4). At no. 247 was the Land Revenue Office; the Island Post Office occupied an apartment on the lower floor, on the right hand side of the entrance, whilst the British Packet Office was installed just opposite, on the left hand side of the entrance (5).

The Packet Agent was directly responsible to the General Post Office in England, he was paid from the British Treasury (6) and he did not form part of the Civil Establishment in these Islands.

The Director of the Post Office, on the other hand, was the Head of a Government Department which functioned on its own in the early days until it became a part of the Chief Secretary’s Office. In 1813, the Director, Domenico Montanaro, was drawing a salary of 720 scudi per annum, equivalent to almost £65 at the rate of exchange then prevailing (7). He retired on the 31st December 1816 on a pension of £50 per annum and his office was abolished.



Engraving by G. H. St. John

Island Post Office

Chief Secretary Office

Valetta Strada Reale

*The building housing both post offices before 1841
(now The Casino (1852))*

On the 1st July 1815, the Third Assistant at the Chief Secretary's Office, William Sim (8), was entrusted with the superintendence of the Post Office at a salary of 1200 scudi (£106), in addition to the salary of 3000 scudi (£265) he was already receiving as Third Assistant (9). On the retirement of Montanaro, Sim's salary for his postal job was raised to £150 (scudi 1694.5.8), and two clerks were employed to help the new Superintendent (10).

On the 28th January 1817, Robert MacNab was appointed to succeed James Chabot as Agent to the Post Master General (11) and he seems to have taken over the superintendence of the Post Office from the Third Assistant on the 18th March 1817 when the holder of the office, William Sim, was appointed First Assistant (12). In May 1818, MacNab left Malta for reasons of health and never came back. Charles Godfrey was appointed to act in his stead (13), but, in less than two years, the two posts were once more separated: James Wilkinson became Packet Agent on February 6, 1820 (14) and, on the 1st May, Richard Bouchier (15) was given the Superintendence of the Island Post Office, "vice Robert MacNab deceased" (16).

This arrangement did not last long. Shortly after the establishment of a Government Packet between Malta and Syracuse, it was announced on July 1, 1822, that Edward Francis Phillips, as Third Assistant in the Office of the Chief Secretary was to be *ex officio* Superintendent Island Post Office (17). The two posts were to remain consolidated for ten years. In 1832, the post of the Third Assistant was abolished and the holder of the office remained Superintendent of the Post Office with the same salary of £257.3s. (18).

The 1830's were dominated by strong political agitation for a representative government, the abolition of censorship and radical reforms in the colonial administration. Two Royal Commissioners, John Austin and George Cornwall Lewis, were appointed to enquire into the affairs of the island.

The Civil Establishment came under heavy fire in the Commissioners' Report dated 19 February 1838. The Secretary of State communicated its contents to the Governor and approved the measures recommended by the Commissioners for the remedy or prevention of the "great social evils" that were being perpetrated. These "evils" may be summarised as hereunder and, although they were incorporated in the Despatch to the Governor, they were omitted when it was laid on the Table of the House of Commons:

1. The number of Public Offices was very great for a population of 120,000 souls;
2. Of these Offices, almost all the higher and more valuable were in the hands of Englishmen, whilst the great mass of petty employments had been reserved, with only three exceptions, for the Maltese;
3. English officers received, and most unreasonably expected, salaries far more expensive than would satisfy the utmost hopes of a native inhabitant of Malta of equal proficiency and trustworthiness in the despatch of business;
4. The English Officer, though thus largely remunerated, being frequently ignorant of the language, character and manners of the people among whom he was placed, was far less efficient than a Maltese of equal capacity;
5. This situation was viewed by the Maltese with constant jealousy and discontent (19).

Out of 680 persons in Government employment, 28 were Englishmen and 652 Maltese. The average official income of each of the 28 English was £523.15.6 and that of each of the 652 Maltese £42.1.11.

The establishment of the Island Post Office, as at 1st January 1838, was as follows:

Superintendent	£257.3.0 p.a.
Clerk	55
Clerk	25
Messenger	25.15.0

In their Report on the Departments of the Chief Secretary and the Auditor-General, dated 21 April 1838 (20), the Commissioners recommended that the office of Superintendent of the Post Office be immediately abolished, and that his duties be performed by the Second Assistant in the Chief Secretary's office. The Second Assistant was to receive a salary of £350 p.a., but the salary of the successor to the present occupant was to be £300. The staff at the Post Office was recommended as hereunder:

First Clerk	£80
Second Clerk	60
Messenger	30

On the 14th September 1838 the Secretary of State wrote to the Governor that Her Majesty's Government were prepared to sanction the establishments recommended by the Commissioners (21).

With effect from the 1st July 1838, the Office of Superintendent of the Government (or Island) Post Office was abolished and the occupant, E.F. Phillips, retired on a pension of £150 per annum (22).



Vincenzo Mamo
7.1838 – 31.3.1849 Officer in Charge of the Post Office

The Second Assistant to the Chief Secretary's Office was Vincenzo Mamo (23) and, as such, he was now in charge of the Post Office.

We have seen that in 1820 James Wilkinson was appointed Packet Agent and Richard James Bouchier became Superintendent of the Island Post Office. It appears that Wilkinson left Malta early in 1827. On February 28, 1827, Phillips was appointed to act during his absence (24) until Bouchier became Packet Agent early in 1828 (25).

In 1841, the Packet Office was transferred to 197 Strada Mercanti (the ancient *Banca Giuratale* or Town Hall, where the Public Registry is today housed), but the Island Post Office remained at 247 Strada Reale (26).

On the 17th April 1848, Bouchier wrote to the Secretary of the General Post Office in London, Lieutenant Colonel W. Maberly, that the Governor of Malta had proposed that the Island Post Office should be placed in the same building and under the same control as Her Majesty's Packet Office. He

expressed the opinion that, by concentrating Postal transactions, the efficiency of the office would be increased and the public would be better served through the prevention of errors which frequently occurred by strangers mistaking one Office for the other (27).

Bourchier was informed that the Governor had to transmit his proposal to the Postmaster General through the ordinary channel, namely, the Secretary of State for the Colonies (28).

When this was done, the General Post Office requested a statement of the number of persons employed in the local Post Office, the annual receipts and expenditure of this establishment and such other particulars as might be useful in considering the subject.

On the 4th September 1848, Bourchier submitted the statement to the Chief Secretary to Government. The salaries paid in 1848 amounted to £170 per annum:

First Clerk	£80
Second Clerk	60
Messenger	30

whilst £6 were spent on stationery and other expenses.

