

Detailed Information about:-

Malta Railway Issue

By J. Farrugia

Date of Issue.....	21st. January, 1983
Values.....	3c, 13c and 27c.
Stamp Size.....	47mm x 29mm
Art Designer.....	Richard J. Caruana.
Printers.....	Printex Limited Malta.
Process.....	Lithography
Perforation.....	13.9 x 13.6
Watermark.....	Maltese Crosses pointing upright.
Paper.....	Chalk Surfaced
Gum.....	P.V.A.

Colours:-

- 3c - Yellow, Olive-green, Light-brown, Red and Black.
- 13c - Magenta, Yellow, Olive-green, Red and Black.
- 27c - Sepia, Yellow, Olive-green, Red and Black.

Designs:-

This set marks the centenary of the inauguration of the Malta Railway. Congratulations to Richard J. Caruana for a very attractive set. The Malta Railway was inaugurated on the 28th February, 1883, with a twenty-five minute journey from Valletta to Rabat. The Malta Railway Company began the service with three locomotives, all O-6-OT built by Manning Wardle of Leeds. Later, another locomotive, built by Black Hawthorn of Gateshead, was bought. By the turn of the century, the number of engines was increased to ten. The railway line was seven miles long and the journey started from an underground station in Valletta and passed through Floriana, Hamrun, Msida, Santa Venera, Birkirkara, Balzan, Attard and ended at Rabat.

The railway service prospered until the introduction of the tramway in 1905 and later from more competition by the buses. The Malta Railway closed down on 31st. March, 1931.

The 3c stamp shows a Manning Wardle O-6-OT engine used in 1883, and has Valletta's Main Gate in the background.

The 13c stamp depicts a Black Hawthorn O-6-OT engine of 1884 against a background of Portes des Bombes.

The 27c stamp reproduces a Beyer Peacock 2-6-4T locomotive of 1895 with Rabat as background.

Colour checks in the form of coloured discs 3mm diameter are seen in the right hand margin, next to the last stamp of the bottom row. The colours from top to bottom correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers from left to right, on all Panes of the three values.

Cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps are seen in top and bottom margin, printed in black.

The Printed Sheet of each value consisted of three Panes, A, B and C. Each Pane has forty stamps, made up of five rows of eight stamps. All three values are of the horizontal format.

Plate/Pane Numbers:-

These are seen under the first stamp of the bottom row.

$$3c = 1A \times 5, 1B \times 5, 1C \times 5.$$

$$13c = 1A \times 5, 1B \times 5, 1C \times 5.$$

$$27c = 1A \times 5, 1B \times 5, 1C \times 5.$$



Perforation of Margins:-

The left hand margin of Panes A, B and C, of all three values, is imperforate. The top, bottom and right hand margins of these same Panes are all fully perforated.

PANE "A"	↑
WMK	↑
PANE "B"	↑
WMK	↑
PANE "C"	↑
WMK	↑

From a study of the details given, the Printed Sheet of each value, before cutting into Panes would look as shown on left. Looking at the Printed Sheet as shown, stamps would be seen the right way up, hence why watermark in individual stamps is also upright. Perforator ran from left to right.

Imprint Blocks:-

"Printex Limited Malta" is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row, in all Panes, of all values. Letters are 1mm high and printed in black. An imprint Block of four will also include the colour checks.

A special hand-postmark inscribed: "Il-Vapur Ta' L-Art F'Malta - L-Ewwel Jum Tal-Hrug 21.1.83 - Malta" and the name of the respective locality, was used on the first day of issue. The inscription means: "The Railway In Malta - First Day of Issue 21.1 83 - Malta". The postmark also incorporates a line drawing of a train.

Up to 12.50p.m. on the first day of issue, sales amounted to Lm38,554. This set will remain on sale up to Thursday, 2nd. June, 1983, unless stocks are previously exhausted.