



THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY
OF MALTA

Vol. 8 No. 1

WINTER 1978

THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF MALTA

The Privileges of membership are:

- Our own quality magazine containing articles and news of general interest to members and collectors.
 - Monthly meetings from October to June.
 - An Exchange Branch, using specially prepared society booklets through which every member is invited to buy or sell.
 - An Expert Committee for the examination of stamps.
-

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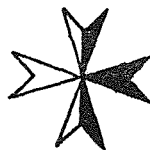
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THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF MALTA MAGAZINE



Bronze-Gilt Medal at VIIth Malta

Philatelic Exhibition — 1977

Editor: Nick A. Cutajar Ass. Editor: Joseph Farrugia

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EDITORIAL

Of Exhibitions

The VIIth Malta Philatelic Exhibition now over, serious collectors start cross-examining the success or otherwise of this event, hopefully arriving at a just evaluation. Success at any philatelic exhibition is judged on three merits, namely the number of participants, the number of visitors and the organization of the actual display.

Last year's National produced only a minority of participation, eight collectors in the adult section and three in the Juvenile section. Obviously in this regard, the Exhibition was a failure. On the other hand, the majority of participants submitted collections of first day covers, hardly ever displayed competitively in any national exhibition anywhere in the world. This was not of course the fault of the collectors who made every effort in mounting a handsome display with their covers, (actually there were a few of exceptional visual clarity and meaningness). The rules and regulations of the Malta Philatelic Exhibition need to be revised completely, with separate classes for the National Class, and why not, the inclusion of other sections catering for those collectors who do not specialize in Malta. Each section ought to be judged separately and every submitted entry, on its own merit.

Exhibitions are meant to promote philately and the hobby in general, especially among the young. Unfortunately, the number of visitors cannot be assessed not even approximately, but reports speak of a trickle every day. Young collectors and school groups were almost ignored completely. It is a pity, indeed, the Malta Post Office keeps losing golden opportunities in promoting stamp-collecting among school-children. Better press communication would have produced the desired effect, while the press in general ought to give greater coverage, than just merely mentioning the opening of the exhibition and enlist the prize-winners.

Organization-wise the VIIth Malta Philatelic Exhibition is a credit to the organisers who gave their best in the circumstances. The Exhibition catalogue was indeed a great improvement on previous editions, with the 1977 Tapestries reproduced in full colour on the cover.

* * *

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The attention of members is drawn to the fact that the new Treasurer, Rev. Fr. A. Galea may be contacted by mail at, 226 St. Paul's Street, Valletta, to whom all membership dues, changes of address etc., should be communicated. Members are once again urged to settle all outstanding membership dues as early as possible to avoid notices being mailed. Prompt payment will enable our magazine to be issued according to plan.

THE COMMITTEE — 1978

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

271	Rev. P.N. Simmons	27, Haig Str., Croydon, Victoria 3136, Australia.
272	Mr. Mario Dimech	6, St. Hyacinth Str., Sliema.
273	Mr. Joseph Bondin	"Villa G, San Josie", Vista Estates, Mellieha.
274	Mr. Joseph F. Porsella Flores	69, Palm Str., Paola.
275	Mr. Ronald Zarb	5/3, St. Dominic Str., Valletta.
276	Mr. A. Craig Ritchie	Box 844, St. Charles, Mo. 63301, U.S.A.
277	Mr. John Farrugia	5, Bishop's Palace Str., Vittoriosa.
278	Mr. James E. Blevins	39, Brandriff Ave., Pennsville, New Jersey, U.S.A.
279	Mr. Joseph John Ruggier	52, Dundonald Str., Apt. 101, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
280	Mr. Jack James Constantine	3, Planet Court, Tigne Sea Front, Sliema.
281	Mrs. F.E. Dawe	10, Grinstead Hill, Needham Market, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 8EY, U.K.
282	Mr. Graham Smeed	59, Wolsey Road, Ashford, TW15 2RA, Middlesex, U.K.
283	Mr. Cecil Diamantino	5, Oleander Str., The Gardens, St. Julian's.

1928 — *MAILS ON WINGS*

NICK A. CUTAJAR

On March 30, 1978 AIR MALTA, the national airline celebrates the fifth anniversary of its establishment. Two days later, on April 1, Malta celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the first Air Mails.

Aviation history in the Maltese Islands had its origin in 1916 when the Admiralty decided to set up the seaplane base at Kalafrana. In 1918, RAF Malta was formed and established a base at Fort Spinola (now the site of the Malta Hilton).⁽¹⁾ In December 1918, the first air mails were in transit through Malta when an RAF plane carried some mail from England, via Malta and Egypt to Karachi.⁽²⁾ Following the devastations of World War I, Malta seems to have served as a transit station for a few experimental flights between England, India and Australia as well as the African Continent.

SIR ALAN J. COBHAM

Late in 1927, Sir Alan Cobham, in his efforts to establish a route linking the United Kingdom to the African Continent, set off from Rochester in an RAF-loaned flying boat and in spite of damage and delays at Malta, reached Capetown.⁽²⁾

While in Malta, Sir Alan Cobham gave an "illuminating speech" to members of the Legislative Assembly in the Tapestry Chamber on December 1, 1927 on the possibility of establishing an air base for civil aviation at Malta. He also presented a report on the same matter to the Government. On February 17, 1928 the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Waiter J. Salamone, presented a memorandum on the subject of the "Establishment of a Regular System of Imperial Air Communications".⁽³⁾

From this memorandum, one learns that on a Map printed in the British Air Ministry book "The Approach towards a System of Imperial Air Communications", Malta was singled out as a possible stopping place for two proposed routes for the England-India route. A sum of £1,000 was tentatively voted in the Draft General Estimates for that year, to be given as a subsidy to an air mail line regularly calling in Malta. It also appears that there was some sort of correspondence on the setting up of an air base in Malta, as the Minister concerned refers in his memorandum to "the Secretary of State despatch of the 8th December, 1927" as "very encouraging in this direction".

Sir Alan Cobham had assured the Minister of Industry and Commerce, that St. Paul's Bay was an ideal sea port for seaplanes. The Minister suggested in his report the construction of an aerodrome on the plain between Salini and Bur Marrat, with a common Customs Clearing House for both air ports.

FIRST OFFICIAL AIR MAILS

A G.P.O. notice of the 20th March, 1928 notified that air mails from Malta were to be made up for Iraq, Persia, North East Arabia and North West India. What had actually happened was that arrangements were made so that air mails from Malta, would link up at Cairo, (through the RAF Seaplane Station at Kalafrana?) with the fortnightly service between England and India, run by Imperial Airways and maintained by the British Postal Administration. The RAF had as early as 1921, established a regular air mail service between Cairo and Baghdad.

Air mails from Malta, connected with the Cairo-Iraq Air Mail Service could be despatched to Gaza, Baghdad and Basra. The same G.P.O. notice gave details of the gain in time as well as the days and time of the despatch of mails. The air mail postage fee was fixed at 6d. No reference was made then of the special air mail stamp, which provokes the suggestion that the decision to overprint a stamp was made during the ensuing week, following the date of the G.P.O. notice.

THE AIR MAIL STAMP OVERPRINT

A brief Government Notice, dated March 28, 1928 informed the general public that "the prepayment of the Air Mail Fee of 6d... will be denoted by means of a special stamp *only*" (my italics). The air mail stamp was created by overprinting the 6d violet and scarlet value of the 1926-1927 series (S.G. 165), with the words "AIR MAIL" in black in two lines. The stamp has been designed by John Harrison, chief portrait engraver to Messrs. Waterlow who printed the stamp, and the whole series, in typography.

