

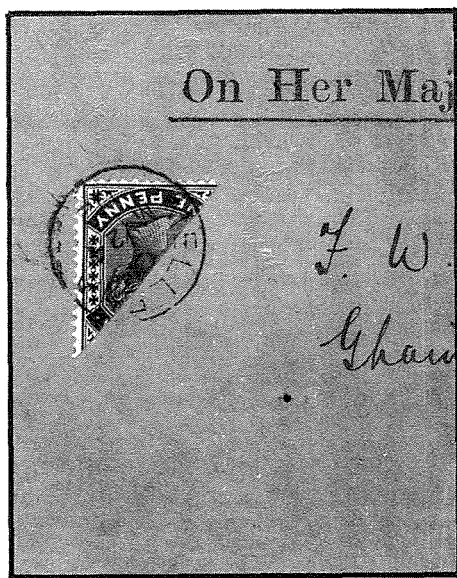
Queen Victoria 1d Bisect

By Dr. A. Bonnici

The Malta Study Hand Book (page 105) says: 'It would appear that copies of this stamp were bisected and used as ½d ones by favour and were cancelled at the Mellieha Branch Office. On the covers, there are no date stamps other than the Mellieha circular date stamp of 24 May 02.'

In examining this item, two questions come to one's mind:

- (a) Was this done Officially?
 - (b) Done by favour as expressed in the Malta Study Hand Book?
 - (c) Or not necessarily done by favour, but done privately, passing through the post normally?
- Examining these suppositions, what is the evidence?



(a) I have been unable to trace any official documentation authorising the Mellieha Post Master to bisect the 1d Queen Victoria. I have written to the Post Master to see if the Malta G.P.O. can help in this direction.

If one accepts the supposition that this was authorised, then one surely expects to find more covers, and on different envelopes, whereas the two that I have seen are both similar in size, colour (blue) and on Her Majesty's Service stationery.

We have only unfounded rumours so far. One of the most popular stories put forward, was that on the 24th May 1902, the Mellieha Post Office ran short of the ½d Queen Victoria stamp, so the 1d was bisected and used as a ½d.

No other Post Office in Malta used this system. If the bisecting was authorised Officially, I am inclined to assume that we should have found this method adopted in other villages.

(b) The bisect I have seen are 'On Her Majesty's Service' BLUE envelope measuring 7.5 × 12 cm having the (2 cm) circular MELLIEHA MY 24, 02 Post mark. Code lettering C, and B. This type of stationery was found in either H.M. Service or Government Departments. Government Departments in Mellieha in 1902 were only TWO; The Government Primary School, and the Post Office.

There was however a Military Service camp in Ghadira, the bay beneath Mellieha. The bisect on piece (Half the envelope) shown above, show part of the name and address of the individual it was sent to. F.W. (initials) and Ghain. The Ghain could be half of Ghain/Tuffieha where there was another Service Military Camp or Ghain/Sielem in Gozo with no Service or Military Establishment.

The one published by the Malta Study Circle in the Hand Book (page 104), and reproduced in the front page of Study Paper 1, circulated lately, is addressed to W. R. Gatt – Valletta, Malta, who was a Lieutenant in H.M. Service, and had a keen interest in philately. I have been unable however to establish that during this period he was at the Mellieha–Ghadira Military Camp.

The envelope and piece are in BLUE. This type of blue On Her Majesty's Service envelope was used by H.M. Services.

From the above, I am inclined to belief that this bisecting was done by Lt. W. R. Gatt, who sent the above reproduced item to a colleague, most probably English, in the Ghain-Tuffieha Military Camp, and addressed the other to himself, and was cancelled normally by the Post Office. The code slug B and C indicates different times of posting during the 24th May.

As the one to himself is addressed by means of a rubber stamp, he could have sent others addressed to himself or other colleagues. Are there any other bisects in the possession of our members? If yes, a description or photocopy of what they owe would be appreciated. Maybe more light can be shed on this interesting item.