

TOGETHER



AGAINST  
CORONA

Protect Yourself and Others



Like us on

facebook



GET IT SORTED WITH  
**SENDON** 



---

The Gozo Philatelic Society was founded on 3 September 1999  
for the promotion of the hobby,  
the provision of a point of reference and co-ordination.  
Front page;- Hand painted FDC by A. Grech

---

**PHILATELIC SOCIETY  
OF CANBERRA**



Large Silver Medal awarded to the Gozo Philatelic Society Magazine

**GPS Magazine —Official Organ of  
The Gozo Philatelic Society**

*First issued on 12 February 2000*

*Editor: Austin Masini—Designer Anthony Grech*

Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the Committee's official policy.

Correspondence (and material for publication) should be addressed to:

*The Editor, GPS, PO Box 10,  
VCT 1000, Gozo, Malta.*

*e-mail address: secretary@stamps-goza.org*

© All rights reserved. Requests for reproduction of contents should be addressed to the Secretary.

**Gozo Philatelic Society Patron His Excellency  
Dr George Vella President of the Republic of Malta**

**CONTENTS.**

G.P.S Diary	Antoine Vassallo	4
Stamp Collecting (poem)	Jasper Scott	5
E & O not E - (54) "babr"	Antoine Vassallo	6
An FDC From Each Issuer	Victor Gusman	8
The SS Columbus & its Story	Zachary Borg	10
Mistakes & Misshapes on Malta Stamps	Anthony Grech	11
What is Thematic Philately?	Antoine Vassallo	12
Which Stamps are worth investing in?	Mary Grace Xerri	15
Not Just Paper—"Fishy" (Cod skin stamps)	Antoine Vassallo	16
Malta Overseas —Early Malta Human Chessmen	Antoine Vassallo	18
Is it Really True: Philatelic-House of Lords	Antoine Vassallo	21
Numismatic Special	Antoine Vassallo	22
Celebrity Philatelists Walter Whitman	Antoine Vassallo	24
Philatelic Centennials—Czeslaw Slania	Antoine Vassallo	26
Stamp No 1 of the World	Anthony Grech	28
Post Hast	Antoine Vassallo	30

(75) *G.P.S. Diary*

Antoine Vassallo Gozo Philatelic Society Secretary ;  
VO/0546



**28 November 2020** Jointly with the Gozo Curia, Anthony Grech produces Cover for Cardinal Mario Grech commemorative postmark.

**December** issue of the periodical in Italian *Filatelia Religiosa Flash* (number 87) features numerous covers produced by the GPS.

**December** issue of Gibbons Stamp Monthly publishes a letter from the GPS secretary featuring a GPS cover.

**2 December** Anthony Grech produces Cover for *Milied f' Ghawdex* postmark, using it for GPS Wishes.

**December** Last instalment in the year's series featuring Gozo-connected stamps published in periodical *Hajja f' Ghawdex*

**1 January 2021** GPS Secretary hands Bishop Teuma a copy of Newsletter 81 with its article in his honour.

**January-March** issue of *L-Anzjani Llum* (national periodical in Maltese for the elderly) carries the first of a series – by our Secretary - featuring stamp errors.

**10 January** Another instalment in the GPS series about Saints on Malta stamps appears in the Maltese national weekly *Il-Lehen*.

**Sorry!!! (#81)**

Page 9: “China” refers to the People’s Republic and “Cocos” to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

**Please note that our publications are included in Malta University’s External Research Collection and can be assessed on**

**<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/24814>**



# Stamp Collecting *Jasper Scott.*

I came about this hobby by accident  
A handful of cancelled stamps, some with the presidents  
I thought that they were rather pretty and nice  
Every envelope that came into the house I grab some scissors  
and cut them off



Before I knew it, I had a lot  
I realized they needed to be sheltered together  
So I tore a few sheets out of my handwriting tablet to  
house my first stamp collection

My mother discovered that I had a liking to this hobby  
affliction

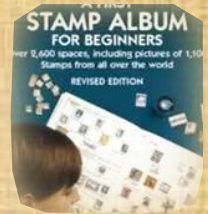
And told me a book called an album could house my collection  
So to the hobby shop we traipsed in the Plymouth station wagon  
I also found out that there were stamps from overseas  
Countries like Chile, Poland and Yugoslavia  
Through these stamps I saw art, nature, struggle and protest  
The concentration camps full of innocent Jews  
I met a man cold tyrannical and mean named Hitler

And also a pompous tyrant named Benito  
Mussolini from Italy.

I travelled to many jungles, coconut groves  
and mahogany forest  
Full of parrots, poisonous tree frogs and sloths  
My world was made bigger by these little pieces of paper with

pictures and perforations  
All because I thought that these pieces of paper  
were pretty and worth saving

When I was, stamp collecting



## E & O not E (54)

*glances at stamps with design or printing mistakes  
(well-known or obscure)  
Antoine Vassallo*

This error is not really connected with stamps, but do bear with me: I am sure you'll find this interesting enough!

Why does the Siberian town of Irkutsk have a strange animal as a symbol?

It is an ancient city; in fact we know that its coat of arms was first created in the 1600s: an image of a Siberian tiger was chosen. An old local word - "babr" - was used to describe it. This 1986 USSR stamp celebrating the third centenary of its city status displays the "correct" arms quite prominently. Down the centuries, the feline died out and the word itself fell out of use – and fashion. When officials were



tasked with redrawing the coat of arms, they could not understand the strange word: it even seemed foreign. Their only "solution" was to assume that the word for "beaver" (*bobr*) had been misspelled!



And they turned the tiger into an invented animal, with webbed paws and a broad, flat tail. In spite of the unconventional anatomy, a sable remains clutched in its mouth. This of course represents the region's role in the medieval Siberian sable fur trade.

One can understandably find many depictions of the babr throughout Irkutsk, including this massive statue.

In conclusion I feature two relevant Russian stamps from 2011.

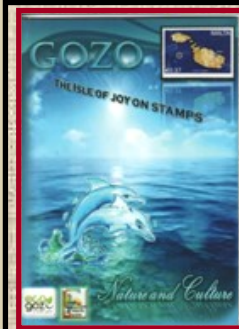
The first (designed by A Gribkova) just shows the Irkutsk coat-of-arms where the error



can be easily noted.

The other, designed by K Betredinova and issued a month later, commemorated the 350th anniversary of the city.

