

**THE
MOST
EXCITING
EXPERIENCE . . .**



. . . I have ever encountered in my twenty-five years of stamp collecting, is intimately connected with Malta Village Postmarks.

About ten years ago, I was assigned to select postmarks from a batch of about fifteen thousand $\frac{1}{4}$ d Harbours (1899-1904). I must also stress the point at this stage, that such postmarks may at time be very elusive for as a rule they do not leave a good impression on the brownish-red coloration of this denomination.

The session was very long and monotonous and nothing seemed to come out of it. It must be pointed out that in those days of the early twentieth century, the $\frac{1}{4}$ d value was mainly employed in the despatch of newspapers, which as is commonly known, were sent from Valletta, where the main printing presses were located, to several villages scattered throughout the Maltese Islands.

Thus, nearly all the postmarks in this connection, carried the "Valletta" strike, circular or oblong — in short, by the end of the search, my eyes were seeing nothing but "Valletta" all over.

Having picked up my last batch of a hundred, I came across a pleated block. I did not bother to open it up, as I was saying to myself, "this is yet another Valletta, why bother!". My conscience pricked me at the moment, and this made me hesitate. Suddenly I stopped... looked again at this particular pleated block... thought it over again and opened it gently.

Much to my surprise, behold, there it was — a block of four with an extra fifth, for good measure, struck with a superb "XEUCHIA-GOZO" village postmark right in the middle and another part strike "XEUC..." on the additional stamp.

This was indeed the find of a lifetime. It certainly made me satisfied and quickly erased from my memory the dull and monotonous hours, characteristic of my long and seemingly endless search.

DR. E. AQUILINA

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Do you have an exciting or unusual experience you would like to relate to your fellow collectors? Everybody must have had some unusual experience during his or her years as a stamp collector.

In other words, we would like to receive your reports of what constituted for you a memorable experience in your stamp collecting career. Keep them short and interesting to read.