

MALTA — A DIARY

January-April 1979

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- 2-1-79 A machine stamp cancelling slogan inscribed: "NEXT STAMP ISSUE — FLEMISH TAPESTRIES SET — 24 JANUARY 1979", was used on and off, during the period 2nd January to 23rd January 1979, at the Central Mail Room.
- 12-1-79 In today's Government Gazette, the Minister of Development, Energy, Port and Telecommunications has approved the opening of a Sub-Post Office at Xaghra and at Nadur, Gozo. Applications for the two posts of Sub-Postmaster at these localities were to be received by the Postmaster General, up to 5 p.m. on Monday 29th January 1979.
- 19-1-79 The 4m stamp of the present Decimal Definitive Postage Set has been reprinted by Printex Limited Malta. It was available from the Philatelic Bureau.
- 24-1-79 "Flemish Tapestries" set issued today. This set will remain on sale up to Friday, 22nd June, 1979 unless stocks are previously exhausted. A special handstamp was used for cancellation on the first day of issue.
- 25-1-79 The Postmaster General notified that, to mark the centenary of the birth of Antonio Sciortino, the well known Maltese sculptor, a special hand-postmark was used on the 25th January, 1979 at the Central Room, Valletta. The special hand-postmark is inscribed: "ANTONIO SCIORTINO — 1879-1979 — CENTINARJU TAT-TWELID — 25.1.79 — VALLETTA — MALTA". The only difficult part in the postmark for our overseas members is "CENTINARJU TAT-TWELID", meaning "Birth Centenary". The sculptor's tools, a hammer and a chisel, are incorporated in the postmark.
- 26-1-79 A machine stamp cancelling slogan, to mark the 10th anniversary of the International Air Rally of Malta, was used during the period 26th January to 31st January, 1979 at the Central Mail Room, Valletta. The slogan reads: "INTERNATIONAL AIR RALLY OF MALTA — 10th ANNIVERSARY — 23-27 JUNE 1979". A silhouette of an aeroplane in flight is also incorporated in the slogan.
- 7-2-79 The last First Day Cover cancelled by the Field Post Office at Luqa was the "British Dogs" set, issued on 7th February, 1979. The normal double ring 1001 handstamp was used for cancellation. The Field Post Office will close in late March.
- 8-2-79 The Postmaster General notified that the new hand date-stamps were put in use on Thursday, 8th February, 1979 at the localities indicated hereunder:
Sub-Post Office, St. Julians
1 hand date-stamp
Branch Post Office, Mosta
3 hand date-stamp
Branch Post Office, Żejtun
2 hand date-stamp
Branch Post Office, Żabbar
2 hand date-stamp
Branch Post Office, Rabat
1 hand date-stamp
The new hand date stamps are

inscribed with the name of the respective locality and the word "MALTA". The old hand date-stamps which were replaced, were withdrawn from use at the close of business on Wednesday, 7th February, 1979.

11-2-79 To mark the opening of the Mediterranean Conference Centre, a special hand-postmark was used at the Counter Hall, G.P.O., Valletta, between 8.00 a.m. and 12.00, on Sunday, 11th February, 1979.

The special hand-postmark is inscribed: "FTUH TA' DAR IL-MEDITERRAN GHALL-KONFERENZI — 11.2.1979 — VALLETTA — MALTA", meaning "Opening of the Mediterranean Conference Centre — 11.2.1979 — Valletta — Malta". The Emblem of Malta is also incorporated in the postmark.

13-2-79 The Postmaster General notified that on the occasion of the holding of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe Meeting of Experts on the Mediterranean 1979, a Temporary Branch Post Office was to be opened at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta. This Branch Post Office was open from the 13th February to the 23rd March, 1979 for the exclusive use of the participants at the meeting. The hours of business of the Temporary Branch Post Office were: Mondays to Fridays 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. The following postal business was transacted:

- (a) Sale of Postage stamps and Postal stationery.
 - (b) Registration of letters.
 - (c) Issue and payment of Money and Postal Orders.
 - (d) Posting of parcels.
- Postal articles posted at this

Temporary Branch Post Office were postmarked with a special date-stamp inscribed with the following words: "CSCE MEETING OF EXPERTS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN 1979 VALLETTA, MALTA".

Persons wishing to obtain an impression of this special date-stamp were to submit their requirement in writing to the Officer in Charge, Philatelic Bureau, Valletta, enclosing the required philatelic material and covering remittance where necessary.

25-2-79 To mark the 50th Anniversary of the Death of Anton Nani, the well-known Maltese music composer, a special hand-postmark was used at the Counter Hall of the GPO Valletta, on Sunday(25th February, 1979 between 8.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon. The special hand-postmark is inscribed: "ANTON NANI — 1929-1979 — HAMSIN SENA MILL-MEWT — 25.2.79 — VALLETTA MALTA". For the benefit of overseas members, "HAMSIN SENA MILL-MEWT" means "Fifty Years Since Death". A lyre surrounded by laurel leaves are incorporated in the postmark.

1-3-79 The Postmaster General notified for general information that an agreement has been signed between the Dutch and the Malta Postal Administration for the encashment of Dutch payment cards in Malta. The new service which came into effect on 1st March, 1979 enables entitled holders of Dutch Giro Cards to withdraw from local Post Offices any amount in Maltese currency up to a maximum of £M30 on each card presented.