**So, a non-philatelic error confirmed through stamps!**



Please note that “ISLE OF JOY”, the full colour A4 book with that innovative viewpoint of Gozo produced through the support of the Eco-Gozo NGO scheme, is still available:

write to

[secretary@stamps-gozo.org](mailto:secretary@stamps-gozo.org).

### **Saturday meetings**

The Gozo Philatelic Society office at 31 Main Gate Street (Putirjal), Victoria (room 2 on the first floor, above Playpen) is usually open on Saturdays 9.30 to 11.30 am for stamp collectors to peruse and borrow publications, acquire and discuss philatelic material and even look at the Melitensia items in the **Juncker Collection**. Do visit!

**FREE FOREIGN STAMPS FOR YOU  
WHEN YOU VISIT**



## An FDC from each Issuer

assorted postmarks and designs on the specially commissioned covers in the “Stamps of all Countries / *Les Timbres des tous les Pays*” Collection  
Victor Gusman



## Costa Rica



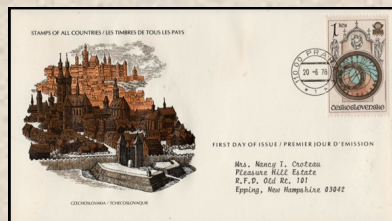
The stamp depicts one of this Central America country's most famous natural attractions, the Poás Volcano. It is nearly 9,000 feet high and is said to have the largest crater in the world.



## Cyprus



This stamp, issued for Christmas by this Mediterranean island whose Northern part now has a separate administration, shows an icon stand from a Marian church. This type of artistic religious portable furniture houses a painting representing some saint or other. The first day postmark was given on 4 December 1978. The cover design shows an original image inspired by Mother and Child icons.

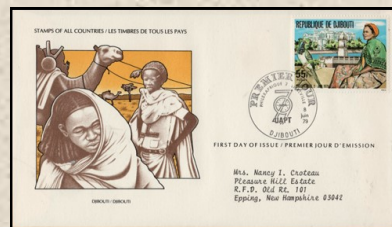


## Czechoslovakia



This stamp, included in one of the numerous sets issued for the “PRAGA 1978” International Stamp exhibition, was the work of Anna Podzemná-Suchardová and Miloš Ondráček. It depicts the face of the Prague Town Hall astronomical clock. The

first day postmark was given on 20 June 1978 in Prague (the then capital), whose historic centre with its impressive buildings, is shown on the cover.

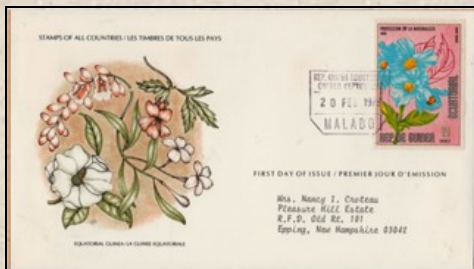


## Djibouti



This stamp, one of a few issued to celebrate the *Philexafrique* Stamp Exhibition held in the Gabonese city of Libreville, was designed by J Chesnot. It shows a panorama framed by a Namaqua dove and a woman in a typical costume.

The first day postmark, referring to the Union of African Post and Telecommunications, was given on 8 June 1979. The cover design depicts two tribal members in the desert.



## Equatorial Guinea



This stamp emphasizes the need to defend the environment, specifically the flora. This idea is confirmed in the cover design. The first day postmark was given on 20 February 1979 in Malabo, the capital of this West African nation created from two separate Spanish colonies.



## Fiji



This stamp, included in a set commemorating the centenary of the arrival of indians in this group of islands, shows men around a tanoa (wooden food bowl). The first day postmark was given on 11 May 1979 in the capital Suva (on the island of Viti Levu). The cover design depicts an indian holding

a sugar cane (work on which was the original reason for their immigration) and a native Fijian in traditional battle stance.



## France



This stamp, designed by Claude Robert Ernest Durrens, commemorated the fifth anniversary of the huge Cross of Lorraine set up above his home village Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises as a memorial to General Charles De Gaulle and shows it (with his easily recognizable outline in the background).

This symbol of the Free French during World War II is included in the first day postmark given on 18 June 1977 in this town. The cover design depicts the celebrations under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris on the liberation by the Allies in 1944.



## French Polynesia

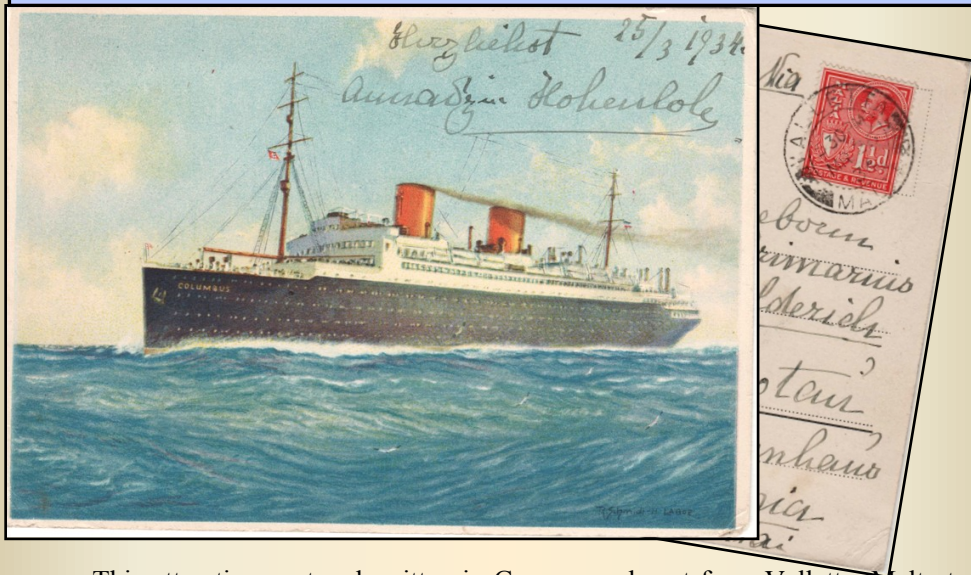


This stamp, part of a set designed by P Blanc depicting traditional dancing costumes, shows the Fetia one. The first day postmark was given on 14 July 1979 in the capital Papeete (in Tahiti). The cover design depicts a typical “traditional” tourist scene.



THE SS COLUMBUS AND ITS STORY

Zachary Borg



This attractive postcard written in German and sent from Valletta, Malta to Bohemia, Czechoslovakia on 25 March 1934. It shows the *SS Columbus* which was launched in 1922.

