



THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY

OF MALTA

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# THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF MALTA

MAGAZINE

WINTER 1969

Address all Correspondence to:

The Editor,

P.S.M. (Magazine)

c/o Catholic Institute,

Floriana,

Malta G.C.

## FROM THE EDITORIALS

Another year has passed — the third since the formation of the Society — and relevant signs of lack of interest are very prominent indeed. Rarely is an article submitted for publication (most of the ones appearing have been written by the members of the Editorial Board) while the monthly meetings are very poorly attended.

Sometimes it baffles one, what is it that keeps the Association alive. Why not pack up, scrap the lot and call it quits. One wonders whether this is the wisest move in view of the attitude of members.

Still we managed to do our best from the Editorial side, and have succeeded in putting forth the Christmas Number of the Magazine which will certainly interest the keener collector of Malta stamps. A drive to boost up Malta Philately has been the underlying thought in compiling the articles in this number.

Taking this opportunity, the Editors in conjunction with the Members of the Committee of the Philatelic Society of Malta, wish all the members a Merry Christmas, and a New Year full of prosperity and exciting philatelic adventure.



The President Mr. L. Frank has moved to Australia where he will settle for some time. In view of this, he has resigned his office as President of the Association. The Editors are sure that they are voicing the desires of one and all, in thanking Mr. Frank for his untiring efforts towards the Society, and in wishing him God Speed for his journey to the new continent.

## MALTA PAULINE CENTENARY STAMPS

By: PAUL A. PACE

One of the most important anniversaries in the annals of Maltese history was no doubt the year 1960. The Island celebrated the 19th centenary of the Shipwreck of St. Paul. The official programme of these festivities in Malta was long and varied, lasting from January to July. To commemorate this great event both the Civil and the Ecclesiastical authorities decided to issue a special set of six stamps depicting various episodes of the life of Paul, with special reference to his shipwreck one thousand nine hundred years before. The stamps were released by the Malta Post Office on Feb. 9th 1960.

Malta has a long and traditional history. It is presumed by some historians that the Island was the "Hyperion" or "Ogygia" of Homer. It has been ruled at one time or another by one of the greatest nations of the world. The first inhabitants were believed to be the Phoenicians, followed by the Greeks, and Carthaginians who ruled over a residue of locals. During the second Punic War the Island came under the influence of the Roman Civilisation, and it was during this period that Paul was shipwrecked on the Maltese shores.

This was not the first time that Malta has had stamps showing the image of St. Paul. In fact there were eleven other issues. The first appeared in 1889, and from the year 1914 up to the present day there was always a high value portraying the Saint. This means that for the last seventy years (with the exception of a few intervals) there has always been an issue including the Patron Saint of the Island of Malta; this point very seldom passes unnoticed by the larger section of collectors.

The following list gives year of issue and describes the different emissions during the seventy year period:—

- 1889: 10/- black with a slight tinge of blue, St. Paul during the shipwreck. This is from an engraving by Paul G. Dorè.
- 1918: 10/- Grey-black, same as before but with an alteration in the frame and wording; Block CA watermarked paper.
- 1922: 10/- pitch black, same as the 1918, but with a script CA watermark.
- 1922: 10/- same as the 1889, but overprinted "Self-Government."
- 1926: 10/- black and carmine, reproduced from a statue venerated in the Church of St. Paul Shipwrecked Valletta. The statue is the work of the famous Maltese sculptor Melchiorre Gafà. The stamp is inscribed "Postage."
- 1928: 10/- same as 1926 but overprinted "Postage and Revenue."
- 1930: 10/- same as 1926 but inscribed "Postage and Revenue."
- 1938: 10/- Black and red, with same image of St. Paul as in the 1926 — 30, but with K. George VI medallion.
- 1948: 10/- same as 1938, but overprinted "Self-Government."

1957: 10/- same image of St. Paul, depicted on more modern lines artistically, and with the portrait of the Queen to one side.