The reasons behind the decision to overprint the stamp in question remain a mystery, but after examining the postal rates then current, it becomes evident that the 6d stamp satisfied no actual postage fee, and this leads us to presume that the G.P.O., for economic reasons, resorted to overprinting the substantial stocks of the unsold and dormant 6d value of the 1926-27 series.

The 6d air mail stamp was not used extensively on air mail because during the early days of air travel, people were still sceptical about the safety of the new service. The stamp remained in use and on sale up to 1940.(4)

Very few varieties are known to exist on the air mail stamp of 1928, mostly involving variations in the position of the overprint. Mint copies of the stamp are extremely rare in block form as most stocks were broken up into singles to satisfy collector demand. For reasons specified in the preceeding paragraph, used copies are even more scarcer, and it is my opinion that the stamp in both conditions is still undervalued.

In the 1973 edition of the "Said Stamp Catalogue", the 1928 air mail stamp was valued at £1.75 mint, £2.00 used. Five years later, in the current 1978 edition of the same catalogue, it is priced at £4.25 mint, £5.00 used; an increase over a period of five years of approximately 150%.

The original G.P.O. notice announcing the introduction of the air mails of the 20th March, 1928 contained a flaw, which was subsequently amended in another G.P.O. notice dated 25th May, 1928 when it was clearly established that 'the Air Mail Fee of 6d is levied as per ounce and not as a flat rate irrespective of the weight of an Air Mail Packet'.



The 34mm
rubber stamp
applied in
violet ink.



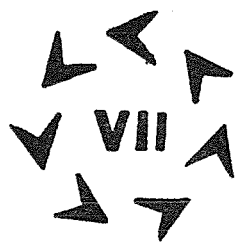
1928 — 6d AIR MAIL STAMP

The issue of the air mail stamp and the establishment of air mails ushered into use at the Mail Room of the General Post Office a special postmark reservtd for air mails only. This postmark took the form of a large double ring circular cancel, inscribed "AIR MAIL, MALTA", with the date in a single line, and applied always in violet ink. The postmark, (illustrated), remained in use into the 1930's when it was replaced by a smaller double ring cancel applied in black.

1928 was only the first step in the development of the air mail service of the Malta Post Office. In subsequent years, direct routes were opened and air mails from and to Malta gained in time. The Post-War period saw further improvements in air transport and consequently in the air mail service, the opening of the Luqa Branch Post Office, and the establishment of Malta's national airline, which further developed air communications, and provided direct air links with a dozen points.

REFERENCES:

- (1) Capt. Noble Philip Manduca, "Early History of the Air Base and RAF in Malta", in "The Armed Forces of Malta Journal", No. 27, April, 1977.
- (2) A.G. Rigo de Righi, F.R.P.S.L., "Britain's Airmails", published by the National Postal Museum, London.
- (3) Malta Government Gazette Supplement N. L, 6th July, 1928.
- (4) M.E. Jetten, "The 'Airmail' Stamp of 1928", in "Stamp Collecting", June 27th, 1968.



THE VIIth
MALTA
PHILATELIC
EXHIBITION

12th-17th
DECEMBER
1977

Members of the Philatelic Society of Malta carried all major awards at the VIIth Malta Philatelic Exhibition, organized by the Malta Post Office between December 12th — 17th, 1977. The Exhibition, under the patronage of Mr. Wistin Abela, Minister of Development, Energy, Port and Telecommunications, was installed within the corridors of the General Post Office, Auberge d'Italie, in Merchants' Street, Valletta.

Seventy-one Postal Administrations participated in the Official Class of the Hors Concours Section with stamps featuring art reproductions and issues of 1976-77. The same section hosted four other exhibits from members of the Judging Committee; of particular significance were the exhibits of Mr. Anthony Fenech (Rare Malta Covers) and Mr. Godwin Said (Malta Cancellations of the Pre-Adhesive Era). The Malta Post Office displayed the original artwork and complete sheets of the 1977 issues.

The Gold medal was awarded to Dr. Anthony J. Abela Medici for his entry "Malta Village Postmarks and their Forgeries", a display of international standard. Second prize, a Silver medal, went to Mr. Carmel Scicluna Bonnici for his interesting study of the "Valletta G.P.O. Postal History since 1857". Two other participants shared the third prize, a Bronze-gilt medal each to Mr. Joseph Bugeja and Mr. Lawrence Muscat. The three junior collectors, Brian Abela, Joe G. Agius and Joseph Bonett were placed first, second and third respectively.

In the Literature Class, the first prize, a Silver-gilt went again to Dr. Anthony J. Abela Medici for his yet unpublished study on the "Postal History of Cospicua and Paola". The second place, a Silver medal, was shared by two entries, namely Messrs. E. Said for their "1978 Said Malta Stamps and Coin Catalogue" and Mr. Nick A. Cutajar, for his nine documentaries for television entitled "The History of the Postal Service in the Maltese Islands". The Philatelic Society of Malta Magazine, Vols. 5-6, (1975-1977) was awarded a Bronze-gilt medal.

A temporary Branch Post Office functioned during the opening days of the the Exhibition offering all normal postal business, except parcel post. A special circular cancellation was applied to all articles posted at the Post Office, (see "Malta — A Diary").



THE EVOLUTION OF THE ONE HALF PENNY QUEEN VICTORIA YELLOW STAMP

by

Dr. ALFRED BONNICI

B.Pharm. M.D. M.R.S.H.

CHAPTER 2

1861 — 1863 Unwatermarked, White Paper, Perf. 14

(Editor's Note: As a result of further research and new information which has come to light, Dr. A. Bonnici has revised Chapter 2, which is now being published in whole. This should now offer the proper classification).

A rather controversial issue in the unwatermarked white paper — Perf. 14, series is whether there were three printings as listed by Messrs. Stanley Gibbons and Said as S.G./Said Nos 2, 3, 4, or in actual fact only two as claimed by Major F. Orme.

From the Invoices of Private Day Book AA of Messrs De La Rue, it results that the following printings were executed on the dates specified below.

2nd Printing	17th August 1861	Private Day Book AA Page 92
3rd Printing	11th September 1862	Private Day Book AA Page 134
4th Printing	17th April 1863	Private Day Book AA Page 168
5th Printing	11th January 1864	Private Day Book AA Page 233

The earliest recorded date of a Watermarked, Crown CC, Perf. 14 stamp is 4th June 1863 and a cover addressed to "Il Conti A. Sant, Commandante del Forte Chambray" — Gozo, having one watermarked Crown CC white paper — perf. 14 stamp has the date 29th November 1863. (C. Smith). This proves that the watermarked Crown CC white paper perf. 14 belongs to the 4th Printing of the 17th April 1863, as the 5th Printing was Invoiced on the 11th January 1864, and so like Orme, we are quite correct in assuming that there were only two Unwatermarked — white paper, perf. 14 printings; namely the 2nd Printing of the 17th August 1861 and the 3rd Printing of the 11th September 1862.

The 2nd Printing — 17th August 1861 (S.G. & Said No. 3)

Brown Orange; white paper; no watermark; perf. 14.