At the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, she was ordered to disembark her passengers at Havana (Cuba) and to return to Germany at once from the Caribbean.

*The Columbus* sped to Veracruz, evading the British – the Royal Navy was obviously on the lookout for enemy ships. On 14 December 1939 she departed Veracruz (Mexico), escorted by seven American destroyers through the American coastal neutrality zone. But on 19 December the British destroyer *HMS Hyperion* sighted the *Columbus* about 400 miles off the coast of Virginia.

While the USA was still neutral, the American heavy cruiser *USS Tuscaloosa* was also in the area - silently observing. Rather than surrender the ship, her crew scuttled her, and she burned and sank. Passengers and crew were taken aboard the *Tuscaloosa* as rescued seamen - not as prisoners of war as they would have been had the British picked them up. The American ship took all personnel to New York City.

That was the unfortunate end of this German ship which, for some time, had been recognized as the *Queen of the Norddeutcher Lloyd* (of Bremen) fleet.

Ref Wikipedia

# MISTAKES AND MISSHAPES ON MALTA MODERN STAMPS.

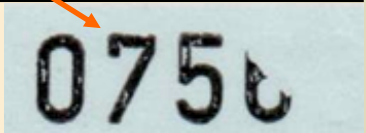
Anthony Grech

Even to day with all the sophisticated and computerized machinery some mistakes and misshapes still occur on modern stamps all over the world...and Malta is no exception.



'Maltese Festa' Series 3 issued 14/08/2019

Nowadays Malta sheets of stamps are individually numbered. The above sheet shows part of the number missing. Even the numbers printed show that the ink flow was poor.



## 'Toys' set issued 11/07/2007

The sheet number 001004 was printed ON the middle stamp instead on the margin below, making the stamp a unique example of overprint.



making the stamp a unique example of overprint.



## What is **THEMATIC PHILATELY?**

*Antoine Vassallo*

Thematic philately is collecting stamps and other philatelic items that illustrate a theme: birds, sports, history, art, way of life, trees, etc. The term "theme" has a dynamic meaning implying the personal elaboration by the collector, who develops a full story around it.

A thematic collection consists of the widest possible range of philatelic material, from the widest possible range of postal authorities, without any time constraint. Every item selected should be relevant to the subject and arranged in the most suitable order to tell a story.

A thematic collection is fascinating because it allows for continuous improvement. The more you get familiar with the subject, the more you discover new details for supporting your story and acquire the relevant philatelic items. The more



you know about the material from using philatelic literature, by browsing through auction catalogues, by studying other collections on display at the philatelic shows, the more you can improve your development when including new items.

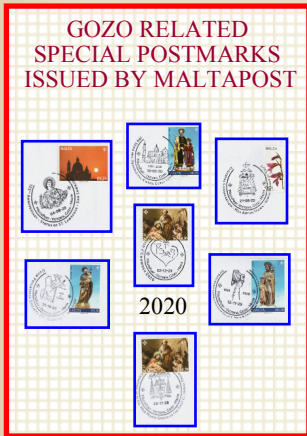
Collections that do not develop a theme but simply accumulate philatelic items with a common subject are far from the essence of thematic philately, since they present no "story", little personal study. The arrangement of items depicting the chosen subject by country of issue or by year, as well as the choice of items issued by countries of a selected geographic area or in a certain time frame, may be just preliminary approaches to thematic philately. Anyway, they do not bring the true pleasure of thematic collecting.

A thematic collection is built around an important concept, freely chosen by the collector. Normally this choice relates to a personal or professional interest: medicine or astronomy, gardening or fishing, chess or car races, computers or music... there is no limit to the choice of your theme! By selecting a familiar theme, you will have a lot of information at your fingertips and it will be very easy to draft a plan for your collection.

The wealth of philatelic material often allows collectors to interpret the same subject in different ways, thus generating very different collections. One



can present a synthetic view of the whole subject or analyse a specific area of the same.



In addition to stamps a thematic collection can use other items related to transmission of mail other postal communications, which contribute to the development of theme through their illustrations and/or captions. These items are considered appropriate as long they have been issued, intended for issue, or produced in the preparation for issue, used, or treated as valid for postage by governmental, local or private postal agencies, or by other duly commissioned or empowered authorities. Five types of relevant items are:

Postal Stationery: postal cards, envelopes and aerogrammes that have an imprint of a stamp and, often with an illustration;

Stamp Booklets: these may have illustrations on the cover(s) or on advertising panels inside;

Maximum Cards: these are picture postcards with a stamp on the picture side and a cancellation linking the subject on the card with the stamp;

Postmarks and Cancellations: postal markings applied when an item goes through the mail, sometimes with an advert or commemorative content;

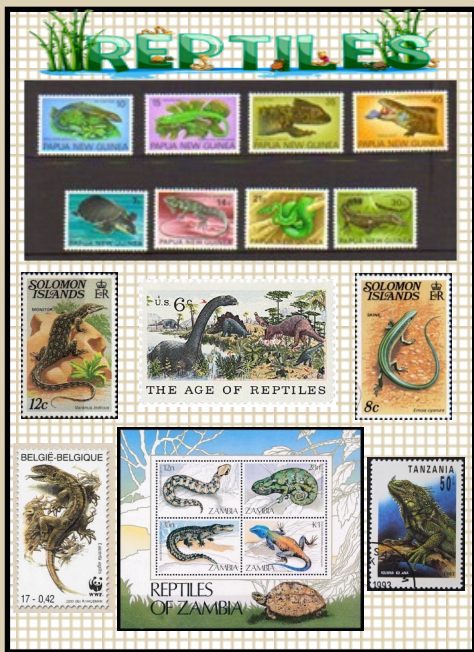
Franking Meters: the franking 'slug' from meters are used by many companies and organisations to frank their mail, often with an advertisement.

Several other items, including revenue stamps, may contribute to the development of the theme. Designers' drawings, essays and proofs, do increase the philatelic interest of the collection, if appropriately selected.

The internet is a powerful source of information for identifying and making contacts with philatelic associations and dealers; search engines allow you to find relevant thematic and philatelic information. The GPS itself will be happy to help!






