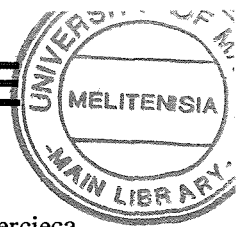


THE PSM MAGAZINE



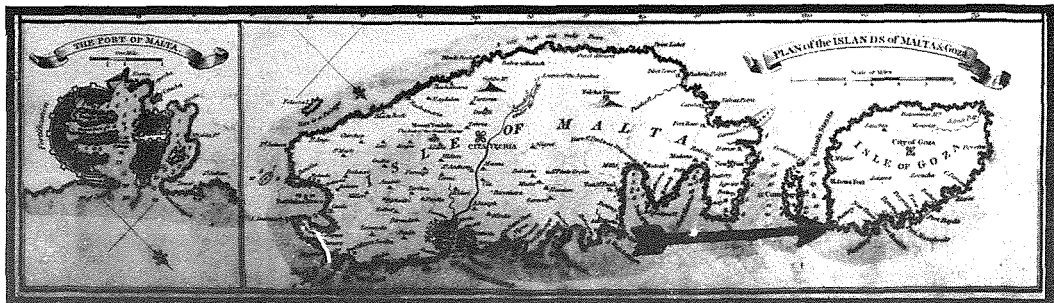
Silver-Bronze ESPANA '84
Silver-Bronze AUSIPEX '84
Silver-Bronze ISRAPIL '85
Editor: Dr. A. Bonnici, Asst. Editor: V. Mercieca.
Casa Bonnici, Sir Augustus Bartolo Street,
Ta' Xbiex, Malta. Tel. 38437

Vol. 14 No. 3

December 1985

Centenary of the establishment of a regular postal service between Malta and Gozo.

Dr. J.H. Mercieca

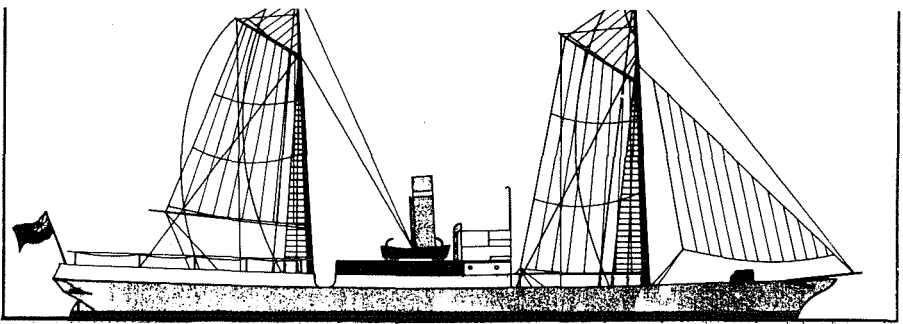


On the 1st January 1985 the Malta Postal Administration appropriately celebrated with justifiable pride, the first Centenary of its statutory establishment, one hundred years to the day earlier.

Yet another historic and important Centenary, also worthy of commemoration and which also fell in 1985, is the introduction by the Government of Malta, of a regular postal service between the islands of Malta and Gozo, only just over five months following the establishment of the Malta Post Office.

Notwithstanding the fact that one hundred years ago the volume of correspondence between the two islands was far from being anything like what it is to-day, yet the Malta Government rightly attached the importance such means of inter-insular communication deserved.

It thus results from the Archives of the time, that on the 8th June 1885, a contract was drawn up in the Acts of Francesco Saverio Camilleri, Notary Public and Notary to Government, Malta, between GEORGE COUSIN, son of the late Gaspare, born and residing in Valletta, Auditor General and Director of Contracts, on behalf of the Government of Malta, by special Authority from His Excellency the Governor (through a letter from the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Secretary to Government, dated the 8th day of June 1885) and Chevalier Olof Frederick Gollcher, son of the late Gustave, born in Stockholm and residing in Valletta, Merchant, for the establishment of a regular daily steam communication between the port of Valletta and Gozo. It was stipulated in the deed that the port of arrival and departure in Gozo was to be Migiarro, unless of course, the state of the weather was such, as to render that anchorage unsafe; in which case the Bay of Marsalforn was to be resorted to.