1965: £1 showing the three Patron Saints of Malta designed by Cremona: St. Paul, St. Publius and St. Agatha.

The episode of the shipwreck took place in the year A.D. 60. Paul, the Apostle of Christ, and great prophet in the early years of the Christian Religion, was imprisoned while at Jerusalem, charged with creating a riot. After two years in prison he appealed to Rome on his citizen's rights, resulting in his being sent to Rome under guard. On his way, he was shipwrecked on the North East coast of Malta, but after a short stay of three months he sailed again ultimately reaching Pateoli. He was imprisoned again in Rome, but apparently thereafter acquitted of the charges.

The centenary stamps commemorating this event were the task and responsibility of the Malta Government Stamp Advisory Board, and were printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons of London, on paper watermarked CA in block capitals.

The 1½d vertical, and coloured blue and fawn, 46 by 27 mm. depicts the actual shipwreck on Malta's shores, presumably at a place called "Selmun" on the mainland adjoining the "G'zejjer" in St. Paul's Bay. It is an adaptation by Chev. Cremona, from a fresco by Palombi found in St. Paul's Church Valletta.

The 3d, vertical, mauve and light blue, 46 by 27mm. depicts as Cremona imagined it, the Consecration of St. Publius First Bishop of Malta. The Maltese welcomed St. Paul and the rest of the crew; Publius, a well-to-do non-believer, gave hospitality to Paul, and was later converted to the new Faith as the stamp shows, reaching a high state of affairs on his consecration.

6d, vertical, carmine and silver grey, 46 by 27mm. St. Paul remained in Malta for three months, preaching and performing miracles. After spending the winter on the Island he and the other shipwrecked men sailed again towards Rome. The Maltese honoured their 'guests', and put on board all the provisions required. The stamp is also Cremona's adaptation from another fresco by Palombi in the mentioned Church, and shows the departure of Paul.

8d, diamond shaped, black and white in colour, 35.5 by 35.5 mm., describes the statue of St. Paul in the Grotto at Rabat, where the Apostle is believed to have stayed. Souvenir hunters formed the habit of taking away with them fragments of the rocks, yet this quarrying cave has never altered in shape to this present day. The art-work of the stamp is again Cremona's.

The 1/-, diamond shaped, coloured bordeaux, 35.5 mm. on all sides, shewes an allegorical design taken from the Acts of the Apostles, again the work of Cremona.

Before the shipwreck took place, Paul had a vision: an Angel of the Lord told the Apostle that all the crew would be saved and that they had to go unto a certain Island; later they discovered the Island was called Melita. Now Malta.

The 2/6 is also diamond shaped and of the same size as its predecessors. Bluish-green in colour the stamp is the result of Cremona's imaginative powers, and describes St. Paul with the Scripture in his hand, against a background of the islets of St. Paul's Bay.

The whole set is by and large one of the most attractive ever produced by the Malta Post Office; even at the time of writing (eight years after the commemoration) it is most keenly sought after by Philatelists the world over.

*Adapted from 'A Weekly Magazine of Philately' published in New Jersey, by kind permission of the writer.*

#### **DR. E. AQUILINA from Valletta writes:—**

With reference to the article by W.L. Freshwater on the Circular Village Stamps of Malta, I would like to make the following additions:

1. BIRCHIRCARA — The capital letters in the circular date mark are not limited to A, B, and C; the letter D can also be found as some of my Specimens show.
2. NOTABILE — Similarly the letter G can also be located.
3. PAULA — The size of the dater was 21 mm. in diameter; whereas the time was denoted by AM or PM. These details were not included in the list shown in the Journal.
4. XEUCHIA — This Gozo Postal Branch also made use of the AM sign besides the PM described.

The instances just described can be substantiated by specimens which are in my possession. I am, therefore, certain that they will be accepted very satisfactorily by keen collectors in the spirit of philatelic research.