We begin by listing – haphazardly - some possible themes, already attempted:

How to Identify Birds; World of Butterflies; Sailing ships; From Abacus to Laptop; Tennis; Apiculture; Gozo's autonomy; Weather Story; Railways;



Optics; French Painting; League of Nations; Maltese Heroes; Motor Vehicles; Classic World; Royalty; Photography; Universal Postal Union; Revolutions; Fire; Great Designers; Christian Vocations; Saints & Patrons; Carnival; Bridges; History of printing; Wine; Roses; Radiomania; History of Tobacco; Danube; Theatre; Dogs; Water; Music through the Ages; Mozart; European Integration; Struggles against Infection; Olympic Games; and, as a popular and “easy” (40<sup>th</sup>) theme, Christmas.

*with acknowledgments to the FIP*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ITALIA – ITALY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Enrico Berlinguer</b></p> <p>Italian politician. Considered the most popular leader of the Italian Communist Party, which he led as the national secretary from 1972 until his death during a tense period in Italy's history, marked by the Years of Lead and social conflicts such as the Hot Autumn of 1969–1970.</p> <p><b>Born:</b> May 15, 1922, Sassari, Italy <b>Died:</b> June 11, 1984, Padua, Italy</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ITALIA – ITALY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Titus Livius Roman historian.</b></p> <p>He wrote a monumental history of Rome and the Roman people – <i>Ab Urbe Condita Libri</i> – covering the period from the earliest legends of Rome before the traditional foundation in 753 BC through the reign of Augustus in Livy's own lifetime.</p> <p><b>Born:</b> 59 BC, Padua, Italy <b>Died:</b> 17 AD, Padua, Italy</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ITALIA – ITALY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>S. FILIPPO NERI – ST. PHILIP NERI</b></p> <p><b>Philip Romolo Neri</b></p> <p>21 July 1515 – 25 May 1596 known as the Third Apostle of Rome, after Saints Peter and Paul, was an Italian priest noted for founding a society of secular clergy called the Congregation of the Oratory.</p> <p>Canonized 12 March 1622 by Pope Gregory XV Feast Day 26 May</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ITALIA – ITALY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FRATELLI ANILARI</b></p> <p>Frattelli Anilari is the world's oldest photographic firm, founded in Florence, Italy in 1852. Its archives contains 5.5 million photographs, ranging from daguerotypes to modern digital photos from around the world.</p>  

Italy Famous People. Thematic collection with stamps and information on cards





## WHICH STAMPS ARE WORTH INVESTING IN?

Mary Grace Xerri

It is sometimes said that there are two kinds of stamps: collectible stamps and investment grade stamps. The first collected by those who are interested in the hobby, collecting for the joy of it. Investment grade stamps are those identified as having the potential to grow in value.

Investment stamps represent a very small percentage of the total available. They must be very rare and in a particular condition, verified by experts and inspected regularly to ensure they remain so. They have to be in a pristine condition, as far as humanly possible. On the other hand, some are considered valuable because of some unintended flaw or mistake – which normally cannot recur.

There are five golden criteria when investing in rare stamps:

1. **Rarity:** only invest where there is a small number of surviving examples or they are unique.
2. **Condition:** only invest in the best quality examples. Among the many factors which influence the condition of a stamp (and thus needing expert appraisal), three can be mentioned: margins around it (early stamps were mostly imperforate, cut off – not necessarily using scissors – from the sheet), gum on the back and freshness of colour.
3. **Authenticity:** ensure this can be proven. A certificate is only as good as the person or body issuing it; so seek items with documented history and provenance.
4. **Liquidity:** only invest in areas where there is a healthy number of collectors.
5. **Price:** seek to buy at the lowest possible, even below fair value!

The GPS is not encouraging anyone to begin investing but is simply suggesting that all should be alert! However the essential point is to derive pleasure from your collection.



### MALTA

St Paul shipwreck  
1919 stamp. Rare,  
in perfect condition.  
10 shillings when  
issued in 1919.  
Now Euro 3,000 in  
this condition

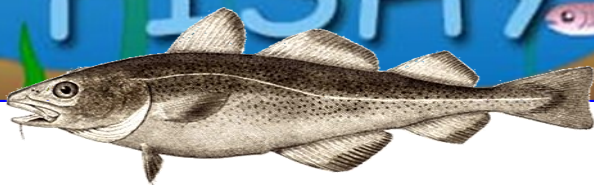
### GREAT BRITAIN

The famous  
Penny Black  
One Penny face value  
when issued in 1840.  
Now worth over £17,000  
in intense black and  
perfect condition



# NOT JUST PAPER

**Antoine Vassallo looks at unusual stamp production, with an invitation for readers to send other suggestions**



In 2016 the Faroes issued a very unusual stamp, engraved by Martin Mörck. The subject itself does not excite: cod! But the stamps, printed in offset by France's Cartor Security Printing, bear a square piece of tanned cod skin glued on. The fish were caught in Faroese waters and supplied by exporter Nevið in Runavík; the tanning was undertaken by Atlantic Leather in Iceland.

The result is surprisingly attractive: instead of something dull and grey, we have beautiful patterns in "metallic" shades. These colours actually change with the angle viewed from. In fact all copies are unique! This issue has even been described as "unusual creative works of art".



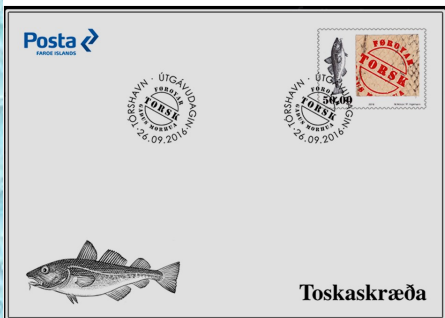
The Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) is usually about one metre in length but can grow to two, with a weight nearing a hundred kilos. Found on both sides of the Atlantic, this fish can reach an age of 25 years. The range of locations



include Novaya Zemlya in the Barent Sea, Spitsbergen and Jan Mayen, the Bay of Biscay, from Labrador in the north to North Carolina in the south, and - to the east - the North and Baltic Seas. It is commonly found in the waters around the Faroe Islands and Iceland, not excluding Greenland.

Cod is generally sandy brown, its back and sides are yellowish-green, with grey or brown spots and a white lateral stripe running along its sides. The belly is white or greyish-white. However, it can have other colour variations depending on habitat: for example, dark brown or maroon if it lives among kelp (large seaweed in nutrient-rich coastal saltwater).

Cod is popular for its delicate flesh – and the Faroese claim this is especially true of theirs, which is normally fatter and not as dry as elsewhere.