The revenue was derived from postage collected on ship letters inwards as no postage was chargeable on letters outwards. The average of annual receipts was £99.10.8 worked out on the previous three years:

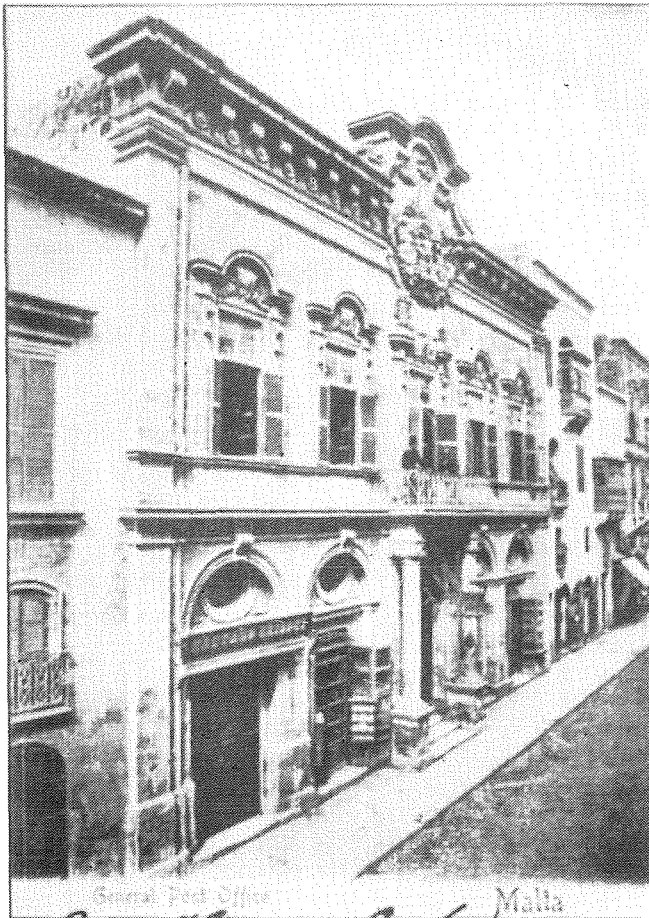
1845	£ 87.3.11
1846	97.9.0
1847	113.19.1

Bourchier proposed a reformed establishment for the consolidated offices which would entail a diminution of expense to the civil government and no additional expense to the General Post Office. At the same time, it would very much aid the Packet branch of the establishment by rendering the aggregate services of the conjoined offices available on the occasion of any great press of business, particularly when a concurrence of inward and outward mails made it extremely difficult for the existing establishment of the Packet Office to despatch the outward mails at the hour fixed for their departure; this was especially applicable to the mails despatched by the French Government steamers over which the Packet Office had no control (29).

Finally, Bourchier confirmed the assurance he had given to the Governor six months before that he was prepared to undertake the superintendence and control of both offices together without any additional remuneration (30). At the time, he was drawing a salary of £250 per annum from England as Packet Agent, and £500 per annum from the local establishment as Collector of Customs (31).

On March 6, 1849, the Secretary of State wrote to the Governor that the Postmaster General had no objection to the proposed arrangement after having ascertained that the object of the consolidation was not that the Island Post Office should be placed under the control of the General Post Office in England (32). It is likely that the British Treasury had no wish to be saddled with the expense of running the Island Post Office along with the Packet Post Office.

Bourchier was informed of this decision by letter dated March 16, 1849 (33), the Island Post Office was removed to 197 Strada Mercanti and the two Offices started functioning under one Head on the 1st April 1849 with Richard James Bourchier as Postmaster (34).



*197 Strada Mercanti (the ancient Banca Giuratale)
1841 – Packet Office and 1st April 1849 Island Post Office as well*

On the basis of Bouchier's plan, the establishment of the consolidated offices was the following as at January 1, 1850:

		Paid by the GPO (London)	Paid by the Civil Govt.	Total
First Clerk	Gaetano Micallef	£80	£10	£90
Clerk and Accountant for the Island branch	John Diston	30	60	90
Clerk	Filippo Farrugia	30	15	45
Clerk	Vincenzo Grech	20	25	45
Messenger	Giuseppe Caruana	15	5	20

The money paid by the Civil Government to the Maltese Clerks and Messenger was not a fixed salary, but "a provisional and temporary remuneration" for the assistance they gave at the Island Post Office (35).

It was the custom to open the Post Office from 9 to noon and from 2 to 5 in the afternoon. By 1855, business at the Post Office had increased so much, that closure for two whole hours was causing great inconvenience to the public. Through the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Government requested the Postmaster General in London to remedy the situation (36).

The complaints of the commercial community and the public in general were, however, mostly centred on the premises which housed the Post Office, and various petitions requested its removal to a more convenient site. The main objection was that the Island Post Office was not on the ground floor of the building. In 1859 the Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Chief Secretary to Government that it was desirable to transfer the Post Office to a ground floor site and in a central position in Valletta. The old Borsa was suggested, namely, the building in Strada San Paolo which gave on to the great courtyard of the University and Lyceum (37).

On the 11th November 1859, the Governor, Sir John Gaspard Le Marchant, informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies that he had decided to accept the Chamber's suggestion and that the new arrangement would in no way interfere with the £50 rental paid annually by the Post Office in England for the quarters of the Deputy Post Master General in Malta. Construction was well under way by January 1860 and the work was to have been completed within a few weeks (38).

Meanwhile, however, the Governor was apprised of Her Majesty's Government's reaction to his decision. The Secretary of State informed him that the plans for the new Post Office were to be inspected by the Practical Officers of the General Post Office for alterations and improvements. Eventually, the Deputy Post Master General of Gibraltar, Mr. Creswell, who had supervised the erection of a new Post Office at Gibraltar, was sent to Malta to inspect the building selected by the Governor as well as one which the Deputy Post Master General of Malta had represented to be available for the Post Office and in a better situation.

Mr. Creswell's verdict was that the building erected by the local Government was very inferior to the one then in use as the Island Post Office, and it was therefore inadvisable to exchange one for the other (39). There the matter rested.

At the time, John Stuart Coxon was the Deputy Post Master General of Malta. On the 15th March 1854, he had succeeded Bouchier as Agent for Her Majesty's Packets at a salary of £350, and *ex officio* Superintendent of the Island Post Office. In 1858, his appointment was changed to Deputy Post Master General and his salary was raised to £400 p.a. As a result of Coxon's new designation, the British Packet Office was thenceforth referred to as the Malta General Post Office (40).

Unlike Bouchier, Coxon did not occupy various other lucrative posts and, during the Governorship of Sir William Reid (1851 – 58), he made a personal application to Sir William for some extra remuneration as Superintendent of the Island Post Office. His request was not entertained and he unsuccessfully repeated his application in writing on the 30th January 1860 (41).



Roger Duke

21.7.80 – 31.12.1884

1.1.85 – 31.12.85 Post Master

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Twenty months later, for some unknown reason, Coxon was removed from office and William Adams Dewar was appointed to succeed him. Dewar proceeded to Malta from Marseilles by the French Packet on the 29th September 1861 (42) and his appointment was published locally on the 11th October 1861 (43). Dewar's salary was fixed at £500 p.a. and he was later allowed a percentage on the sale of stamps and money orders which worked out at about £60 p.a. (44).

On the 4th November 1867, the Superintendence of the Island Post Office passed to Thomas Walter Coffin under his appointment as Dewar's successor, this time with the title of Postmaster. Coffin was succeeded by Roger Duke on the 21st July 1880, who was given the title of Imperial Postmaster on the 1st November 1880 (45).

In 1878, Sir Penrose Julyan was invited to inquire into and report on the organisation and working of the Civil Establishment of Malta (other than those connected with education) with a view to ascertaining whether it might be practicable to effect any reduction in the numbers and cost of the employees in the public service, naturally, without detriment to the efficient conduct of public business. On the 25th March 1879, Julyan submitted his findings to the Colonial Office (46).

For the services rendered by the Post Office employees in connection with the Island postal service the local Government added £212 to their Imperial salaries. It also provided and kept in repair the premises of the Post Office, receiving for the same a rent of £50 a year. Besides, it spent about £270 on the conveyance and delivery of letters to the country districts of Malta and Gozo, in addition to the £880 mentioned above, while, as a partial set-off to these charges, it derived about £140 a year from the sale of Island postage stamps. Thus, the net cost of the Post Office to Malta exceeded £1150 a year.