In connection with St. Paul's landing after being shipwrecked on the North East Coast of the Island of Malta in A.D. 60, I consulted Mgr. Knox's Version of The Holy Bible and came to the conclusion that the snake (viper) that attacked Paul did so at the landing of the Apostle; and not "later on" as Mr. B. Hamilton states in his article.

To substantiate this, I quote The Acts Chapter 28 verses 1 — 3 from The Holy Bible referred to:

"When we were safe on land, we found that the Island was called Melita. The kindness which the natives shewed to us was beyond the ordinary; they welcomed us all by making a fire for us, because rain was coming on, and it was cold. Paul had collected a bundle of faggots and had just put them on the fire, when a viper, coming out to escape the heat, fastened on to his hand....."

The conclusion from the above is rather unmistakeable, and needs no further comments.

## PHILATELIC INFORMATION

### BIGGEST "PENNY BLACK" STAMPS DISCOVERY

A block of ten "Penny Black" stamps on an envelope dated May 6, 1840, and discovered in Kirkcudbright, Scotland, are to be auctioned at Harmer's auction rooms in London on May 27.

This is the largest number of "Penny Blacks" to have been found on a first-day letter, and they are expected to realise a price of at least £1,000. The unique letter was from a London firm of lawyers and the 10d rate is explained by the reference in the letter to legal documents enclosed. It was found in a batch of old papers and documents.

The block, cancelled with the red Maltese Cross, has excellent margins on three sides and is of fine appearance. The May 6 date-stamp on the reverse is a remarkable clear strike.

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### HAWID STRIPS TO ANY SIZE

How often have you not been able to mount an unusual sized block because the right strip was not available, either because you had run out, or none were available on the island?

To overcome this, for me, frequent occurrence, I hit on the idea of making up the right size strips from two others. To do this you will need:— a small sheet of glass for a cutting board, a sharp rigid bladed knife and two steel rulers.

First take a very large size standard strip and cut off one of the joined edges, fit in your block. Then choose another size to fit over the uncovered portion with about a third of an inch of overlap. Carefully gum the backs together taking care not to spoil the gum on the block and then remove the stamps. Insert a steel rule between the transparent face and dark backing and position it under where the pieces overlap, using the second steel rule and the knife cuts through both pieces of transparency at once. So as not to waste any strips, you should trim the length before gumming.

You now have a custom made housing for your block which permits easy insertion and removal but still holds the stamps firmly.

R.J. Walley



## LETTER EXTRACTS

A very interesting article came into the hands of Dr. C. Cassar (himself a keen philatelist), which throws much light on the early Postal arrangements of our Island. All those who are after the historical development of Malta's Postal Services in their infancy, should very well peruse the contents of the letter and remember them for any future references.

Dr. Cassar writes:

Our Island, a speck in the Mediterranean came often and still comes in the way of passers. It is hence that many historical informations about Malta were left to us when travellers going to the East landed on our shores either as birds of passage or stayed here as settlers for some years.

One of these men was Mr. E. Blaquiere who in his "letters from the Mediterranean" in 1812 wrote some observations on our Postal Services:

"There are two Postal Offices in Malta, whereas one properly administered would answer the purpose of distributing letters much better than both these, and save an expensive establishment to the revenues of the Island. The agent for packets, or in other words the English Postmaster, is, by a highly improper arrangement, a merchant having very extensive concerns; the facility with which such a person, if so inclined, might considerably hurt the interests of his contemporaries, is very great; this is happily not the case at present, although the circumstance of his appointment is far from being agreeable to any of the trading people here. To the other numerous objections of the public to this place being in charge of a mercantile man, it might be added that his own avocations prevent him from paying the least attention to sorting letters and forwarding them to individuals." (Blaquiere E. Esq.)