Tanning of fish skin is an ancient art although probably less popular during this last century. However, though the quality of fish leather will of course vary from species to species, properly treated skin of cod and – for example - salmon is often stronger than ordinary cowhide.

The size of the skins makes them especially well-suited for producing smaller items, such as shoes, bags, purses and watchbands. Sewn together, they can also be used in the garment industry and to upholster furniture. Today's designers are getting more and more aware of the practicality and beauty of these fish skins – and experiment also with jewellery, belts and even book binding.

Moreover the tendency is for caught or farmed fish to be used to the fullest extent, such as in the industrial production of gelatine, for both the food industry and in advanced technology like electronics and optics. In addition, fish skin protein can be used in the nutrition industry and as health food.

**So cod too merits philatelic celebration!**



## MALTA OVERSEAS

local connections on foreign stamps

*Antoine Vassallo*

### Early Malta human chessmen



Romania celebrated the 24th Chess Olympiad in 1980 (concurrently with the Women's 9th) with four stamps designed by E Keri. That year Malta, the hosting country, was commemorating the local recorded centenary. Obviously chess surely existed in our country from much earlier: rulers and visitors are known to have been interested in this pluri-millennial game.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Daily Malta Chronicle began including chess articles by Leone Benjacar. He finally succeeded in convincing others to participate in local tournaments (details of which still exist). Unfortunately he had to stop his activities when promoted to a high civil service post.

Chess did not become extinct but it was only after World War I that progress continued – through two “pioneers” Oreste Pitre and Pawlu Izzo Clarke. Malta serving as a sort of War hospital (also as a centre for refugees after the Russian revolution), the former could meet numerous foreign players. Moreover he was sent in 1922 on a Government course in the UK and took the opportunity to participate in numerous events there, culminating in a national tournament - where he played for Liverpool. Pitre was the first known Maltese participant abroad.

Izzo Clarke passed these years meeting foreign challengers, through contacts made by Croce Bonaci who can thus be described as the first local chess promoter. Chess players – sometimes nicknamed “64 square-eccentrics” - were congregating regularly at *Cafè de la Reine* in Valletta. Two young brothers from Senglea, Oscar and Erin Serracino-Inglott, had great success in creating a new chess club in Cottonera; Oreste Pitre also started his own group in Sliema.

Through Erin's efforts in membership building, the Malta Chess Association became a reality – with the first championship in 1923. Oscar won that and the two after, with Erin immediately succeeding his brother with his own hattrick! In the meantime FIDE (*Fédération Internationale des Échecs*) was founded in 1923 to connect national federations and to act as the governing body of international chess competitions.



Jacques Mieses

These were very busy years locally with competitors from all age groups playing regularly. International contacts began too: the



German septuagenarian Jacques Mises (later to be declared a Grandmaster) visited amid wide publicity in 1930. He was followed within a few years by the Russo-French then-World Champion Alexander Alekhine. Aficionados became convinced that the local level could advance only through meeting foreigners.



in 1938 Erin Serracino-Ingloft succeeded in participating in an international event in Brighton.



But 1946 - 1956 is often called the golden decade for Malta chess. Wilfred Attard began winning titles, upstaging the older “masters”. The younger generation was introduced through a Boys' Championship, the first winner being a ten-year old second generation Serracino-Ingloft. This young nucleus included various future Malta Champions. Author Mike Spiteri (“Kilin”) was an enthusiastic propagandist in regular columns in the papers. The game flourished tremendously, with Gozo boasting its own chess circle among almost twenty all around the islands.

Spiteri managed to send Malta’s first representatives to the 1957 La Spezia International: contacts there resulted in an invitation to the Vrnjacka Banja International Team event. The Maltese government subsidised the fare to Yugoslavia for the five players: Wilfred Attard, Harry Camilleri, Mario Serracino Ingloft and the Soler brothers Wannì and Richie. These and other successful events resulted in Malta becoming a full FIDE member - and thus acquiring the possibility of Chess Olympiad participations. Camilleri was the first Maltese chessman to achieve FIDE international recognition and rating. Unfortunately chess tends to be considered as exclusively masculine among us!

After these positive developments, Maltese chess passed through the doldrums for some years. However annual International Rating events started in 1975. And in 1980 Malta became the first developing country of its size to acquire the right to hold the Chess Olympiads.

Unfortunately it does seem that the venture was negative from a financial aspect. However over eighty countries did participate, through almost five hundred (including as much as 58 Grandmasters), for a total of well over two thousand games at the Mediterranean Conference Centre - between 20th November and 6th December. And during those days there was also the female tournament! The Soviet Union won both.



The gold medals (featuring the logo/symbol) were shown on the top value in a 1984 set for the FIDE 60th anniversary issued by British Virgin Islands, whose William Hook



finished first on board one. The 75c too commemorated Malta's Olympiad four years previously, showing the game between Hook and Saif Kanani. 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5 3.d5 Qb6 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Nbd7 6.Rb1 a6 7.a4 h6 8.Be3 Qb4 9.f3 Ne5 10.Bd2 Qb6

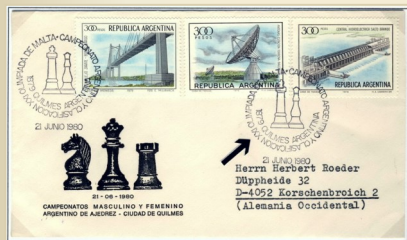


11.f4 Ng6 12.Bd3 Bg4 13.Qc1 Bd7 14.e5 dxe5 15.Bxg6 fxe6 16.fxe5 0-0-0 17.exf6 exf6 18.Nge2 Bg4 19.Be3 Bxe2 20.Kxe2 Qb4 21.Re1 Bd6 22.h3 g5 23.Kf1 g4 24.hxg4 h5 25.g5 h4 26.Bf2 h3 27.gxh3 Rxh3 28.Re4 Qa5 29.Qd1 f5 30.Rh4 Rxh4 31.Bxh4 Qb4 32.Bf2 Qf4 33.Qh5 g6 34.Qh4 Qd2 35.Re1 Bf4 36.Rd1 Bxg5 37.Rxd2 Bxh4 1-0

Unfortunately it does seem that the venture was negative from a financial aspect. However over eighty countries did participate, through almost five hundred (including as much as 58 Grandmasters), for a total of well over two thousand games at the Mediterranean Conference Centre - between 20th November and 6th December. And during those days there was also the female tournament! The Soviet Union won both.