Invoice from Private Day Book A A Page 92

17th Aug. 61. The Agents General for Crown Colonies
106 Sheets of Postage Labels
for Malta, duty ½d.
240 on sheets = 25,440 labels @ 11d
Packed in tin lined case

1	3	4
	7	6

Delivered to Mr. Winckley

1	10	10
---	----	----

The 3rd Printing — 11th September 1862
 Buff (variation: stone colour); white paper; no watermark; perf. 14.
 Invoice from Private Day Book AA Page 134

1862	Agents General for Crown Colonies			
Sept. 11th	Malta Postage Stamp			
	109 Sheets Malta Stamp Duty one half penny			
	240 on sheet = 26,160 @ 11d	1	4	0
	Making ready the form (less than 1 Reem)		10	0
	Packing		7	6
	Delivered this day to Mr. Winckley rectipt left	2	1	6

The 2nd printing of 17th August 1861 is brown orange — a blurred and muddy printing which has not been seen used after 1862. The so-called pale-buff, or clear stone shade listed by S.G. & Said as No. 2, did not comprise a complete printing, as very few copies have been recorded. The only copies recorded are dated "MAR 28/62" and "APR 2/62" — (F. Orme). Of all the famous collections that have been sold on the market over the past ten years, there was not one single mint block of four, the last recorded being in the Damsell collection, which makes such a mint block of four numerically rarer than S.G. 1, whereas from the above quoted Invoices we know that the 2nd printing of the 17th August 1861 consisted of 106 sheets, a total of 25,440 stamps, and the 3rd printing of the 11th September 1862 (S.G. & Said No. 4) consisted of 109 sheets, a total of 26,160 stamps. This printing is the buff shade which is not recorded as used prior to 1863.

From the above it is therefore clear that the pale buff (S.G. & Said No. 2) is a variation of the 3rd printing of the 11th September 1862, and that S.G. & Said Nos. 2 and 4 are really the 3rd printing of the 11th September 1862.

We may therefore safely conclude that the period 1861-63, (what S.G. & Said list as Nos. 2, 3, 4. Unwatermarked, white paper, perf. 14), really consist of the:-



2nd Printing—17th August 1861 — brown orange (S.G. & Said No.3)

3rd Printing—11th September 1862 Buff shade, variation pale Buff
 (S.G. & Said Nos. 2 and 4)

The 2nd printing of the 17th August 1861 was issued in Malta in November 1861, and the earliest and latest recorded dates are 24.1.62 (Orme) and 16.12.62 respectively. One dated the 18th Dec. 1862 is on the entire addressed to Il.Sig.Dr.Av. Giuseppi Xuereb, Gozo (Bonnici, Malta), while one on piece has the date 16.12.62 (Bonnici, Malta).

The 3rd printing of the 11th September 1862 was issued in Malta in 1863 and the earliest and latest recorded dates are 11.1.63 and 12.12.63 respectively, (Orme).



QUALITY PRINTERS

SECURITY PRINTERS

Printex Ltd. Mill Str., Qormi, Malta

DETAILED INFORMATION OF NEW ISSUES

by JOE FARRUGIA

MALTESE WORKER ISSUE

Date of Issue	12th October 1977.
Values	2c, 7c and 20c.
Stamp Size	20.5 x 47.15mm.
Art Designer	Anthony Agius.
Printers	Printex Limited Malta.
Process	Lithography.
Perforation	13.5 x 13.5 Comb.
Watermark	Maltese Crosses pointing upright in 2c and 7c, sideways in 20c.
Paper	Chalk surfaced.
Gum	P.V.A.

COLOURS:

- 2c Terracotta and dark terracotta.
- 7c Brown and dark brown.
- 20c Green, dark green, red and gold.

DESIGNS:

The 2c stamp symbolises the help given to workers handicapped through work while the 7c stamp depicts work in the old established craft of building in local stone and comparatively recent trades of modern industry and ship-building. These two values feature details from a Monument to the Maltese Worker which is to be erected shortly on the initiative of the General Workers Union. The 20c value is dedicated to the dangers encountered by workers and shows, in relief form, a mother holding the body of her son who lost his life while at work. The decoration featured is awarded for Service to the Republic. The first such decoration to be given, was awarded posthumously to a worker who lost his life at work.

Colour checks in the form of coloured discs, 3mm in diameter are seen in the right hand margin, next to the last stamp of the bottom row in the 2c and 7c values but also extending to the stamp above it in the 20c value. With this set, it must be pointed out again that a Pane of stamps is looked at in such a way that the Plate/Pane numbers are at the left hand side and the Printers Imprint is at the right hand side of the bottom margin. In this way, looking at Panes of the 2c and 7c values, the stamps will be seen sideways resting on their 47.15 mm side, but looking at Panes of the 20c value, the

stamps will be seen the right way up. This is the reason why the direction of watermark in the 2c and 7c values is different from that of the 20c value.

In the 2c and 7c values, the colour checks from top to bottom correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers from right to left on all Panes of these two values. In the 20c value the colour checks from top to bottom correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers from left to right, on all Panes of this value.

Cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps are seen in top and bottom margins. Figures are 2.5mm high and printed in dark terracotta, dark brown and red in the 2c, 7c and 20c values respectively.

The Printed Sheet of all three values consists of three Panes. Each Pane has 50 stamps made up of five rows of ten stamps. Stamps of the 2c and 7c values are of the vertical format, while the 20c value is of the horizontal format.

PLATE/PANE NUMBERS:

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

2c = 1A x 2, 1B x 2, 1C x 2.

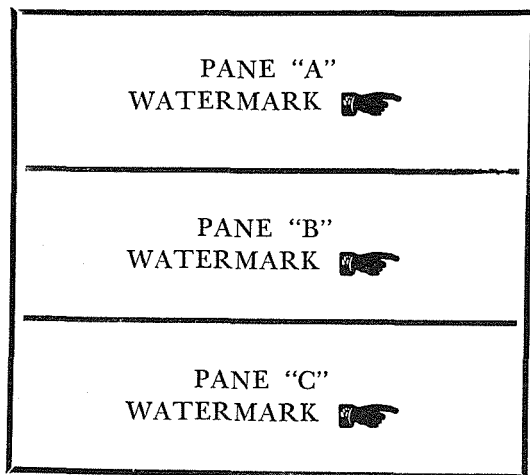
7c = 1A x 2, 1B x 2, 1C x 2.

20c = 1A x 4, 1B x 4, 1C x 4.

PERFORATION OF MARGINS:

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

Registration marks in the form of coloured horizontal lines were seen in margins next to the first or last or both stamps of the top row. Such marks were seen only on Panes "A" of all three values.



From a study of all the details given, the Printed Sheet, before cutting, of all three values would look as shown on left. The direction of watermark in the Printed Sheets is the same for all the three values. Looking at the Printed Sheets as shown, stamps of the 2c and 7c will be seen sideways and those of the 20c value will be seen the right way up. Hence the reason when individual stamps of the 2c and 7c values are examined the watermark will be seen upright but in the 20c value it will be seen sideways.

IMPRINT BLOCKS:

"PRINTEX LIMITED MALTA" is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row and printed in dark terracotta, dark brown and red in the 2c, 7c and 20c values respectively. Letters are 1mm high. An Imprint Block of four will also include the colour checks. A special hand-postmark was used for cancellation on the first day of issue. It is inscribed with the words "Il-Haddiem Malti", "L-Ewwel Jum tal-Hruġ", the name of the respective locality and the date "12.10.77". The inscription is embodied in a motif symbolising industry. Sales on the first day of issue of this set amounted to £M27,872.



CHRISTMAS ISSUE 1977

Date of Issue	16th November 1977.
Values	1c + 5m, 7c + 1c and 11c + 1c5.
Stamp Size	43mm x 21.4mm.
Art Designer	Chev. Emvin Cremona.
Printers	Printex Limited Malta.
Process	Litography.
Perforation	13.3 x 13.75 (comb).
Watermark	Maltese Crosses Sideways.
Paper	Chalk Surfaced
Gum	P.V.A.

COLOURS:

The colour of these stamps was produced by the four colour process.

DESIGNS:

This is the fourteenth set of Christmas stamps issued by the Malta Postal Administration. Each stamp includes a small surcharge, in addition to the postal value, as in the previous eight Christmas issues. The proceeds from this surcharge will be distributed by a Government appointed committee amongst various child welfare philanthropic organisations and charitable institutions.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Please attend whenever possible and bring a guest; the warm friendly atmosphere of philately is always in evidence at our monthly meetings.