**Editorial Comment:** *Though Mr. Blaquiere's Letter is rather humorous it is very true indeed, and reflects the contemporary mentality of the 'get rich quick' entrepreneurs.*

## THE MONTHLY MEETING IN NOVEMBER

This took place as usual, and was rather well attended.

It consisted of two parts. In the first part, Mr. P. Pace, with the use of slides, read an interesting paper on Malta's monuments and Churches as depicted on her postage stamps. By and large, the stamp issues involved belonged to the George VI and Elizabethan periods, which form the peak of pictorials in the graphic development of Malta's artistic stamps.

During the latter part of the meeting held on Monday the 4th of November 1968, Mr. Walley gave an exhibition of modern Maltese varieties which included some exhaustive studies of recent issues. Mr. Walley's intention is eventually to produce information on the relative frequency, the cause and effects of various types of flaw and error to be found on the Elizabethan issues of Malta; to this end, any information on earlier issues would be gratefully received by him through the editor.

Some of the facts brought to light so far indicate that definitive issues are considerably better printed than commemoratives, for the incidence of sizeable flaws on them is very low. Commemorative issues on the other hand may be split into two groups, the high and the low values. The high values generally have the greatest incidence of varieties in the form of retouches, possibly because many of them have very pale or pastel colours. Low values by comparison have many minor flaws, but rarely large retouches.

Mr. Walley stresses though that much more study is needed before these facts may be stated with any certainty.

# A BRIEF SURVEY OF MODERN POSTMRKS USED IN MALTA

(1952 to date)

By R.J. WALLEY

Member: Malta Study Circle.

J.S.P.S. Malta.

Having completed a collection of Elizabethan Maltese stamps and, having before me only the prospect of waiting for new issues and variety hunting, I turned my attentions to the postmarks and envelope markings used in Malta since Queen Elizabeth came to the throne.

Expecting to find a small number of standardized types, I was agreeably surprised to find that in fact they are just as interesting and complex, in their way, as the marks of 50 or more years ago. With the added delight that most of them are still in use and readily available. Therefore the study of them is made far easier and can be much more complete and rewarding because of it. I will now give a brief survey of my findings so far.

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## HAND STAMPS

There are some fifteen permanent offices in the island, all of them delivery offices, and all have a standard type of handstamp which is used for cancelling and backstamping normal daily mail. We will deal first with this, the most common type. It is in the form of a double circle with diameters 27 mm. and 17 mm. The time and date slugs occupy the centre of the stamp, while the office name appears between the circles at the top, and MALTA at the bottom, in letters 3 mm. tall separated by line spacers placed centrally between the circles.

This standard cancellator appears in every office, indeed, most offices must possess several of them, and every office has at least two. Study in this field has not yet progressed very far, but it is evident from slight varieties in marks from the same office that more than one such stamp exists. A good number of offices omit to use the time slug occasionally, which produces more variety of cancellations. Not all stamps however have identical styles of lettering in spite of standardization. That used at Victoria Gozo office has a decidedly cramped appearance beside the large and clear lettering of Mgarr Gozo, or Gzira offices.

Lesser known, but vastly more attractive in appearance is the type with Malta cross spacers in place of line spacers. The only offices known to the author at present currently using this type are Valletta Central, who use it solely for the 5.30 a.m. and 9 p.m. posts, and Sliema, Prince of Wales Road. But Birkirkara used one as late as 1956, as proved by an untimed cover in the authors possession. This last named has also larger, and better formed

crosses when compared with the other two, possibly due to those at Valletta and Sliema now being old and worn.

By far the rarest known so far in this period is with Killer Block spacers. The only known instance to date of this type being in use is at NOTABLE. The impressions from this are very poor in that they show many frame breaks and worn lettering due to use of an aged stamp. No time slug was inserted with this type it seems, only an "a.m." or "p.m.". Again there were double circles of diameters 27 mm. and 16.5 mm. The lettering (3 mm. tall, but very thin type) reads "NOTABLE B.O." at the top and "MALTA" at the bottom, all between the circles. The spacers were solid and 3 mm. thick.