The gold medals (featuring the logo/symbol) were shown on the top value in a 1984 set for the FIDE 60th anniversary issued by British Virgin Islands, whose William Hook finished first on board one. The 75c too commemorated Malta's Olympiad four years previously, showing the game between Hook and Saif Kanani. 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5 3.d5 Qb6 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Nbd7 6.Rb1 a6 7.a4 h6 8.Be3 Qb4 9.f3 Ne5 10.Bd2 Qb6 11.f4 Ng6 12.Bd3 Bg4 13.Qc1 Bd7 14.e5 dxe5 15.Bxg6 fxe6 16.fxe5 0-0-0 17.exf6 exf6 18.Nge2 Bg4 19.Be3 Bxe2 20.Kxe2 Qb4 21.Re1 Bd6 22.h3 g5 23.Kf1 g4 24.hxg4 h5 25.g5 h4 26.Bf2 h3 27.gxh3 Rxh3 28.Re4 Qa5 29.Qd1 f5 30.Rh4 Rxh4 31.Bxh4 Qb4 32.Bf2 Qf4 33.Qh5 g6 34.Qh4 Qd2 35.Re1 Bf4 36.Rd1 Bxg5 37.Rxd2 Bxh4 1-0 Malta's philatelic offerings could have been more "spectacular"! Two further related items were issued by Romania and Argentina respectively, the latter including an error (XXI instead of XXIV).



# Is it REALLY True that....

## Philatelic case reached House of Lords in 1927?!

*Antoine Vassallo*

In 1913 Dutch diamond merchant - and stamp dealer *cum* collector - Jonas **Lek** (with a London address) bought a parcel of hundreds of King Edward VII GB £1 stamps, all with an undated Jersey double-ring cancel. They supposedly represented tobacco import tax.

The selling dealer was John Stewart “George” **Lowden** (of Leicester Square, and other premises) who had previously been accused more than once of philatelic forgeries, including Orange River Colony, Transvaal and North Borneo. He was acquitted in this last case, arguing successfully that they were reprints rather than forgeries! However he was not so lucky when prosecuted in reference to the



KE7 stamps (found to be forgeries or reproductions in a wrong shade): the sentence for fraud was three years penal servitude. His defence that he was completely in the dark (claiming that he was simply acting as an agent for someone else) was disregarded by the jury in the repeated trial.

One should add that Lek had earlier sold Lowden himself a few mint copies of the stamp in question which, when inspected, gave the impression that they had been used to create the fraudulent reproductions. Interestingly, the prosecution noted that in 1903 he had used a pseudonym to give evidence against some persons accused of stamp theft.

Jonas, who died in 1961 aged 85, continued with a claim against his insurers: this loss case reached the House of Lords (at the time, the highest court). He was represented by - still junior barrister - Reginald Powell **Croom-Johnson**, himself a noted philatelist with a specialist British Solomon Islands collection. That same year, after previously authoring an illustrated stamp collecting guide, Croom-Johnson actually published a book about his favourite area. This British barrister, soon to become a Conservative Member of Parliament, was later appointed a High Court justice and knighted. Sir Reginald died in 1957, at 78. The family's high-level legal connections continued through youngest son Sir David who served as a Lord Justice of Appeal.

I conclude by emphasizing that in fact these Edwardian forgeries now fetch more than the genuine stamps! Illustrated is a forgery of the forgery, along with a genuine stamp with a forged postmark.



## NUMISMATIC SPECIAL

Antoine Vassallo



*It seems that numerous members are also interested in coins – and, of course, stamp First Day Envelopes are regularly prepared with allied coins or medals in various countries. Two examples were these production by our Anthony Grech.*

So it is hoped that this irregular series will be appreciated!

### Regulation breach leads to Canada's most identifiable design



The Royal Canadian Mint saw a need in the mid-eighties for a circulating dollar coin, with reduced size, to be able to eliminate the one-dollar note. The design was to be the same: the 1935 "Voyageur" (Hudson's Bay Company fur-trappers or *coureurs de bois* in a canoe) by German-Canadian sculptor Emanuel Otto Hahn.

However something unexpected happened: the adapted master dies were lost in transit from Ottawa to the Winnipeg production facilities. According to an investigation, they had been entrusted to a courier service on 3 November 1986 - in breach of accepted security procedures. Not only was a specialized firm not used, the employee who picked up the package was not even asked for identification! Moreover both dies (obverse and reverse sides) were packed together – this meant that someone unauthorized could strike both sides of the new coin, minting their own money!

This was too dangerous and so the Mint undertook to redesign the coin to foil potential counterfeiters. An alternate design - by Canadian artist Robert-Ralph Carmichael - was on hand and government approval was quickly gained for its use. They even succeeded in keeping to the original release date: 30 June 1987.





A bird was featured, called a loon in North America, and the new coin was quickly dubbed the “loonie” (and piggy banks “loonie bins”). Obviously this humourously sounds like “looney”, the antiquated term for someone with mental problems. Even the later two-dollar coin became a “toonie”!



These large diving birds that live in both fresh and salt water (*Gavia Gaviidae Gaviiformes* in scientific Latin and “divers” in British English) first appeared on Canadian stamps in 1957, as part of the National Wildlife series.



← It was much more high-value definitive.

colourful on a 1998

A Pacific Loon specimen was shown in the 2000 Birds series.



Loons can be found among the 2012 Baby Wildlife Definitives.



← The last loon to date was included in another Birds series, in 2017.

*This list could well be expanded with “cousins”, this being quite a wide fam-*



*ily!*



## CELEBRITY PHILATELISTS

*Antoine Vassallo highlights famous stampcollectors*

### Talented stampuser



Walter “Walt” **Whitman** (1819-92) was an American poet, journalist, and essayist whose verse collection Leaves of Grass is considered an important landmark in the history of American literature.

He was included in the U.S. Postal Service’s Literary Arts series in 2019, on his birth bicentennial. The design by Sam Weber was adapted from an 1869 portrait of Whitman taken by Frank Pearsall. The final designer was Greg Breeding. The bird (hermit thrush on a lilac bush

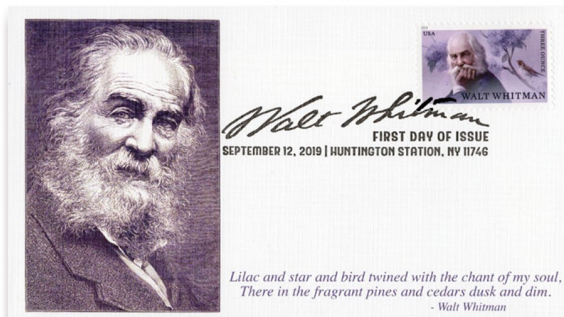
branch) in the background recalls an elegy written on Abraham Lincoln’s assassination. Being a type of Forever stamp, there is no face value: the Three Ounce at the side refers to the maximum weight it can be used to prepay postage.