The devotion to the Christmas Crib is of very ancient origin. St. Francis of Assisi popularized it and gave it the tangible form in which it is known at the present time. During Yuletide, in Malta, Cribs with artistically sculptured figures made of clay and carefully coloured are exhibited in churches, social clubs and homes. The Cribs, which vary from small, humble coves to elaborate representations of the Bethlehem countryside, with mechanical movement, are the focal point in the home around which the family gathers over Christmas. The stamps of this Christmas issue feature three figure compositions from the Crib exhibited at the Discaled Carmelite Priory, Cospicua, Malta.

The 1c + 5m stamp shows the Shepherds listening to the good tidings. The 7c + 1c stamp features the Nativity, whilst the 11c + 1c stamp depicts the Shepherds proceeding to the manger.

Colour checks in the form of coloured discs 3mm in diameter are seen in the right hand margin, next to the last stamps of the two bottom rows. The colours from top to bottom correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers from left to right on all Panes of all values including the se-tenant Panes.

Cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps are seen in the bottom margin only. Figures are 2.5mm high and printed in black. I have noticed that the value of cumulative totals of columns shown is for the postal value of the stamps without the surcharge. In earlier sets the value given included the surcharge.

The Printed Sheets in single form of the 1c + 5m, 7c + 1c and 11c + 1c consist of two Panes. Each Pane has 50 stamps made up of ten rows of five stamps. All three stamps are of the horizontal format. The same three stamps have also been printed in se-tenant form, the 1c + 5m on top, 7c + 1c in the

middle, and the 11c + 1c5 at the bottom. The Printed Sheet of the se-tenant consists also of two Panes. Each Pane has 75 stamps (25 sets in se-tenant form) made up of 15 rows of 5 stamps. The five stamps in each row are of similar design and value, i.e. the bottom row in each Pane consists of five 11c + 1c5 stamps, the row above it has five 7c + 1c stamps and the row above this has five 1c + 5m stamps. The fourth row from the bottom of the Pane is again made up of five stamps of the 11c + 1c5 value and so on towards the top of the Pane. Thus in each of the five vertical columns (15 stamps in each column), will be seen five se-tenant sets, hence 25 sets in se-tenant form in each Pane. From this it is easy to see, that people buying stamps in pairs from the single form, should buy them one on top of the other, because if they are a horizontal pair, they could have been cut from a se-tenant Pane. It is of interest to note that since Printex have been producing Malta stamps, this is the first time that a Pane consists of 75 stamps. Besides small sheets of ten (Europa sets), Panes of 60 stamps (Xmas. 1975 Triptych), Panes of 40 stamps (Tapestries 1977), all other sets since 1972 consisted of Panes of 50 stamps.

PLATE/PANE NUMBERS:

These are seen under the first stamp of the bottom row, whether in single or se-tenant form.

1c + 5m = 1A x 5, 1B x 5.

7c + 1c = 1A x 5, 1B x 5.

11c + 1c5 = 1A x 5, 1B x 5.

Se-tenant = 1A x 5, 1B x 5.

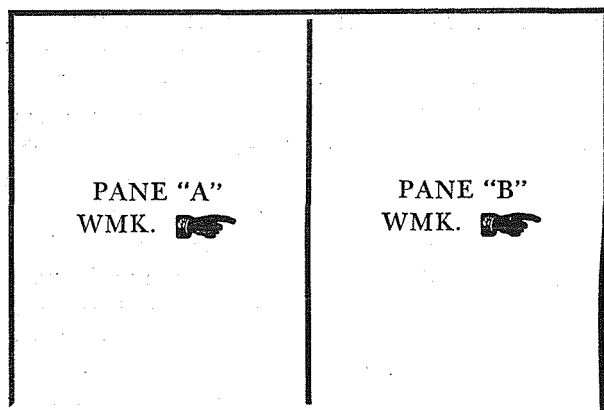
PERFORATION OF MARGINS:

The top margins of Panes "A" and "B" in single form values as well as in se-tenant form are imperforate. The right hand margin of Pane "A" and the left hand margin of Pane "B" in single form and se-tenant are fully perforated. The left hand margin of Pane "A" and the right hand margin of Pane "B" in single form values and se-tenant form are also nearly fully perforated except for a little space at the edges, where three more perforations could have been inserted. The bottom margins of Panes "A" and "B" in single form values as well as in se-tenant form are perforated. Some Panes I have seen, have this bottom margin so wide that even an extra horizontal perforation line can be seen. I have noticed this on Panes "A" and "B" of the 1c + 5m, 7c + 1c and se-tenant values but not on Panes of the 11c + 1c5 value.

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From a study of all the details given, the Printed Sheets of all values in single form as well as in se-tenant form before cutting, would look as shown on left. Stamps would also be seen the right way up. In the case of the se-tenant form, the Printed Sheets would be a little larger in height as each Pane consists of 75 stamps instead of 50 as in the single-form values.

IMPRINT BLOCKS:

"Printex Limited Malta" is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row in all single form values as well as in the se-tenant form. Letters are 1mm high and printed in black. An Imprint Block of four from the single form values and an Imprint Block of two se-tenant sets will also include the colour checks. A special hand-postmark inscribed with the words, "L-Ewwel Jum tal-Hrug", the name of the respective locality and the date "16.XI.77" plus a decorative star in the centre, was used for cancellation on the first day of issue. Up to 4 p.m. on the first day of issue, the sale of these stamps realized the sum of £M45,460. This is the highest ever amount to be realized from a Christmas issue on the first day.



FLEMISH TAPESTRIES — II

Date of Issue	26th. January 1978.
Values	2c, 7c, 11c and 25c.
Stamp Size	48mm x 39.5mm.
Art Designer	Chev. Emvin Cremona.
Printers	Printex Limited Malta.
Process	Lithography.
Perforation	14 x 14
Watermark	Maltese Crosses pointing sideways.
Paper	Chalk surfaced.
Gum	P.V.A.

COLOURS:—

The colour of these stamps was produced by the multi-colour process.

DESIGNS:—

This is the second set of four stamps in the Flemish Tapestries series. The first set was issued on the 30th. March 1977. The priceless 17th. century tapestries are on permanent exhibition at the Museum of St. John's, in Valletta, and are hung in the Co-Cathedral during the special liturgical functions which take place during June. Each of the fifteen large tapestries and the fourteen smaller ones bear the name "JUDOCUS DE VOS" or the initials "J.D.V." together with the shield and the letters "BB", as hallmark of Brussels, in the selva. The firm of Josse de Vos which wove the tapestries was one of the leading Flemish families of tapissiers. The series of Malta postage stamps will feature the large tapestries. The second tapestries set reproduces four scenes from the Life of Christ, all related to Easter. The 2c stamp shows "The Entry into Jerusalem" by an unknown artist. The 7c stamp features "The Last Supper" after a painting by Nicholas Poussin (1594 - 1665). "The Raising of the Cross" from the celebrated triptych in Antwerp Cathedral by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) is reproduced on the 11c stamp. The 25c stamp depicts "The Resurrection" also attributed to Rubens.

Colour checks in the form of coloured discs 3mm in 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 all values. In the 25c value Panes, I noticed two different things from the other three values. One is in the colour checks, the other is in the Pane numbers. In the 2c, 7c and 11c value Panes, the order of the colour checks from top to bottom is the same in all three, i.e. the "Yellow" colour is the second from the top. In the 25c value, the "Yellow" colour is shifted down from second to fourth place from the top. In the Plate/Pane numbers of the first three values, each one of the six "1A" or "1B" on each Pane of each value is quite clear, separate from each other and easy to see. In the 25c value Panes, the last "1A" and "1B" (colour gold) are shifted to the left, such that the "1" is completely on the previous "A" or "B", and only the letters "A" or "B" alone are seen.

Cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps are seen in top and bottom margins. Figures are 2.5mm high and are printed in black.

The printed sheets of all four values consist of two Panes. Each Pane has 40 stamps made up of eight rows of five stamps. All stamps are of the horizontal format.

PLATE/PANE NUMBERS:—

These are seen under the first stamp of the bottom row, and also extending to the left hand side of the first vertical perforation line.

2C = 1A x 6, 1B x 6.

7C = 1A x 6, 1B x 6.

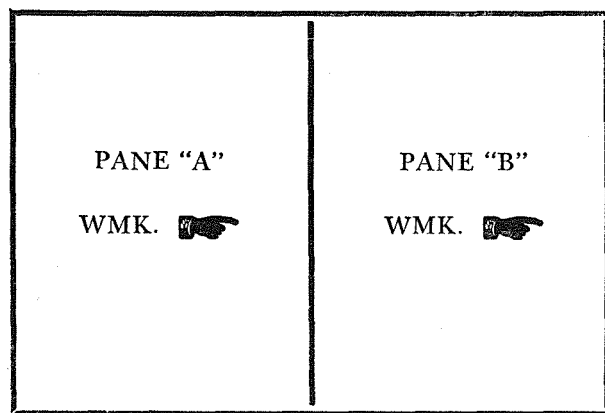
11C = 1A x 6, 1B x 6.

25C = 1A x 6, 1B x 6.

PERFORATION OF MARGINS:—

The top margins of Panes "A" and "B" of all values are imperforate. The right hand margin of Panes "A", the left hand margin of Panes "B" and the bottom margins of Panes "A" and "B", of all values are fully perforated. The left hand margin of Panes "A" and the right hand margin of Panes "B", of all values, are also fully perforated except for a little space at the edges.

There were four registration crosses (5.5 x 6mm) on the Printed Sheet before cutting, one on each corner. Also some coloured horizontal lines of various lengths could be seen just above the two corner crosses at the top. When the Printed Sheets were cut into Panes, these crosses and horizontal lines remained visible in the top left hand margin of Pane "A" and in the top right hand margin of Panes "B", of all values. The bottom crosses can still be seen in the bottom left hand margin of Panes "A" and in the bottom right hand margin of Panes "B" of all values. Thus a plate block of four, from Pane "A" of any value



will show one of these bottom crosses whilst an Imprint Block of four from Pane "B" of any value will show the other cross.

From a study of all details given, the Printed Sheet of each value, before cutting, would look as shown on left. In this way, stamps would be seen the right way up.

IMPRINT BLOCKS:—

"Printex Limited Malta" is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row, and also extending to the right hand side of the last vertical perforation line on each Pane. Letters are 1mm high and printed in black. An Imprint Block of four of any value will include the colour checks and a registration cross if it is from Pane "B" or the colour checks only, if it is from Pane "A".

A special handstamp was used for cancellation on the first day of issue. £M62,050 worth of stamps were sold up to 4p.m. on the first day. This set will remain on sale up to Friday, June 16, 1978, unless stocks are previously exhausted.

CORRECTIONS FOR VOLUME 7 No. 3

TELECOMMUNICATION ISSUE:

Page 19: Perforation of stamps should have been,

1c and 6c	13.85 x 13.5 (comb)
8c and 17c	13.5 x 13.85 (comb)

Page 20: The first three lines should have read thus:

"In this way, looking at Panes of the 8c and 17c values, the stamps will be seen the right way up, but looking at Panes of the 1c and 6c values, the stamps will be seen sideways resting on their 38mm side. In the 1c and 6c values, the colour checks, etc. etc."

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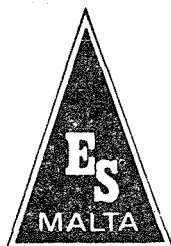
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TIME IN CODE LETTER FORM

by

ANTHONY FENECH

PART II

THE VILLAGE POSTMARKS

The circular date handstamps employed at the larger Branches, opened after 1885, and also at the smaller Postal Agencies, usually located at the corresponding Village Police Stations from where they derive their name as from 1900, bear either time slugs in the form of code letters, "AM." or "PM", or "AM" only. The fact that some Agencies use code letters whilst others use "AM" and "PM" proves that the former were simply used to indicate the time of post. It is not likely that the code letters had been used to indicate origin of the mail or any thing similar.

Handstamps with "AM" only are: Attard, Caccia-Gozo, Chirchop, Crendi, Dingli, Garbo-Gozo, Gargur, Ghain-Sielem-Gozo, Gudia, Luca, Micabbiba, Naxaro, Safi, Sannat-Gozo.

Those with "AM" and "PM" are: Asciak, Balzan, Curmi, Marsa, Misida, Musta, Nadur-Gozo, Paula, Siggieui, Tarxien, Xeuchia-Gozo, Zabbar, Zebbug, Zeitun, and Zurricco.

Datestamp errors and abnormalities exist and the Malta Study Circle Paper No. 25 — Malta Village Postmarks, Pages 31-35, lists considerable errors and their period of use, missing time slugs and other abnormalities which make the study of the Village Postmarks so interesting.

Larger branches and more important Postal Agencies used code letters instead of "AM" or "PM". Such a practice explains that mail needed to be cancelled more often.

Code letters "A", "B", "C" were used at the following Postal Agencies:

- at Birchircara, first as Branch Post Office, between 1st April 1898 and 30th April 1899 and then at the Postal Agency at the old Police Station 19, St. Rocque Street;
- at the Casal Lia Postal Agency at 45, Bakery Street, Lija (The fact that the Maltese nobility flocked to their summer residences and villas in Lija and Balzan, explains why more than two times of cancelling the mail was necessary;
- at the Hamrun Postal Agency. At Hamrun, the population in 1901, exceeded 10,000.
- at Rabato, Gozo, between 1885 and 1887 before it was changed to Victoria.



At Migiarrro, Gozo, "A" and "B" were used between the years 1885 and 1900. The code letter "A" which cancelled mail in the morning appears twice as often as "B", which was used in the afternoon. As a proof of this is an incoming U.P.U. Post Card to Migiarrro shown on the Malta Study Paper No. 11, Page 10, with Malta B/MY 22/93 (at that time "B" was a morning cancel at the G.P.O., Central Office) and Migiarrro, Gozo, B/MY 22/93 which was obviously an afternoon cancel.

Mellieha opened as a Branch Post Office at 31d, Strada Cimitero, on the 29th March 1902, but closed on the 10th May 1903. At that time it was thought that this Branch Post Office would be a better link between the two Branch Post Offices in Gozo, namely Victoria and Migiarrro, and those in Malta. But the dates above prove that this was not needed at the time. However, the opening of the Branch Post Office, at Mellieha, explains why code letters "A", "B", "C", and "D" were used. After the closure of the Branch Post Office, in 1903, the Postal Agency carried on with the code letter "A" only. Forgeries of the code letter "C" on Cover have been seen.

A 21 mm c.d.s. with code letter "A" was used at St. Paul's Bay. Many Village Postmarks collectors anticipated the use of the other letter at St. Paul's Bay, but it seems that only "A" was used at this Postal Agency kept at The Wignacourt Tower.