### SPECIAL HANDSTAMPS

The handstamps used for FDC's of the Independence and St. Paul's Shipwreck issues can be considered as special marks by virtue of the fact they were only in use for a very short time servicing first day of issue covers for each set. Their make-up is too complex to describe here but many perfect examples may be seen on most FDC's for the two issues. They were unusually large for handstruck marks being:—

For Independence	— 36 mm. across (approx.)
For St. Paul's Shipwreck	— 39 mm. across

To this can now be added the special marks employed for the duration of the E.N.T. Congress in May 1967, and that of the FAO conference recently which measure approximately 35 mm. across.

Perhaps one of the most unique specials ever used on the island in recent time was that at the Independence arena during Her Majesty's visit in 1967. This cancellation was in use for Forces Week which was coincident with the Royal visit. It could be used with any current Maltese stamps, on cover together with any current British stamps, which were separately cancelled with another date stamp. The proviso being that Maltese stamps were only cancelled with the special Maltese G.P.O. handstamp and the British Stamps with the Forces Post office cancellation.

Another unusual "Special" is in fact a standard type of handstamp but can be deemed as special since it is only used to cancel F.D.C.'s. At Sliema, in place of the more normal one with "PRINCE OF WALES ROAD SLIEMA" inscribed between the circles, the lettering states simply 'SLIEMA' 'MALTA' and is identical to the stamps used by other offices for normal work.

The last of the specials is one used at the Malta Trade Fair each year. Again it is of the standard type as already described, but is lettered: "MALTA TRADE FAIR" "POST OFFICE" and does not normally contain a time slug. It is here listed as a special since the office of its use is only a temporary one, open for the duration of the Fair.

## MACHINE CANCELLATIONS

There are six offices that possess "Universal" machines for franking mail these are:—

Valletta Central Office.

Valletta Branch office.

Birkirkara.

Hamrun.

Paola.

Sliema, Prince of Wales Road.

The central office uses the machine to backstamp incoming mail mostly, which far exceeds that going out, but at times of high post volumes, (e.g. Christmas).

This holds also for the other offices using machines.

Valletta Branch office has a more permanent use for its machine because the Government Lotto offices are nearby and push forth a large volume of post both inland and overseas. **Slogans:** A more important use for the machine is national advertising. A special block is made up each year to advertise the Trade Fair, and from time to time blocks are made up to advertise natural beauty spots or to extoll the virtues of Malta as a holiday resort. Valletta Central office, when not using special blocks has a continuous obliterator in the form of a Maltese cross to the left of a circular date stamp, (cross = 24 mm. across the extreme points and 14 mm. across the extreme valleys, it is bounded on either side by seven horizontal lines approx. 8 mm. long. The c.d.s. is a single circle of 21 mm. dia. with conventional 2.5 mm. lettering). Pre-paid blocks can be fitted to these machines for franking Government mail, when this is done, (usually at Valletta Central), the franking is struck in red.

The other type of machine cancellation used in Malta is the type known as "Meter-Franking." They are usually held by private firms on licence from the Post Master General. Their marks are always struck in red and provision is made for an advertisement block on the left of the date stamp, (which is in the form of a printed postage stamp including the perforations). All except one of the meters in use at present in Malta are made by Pitney Bowes. The study of these marks has been well covered in a Malta study Circle study paper, but more information is needed to complete this subject and any information you may have, or examples, would be gratefully received by the author.

## REGISTERED MARKS.

Most offices use paper stickers bearing the Capital letter 'R' at the left and provision for the number on the right together with the office name printed in. But the temporary office at the Trade Fair has a special rubber stamp, which is struck in black. It is 51 mm. x 19 mm. round the frame,

while the name of the office is contained in the right side separated by a further frame line 10 mm. in from the left. The lettering reads:

TRADE FAIR (MALTA)

No.

and the large "R" is contained in the left box.