Whitman had first appeared on American stamps in 1940, within the long list of monocoloured Famous Americans –

specifically among five Poets (with fiftytwo million printed of each). The others were Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, James Russell Lowell and James Whitcomb Riley.

This poet is not well-known in just his country: other issuers who have commemorated him on their stamps include Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey and Romania.

Glancing at his biography, one notes that he began working as an office boy in 1830 and then was







apprenticed in the printing trade. He passed a period from 1836 as a teacher and edited a weekly newspaper from 1838. Off-and-on political involvement started in 1840.

An essential development was the publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* - containing twelve poems and a preface - in 1855. His father died the following week! But Walt was surely emboldened by a letter from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "I greet you at the beginning of a great career."

The Civil War, in which he participated indirectly, offered difficult years: a brother was among the military injured, another died of tuberculosis and a third was committed to a lunatic asylum.

In 1868 a selection of Whitman's poetry was published in London, during a period when his writings were providing vast discussions – also effecting his employment. But his following in England expanded strongly.

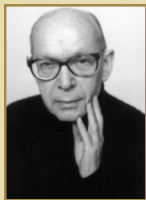
However he suffered depression in 1870 and a paralytic stroke in 1873, a few months after which his mother died. Though increasingly famous, receiving visits and accolades from prominent personalities, he faced many setbacks – amid physical and mental problems. His death early in 1892 is assumed to have been the result of pneumonia.

Though not really a philatelist, he is not out of place in this series of ours. He did not collect stamps as a hobby but he did use stamps a lot! As a wordsmith (and brilliant at that!), teacher and humanitarian, he was continually sending letters – a fact echoed by the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association: "We know he loved using the post office".

(Q) What goes round the world but never moves from its corner?

(A) A STAMP .





## PHILATELIC CENTENNIALS

*glances – and longer looks – at events from a hundred years ago  
presented by Antoine Vassallo*

**Czeslaw Slania (1921–2005): the stamp engraver**

During his fiftyfive-year career, world-renowned stamp engraver Czeslaw Slania produced in excess of a thousand stamp engravings for numerous countries, together with various banknotes. Sweden in fact had the honour of issuing his thousandth in 2000: David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl's Great Deeds by Swedish Kings, described by the Guinness Book of Records as the largest engraved stamp ever. He always accepted to sign philatelic material for fans but immediately recognized any stamp which was not among his oeuvre!

Engraving a stamp die is an exacting and lonely task that requires intense concentration. A die could be ruined by a single false cut. Obviously some parts of the image – such as lettering - have to be etched, not being considered suitable for hand engraving. Czeslaw generally worked in simple fashion using a burin, hand-held magnifying glass and mirror (to reverse the artwork image). In the meantime he listened to classical music.

Growing up in Poland, he developed his skills making miniature portraits. Expelled from school for forging a lost identification card, his headmaster predicted that Czeslaw would either be a great artist or a great forger! During World War II, Slania used his skills to good effect in the Polish resistance by forging identification documents.

After the war, he took a four-year course at the Kracow Academy of Fine Arts. In 1950, Slania joined the Polish State Printing Works, which produced stamps and banknotes. Over the next six years, he engraved 23 Polish stamps. This 1950 stamp designed by T Gronowski (showing a worker with Peace dove – for Poland's first Peace Congress) was Slania's first work as an apprentice: he was allowed to engrave the metal part of the hammer under the strict surveillance of MR Polak (whose name appeared in the stamp's lower right corner).



This 1951 stamp, in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Paris Commune, was the first ever fully engraved by Czeslaw Slania (but I intend treating this stamp further later this year).

While visiting Stockholm in 1956, our hero resolved to stay and engrave stamps for Sweden. His initial approaches were rebuffed, there being no vacancy for a stamp engraver. For the next three years, he did menial jobs, including washing dishes for the Post Office Railway Depot restaurant. To maintain his skills, Slania engraved “personal labels” – stamp-like labels featuring famous people that he admired: entertainers, world leaders and boxing champions.



In 1959 Sweden's chief stamp engraver, Sven Ewart, fell ill and Slania was invited to join the Stamp Printing Works. His first job was to complete two of Ewart's partly-engraved stamps, which took two weeks working around the clock. From this point onwards, there was no looking back.

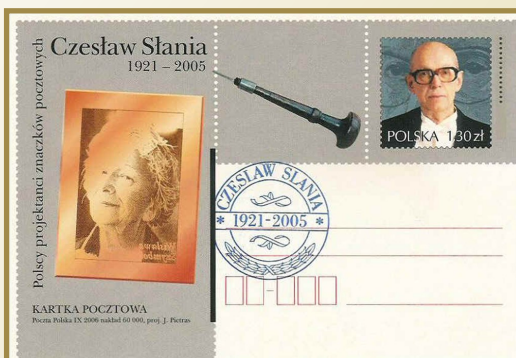
Denmark, Greenland, Faroe Islands and Monaco, are the countries representing the bulk of his work, apart from Sweden. But there are many others for whom Slania engraved occasional stamps: Australia, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, France, Germany, Belgium, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Gibraltar, Jamaica, New Zealand, Poland, San Marino, Singapore, China, Tunisia, Aland, United States and Vatican City - as well as the United Nations.

Czeslaw Slania received many honours during his lifetime. In 1972, his engraving of stamps marking the 90th birthday of King Gustaf VI Adolf of Sweden earned Czeslaw Slania a rarely-awarded title, "Engraver to the Royal Court of Sweden". Another significant honour was the Cross of the Commander of the Order of Poland – the country's highest civilian award – given to the engraver in 1999. In 1996, Poland had issued a postal stationery card, featuring Slania's portrait on the stamp, which was timed for release during an exhibition of Slania's graphic works as well as to celebrate his 75th birthday.

The artist's favourite intaglio stamp was one that he didn't engrave: the 1965 5c Winston Churchill USA stamp. Noting that portraiture was the most difficult aspect of stamp engraving, Slania described it as a fine example of portrait engraving.