He wrote on the Post Office that it was, in the main, a branch establishment of the General Post Office in London and, as such, it provided:

- a) the salaries of the Postmaster, five clerks, a sorter, a messenger and four letter carriers, amounting, with incidental expenses, to about £1,600 a year (47);
- b) for the conveyance of all English and foreign mails to and from Valletta – except that £880 out of the £2080 paid for the Messina and Malta service was drawn from local funds (48).

On the other hand, the General Post Office in London appropriated all the revenue derived from the sale of British stamps and other postal charges.

The local Government had informed Julyan that it was strongly in favour of the transference to it of the larger share in the establishment then held by the Imperial authorities. Julyan recommended that this request should be met. Not only would it be in harmony with the arrangements existing in nearly every other British colony, but the island would derive considerable advantage from its adoption.

Under the proposed arrangement, the Malta Government would have to defray all the cost of the Post Office establishment, including the distribution of letters throughout Malta and Gozo and other miscellaneous expenses. These charges amounted at the time to about £2080, of which nearly £1600 were paid from Imperial and about £480 from local sources.

Julyan considered these charges to be excessive and he wrote:

“If the successor to the present Postmaster is chosen from the natives of Malta, he may be amply remunerated by less than half the emoluments which are now assigned to the post, and which far exceed those of every other civil servant in the Island except the Chief Secretary, not excluding even the President of the Court of Appeal” (49).

He also recommended that the large staff of clerks and subordinates be reduced. If the outlay of £2080 on account of the establishment and incidental expenses were to be reduced to about £1520, the total cost of the Malta Post Office could be estimated at £5300 a year, the balance of £3780 being the cost of the conveyance of mails to foreign countries (50).

Julyan estimated the revenue to be £5800 distributed as follows:

Sale of Postage stamps	£5170
Collections on unpaid correspondence	260
Private Box Fees	70
Commission on Money Orders	300
	<hr/>
	£5800

Consequently, besides collateral advantages, a profit of about £500 a year could be expected should the Post Office be transferred from Imperial to local control, instead of a deficit which amounted to about £1150.

Eventually, the Imperial Government consented to the transfer of the Post Office to the control of the local Government and the Post Office Ordinance was given a first reading in the Council of Government on the 28th November 1883 (51). However, almost all the Elected Members resigned on the 11th January 1884, new elections were held, Sir J.A. Lintorn Simmons (1884 – 1888) succeeded Sir A. Borton (1878 – 1884) as Governor of Malta, and the Ordinance was introduced once more at the sitting of the 19th November 1884. It was the Government's intention that the transfer should take effect as from the 1st January 1885 and therefore the Ordinance was passed through all stages in two weeks time (52).

The Governor gave his assent on the 14th December 1884, but, under an Act of the Imperial Parliament (53) the transfer of the powers of Her Majesty's Postmaster General to a Colony could not take effect in virtue of a law passed by the Legislature of such Colony unless the same was assented to by Her Majesty with the advice of Her Privy Council. The Queen's assent was given by an Order-in-Council dated the 30th December 1884 (54). The day after, a Supplement to The Malta Government Gazette published Ordinance II of 1884 entitled "To establish a Post Office".

Section 1 of the Ordinance laid down:

"There shall be established, in the city of Valletta, in any such place as the Head of the Government shall direct, a General Post Office, where postal packets may be received from all places within or out of these islands, and whence such postal packets may be despatched to all places within or out of these islands".

The Government was to have the exclusive privilege of the conveyance of letters, except in a few cases, such as, for example, in regard to letters sent on Her Majesty's Service. The Post Master was to be appointed by the Head of the Government and his salary was fixed by the Ordinance at £500 a year, including all emoluments derived from his office.

Roger Duke, who had been Her Majesty's Postmaster in Malta since 1880, was appointed Postmaster under the new law for one year from the 1st January 1885 (55). As from the same date, postage stamps of the U.K. were no longer valid for the prepayment of postage on correspondence posted in Malta or Gozo, and Malta postage stamps to be used as from the 1st January 1885 were sold as from the 27th December 1884 (56).

On the 1st January 1886, the Hon. Ferdinando Vincenzo Inglott was appointed Postmaster (57) and a new era was inaugurated for the postal service in these Islands.

The Post Office was still at the "Ancient Banking House of the Jurats of Valletta", but the place was a real shambles. Inglott commented:



The Hon. Ferdinando Inglott
1.1.1886 – 31.3.92 Post Master General

Photo published by the kind permission of the G.P.O. Malta.

“The scantiness and poverty of the Office Furniture, the total absence of the least convenience, and the general dilapidated condition of everything, could only be explained either that the Imperial Government was too economical in allowing the necessary means, or what it was now too late to effect a reform, it having been recommended that the Department should be transferred to the local Government.”

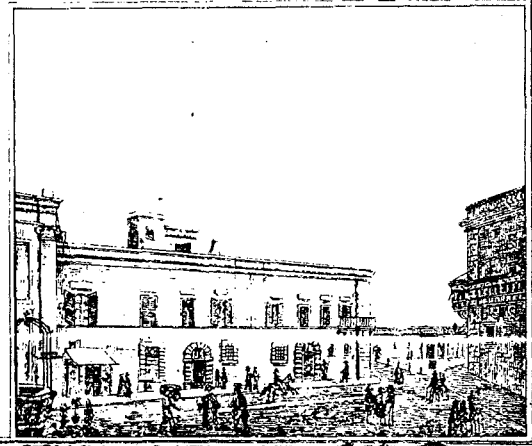


REFERENCES

1. St. James's Church	14. Theatre
2. St. John's	15. New English Church
3. Auberge de Castille	16. The Eng ^d Bishop's residence
4. Lord's Buildings	17. Island Post Office
5. Sir T. Mailland	18. Library
6. Admiralty House	19. Commercial Revenue
7. Spencer's Battery	Anglo-Maltese Bank
8. Ponsoby's Pillar	20. Maltese Bank
9. Quarantine Gate	21. Antiq. Anglo-Bavarian
10. Auberge de France	22. Military Hospital
11. St. John's Church	23. Auberge d'Italie
12. Packet Post Office	24. Auberge d'Espagne
13. Auberge d'Auvergne	Granaries & Counters
A. Church & Hotel 219 St. Paolo	B. Victoria Hotel 150 St. George
C. Baker's Palace Royal M.S. Veg	H. Mars' Public Library 275 St. Paul
D. Royal Clarence Hotel 29 St. Paul	K. Penultimate C. Office S. S. Paul
E. Dunstons Hotel 30 St. Paul	L. Neapolitan St. City 150 St. Paul
F. Hotel de la M. de France	M. French Post Office 16 St. Michael
N. Hotel de la M. de France	O. Light House
P. Hotel de la M. de France	U. G. Grant's Warehouse 10 St. Paul

To accompany the report of the
 Pratique Military 1856
 1st January 1856

Line proposed by Colonel
 Shannon marked red



Map of Valletta showing 12, Packet Post Office and 17, Island Post Office

No adverse comments could be made about the personnel. Inglott found them to be the “most intelligent, most zealous and most admirably assiduous and hard-working Officers”, but the Department was under-staffed and work was rapidly increasing – with the consequence that there was a complete “derangement” in every Branch and in every detail of organisation.

Sorters, messengers and even boatmen, were called upon to perform the duties of the clerks, and the clerks were then directed to attend to what those had done before them. The Chief Sorter and the Chief Messenger had frequently to perform duties at the Counter, registering letters, to take one example, when they were obliged to sign Receipts “for the Postmaster”. Valuable Postal Stores were in charge of the Messenger. The Stationery and Forms were in Presses accessible to everybody.