It was also agreed that the steam-vessel, to be regularly employed by the Contractor in this service was to be the "Gleneagles" of which vessel a full description was given in the Schedule annexed to the Agreement.

Mr. Gollcher, the Contractor, appearing on this agreement was given a free hand to fix the hours of departure and arrival of the steam-vessel, subject however to the approval in writing of the Government and provided always that the time allowed for the trip from Valletta to Migiarrro, Gozo or from Migiarrro, Gozo to Valleta, would not, in weather certified by the Superintendent of Ports to be ordinary weather, exceed two hours. However an extension of time to two and one half hours were to be allowed, if the vessel called at St. Paul's Bay or intermediate ports.

Notwithstanding the fact that it was stipulated in the Contract that the steam-vessel "Gleneagles" had to be employed for the regular daily communication between the port of Valletta and Gozo, yet, the then Government reserved the right, that in the event it was deemed necessary to send mails to Sicily or bring back mails from that island, the Contractor should whenever required by the Government, place the services of the "Gleneagles" at its disposal for that purpose. It is interesting to note that even in this case a limiting clause in the Contract laid down that the round trip from Valletta to Syracuse and back did not have to exceed twenty hours and also that no subsidy would have fallen due to the Contractor for any trip executed in more than twenty hours, unless caused by stress of weather or accidents and detentions not under the control of the Contractor, that is to say, not caused by any act or negligence of himself or servants.

Mr. Gollcher, the Contractor, was also bound not to refuse to take on board any person applying for passage at the tariff price, provided that there was room, except with the written consent of the Government, and additionally in cases of trips to Syracuse the same condition was also applicable, provided that the departure of any individual was not impeded by an act from the Court of Justice.

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“Gleneagles” for the conveyance of continental mails, for repairs or otherwise, in the event of the approval of the Government, in writing, having first been obtained, the Contractor was bound to keep up the regular daily mail service between Malta and Gozo by means of another steam vessel approved by the Government for that purpose.

The daily mails between Malta and Gozo were to be carried free of charge by the Contractor who also had to receive them and deliver them on board at the ports of arrival and departure, however in return for the daily steam service between Malta and Gozo, the Government agreed to pay to the Contractor a subsidy at the rate of seven hundred and fifty pounds sterling per annum. Additionally in the event of the Government calling on the Contractor to dispatch the “Gleneagles” to Sicily with the continental mails, the Government had to pay the Contractor the sum of thirty five pounds sterling for the round trip to Syracuse and back, and a proportional rate, according to distance, in the event of the “Gleneagles” being despatched to some other port than Syracuse. The first instalment was to be payable on the 30th September 1885 and the amount then payable was to be calculated from the day on which the regular service had commenced, as certified by the Superintendent of Ports.

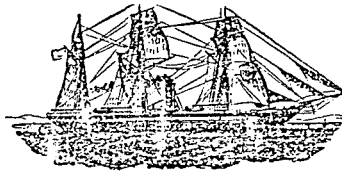
The subsidy was to be paid in equal quarterly payments on the last day of each quarter during the time the agreement was in force, i.e. on the 31st March, 30th June, 30th September and 31st December, which dates were later changed to the 28th February, 31st May, 31st August and 30th November to be in accordance with the quarters of the financial year of the then Government. This request for the alteration of the payment quarters was agreed to by Mr. Gollcher, the Contractor, and approved on the 8th November 1887. The first Postmaster, Ferdinand V. Inglott read and noted this approval on the 17th November 1887.

In the event of the “Gleneagles” or a substitute thereof, approved by the Government, failing to perform the regular service from Valletta to Gozo and back, on any day not a holiday or festival “d’intero precetto”, a deduction of two pounds sterling was to be made from the subsidy for every such failure. However it was agreed that no such deduction would be made on account of such failure if and when the state of the weather was such, on any day on which such failure would have occurred, as to preclude the “Gleneagles” or other approved vessel from proceeding to Gozo without serious risk or loss.

There was also a regulation regarding the keeping of time on board the steamer, which had to be regulated according to the time kept at the Office of the Superintendent of Ports.