Code letters "A" to "F" were used at Notabile Branch Post Office, since 1897 and up to 1930; "A" to "F" and nil on the Cospicua 20 mm c.d.s.; and "A" to "G" on both the 23 mm and the 25 mm Cospicua datestamps; also code letters "A" to "G" were used by the Victoria, Gozo, Branch Post Office between the years 1887 and 1954 when the code lettered Victoria 21mm c.d.s. were withdrawn. The last occasion when they were used was on the 8th September, 1954, to cancel some of the First Day Covers of The Centenary of The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

A letter dated by the Valletta oval and the proper time datestamp, exactly at 4.30 p.m. DE 27/04, addressed to Nadur, Gozo, bears the backstamp Nadur, Gozo, AM DE 28/04. This is a clear indication that "AM" or "PM" or their code letter substitutes indicated time and not the village of origin of the mail, as is thought by a few. In fact another letter cancelled by Musta AM cancellor dated AP/11, is backstamped by the Valletta 30 mm double ring 9.00 a.m. 17 AP/11, and Notabile, where the letter is addressed to, C/AP 17/11, "C" being an early afternoon cancel. And yet another striking proof is a card cancelled by the Sliema single ring 27 mm (Sliema has never used any code letters, but always different times, since the opening of the Branch Office in 1895) 8 a.m./SP 1/21, backstamped Valletta "C"/SP 1/21 and Cospicua "G"/SP 1/21 ("G" being the latest time change at Cospicua). Also, if the code letters on the different c.d.s. used by the Branch Post Offices and Postal Agencies. had other significance than time, it would have necessitated that the Sliema Branch Post Office use them besides the time and date handstamps; but as all Postal History collectors know, Sliema has always used the exact time for their cancels; thus it is crystal clear that code letters on the different handstamps meant nothing but "time".

On or around 1968, genuine village cancellors were used illegally.⁽¹²⁾ The "AM" or "PM" or "A" or "M" codes shown on the forged Asciak (2 types), Caccia, Safi and Sannat have rather short ends and are recognizable from those struck genuinely, though no known genuine Sannat strikes have so far been recorded.

Forgeries have been found of a significant proportion of the village strikes.⁽¹³⁾ Among them are Asciak, Balzan, Caccia — Gozo, Zebbug and Zurricco. The "AM" on the Balzan forgery is wider than on the genuine; so are the forged "AM" on the Balzan forgery is wider than on the genuine; so are the forged "AM" on the Caccia — Gozo, Micabbiba, Musta, Siggieui and Zebbug. No code letters appear on the Victoria — Gozo forgery, whilst "C" and "D" code forgeries appear on the St. Paul's Bav and Mellicha forged village post marks. The Xeuchia — Gozo fakes do not bear either "AM" or "PM" as they should.

References

9. Said Malta Catalogue — 1978 — Village Postmarks pp. 173-181.
10. Malta Study Circle Paper No. 11 — Victoria and Mgarr, Gozo.
11. Said Malta Stamp Catalogue — 1978 — Village Postmarks.
12. Dr. Anthony Abela Medici — Detailed Study of Malta Village Postmarks under the title 'Collection of Malta Village Postmarks and their forgeries' awarded the Gold Medal at the VIIth Philatelic Exhibition at the Auberge D'Italie.
13. Malta Study Circle Paper No. 25 — Village Postmarks, Malta.
14. Malta Study Circle Paper No. 10 — Malta — Forces Mail (1974).

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CHINA'S FIRST STAMPS

By NICK A. CUTAJAR

In China the postal system is a very early development of the government. There are historical records of a horse posts operated by the central government during the Western dynasty (1122-772 B.C.). This system, usually referred to in China as "post station" had already become quite efficient and well-developed by the time of the Ching dynasty (221-207 B.C.). However, since the 'post station' system was solely available to convey government and military despatches, the public could not use it.

During the latter period of the Ching dynasty (1644-1911), the Imperial Maritime Customs started the modern Chinese Postal Service, and began to accept mail items from the public. Consequently, the first Dragon Customs issue of three stamps was released in 1878.

THE CUSTOMS DRAGON ISSUE

The Customs issue of postage stamps consisted of three stamps with denominations of 1 canadrin, 3 canadrins and 5 canadrins; the Dragon formed the basic design known world-wide as the Customs Dragon Issue, and usually also referred to as the "Large Dragon Stamps", because the size of the image area of these stamps is larger than that of the 2nd Customs Dragon issue which was released later. It is to be noted that a canadrin is one-hundredth of the Chinese ounce of silver, China's currency at the time.

THE DESIGN

The Dragon on the first Customs Issues symbolized the imperial power in ancient China and it was featured on stamps as the Chinese national emblem. The stamps appeared in three different colours: 1 canadrin in green, 3 canadrin in red and 5 canadrins in orange-yellow. The dragon in the design appears to be playing with a pearl, and the English word "CHINA", was inscribed at the top, inside the frame. Chinese characters, translating "Great Ching court" are inscribed in the upper left and right corners. The right panel contains Chinese inscriptions for "post office", while the right panel refers to the face value of the stamps. In the lower two corners are printed the Arabic figures 1, 3 and 5 with the English word, "CANADRIN" or "CANADRINS" in between.

CLASSIFICATION

The Large Dragon stamps were printed by the Chinese Customs Statistical Department in Shanghai. Classification of these stamps depends on type of paper, image area and the dates of issuance. The first types were printed on thin paper with no watermark, the interval between two stamps being 2.5mm, and are usually referred to as the "Large Dragon Thin Paper Stamps".

In 1882, stamps with a wider margin were issued. This same paper was used for the first two values, but the French half-transparent pelure paper was used for the 5 candarins stamp. The stamps were printed 4.5mm apart, thus obtaining a wider margin than that on the first issues. This heavy paper was utilized the following year with the space between any two adjacent stamps being 2.5mm.

Perforation differences provide two classes, namely "thick paper smooth perforation" and "thick paper rough perforation". The Statistical Department of the Chinese Customs used a perforating machine with a $12\frac{1}{2}$ perforation, but due to constant tear and wear, the needle of that perforating machine gradually became blunt giving a rough perforation to later issues of the thick paper stamps.

PRINTING PLATES

For each denomination of the Large Dragon series, a mother die was carved, from which similar medal dies were cast; twenty-five of these casts were assembled to form the plate. It seems at first glance that stamps of the same denomination printed by these printing plates of individual dies are identical in patterns, strokes of the Chinese characters, and in the figures. But on closer examination, one observes that each individual die has its own characteristics, with broken lines and scars helping in the identification.

It is interesting to note that after the completion of the first printing (and any subsequent printing from the dies), the plate was dismantled into individual dies and stocked separately. When a new printing was required, these dies were once again built up into a plate of 25 dies, with no attention being given to the previous setting of the dies. Consequently, there were different plates for each new printing, giving rise to different printed sheets.

Research has so far ascertained the existence of at least seven different plates for the 1-candarin stamps, fifteen types of plates for the 3-candarin stamps, and seven plates for the 5-candarin stamps.

VARIETIES, QUANTITIES AND CIRCULATION

Varieties of the Large Dragon stamps are not many, mostly involving plate-varieties, perforation, type of paper and minor constant flaws, the most spectacular being an extra semi-circle beside the "3" at the lower-left corner of the fourth die of the 3-candarin stamp, printed on thick paper since the twelfth plate. According to a report by a Chinese specialist, the quantity of stamps printed of all three values from all the printings amounted to just over a million.

According to statistics based on postmark impressions, the Large Dragon stamps were used in fourteen localities, namely, Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai, Newchang, Chefoo, Chinkiang, Ningpo, Ichang, Hankow, Kiukiang, Amoy,

Taku, Wuhu and Wenchow, which indicates that the Customs Post Service laid more emphasis and offered a more efficient postal service in northern China at that time.