The “Stamp Impression Book”, a vital record which constituted the legal proof of the proper and exact time of the arrival and departure of mails, and of the posting of letters, was to be found knocking about, not stamped at the very instant a change of the “Index letter” took place, and not checked and initialled by a Superior Officer, as required by the Regulations. The Messengers impressed the required stamp carelessly and when they found time to do so. The Book was never paged, nor was the paging certified as it should have been. The attendance Book was also not properly kept.

Public Stores, such as “Mail Bags” were allowed to be misused. Records of a useful nature were stored away in a damp room and found eaten by rats. Thirty-six volumes of the Government Gazette were sold as waste-paper in October 1881. The Postage stamps, Cards and Envelopes in use in all the Countries forming the Universal Postal Union had yet to be collected and arranged into an Album for prompt comparison to ascertain their genuineness and detect any attempt at forgery.

Inglott expressed his surprise in that, although some of the Officers of the Department habitually visited London almost every summer, no one had ever thought of bringing with him a single specimen, not even a “wall letter box” or a pair of “Bag scissors”. Indeed, there was in the Post Office a total absence of any of the Fittings and Contrivances used abroad to facilitate the performance of Postal Services.

He recalled that the two Iron Pillar Boxes, one in the Piazza and the other in the Marina, were an improvement introduced by Sir Gaspard Le Marchant (58) in 1859, and the “Bag Scissors” in use had been imported as late as 1884 at the suggestion of one of the clerks (who had seen a specimen in the Post Office at Cyprus) to put aside the shoemaker’s knife with which the Mail Bags had, until then, been cut open and considerably damaged (59).

As the Office was under Imperial control, and consequently quite independent of any local authority, its responsibilities and work and hitherto remained unknown; nor had the Internal Rules and Regulations of the Post Office ever been considered as subject to the interference of the local Government. The public, in fact, regarded the Post Office as an Institution through which they were allowed to receive and despatch their correspondence, but had no right to complain to the local Government on any measure the Postmaster thought necessary to adopt. To prove his point, Inglott quoted an example. His predecessors had put up a Notice:

“No attendance at the Counter, whilst the Mails are being sorted for delivery”



Palazzo Parisio
In May 1886 it became the General Post Office

Photo published by the kind permission of the G.P.O. Malta.

which meant that the Post Office was completely shut for two or three hours.

On one occasion, his immediate predecessor, annoyed at the noise and other inconveniences the idle crowd made while waiting for their letters, shut them out of the Office premises altogether, and admitted them a few at a time on opening the "Private Boxes".

Yet the public, both English and Maltese, bore these inconveniences and delays without a murmur.

Once the Department had then become an integral part of the local Government, Inglott felt it his duty to submit for the consideration of the Governor all that appeared to him to be wanting to bring it up to the level of the other Public Offices. For that purpose, he prepared rough sketches showing structural arrangements required at the Banca Giuratale, which were totally different from those prepared by his predecessor. These were submitted on the 13th March 1886 and approved by the Governor who directed that their cost be estimated.

It was soon ascertained that, in order to obtain the area required for the construction of the several Offices and "Officers's Quarters", considerable property in Strada Mercanti and Strada Tesoreria would have to be taken possession of. For the necessary works at the Banca Giuratale to be carried out with urgency, it was decided that, as a preparatory measure, a building had to be found for the temporary accomodation of the Post Office.

In January 1886 Inglott had already viewed Palazzo Parisio, together with a representative of the Public Works Department, and he had found it very suitable for the purpose. On the 25th January 1886, a two-year lease was entered into with the owners (numbering over 60) at the rental of £170 per annum. The Palace was in quite a dilapidated state, and the Government decided to carry out only the most urgent repairs, namely, patching up of the iron and woodwork, painting and decoration, at a cost of £450 (60).

In May 1886, Palazzo Parisio was ready to receive the General Post Office. On the 8th May, Mons. Don Emmanuele Debono, the Rev. Curate of St. Paul's Shipwreck, performed the ceremony of benediction, in the presence of the entire Post Office staff and the staff of the Customs Department who were invited for the occasion. On the 12th, the Press was shown round the new premises by Ferdinando Inglott, the Postmaster General, on whose head all the newspapers showered unstinted praise for a wonderful achievement. One paper commented that as soon as Inglott took over a Department he transformed it with a magic wand! (61)

On Monday, the 17th May, the new Post Office opened its doors to the public (62). Just beyond the main door four large letter boxes were installed for the postage of mail: the two on the right, coloured red and blue, were for foreign letters and newspapers; those on the left, in white and green, for inland ones. The different colours were adopted mainly for the guidance of messengers most of whom were in those days illiterate.

The room on the right was reserved for the sale of stamps and registration of letters; that on the left served for *Poste Restante*, ship letters and official correspondence. Next to the courtyard, there was a special section for the distribution of letters to those who paid £1 per annum for express delivery of mail addressed to them. A desk was provided near the staircase for those wishing to write a letter. A few steps up was the office of Money Orders. The upper floor, contained the Parcel Post Office, a large room for sorting and stamping of mail, a room for the postmen, a separate section for the delivery of

mail to the Forces, sorted out according to the name of the vessel or regiment concerned.

The Offices of the Postmaster and that of the Chief Clerk were on the same floor. A Resident Clerk who looked after the Department outside office hours lived on the premises and there were two rooms occupied by the night guards. Large clocks were fixed to the walls in several places and there were so many gas brackets that the illumination of the whole building was as strong as daylight.

In short, there was a general consensus that the new Post Office could stand its own in any country on the Continent. Palazzo Parisio had come to life once more in a manner worthy of its founder, in striking contrast to the level it had fallen in the preceding years as a livery-stable. As one writer aptly put it, the change was literally "Dalle stalle alle stelle"! (63)

The arrangements made for the various postal services worked satisfactorily and the Governor decided to grant Inglott three months' leave of absence, and £50, to enable him to travel on the Continent and in England with the object of acquiring theoretical and practical knowledge of large and varied Postal arrangements. He left Malta on May 31st, visited the principal Post Offices in Italy, Switzerland, France and England and returned in August with "Notes" on his journey which were commented on by the Governor in this fashion:

"It is evident that Mr. Inglott has made the best use of the opportunities afforded him, and has amassed a fund of information which, I have no doubt, will be used to very great advantage in promoting the convenience of the community as well as the safety and expedition of their correspondence".

But the arrangements at the Temporary Post Office had been organised so well that Inglott, on his return, found that he had hardly any alteration to recommend. The general approbation which these arrangements had elicited locally was endorsed in December by an Officer of the General Post Office in London (Mr. Herbert W. Linford) who wrote to Inglott in these terms:

"I cannot leave without expressing the great pleasure I have had in inspecting the arrangements of the Malta Post Office, and my admiration for the extreme simplicity and order which characterize its internal Economy. I cannot remember ever to have seen a Post Office (out of England) where the convenience of the Public appears to have been so much studied".

The distribution of the various services in several separate and distinct Offices had removed the inconvenient practice of concentrating all the work upon one counter. Besides, instead of shutting the Office altogether, as practised in the old building, during the sorting of the mails, the public could now, at any time during office hours, buy stamps, register letters, take or change Money Orders and post or withdraw Parcels. The only Branches that had to be kept closed, to refill, during the sorting of the mails, were the *Poste Restante* (which comprised the "Official Correspondence" and the "Ship Letters") and the "Private Boxes".

The sharp supervision which was being enforced on the "Sorting Room operations" had the effect of sending down the correspondence to the "Delivery Offices" in as short a time as possible. Instances were frequently occurring of mails consisting of 30, 40 and even 50 Bags being sorted within two hours. Not even in Post Offices abroad was sorting carried out so efficiently, although the education of their sorting staff was far superior to that of the class the Government found for employment in this Island.