Valetta Central posses two stamps which are unique on the island and each perform a special duty.

- (i) one is used for marking and dating Government registered mail, but not for franking it, while:
- (ii) the other is used for backstamping incoming registered mail, this latter has Malta cross spacers to differentiate between them and the lettering is a slightly different style.

The dimensions are as follows:— (i) horizontal oval 32 mm. × 25 mm. with 4 mm. tall lettering fount the inside perimeter reading "REGISTERED" "G.P.O. MALTA". The date slug appears as a straight line across the centre in letters 2.5 mm. tall. e.g. "22 MY 68." (ii) horizontal oval 31 mm. × 24 mm. lettering as for (i) but 3.5 mm. and 3mm. respectively. The Malta crosses are in line with the date slug and at the extreme ends of the oval.

Pre-paid registered envelopes which are purchased from the G.P.O. bear a very large printed "R" in blue bounded by an oval in the top left corner, and the envelope is crossed with blue lines. The use of blue lines on registered mail does not, however, appear to be compulsory. Provided that the word "Registered" appears legibly and clearly, the Post Office will treat it as a registered dispatch.

#### "AR" MARKING.

"Avis de reception" is a service provided by most postal authorities in one form or another, (i.e. recorded delivery in the U.K.), and Malta is no exception. The AR is marked in red on the envelope and appears in an oval. Briefly the system is this:— The sender fills in a pink card form with details of the letter, addressee's and sender's particulars. A 3d stamp is affixed to the front and cancelled at the office of despatch. The envelope is marked as above and sent on its way to the office of destination together with the pink card. The office of delivery backstamps the letter and the pink card, the clerk signs the card and then the postman delivers them both to the addressee, who signs the card as proof that he has received the letter. The card is then returned to the sender as his receipt for the letter from the addressee. The service applies only to registered or insured letters and parcels, and money orders. Judging from the scarcity of AR marks it would appear to be a little used service in Malta. The dimensions and styles of lettering vary greatly from office to office depending on the age of the stamp in question.

## POSTED OUT OF COURSE AND COMPULSORY REGISTRATION MARKS.

For letters found to contain coins or other valuables, and not previously registered, the G.P.O. has a set procedure. The envelope is marked with the "COMPULSORY REGISTRATION" stamp, which is rubber and struck in black, and a printed label is affixed to the back with the appropriate lines scored out. A registered tag is stuck on and a postage due charge raised to cover the cost of registration. Then it is treated as a normal registered package and forwarded to the addressee.

A similar course is adopted for registered packets put into the post box instead of being handed over the counter and a receipt obtained. The same label is affixed to the back with the appropriate lines scored out and the rubber stamp "POSTED OUT OF COURSE" is struck in black upon the front. This would only apply to the envelopes supplied by the G.P.O. themselves and on which the registration fee had been pre-paid. An ordinary envelope bearing the word "Registered" and/or, crossed blue lines, and not having been pre-paid would be treated as a compulsory registration and the necessary dues charged. The label is approx. 71 mm. x 54 mm. and contained a G.P.O. and crown cypher in the top left corner. The wording is as follows:—

This packet, which was posted  
in the ordinary way, has been com-  
pulsorily registered by the Post Office  
because it  
\*contains .....  
\*bears the word "registered"  
\*is crossed with blue lines.

Valuable articles should not be sent in unregistered packets. Packets intended for registration should not be dropped in a posting box, but should be handed in at a Post Office and a receipt obtained. Packets found to contain money or jewellery and packets bearing the word "registered" or any similar word or mark, posted without registration, are registered by us and we charge on delivery.

- \* *Please advise the sender about this.*
- \* *Delete and amplify where necessary.*

The first seven lines are in lettering 2 mm. tall. The remainder 1.5 mm. tall.