The first Customs Dragon stamps were the first postage stamps issued by modern China. A glance reference in "Stanley Gibbons Overseas Stamp Catalogue 1" under the heading of 'China' will provide a better insight into the postal history of China. Thus although 1878 is described as the year ushering the first Chinese stamps, it might be appropriate to clarify that earlier, in 1865, stamps were also issued for use by the Shanghai local postal service operated by the Municipal Council of the city.

The Chinese Imperial Post Office was established by a decree of March 20, 1895. The Twentieth Century saw further developments, in the postal service, as a result of political upheavals. Today the Chinese empire is composed of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Nationalist Republic, better known as the Republic of China, or Taiwan.

Taiwan has taken up the initiative this year, to commemorate the centennial of the first official Chinese stamps with a full-scale International Exhibition, ROCPEX TAIPEI '78, to be held between March 20-20. It will actually be the first International for China and will award medals for every class according to the judging by an international jury.

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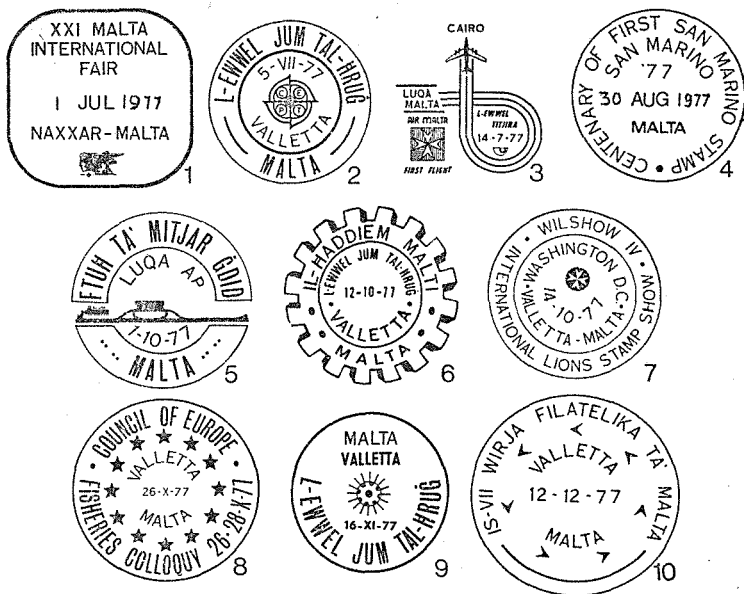
JULY — DECEMBER 1977

Compiled by JOE FARRUGIA

- 1- 7-77 A temporary Branch Post Office was opened on Friday, July 1, at the XXI International Trade Fair, Naxxar. Hours of business for the sale of stamps, postal stationery, registration of letters, issue and payment of Postal and Money Orders, and posting of parcels was from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. starting from Friday 1st July to Friday 15th July. Postal articles were postmarked by a special date-stamp inscribed with the words: "XXI Malta International Fair, Naxxar, Malta". (Fig. 1)
- 5- 7-77 "Europa 1977" set issued today. These stamps remained on sale up to Wednesday, 30th November, 1977, unless stocks were previously exhausted. A special handstamp was used for cancellation on the first day of issue. (Fig. 2)
- 14- 7-77 On the occasion of the first Air Malta Flight, Malta/Cairo on Thursday, 14th July, the Malta Post Office used a special hand postmark indicating the date of the first flight and place of destination. The postmark was used at the Philatelic Bureau. (Fig. 3)
- 16- 7-77 The Field Post Office, 171, at St. Francis Barracks, Floriana, closed today. Handstamps F.P.O. 171 and Parcel Post 112 were still in very good condition. This leaves only two more F.P.O.s on the Island, one at St. Andrews and the other at Luqa.
- 25- 7-77 A machine stamp cancelling slogan worded: "Xth Middle Sea Race — 1 Oct. 1977" was used on and off during the period 25th July to 30th September, 1977, at the Central Mail Room.
- 2- 8-77 By means of Notice No. 466 in the Govt. Gazette of 2-8-77 the Postmaster General notified for general information that a set of three postage stamps, featuring three different designs, and a miniature sheet, will be issued in 1978 on the occasion of the F.I.F.A. World Cup — 1978.
- 13- 8-77 The Malta Post Office participated in the Official Class, in the Philatelic Exhibition "Homeland — Environment — Nature", organised by the Grafenau Stamp Club, of West Germany. The exhibition was held in the woods of the National Park in Bayer on August 13 and 14.
- 27- 8-77 The Malta Post Office participated in the XXIX Fiera Internazionale del Francobollo held at the Palazzo del Turismo, Riccione, Italy, between August 27 and 29. The fair was organised by the Rimini Philatelic Circle and the Tourism Committee of Riccione.
- 28- 8-77 The Malta Post Office participated at the "San Marino 77" International Philatelic Exhibition which was held at the Congress Palace of the Republic of San Marino from the 28th August to 4th September 1977, on the occasion of the centenary of the first San Marino Stamp.
- For the occasion, the Malta Post Office printed a number of commemorative covers which were available for sale at 5 cents each from the G.P.O. from Monday, 22nd August 1977. During the period of the exhibition a special commemorative date-stamp inscribed with the words: "Centenary of the First — San Marino Stamp — San Marino '77 — Malta" was used at the Counter Hall of the G.P.O. A limited number of commemorative covers, each bearing one Malta stamp and one San Marino stamp, cancelled with the appropriate postmark of the respective Postal Administration, were also available for sale at 25 cents each. Orders for such covers were made

at the Philatelic Bureau, G.P.O. Valletta, up to noon of the 22nd August (Fig. 4)

- 5-9-77 The Postmaster General notified that a machine stamp cancelling slogan worded: "Irbah £M50,000 — Ixtri Biljett Issa", was going to be used on and off, at the Central Mail Room, as from Monday, 5th September, 1977.
- 19-9-77 A machine stamp cancelling slogan worded: "Next Stamp Issue — Maltese Worker Set — 12 October 1977" was used at the Central Mail Room, as from 19th September 1977.
- 1-10-77 On the occasion of the opening of the New Runway at Luqa Airport, on 1st October, 1977, a special hand-postmark was used at the Central Mail Room, Castille Place, Valletta and at the Branch Post Office at Luqa Air Port. The special hand-postmark was inscribed with the date "1-10-77", the words "Ftuħ ta' Mitjar Gdid", "Malta" and the name of the respective locality. An outline of the New Runway was also incorporated thereon. (Fig. 5)
- 12-10-77 Maltese worker set issued today. These stamps will remain on sale up to Tuesday, 28th February, 1978 unless stocks are previously exhausted. A special handstamp was used for cancellation on the first day of sale. (Fig. 6)
- 14-10-77 The Malta Post Office again participated in the Annual Washington International Lions Stamp Show — Wilshow IV — held in Washington U.S.A. from the 14th to 16th October 1977. For the occasion a number of commemorative covers were prepared and sold at 5 cents each from the G.P.O. as from the 3rd. October 1977.
- A limited number of special covers each bearing one U.S. stamp and one Malta stamp, each cancelled with an appropriate postmark of the respective Postal Administration were also available at 25 cents each. Orders for such covers were received at the Philatelic Bureau, up to noon of Friday, 30th September 1977.
- A special hand postmark was used at the Counter Hall of the G.P.O. during the period from 14th to 16th October 1977. The postmark was inscribed with the words: "International Lions Stamp Show — Washington D.C. Wilshow IV — Malta Post Office". An identical postmark was used at the Malta Post Office Stand at Wilshow IV. (Fig. 7)
- 21-10-77 The Govt. Gazette of the 21st October, 1977 the Minister of Development, Energy, Port and Telecommunications, approved the opening of Sub-Post Offices at San Gwann and at Mellicha. Applications for the two posts of Sub-Postmasters at these localities were to be received by the Postmaster General up to 5 p.m. on Friday, 11th November, 1977.
- 26-10-77 A special hand-postmark was used at the Central Mail Room, Castille Place, Valletta, on Wednesday, 26th October, 1977 on the occasion of the Fisheries Colloquy of the Council of Europe which was held in Malta from the 26th to the 28th October, 1977. The special hand-postmark was inscribed: "Council Of Europe — Fisheries Colloquy 26-28.X.77 — Valletta — Malta". The crest of the Council of Europe is also incorporated thereon. (Fig. 8)
- 28-10-77 With reference to the Stamp Design Competition, F.I.F.A. World Cup 1978 set, the Postmaster General notified that the two sets of designs submitted by Mr. Anthony De Giovanni under the noms-de-plume VINS and ANASTASIA had been placed first and third, respectively, and the set submitted by Mr. Harry Alden under the nom-de-plume SERUSIER had been placed second. The set placed first will be reproduced on the postage stamp



set to be issued in 1978 on the occasion of the F.I.F.A. World Cup.