The keeping of the correspondence, the account books, the several records required as auxiliaries to ascertain the Receipts and Expenditure under "Transit Rates", were being looked into and were being improved in form, diction and manner of registering.

Inglott felt the need to emphasise the importance of his Department by submitting detailed returns of the operations of the Post Office (64). Besides collecting revenue for the island Treasury, the Department transacted every month heavy cash operations for that of the U.K. During 1886, no less than £36,384 was dealt with. The Department was not merely the means of receiving and delivering correspondence. Its machinery was complicated and its duties involved very great responsibility on all concerned. The clerks of a Post Office, he opined, required uncommon abilities and long and careful training, as they were in immediate and continual contact with individuals of all classes and of all nations.

Besides, the Post Office being an International Institution had to attend to and obey the laws and Regulations of other countries, apart from the local ones, and a large portion of the duties of the Postmaster did not fall under the notice of the local Government, as the correspondence connected therewith was despatched direct to the Postal authorities abroad.

For 1887, the second year of his administration, Inglott proposed to use every endeavour to complete the internal organisation and discipline of the Post Office and of its several branches, and to establish the necessary arrangements for two collections and two deliveries of correspondence per day in the Fortified Towns, Sliema and Hamrun, and to form a "Postal Guide" in accordance with the provisions of the local Ordinance (65) and with what was observed in other countries.

Finally, Inglott remarked that, should Palazzo Parisio be declared "Public Property", he would submit plans for structural alterations on a permanent basis. He was keen to convert the building into as perfect an establishment as possible, to secure the general efficiency required in a Postal Department, "for the first time entrusted to a native official"!

Governor Simmons found the Report highly satisfactory. It confirmed Ferdinand Inglott's "well-known administrative capacity and the care and attention he always brings to bear upon his public duties" (66).

Palazzo Parisio was found to be admirably suited to be converted into a permanent Post Office. It was recorded that a substantial sum of money would have to be spent for the purpose, but that the expansion and modernisation of the former premises of the Post Office would also have entailed considerable expense (67). The Government, mainly at Inglott's insistence, was induced to retain possession of the palace and, on March 24, 1887, it acquired near a two-thirds share of the property from Girolama widow of Carmelo dei Marchesi DePiro (68), the value of the Palace having been taken at £8,332.3.6.

The purchase by Government of some of the remaining portions of the property gave rise to strong controversy in the legislative assembly, the Council of Government, in March 1892. When the Government presented an Estimate to the Council for a vote enabling it to acquire those portions, it transpired that a small part of that vote had already been spent under a warrant of advance issued by the Governor. A heated debate followed during which the elected members were unanimous in condemning the Government's action. Its conduct was labelled unconstitutional and the elected members felt insulted by having

been requested to approve a vote when a part of it had already been spent beforehand without the knowledge and approval of the Council.

The Government side pleaded that it had not gone to the Council for the necessary vote because it was pressed for time to effect the purchase of those portions. But the elected bench pointed out that, when two of the deeds of purchase were signed, the Council was in session and therefore the Government had no excuse for its omission (69).

Within a short time, however, the whole of Palazzo Parisio was Government property and it was to remain the seat of the General Post Office for 87 years. On July 4, 1973, it was transferred to the building on the opposite side of the road in Merchants Street, the Auberge of the Italian Knights of the Order of St. John.

References

1. Ganado, Albert. *The Officina della Posta and its Functionaries*. In *PSM* (Philatelic Society of Malta) *Magazine*, XII.3 (1983) 13 – 24.
2. Malta Study Circle. *Malta. The stamps and postal history 1576 – 1960*. London, 1980, 23 – 26.
On Jan. 11, 1814, J. Chabot was appointed to act as Postmaster in all matters connected with the Packets of the local Government established between Malta and Smyrna (PAV, *Letterbook* Oct. 1813 – June 1815, p. 23).
3. Blaquiére, E. *Letters from the Mediterranean*. London, 1813, II, 371.
4. Public Registry business was transferred to the Chief Secretary's Office as from Jan. 1, 1828.
5. *The Mediterranean Magazine for the diffusion of useful knowledge*. Malta. IV, 26 Nov. 1842, 13.
When the Packet Office moved to 197 Strada Mercanti, its apartment at the Chief Secretary's Office was segregated from the main building and converted into a shop which became *Muir's Circulating Library*.
6. In 1830, his salary was £150 p.a.
7. It was not until the 9th June 1825 that the rate of exchange was fixed at twelve scudi to the pound. Five years before, for instance, it was about 16s. for 10 sc. (PAV, *Abstract of the net revenue and expenditure of the Island of Malta for the year 1821*, p. 6).
8. *Malta. Returns to two addresses of the Hon. The House of Commons. . . for Returns. . . of the Salaries of all persons employed under Government in Malta. . .* Parliamentary Paper No. 39, ordered to be printed 19 Feb. 1836, p. 10.
William Sim was born on May 30, 1788. Appointed Assistant Registrar for Prize Vessels Oct. 1, 1811; from 1st Jan. 1813 held same situation conjointly with that of Clerk in the Public Secretary's Office. Became Third Assistant June 15, 1814; from 1st July 1815 held that post conjointly with that of Superintendent of the Island Post Office. March 1816, accompanied Sir Thomas Maitland to Cefalonia and Corfù, where he acted as Treasurer General of the Ionian Islands 18 June – 9 Nov. 1816 with an allowance from the Ionian Government of 8s.4d. a day, in addition to the double salary drawn on the Malta Establishment. Appointed 19 March 1817 First Assistant in the Chief Secretary's Office. Became Assistant Secretary to Government and Clerk of the Council of Government 12 Oct. 1835. Retired June 1, 1851, and left Malta on August 26. (NLM, Mss. Libr. A19, p.7; PAV, *Malta. Miscellaneous Papers*, II encl. 20.) *Malta Blue Book* 1851, p. 107).
9. Parl. Pap. 39 *cit.*, p. 16.
10. PAV, *Abstract. . . 1821 cit.*, p.13.
11. *Malta Government Gazette*, 29 Jan. 1817. MacNab's temporary appointment was confirmed by a Government Notice of 9 July 1817 (*MGG*, 9 July 1817).
12. NLM, Mss. Libr. A19, p.7.
13. Govt. Not. 27 May 1818 (*MGG*, 27 May 1818).
14. *MGG*, 9 Feb. 1820. Wilkinson was at the time Agent Victualler to the Navy at Malta; in 1827 – 28 he was succeeded by Robert Clement Sconce.
15. His name was not *Bouchier* as reported in the handbook of the Malta Study Circle. The mistake is due to a misprint in the Govt. Not. announcing his appointment. Unlike the preceding appointments, Bouchier's was made by the local Government, instead of by the Post Master General in London.