Czeslaw Slania died in 2005, aged 83. A press release from the Swedish Post stated, "A great artist has passed away ...". His last engraved stamp was issued that same year by the United Nations Postal Administration, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly.

In commemoration of Czeslaw Slania, Poland issued in 2006 a postcard bearing a stamp portraying Slania himself (a photograph taken in his later years). The card is prepaid by a printed stamp and on the two adjoining labels are shown his burin and a gold portrait of the Polish 1996 Nobel Prize Literature Laureate poet Wislawa Szymborska (previously portrayed on a 2000 Swedish stamp, engraved by Czeslaw Slania himself).



Anthony Grech



Based mainly on Stanley Gibbons Catalogues.

Abbreviations; Op.=Overprint or Overprinted.

Ins.= Inscribed, Sur.=Surcharged  
Prot=Protectorate

**SPANISH WEST AFRICA**  
1949

**SRI LANKA**  
1972

**STELLALAND**  
1884

**STRAIT SETTLEMENTS**  
o.p India stamps  
1867

**STRAIT SETTLEMENTS**  
Own issue  
1898

**SUDAN**  
o.p Egypt stamps  
1897

**SUDAN**  
Own issue  
1898

**SUNGEI UJONG**  
o.p Strait Settlements stamps  
1878

**SUNGEI UJONG**  
Own issue  
1891

**SURINAME**  
1873

**SWAZILAND**  
o.p. Transvaal stamps  
1889

**SWAZILAND**  
Own issue  
1933

**SWEDEN**  
1855

**SWITZERLAND**  
1850

**SYRIA**  
o.p. France stamps  
1919

**SYRIA**  
Own issue  
1920

**TAHITI**  
o.p. France stamps  
1889

**TANGANYIKA**  
1922

**TANZANIA**  
1965

**TASMANIA**  
1853

**TCHONG-KING**  
o.p. France stamps  
1903



 <p><b>THAILAND</b> 1883</p>	 <p><b>THAI</b> <b>Occupation of</b> <b>Malaya</b> 1943</p>	 <p><b>THESSALY</b> 1898</p>	 <p><b>THURN &amp; TAXIS</b> <b>NORTH</b> <b>DISTRICT</b> 1852</p>	 <p><b>THURN &amp; TAXIS</b> <b>SOUTH</b> <b>DISTRICT</b> 1852</p>	 <p><b>TIBET</b> <b>sur. China</b> <b>stamp</b> 1911</p>
 <p><b>TIBET</b> <b>Own issue</b> 1912</p>	 <p><b>TIERRA</b> <b>DEL</b> <b>FUEGO</b> 1891</p>	 <p><b>TIMOR</b> 1948</p>	 <p><b>TOBAGO</b> 1879</p>	 <p><b>TOGO</b> <b>German</b> <b>occupation</b> 1897</p>	 <p><b>TOGO</b> <b>British</b> <b>occupation</b> 1914</p>
 <p><b>TOGO</b> <b>French</b> <b>occupation</b> 1914</p>	 <p><b>TOGO</b> <b>French</b> <b>Mandate</b> 1921</p>	 <p><b>TOGO</b> <b>Own issue</b> 1924</p>	 <p><b>TOKELAU</b> 1953</p>	 <p><b>TOLIMA</b> 1870</p>	 <p><b>TONGA</b> 1886</p>
 <p><b>TRANSCAU-</b> <b>CASIAN</b> <b>FEDERATION</b> 1923</p>	 <p><b>TRANSKEI</b> 1977</p>	 <p><b>TRANSVAAL</b> 1869</p>	 <p><b>TRAVAN-</b> <b>CORE</b> <b>COCHIN</b> 1888</p>	 <p><b>TRENGGANU</b> 1910</p>	 <p><b>TRIESTE</b> <b>o.p. Italy</b> <b>stamps</b> 1947</p>

## POST HASTE

*continuing an irregular series about the interesting  
story of the Post*  
Antoine Vassallo

This series returns after quite a long hiatus: in fact the latest instalment appeared in issue 52! I venture into a few notes over a couple of issues about methods of mail transport and delivery – though the list could be infinite!

The most primitive method was, obviously, simply on **foot**. Private



messengers on foot, horseback and camel (see issue no 52 *The Camel*

*Postman of Sudan*) brought news and information to those who could afford them before public mail systems had been established. By the seventeenth century the bulk of the mail was carried on horseback and by ship. However, rural mail delivery often involved foot travel.

In 1814, a mail system was established in Namibia (South West Africa) between the missionary stations and the outside world. This made use of natives who carried the mail on the end of sticks, with their provisions on another end. They often went missing on their two-week journey by foot between Windhoek and Walvis Bay: presumably attacked by lions!

Beginning in 1885, mail between the two Florida (USA) locations of Palm City (now Palm Beach) and Lemon City was carried by barefoot mailmen



along beach of the 68 Prior to mail was carried



the for 40 miles. this, via



steamboat and train, taking a total of two months: the barefoot route shortened this to one week. And of course mail is still delivered door to door by postmen on foot!

Another “primitive” method was delivery by **ski**. In frigid northern regions, mail delivery could be problematic. Probably the most famous mail carrier on skis was Norwegian-born John Thompson (“Snowshoe Thompson”). He used 10-foot skis and a pole in both hands. For twenty years from 1856, he carried mail between Placerville (California) and Genoa (Nevada). This 80-mile treacherous route through the Sierra Nevada mountains, took three days from Genoa and two (with a lighter pack) on the return.

Another heroic early mail carrier on skis was John Craig, between Willamette Valley and Camp Polk in Oregon. At about Christmas in 1877, he started off on the 45-mile journey to Camp Polk: his body was discovered only the following spring in a small hut he had built for shelter. Granville Zackariah operated an express service over the trackless wilderness between Dowieville and La Port (California) in the winters of 1865 and 1866, on skis or snowshoes. Then George Cook took over the route, continuing until 1870. Individuals – not in Malta! - of course still ski on occasion to post and pick up their mail.

*(to be continued)*







*Welcome to*

**THE BOOK  
AND STAMP  
SHOP IN GOZO**  
De Soldanis Street  
Victoria



The current opening hours are:  
Mondays: 14:45 to 18:45  
Tuesday, Thursday, Fridays and  
Saturdays: 8:45 to 12:45  
Wednesday: Closed

Call Manwel;  
21342189