Twenty four sets entered the competition and these were exhibited at the G.P.O. on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd November, 1977.

- 28-10-77 The Postmaster General notified that the Qormi Sub-Post Office at 57, St. Sebastian Street, Qormi was closing down with effect from the 1st November, 1977.
- 29-10-77 A machine stamp cancelling slogan reading "Jum ta' Tfaddil Nazzjonali — It-Tfaddil Ighin Lilek — U Lil Art Twelidek — 31 Ta' Ottubru 1977" was used at the Central Mail Room, on the 29th and 31st October, 1977.
- 2-11-77 A machine stamp cancelling slogan worded: "Next Stamp Issue — Christmas '77 Set — 16 November 1977" was used at the Central Mail Room as from Wednesday, 2nd November, 1977.
- 16-11-77 "Xmas. 1977" set issued today. These stamps will remain on sale up to Wednesday, 25th January, 1978 unless stocks are previously exhausted. A special handstamp was used for cancellation on the first day of issue. (Fig. 9)
- 18-11-77 The Postmaster General notified that the new hand date-stamps were put in use, as from today, at the Sliema Branch Post Office and at the Parcel Post Office, Valletta. Six new hand date-stamps were used at Sliema and two at the Parcel Post Office, Valletta. The cancellation stamps at Sliema are inscribed with the name of the locality and the word "Malta", whilst those at the Parcel Post Office are inscribed with the words, "Parcel Post Service — Malta". Old cancelling stamps were withdrawn from use at the close of business on 17-11-77.
- 19-11-77 The Malta Post Office participated in the "Portugal '77" International Philatelic Exhibition which was held in the Sports Pavilion of the Cristal Palace,

Oporto, Portugal from the 19th to 28th November, 1977.

21-11-77 A machine stamp cancelling slogan worded: "Gimgha Nazzjonali — Tal-Ktieb — 21-27 Ta' Novembru 1977" was used at the Central Mail Room on Monday, 21st November, 1977.

25-11-77 The Postmaster General notified that new hand date-stamps, were put in use, as from today, at the Branch Post Office of Zejtun, Żurrieq, Rabat, (one new hand date-stamp in each), Hamrun (three new hand date stamps), and Luqa Airport (two new hand date-stamps). The cancellation stamps of these Branch Post Offices are inscribed with the name of the respective locality and the word "Malta". Old cancellation stamps were withdrawn from use at the close of business on 24-11-77.

28-11-77 A machine stamp cancelling slogan worded: "VII Malta Philatelic — Exhibition — 12-17 December 1977" was used on and off, at the Central Mail Room, as from the 28th November, 1977.

1-12-77 The Postmaster General notified that new hand date-stamps, were put in use, as from today, at the Valletta Branch Post Office, at Old Bakery Street (two new date-stamps), the Central Mail Room, Valletta, (four new date-stamps), the General Post Office Counter, Valletta, (six new date-stamps) and the Philatelic Bureau, Valetta, (two new date-stamps). These new cancellation stamps at Valletta are inscribed as follows:

"Valletta B.P.O. — Malta", (at Old Bakery Street Branch Post Office).

"Valletta — Malta", (at Central Mail Room and G.P.O. Counter).

"Valletta — Malta" and the letter "A" or "B", (at the Philatelic Bureau, G.P.O.).

Old cancellation stamps were withdrawn from use at the close of business on 30-11-77.

5-12-77 A machine stamp cancelling slogan worded: "Għinu T-Tfal Fil-Bżonn — Użaw Il-Bolli Tal-Milied" was used at the Central Mail Room, as from Monday, 5th December, 1977.

12-12-77 A temporary Branch Post Office opened at the Auberge d'Italie, Valletta, on the occasion of the holding of the VII Malta Philatelic Exhibition 1977, which was held at the same place. This B.P.O. was open from the 12th to the 17th December, 1977. The hours of business of this temporary B.P.O. were:

Monday 12th December, 1.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

Tuesday 13th to Saturday 17th December, 8.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

The following postal business was transacted: the sale of Postage stamps and Postal stationery, registration of letters, issue and payment of Money and Postal Orders, as well as the sale of Commemorative Medals.

Special covers at 5 cents each, to mark the occasion of this VII Malta Philatelic Exhibition, were sold from the Philatelic Bureau, the Philatelic Window at the G.P.O. and from the temporary B.P.O.

Letters posted at the VII Malta Philatelic Exhibition 1977 temporary B.P.O. were postmarked with a special date-stamp inscribed with the following words: "Is-VII Wirja Filatelika ta' Malta, Valetta — Malta". (Fig. 10)

26-12-77 A new hand date-stamp was used on all postal articles posted at Gżira Branch Post Office as from Monday, 26th December, 1977. The words inscribed on the hand date-stamp are "Gżira — Malta" similar to the old one which was withdrawn at the close of business on the 24th December, 1977.

28-12-77 A machine stamp cancelling slogan worded "Day of Peace — First January" was used at the Central Mail Room, on the 28th, 29th and 30th December, 1977.

Book Review

"SAID MALTA CATALOGUE 1978" 9th Edition; Printex Ltd, for E. Said Publishers—Malta, 1977, pp.330, £4

The ninth edition of the "Said Malta Catalogue 1978" once more reflects the volatile and unstable market in early and classic material of Malta; a market so uncontrollable that most catalogue publishers continue to make vain efforts to produce a valuation capable to hold true for at least six months. This situation is creating havoc; — as soon as a catalogue is published, some prices are already out-dated. Unfortunately this is what happened to the ninth edition of the "Said" catalogue.

In fact, barely one month after the publication of the edition under review, the same publishers produced a colourful new price list revising upwardly, of course, a few single items; the most spectacular price increases being: 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % reserved for that classic Multiple Crown C A 10/- black of 1919, and 50% for that much abused "International Women's Year" set of 1974, the black sheep of the Republican issues.

The publishers shouldn't be held responsible for offering to collectors an out-dated, (in part only), catalogue by the time it reached them through the post. Printing-time schedules have to be honoured and respected by both parties and if anyone is to blame, then it's people who are ready to demand at whatever costs.

The "Said Malta Catalogue" is not just a stamp catalogue. It has now been established as a unique reference of almost all aspects of Maltese philately, including a wide spectrum of postal history. Sections are also reserved for listing and pricing the S.M.O.M. Issues, as well as numismatics of both Malta and the S.M.O.M.

Postal History now occupies almost a fifth of the catalogue providing a guide to the value of pre-adhesive cancels, the Lazzaretto markings and the village postmarks, all of which show increases over last year, in accordance with current market realizations. Other aspects of this section include modern, special and machine cancels and postmarks, World War I Censorship and a brief note on the postman's personal handstamps, every section being profusely illustrated.

NICK A. CUTAJAR

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