- Bourchier was born on the 10th June 1793. His first job under the Civil Government seems to have been that of Superintendent of the Island Post Office 1 May 1820–30 June 1822. Appointed Assistant Superintendent of Grain on 30 Aug. 1824 and Private Secretary to the Governor 15 Feb. 1827–31 Dec. 1831. Collector of Customs from Dec. 1, 1831. His salary in 1850 was £500 and he occupied a government house two-thirds rent free. Retired on 13 Sept. 1853 on a pension of £330 p.a. Died in 1864. (NLM, Mss. Libr. A19, p.23; *Malta Blue Books* 1864, 1865).
16. *MGG*, 3 May 1820.
 17. *MGG*, 2 July 1822. It appears that Phillips was not receiving any extra salary for his superintendence of the Post Office, unlike the arrangement when Sim was appointed. Phillips entered the service of the local Government on Jan. 1, 1809. Became Third Assistant on Jan. 1, 1819. Died in 1839. (*Malta*. London, Wm. Clowes, 1828, p.43. This is a book “containing the Financial Accounts, Return of Establishments and Statements of other matters” relating to the Island of Malta laid before the Committee appointed by the House of Commons to enquire into the existing state of the Revenue and Expenditure of the British Empire. See also *Colonial Pensions. Return of the Amount paid for Pensions... from the Colonial Revenue of Malta, Ceylon, Trinidad... in the years 1837, 1838, and 1839...* Parl. Pap. 596, ordered to be printed 5 August 1840).
 18. *Malta. Returns of the Names of, and Appointments held by, the Members of the Council of Government of Malta:- Of the Salaries of all Persons employed under Government in Malta...* Parl. Pap. 39, ordered to be printed 19 Feb. 1836 pp. 45 and 48. Under “Alterations in 1832” the Return shows a reduction of salary of £257.3s. in respect of the Third Assistant, but there was in actual fact no reduction in expenditure once the same salary was drawn by the holder under a different designation.
 19. PAV, *Despatches Secretary of State to Governor*, Vol. 32, No. 227, 27 March 1838. Cfr. the incomplete extract of the Despatch published in *Copies or Extracts of Reports of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Affairs of the Island of Malta and of Correspondence thereupon*. Parl. Pap. 141, Part II, ordered to be printed 16 Feb. 1838, pp. 27–29.
 20. *Copies or Extracts of Reports of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Affairs of the Island of Malta, or of Correspondence thereon*. Parl. Pap. 140, Part III, ordered to be printed 27 March 1839, p. 69.
 21. *Op. cit.*, (ref. 20), p.72.
 22. Parl. Pap. 596 *cit.* (ref. 17), p.1.
 23. Born 3 Feb. 1789, died 30 April 1864. Clerk in the Post Office 15 July 1802–31 Dec. 1806. Clerk in Public Secretary’s Office 1 Jan. 1807–2 Jan. 1812 (conjointly, he held situation of Interpreter to the Criminal Court 27 Nov. 1808–31 Aug. 1810). In charge Mediterranean Passports Office 3 Jan. 1812–14 June 1814. Second Assistant Chief Secretary’s Office 15 June 1814–14 March 1855 (conjointly, Registrar of the Supreme Council of Justice 6 July 1814–31 Dec. 1843; Taxer of Costs in Matters of Bankruptcy 11 March 1822–24 Aug. 1824; Joint Secretary to the Commissions for framing new Codes of Law 18 Nov. 1831–31 Dec. 1837). Occupied various other posts in an acting capacity, including Acting Superintendent of the Island Post Office March 1816–18 March 1817 and 5 April–1 Nov. 1830. Sent to Tunis and Tripoli in 1811 under the orders of Capt. Hope of *H.M.S. Topace* on a mission to those Regencies, and, in 1827, he accompanied to Rome the Chief Secretary, Sir Frederick Hankey, on official business. His salary in 1850 was £450. (NLM, Mss. Libr. A19, pp.8–9). Appointed Collector of Land Revenue 15 March 1855; Cashier of the Treasury 1 Nov. 1855–31 Oct. 1858 (*Malta Blue Books* 1855, 1858).
 24. *MGG*, 28 Feb. 1827.
 25. *MGG*, 23 Jan. 1828. See also *Malta Blue Book* for 1828, pp. 90–91, which mentions for the first time Bourchier’s situation of Packet Agent at a salary of £150.
 26. NLM, Mss. Libr. 411.
 27. NLM, *Duplicate Despatches* 1848, ff.451–452.
 28. NLM, *Dupl. Desp.* 1848, f.449.
 29. In June 1837 a service of French postal packet-boats in the Mediterranean was inaugurated. A French packet agency entrusted to M. Laissagne was opened in Valletta. (Tristan, H. *Franco-Maltese postal relations from their origins to 1870*, unnum. page facing plate 11). His office was set at 16 Strada Mezzodì (*Almanacco di Malta per l’anno 1843*, Tip. Anglo-Maltese, p.xliii; *Muir’s Malta Almanack for the year 1845*, p.83; *Muir’s Malta Almanack for the year 1847*, p.83). He was succeeded by D. Bertora (*Muir’s Malta Almanack and Directory... 1849*, p.59; *The Malta Postal Directory for 1850*, p. 50) and, subsequently, by M. Champion (*Muir’s Malta*

Almanack and Directory. . . 1851, p.61). It appears that the Agency later passed to “Agostino Portelli & Co.”, with offices at 101 Strada San Giovanni (*Almanacco di Malta per l'anno bisestile 1852*, p.79; *Grande Almanacco di Malta pel 1854*, p.82), and then to C. Kühnert at 38 Strada Zecca (*Muir's Malta Almanack and Directory*. . . 1858, p.70).

30. NLM, *Dupl. Desp.* 1848, ff.608 – 613.
31. NLM, *Dupl. Desp.* 1848, f.613; Mss. Libr. A19, p.23. Bouchier's salary at £250 (instead of £150) is mentioned for the first time in the Blue Book of 1843 (pp.82 – 83). J.S. Coxon, Bouchier's immediate successor, wrote in 1860 that it would appear to have been contrary to Bouchier's interest to demand additional pay from the local Treasury for his superintendence of the Post Office as, apart from being Packet Agent, he was also Collector of Customs and Agent for the East India Company (NLM, Govt. Files, Vol. 28, File 3973, Coxon to the Chief Secretary, 30 Jan. 1860).
32. PAV, *Desp. SOS* to G. Vol. 45, No. 132.
33. PAV, *Letter Book*, Vol. 21 (July 1848 – June 1849), p.440.
34. Although the date of March 31, 1949 is given in Mss. Libr. A19, the 1st April seems to be the correct date (See *Malta Blue Book 1849* which gives the latter date for the appointment of the staff at the Island Post Office). The move to 197 Strada Mercanti took place in April. On April 7, the Superintendent of Public Works was solicited to provide the necessary help for the move (PAV, *Letter Book*, Vol. 21, p.476).
35. NLM, *Dupl. Desp.* 1848, f.613; Mss. Libr. A19, p.15.
36. PAV, *Desp. G* to SOS, Vol. 8, No. 142, 19 Dec. 1855, p.13. One of the reasons for the increase in business was probably the inauguration on 10 June 1853 of the delivery of mail to the towns and villages and to Gozo.
37. Letter 26 May 1859 to Sir Victor Houlton (NLM, Govt. Files, Vol. 18, File 2572).
38. PAV, *Desp. G* to SOS, Vol. 8, 11 Nov. 1859 and 23 Jan. 1860, Nos. 121/59 and 6/60, pp.498 and 525.
39. PAV, *Desp. SOS* to G, Vol. 56, No. 43/29 Dec. 1859; Vol. 57, Nos. 58/9 March 1860 and 68/17 April 1860.
40. *Malta Blue Books*: 1855, pp.108 – 109; 1858, pp.108 – 109.
41. Letter to the Chief Secretary in File 3973/1860 *cit.* (ref. 31).
42. PAV, *Desp. SOS* to G, Vol. 58, No. 217/28 Sept. 1861, p.282.
43. *MGG*, 11 Oct. 1861.
44. *Malta Blue Books* 1861 to 1866 at page 108. In the Blue Books for 1863 and 1864 and salary is given as £600, but it reverted to £500 in the next two years.
45. *Malta Blue Books*: 1867, pp.108 – 109; 1880, pp.M40 – 41; 1881 – 83.
46. Julian, P.G. *Report on the Civil Establishments of Malta*. London, Wm. Clowes & Sons, 1879. (For remarks on the Post Office, see paras. 201 – 202).
47. The Postmaster was appointed by the Crown on the Establishment of the United Kingdom, and, in virtue of his appointment, he was *ex officio* Superintendent of the Island Post Office. At the time, his salary was £500, but he enjoyed other emoluments (*Malta Blue Book* 1879, pp.M40 – 41). The clerks were: Amabile Camilleri, Filippo Farrugia, Salvatore Camilleri and Gaetano Izzo, receiving respectively £110, £180, £110 and £100 from the G.P.O. in London and £100, £40, £30 and £10 from the local Treasury. The messenger, Paolo Cauchi, received £35 from London and £5 from the revenue of Malta. One sorter and two letter carriers received between them from the local Treasury a salary not to exceed £9 each. The Blue Books of 1878 and 1879 mention four (not five) clerks and two (not four) letter carriers.
48. The local Govt. was paying to the Florio Company £2080 a year for this service, £1200 of which were being refunded by the Imperial Govt.
49. The Chief Secretary, an Englishman, had a salary of £1300. The President of the Court of Appeal, a Maltese, had £600 (*Malta Blue Book* 1879, pp. M32 and M88).
50. This is the breakdown of the cost as given in the Report:

Subsidy to Florio Company	£2080
Less Imperial contribution	600
	£1480
Foreign Countries, for Land Transport	650
British Inland Rates	1500
Sea Postage on P.&O. Mails	150
	£3780
51. *Debates of the Council of Government of Malta in the Session 1883 – 84 – 85*. Malta, Govt. Ptg. Off, 1886, Vol. VII, col. 171 – 174.

52. *Debates*, op. cit., col. 310 – 311; 376 – 383; 399 – 401. The Ordinance was given a third reading on Dec. 3, 1884. Two main points emerged from the discussion on the Bill. One elected member objected to the salary of the Postmaster being fixed by law and he submitted that £500 was too high; he proposed that it be reduced to £400 which was the salary paid to the Receiver General. Dr. Fortunato Mizzi suggested, in the interest of the freedom of the press which served to educate the people, that newspapers be exempted from paying postage. The latter amendment was accepted and it was laid down that newspapers posted in these islands were to be transmitted from any one place to any other place within the limits of the said islands free of any duty of postage (sec. 12). The elected Bench also proposed that shops be authorised to sell stamps; the Crown Advocate replied that that was an administrative power vested in the Head of the Government.
53. *An Act for enabling Colonial Legislatures to establish Inland Posts* passed in the Session held in the 12th and 13th years of Victoria's Reign.
54. Published by Govt. Not. No. 4 (*MGG*, 10 Jan. 1885).
55. Govt. Not. No. 6 (*MGG*, 10 Jan. 1885).
56. Notice from the General Post Office, Valletta, dated 9 Dec. 1884 (*MGG*, 10 Dec. 1884).
57. *MGG*, 24 Dec. 1885. Inglott was born at Vittoriosa in 1820; died 25 Oct. 1893. Served in the Education Department 1 Nov. 1841 – 20 Feb. 1843, and in the Naval Department 21 Feb. 1843 – 15 June 1855. Transferred to the Colonial Govt. on June 16, 1855, as Assistant Superintendent Port Department. Appointed Comptroller of Charitable Institutions Dec. 1, 1859; Collector of Customs 12 Feb. 1870; Postmaster 1 Jan. 1886 – 31 March 1892.
58. Governor of Malta April 1858 – Nov. 1864.
59. The clerk referred to by Inglott was probably Gaetano Izzo who served at the Cyprus Post Office 8 Aug. 1878 – 6 March 1883 (*Malta Blue Book* 1888, p. H32).
60. PAV, Govt. Files, Vol. 76/1887, File 11387. Inglott's Report was dated April 9, 1887.
61. *Risorgimento*, 10 and 15 May 1886; *Malta – Corriere Mercantile Maltese*, 15 May 1886; *The Malta Times*, 15 May 1886; *Il Portafoglio Maltese*, 27 May 1886.
62. *MGG*, 6 May 1886, Govt. Not. 57.
63. *Risorgimento*, 15 May 1886; *Malta – Corriere Mercantile Maltese*, 15 May 1886; *Il Portafoglio Maltese*, 17 and 27 May 1886; *The Malta Times*, 29 May 1886.
64. See Appendix II.
65. The following official postal guide-books are known to have been published: *The Malta Post Office Guide*. Malta, Govt. Ptg. Off., 1905, pp.167; *Malta Post Office Guide*. Malta, Govt. Ptg. Off., 1913, pp. 228; *Malta Post Office Guide – January 1924*. Malta, Govt. Ptg. Off., 1924, pp. 55.
66. PAV, Govt. Files, Vol. 76/1887, File 11387.
67. PAV, Govt. Files, Vol. 76/1887, File 11393.
68. Records of Notary Francesco Saverio Camilleri. The site of Palazzo Parisio was originally occupied by two houses acquired by Donna Maria Scerberras in 1717 from the Ventimiglia family. On her death, they passed to her son, Monsignor Domenico Scerberras (1670 – 1744), who demolished the Ventimiglia houses and built the palace which later came to be known as Palazzo Parisio, after Sir Paolo Parisio Muscati, who inherited it from his mother Anna Muscati (wife of Cavaliere Don Domenico Parisio of Reggio Calabria) who was related in the collateral line to Mons. Scerberras. When Malta capitulated to the French in 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte took up his quarters at the Banca Giuratale (197 Merchants Street), but moved the next day to Palazzo Parisio where he stayed for seven days until his departure for Egypt (Denaro, V.F. *The houses of Valletta*. Malta, Progress Press, 1967, pp. 14 – 15; Mifsud Bonnici R. *Dizzjunarju Bijo-Bibliografiku Nazzjonali*. Malta, Dipartiment ta' l-Infommazzjoni, 1960, pp. 401, 454).

It appears that in 1885 the co-owners of the palace numbered more than one hundred. Between Dec. 15, 1885, and Oct. 13, 1886, by sixteen separate deeds in the records of Notary Paolo Vassallo, Girolama DePiro, daughter of Baron Pasquale Scerberras Trigona, acquired the portions of about forty of the co-owners who had between them almost one moiety of the property, namely, $\frac{36323}{74400}$. On March 24, 1887, in the records of Notary F.S. Camilleri, she

transferred to the Government all those portions, in addition to her own share, totalling $\frac{49033}{74400}$.

By a Court judgement of the 9th August 1888, in re *D'Amico vs Laferla*, Government was evicted from a small share of the property bought from Madame DePiro, but the matter was put

right by the rightful owner of that share, Salvatore dei Baroni Sceberras Trigona, Girolama's brother, when he ceded his rights to the Government by a deed of Jan. 27, 1891, in the records of Notary Camilleri. Further portions were acquired by Government by other notarial deeds, including those of the 28th March 1891, 6th August 1891 and 30th January 1892, in the records of the same Notary. It appears that by the end of 1892 the Government was the sole owner of the palace.

69. *Debates of the Council of Government of Malta in the Session 1891–92*. Vol. XV, col. 920–946. See also: col. 1075; 1147–1154; 1287; 1379–1384; 1598–1599.
70. The Central Mail Room, the Registered Letter Branch and the *Poste Restante* were, however, housed at the Upper Barracca Hall, Castile Place.