9-3-79 The Malta Post Office participated in "Interprex 79" Philatelic Exhi-

- bition which was held at the New York Coliseum, New York. The exhibition was organised by the American Stamps Dealers' Association.
- 12-3-79 A machine stamp cancelling slogan inscribed: "World Maritime Day — 16 March 1979 — Safer Shipping — And Cleaner Oceans", was used from the 12th to 16th March 1979, at the Central Mail Room.
- 13-3-79 A machine stamp cancelling slogan inscribed: "Next Stamp Issue — End of Military Facilities — Agreement Set — 31 March 1979", was used on and off, during the period 13th March to 30th March 1979, at the Central Mail Room.
- 15-3-79 To mark the Malta International Book Fair 1979, a special hand-postmark was used at the Counter Hall of the G.P.O. and the Central Mail Room, on the 15th, 16th and 17th March 1979, during normal business hours. The postmark was also used at the Counter Hall of the G.P.O. from 8.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon on Sunday, 18th March, 1979.
The postmark is inscribed: "Malta International — Book Fair 1979 — 15.3.79 — Valletta — Malta". A line drawing symbolizing a book is also incorporated in the postmark.
- 16-3-79 The 1c3 stamp of the present Decimal Definitive Postage Set has been reprinted by Printex Limited Malta. This is the second reprint or the third printing of this value. Panes "A", "B", "C" and "D" were issued for sale by the Philatelic Bureau.
- 20-3-79 The Postmaster General notified that none of the 77 designs entered in the competition for the set of postage stamps to mark the End of the Military Facilities Agreement with Britain was selected for stamp reproduction.
The artistic level and the concept of several of the designs were very good but none was considered sufficiently suitable for the proposed stamps.
- In view of the good standard of their entries, the competitors who submitted the sets under the noms-de-plume "V8", "Gemini" and "Xemx" which were placed first, second and third will each be awarded a consolation prize of £M50, £M20 and £M15 respectively.
- 27-3-79 The Minister of Development, Energy, Port and Telecommunications approved the opening of a Sub-Post Office at Sliema in the area covering the following localities — The Strand from the bottom of St. Pius V Street to Bisazza Street, Bisazza Street, Tower Road from St. Anne Square to Ghar id-Dud Street and Cathedral Street between Tower Road and St. Peter Street. Applications for the post of Sub-Postmaster at this locality were to be received by the Postmaster General, up to 5.00 p.m. on Monday, 23rd April, 1979.
- 27-3-79 The last Field Post Office in Malta closed today. It was commonly known as Luqa F.P.O. Three handstamps were in use at this F.P.O. Two metal handstamps, 1001 for ordinary mail and 1040 for registered mail. Another rubber handstamp 107 was used for parcels. What happened on the last day, I cannot say exactly, because both my ordinary and registered covers were cancelled with the 1001 handstamp, but I have examples of both the other handstamps 1040 and 107, dated December and October 1978.
- 31-3-79 The End of Military Facilities Agreement with Britain" set issued today. A special hand-postmark was used on the first day of issue. It is inscribed: "L-Ewwel Jum tal-*Ħruġ*", "*Ħelsien u Sliem*",

"Malta" and the name of the respective locality together with the date "31.3.79". The words inscribed mean "First Day of Issue", "Freedom and Peace".

5-4-79 The Postmaster General notified that on the occasion of the first flight Malta/Kuwait/Dubai by Air Malta on the 5th April 1979, the Malta Post Office was using at the Philatelic Bureau, two special hand-postmarks each indicating the date of the first flight and place of destination. (See note after date 7-4-79).

7-4-79 The Postmaster General notified that on the occasion of the first flight Malta/Lyons by Air Malta on the 7th April, 1979 the Malta Post Office was using at the Philatelic Bureau, a special hand-postmark indicating the date of the first flight and the place of destination.

Note: It is of interest to note that the Kuwait covers were returned back stamped at "Safat" with the date "5th April" corresponding to the front cover cancellations, meaning they were returned on the same flight. The Dubai covers are back stamped at "Dubai" with the date "7th April" as they were not returned on the same flight which also left Malta on the 5th April as can be seen from the front cover cancellations. Also of interest, covers and envelopes used for these first flights will be found with the date printed or typed on the front (including Saïd covers) not corresponding with the hand-postmark cancellations used on the actual first flight. This includes the "Lyons" covers. The reason for this is, that the first notice

appearing in the Government Gazette gave the dates and places of first flights as follows:

Malta/Lyons — 5th April 1979.

Malta/Kuwait/Dubai — 7th April 1979.

When the actual first flights took place, the dates were changed, i.e. Malta/Kuwait/Dubai — 5th April 1979.

Malta/Lyons — 7th April 1979.

But by that time, all covers were already printed or typed and handed over to the Philatelic Bureau.

17-4-79 The Postmaster General notified that registration envelopes in size "H" (large) with the SIX PENCE registration fee stamp obliterated and bearing a new registration fee stamp, incorporating the Emblem of Malta, with the words, "SITT ĊENTĖZMI — REGISTRAZZJONI — MALTA", meaning "SIX CENTS — REGISTRATION — MALTA", were available for sale as from today, Tuesday, 17th April, 1979. The selling price of these registration envelopes is 7c5 each.

23-4-79 A machine stamp cancelling slogan inscribed: "Next Stamp Issue — Europa '79 Set — 9 May 1979" was used on and off, during the period 23rd April to 8th May, 1979 at the Central Mail Room. ■

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Always (keep the first Monday of the month free of any appointments. Make sure you are always able to attend the monthly meetings. And bring a guest with you. The warm friendly atmosphere is always in evidence.