As to the duration of the Contract it was agreed that it should remain in force up to the 30th June 1890 and no longer, but it was also stipulated that it would be competent for the Contractor, in the event of his desiring at any time to dissolve the agreement, to do so by giving six months notice in writing to the Government to that effect.

But on the other hand Government reserved the right, that it could dissolve the agreement, after giving seven days notice, without the necessity of any judicial act, in the event of the Contractor failing to carry out the conditions of the contract, by failing to provide, during the continuance of the contract, a regular daily steam communication between Malta and Gozo, or by failing to carry the continental mails, as provided for by the agreement signed between the two parties. The same penalty would be made to apply in case the Contractor made over the contract to any person, without the consent in writing of the Government.



S. S. "GLENEAGLES"

Steam Communication between MALTA & GOZO

TIME TABLE WEEK DAYS

FOR

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

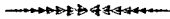
Leaves CUSTOM HOUSE 6. 30 a.m. Arrives GOZO 8. .0 a.m.
,, GOZO 9. 0 a.m. Arrives CUSTOM HOUSE 10. 30 a.m.



Leaves CUSTOM HOUSE 4. p.m. Arrives GOZO 5. 30 p.m.
,, GOZO 6. p.m. Arrives CUSTOM HOUSE 7. 30 p.m.



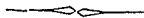
**Special Notices will be issued for Sundays and Holidays.*




PASSENGERS TARIFF

VALLETTA TO GOZO & VICEVERSA

FIRST CLASS	£ 0. 1. 6.
— do — Return Tickets	0. 2. 6.
THIRD CLASS	0. 0. 8.
— do — Return Tickets	0. 1. 0.



 Return Tickets are available for 3 Days.

Tickets obtainable on board.

The competent Authority in case of any difference or dispute relating to the interpretation of the contract, to the performance of the obligations of the Contractor or to any other question concerning the execution of the contract, was to be the Admiral Superintendent of Her Majesty's Dockyard against whose decisions no appeal could have been entered. Any other qualified person as could be agreed on between the Government and the Contractor was also eligible for such purposes.

This deed, in virtue of which, this most essential service between the two islands was five score years ago first established, was done and published at No. 216, Strada Mercanti (now Merchants' Street) Valletta in the presence of Dr. Antonio Carmelo Briffa, Notary, son of the late Giuseppe and of Master Gavino Naudi, writer, son of the late Antonio Cleardo, both residing in Valletta, witnesses who had declared not to be related by blood or affinity to the contracting parties in any of the degrees prohibited by law. As already stated earlier it was signed by Geo. Cousin and O.F. Gollcher and the Notary was Franc. Sav. Camilleri, Notary and Notary to Government, Malta.

It is worthwhile noting that the Schedule of particulars of the S/S Gleneagles giving the name of the ship, official number, port and year of registry, where and when built, framework, length and breadth, horsepower, speed etc as well as the Passengers Tariff s/s Gleneagles, showing the single and return fares on both first and third class, from Valletta to Gozo, Valletta to St. Paul's Bay and St. Paul's Bay to Gozo and vice-versa, were signed by the Director of Contracts and the Contractor Mr. O.F. Gollcher as well as by the Notary F.S. Camilleri and were annexed to the agreement.

Thus, just over one hundred years ago, the mail and passenger service was officially inaugurated on the 13th June 1885, when for the first time, the steam-vessel "Gleneagles" left the Grand Harbour for Migiarrro, Gozo, to the elation and clapping of a sizeable crowd which had assembled at the Marina to witness the ship's first trip to Gozo, thus opening a new era of more modern means of communication between the sister islands of Malta and Gozo.

At the other end, i.e. at the port of Migiarrro, Gozo, another crowd awaited the arrival of the Gleneagles and gave her a rousing welcome as she approached the shores of Gozo. From that day onwards the arrival of the Gleneagles was to be a daily sign much welcomed by many Gozitans whose living much depended on what that ship brought over from Malta both as regards the passengers as also the goods which it carried on its decks.

The Editor and your Committee
Wish you
a Happy Christmas
and a Prosperous New Year