Appendix I

A. Heads of The Government Post Office

1. Giovanni Antonio Micallef	1802–12.	4.1804	Commissario
2. Domenico Montanaro (1)	c.1805–31.12.	1816	Direttore
3. William Sim	1.	1.1817–18.	3.1817 Superintendent (2)
4. Robert MacNab (3)	(March?)	1817–1820?	
5. Richard James Bouchier	1.	5.1820–30.	6.1822
6. Edward Francis Phillips (4)	1.	7.1822–30.	6.1838
7. Vincenzo Mamo (5)	1.	7.1838–31.	3.1849 Officer in charge (6)
8. Richard James Bouchier	1.	4.1849–12.	7.1853
9. Gaetano Micallef (acting) (7)	13.	7.1853–14.	3.1854
10. John Stuart Coxon	15.	3.1854–?	9.1861 Superintendent
11. William Adams Dewar	?	9.1861–	3.11.1867
12. Thomas Walter Coffin	4.	11.1867–20.	7.1880
13. Roger Duke	21.	7.1880–31.12.	1884
	1.	1.1885–31.12.	1885 Postmaster
14. Ferdinando Vincenzo Inglott	1.	1.1886–31.	3.1892

Note – Some of the dates of termination of appointment are approximate, made to coincide with the date of appointment of the successor, as the exact dates do not result officially.

References

1. William Sim was acting *Direttore della Posta* 1.7.1815–31.12.1816 (probably, Montanaro was on sick leave during this period).
2. Between 1817 and 1838 the post was referred to as *Superintendent of the Island Post Office*. At first, the designation *Government Post Office* was used, rather than *Island Post Office*.
3. Charles Godfrey was acting 27.5.1818–30.4.1820 due to MacNab's absence and subsequent demise.
4. From 1822 to 1827 Superintendent *ex officio* as Third Assistant at the Chief Secretary's Office.
5. Superintendent *ex officio* as Second Assistant at the said Office. In Mamo's schedule of services (NLM, Mss. Libr. A19) we find that he was Acting Superintendent of the Post Office from March 1816 to March 18, 1817. This means that Sim was *effectively* directing the Post Office only from July 1815 to March 1816.
6. According to the Blue Books, the Island Post Office came under the general superintendence of the Chief Secretary to Government. This probably happened after the retirement of Montanaro as *Direttore*. Both Sim and his immediate successors were officially referred to as "Superintendent" (See Blue Books 1821 to 1837). With the appointment of V. Mamo, the official designation of Superintendent was dropped (See Blue Books 1838–1854). When Coxon was appointed Packet Agent (15.3.1854), the designation was once more introduced (See Blue Books 1855–1884).
7. G. Micallef has been included in the list as he was appointed to act when the post was vacant.

B. Heads of the Postal Service in Malta Representing The Postmaster General in London

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. James Chabot | 9. 7.1806 – 1815? Agent of H.M.'s Packets |
| 2. George Heaslop (1) | 1816? |
| 3. Robert MacNab | 28. 1.1817 – 1820? |
| 4. James Wilkinson | 6. 2.1820 – 1828 |
| 5. Richard James Bouchier (2) | 23. 1.1828 – 1853 – 4? |
| 6. John Stuart Coxon | 15. 3.1854 – 1858 |
| | 1858 – ?. 9.1861 Deputy Postmaster
General |
| 7. William Adams Dewar | 11.10.1861 – 1867 |
| 8. Thomas Walter Coffin | 4.11.1867 – 20. 7.1880 Postmaster |
| 9. Roger Duke | 21. 7.1880 – 31.12.1884 |

Note – Most of the dates of appointment are taken from Notices appearing locally. The actual commission might precede the dates given by a few weeks.

References

1. According to the handbook of the Malta Study Circle, Heaslop was given a local temporary appointment (p.36). In Jan. 1816, Heaslop was a clerk at the Chief Secretary's Office.
2. The author has come across the name of E.C. Puslow as Packet Agent on Feb. 5, 1839. This might also have been a temporary appointment.

EVERY MEMBER SHOULD ENROL A NEW MEMBER

Have you paid the 1986 Membership dues?

Membership dues for 1987 should be posted now to:

The Treasurer

Mr Mario Dimech

Zenith 3

New Street in Ghenba Str

Attard – Malta

Tel: 446389

Appendix II

Returns submitted by the Postmaster, the Hon. F.V. Inglott, with his Report dated 9 April, 1887 (File 11387/1887)

- A. General Account between the Post Office of the United Kingdom and the Post Office of Malta for the month of December 1886.
- B. Detailed Account of Parcel Mails exchanged between the United Kingdom and Malta during the month of December 1886.
- C.¹ (Money Orders and Postal Orders issued and paid in 1886)
- C.² Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the month of December 1886.
- D. Registered Letters received at, and forwarded from Malta during the year 1886.
- E. Dead or Returned Letters, etc., received from the United Kingdom and other Countries, and disposed of in the Returned Letter Branch, during 1886.
- F. Fees collected of Late Letters, from the 13th December 1886, to the 13th January 1887.
- G. Paid and Unpaid Postage on Local Official Correspondence, posted by the Army and Navy from 1st March to the end of the year 1886.
- H. Parcel Post. Statement of Parcels Received and Forwarded during the year 1886.
- I. Number of Mails received and despatched during the year 1886.
- J. Ordinary Correspondence, etc., received at, and forwarded from Malta from 1st October to 31st December 1886.
- K. Local Correspondence. Showing the number of Letters and Newspapers received from, and sent to, the undermentioned Casals, during the year 1886.
- L. Extra Attendance of each Officer during the year 1886.
- M. Statement of Correspondence Received and Issued during the year 1886.

Note – These Returns and Inglott's comments thereon contain a wealth of information. We learn that: the Regulations regarding "Late Letters" had not been enforced in the past and the revenue from this source had not been collected, but Inglott had not allowed this abuse to continue; the prepayment of postage on official correspondence posted by the Army and Navy was authorised by the London authorities and enforced from 1st March 1886; the amount of work in the Post Office had no equal in any other Department of Government; during 1885, the Malta correspondence to the U.K. amounted to one-third of the whole correspondence from all the British Colonies included in the Universal Postal Union except India and Canada.

Showing the number of letters and Newspapers received from and sent to the undermentioned Colonies during the year 1866

Names of Villages	Inwards	Outwards	Names of Colonies	Inwards	Outwards
Motakile	4176	6538	Alagoes	16226	86
Bukukawa	2582	3095	Zabbing	(0)	2377
Attard	(0)	541	Agigium	(0)	1127
Kayon	(0)	1801	Ami	1727	1857
Iva	(0)	1557	Acop	(0)	252
Mawaso	2269	412	Ami	(0)	523
Mweta	(0)	1397	Ami	(0)	530
Sangut	(0)	298	Ami	(0)	272
Zukun	1922	2298	Ami	(0)	90
Oziack	(0)	672	Mwiso	(0)	1355
Andra	(0)	404	Mwiso	625	22
Zakhan	(0)	1763	Mwiso	150	788
Cospiana	4154	2985	Mwiso	44	311
Sungla	(0)	1800	Mwiso	1190	720
Vitorioso	(0)	2056	Mwiso	3381	44
Puta	396	2499	Mwiso	155	639
Dawion	912	101	Mwiso	358	184
Muma	2123	3770	Mwiso	(0)	3230
Shukiana	(0)	1634	Mwiso	(0)	1253
Hannun	776	3014	Mwiso	(0)	690

Grand Totals
 Inwards 1447
 Outwards 113622

Letters from these Villages are included in the mail from
 Baskinaw
 1. Penasco
 2. Leticia
 3. Capionel
 4. Offenow
 5. Liding
 6. Curacao
 7. Bijaie

John J. ...
 ... in charge of ...