## UNDELIVERABLE MAIL MARKS.

Mail that cannot be delivered due to wrong, or lack of address to treated in one of two ways. If there is an address to which the letter can be returned on the outside of the envelope, then it is returned directly to the sender marked:— "RETOUR A' L'ENVOYEUR/RETURN TO SENDER" in a rectangle struck in black. If, on the other hand, there is no address marked for return, the letter is passed to the "Returned Letter Office," where it is opened. Presuming the senders address be inside, the letter is put in a special envelope marked "Returned PAID Letter." If neither of these methods can be used due to the obsence of any senders address, then the letter is of course destroyed.

The special envelope is approx. 24 cm. × 13 cm. and bears a printed cachet 50 mm. × 31 mm. enclosed in rectangle saying:—

UNDELIVERED LETTER'S BEARING  
ON THE OUTSIDE THE FULL NAME  
AND ADDRESS OF THE SENDER  
ARE RETURNED DIRECT AND  
UNOPENED.

in letters 2mm. tall. In the left top corner is printed:—

Returned PAID Letter

---

and in the bottom left corner is printed:—

Returned Letter Office  
MALTA

The minimum permissible size of envelope transmissible by post in Malta is 4" × 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". If this is ignored, and an undersize envelope used, the letter not transmissible. Unless valuables are contained in the envelope, it will usually be destroyed, but, the opposite being the case, provided there is a senders address, it is marked "NOT TRANSMISSIBLE ENVELOPE BELOW SIZE/4 × 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins." and returned to the sender. This also is a rubber stamp with no rectangle bordering the lettering, and struck in black.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

The following is a list of further marks employed by the post office for purposes which are self evident from the wording used. Some of them are exceedingly poor stamps, and appear to have been made up from older stamps cut up and remounted on new bases, (marked \*). All are rubber, have no rectangles bordering the wording and are struck in black.



RECEIVED IN/THIS CONDITION\* RECEIVED WITH/WRAPPER TORN\*  
DAMAGED BY/STAMPING MACHINE FOUND POSTED/IN THIS  
DAMAGED BY/STAMPING MACHINE FOUND POSTED/IN THIS  
CONDITION RECEIVED IN/BAD CONDITION.

*N.B. An oblique stroke after a word denotes that the next appears on a fresh line.*

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My thanks are due to the G.P.O. for the many questions they have answered with great patience, and the help extended to me while investigating these marks and the methods of their use. Acknowledgment must also be made to the compilers of relevant publications of the Malta Study Circle.

Anyone who has further information or examples of any of the marks used in Malta, and is willing to allow them to be examined, is asked to contact me through the editor.

## STAMPS OF THE WORLD

A major extension to the National Postal Museum in London, which began on April 1, will enable 135 times as many stamps to be displayed as at present. When it re-opens in the latter part of this year it will show a virtually complete collection of the postage stamps from every country in the world since 1878 and many earlier stamps of which a substantial proportion were printed in Britain for postal administrations of other countries. It will also have a much wider selection of 19th century British stamps.

When the new museum is finished it will have direct access from the present gallery to a mezzanine floor and to a main gallery above. Since 1966, the Postal Museum has attracted some 60,000 visitors, many of them from other countries.

## THE NEW MALTA POSTAGE DUES

*(Reprinted from Stamp Collecting by Kind Permission  
of Messrs. Said Stamp Dealers, Valletta)*

On November 9th, 1967, the Malta Post Office issued a set of four Postage Dues with the new "Malta Cross" watermark. Bradbury Wilkinson, the printers of such stamps since 1925, were again entrusted with the job of printing the four values in photogravure keeping, however, to the old designs and, maintaining more or less, the former colours for the corresponding denominations.

Thus, the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d green, 1d violet, 2d grey and 4d olive-brown, all perforated 12 by a line machine (as were their predecessors) came into being. This type of perforation, rendered very rough at the angles, is easily prone to damage, let alone the fact that some of the holes along the perforated margin were not even present, giving the impression of an imperforate variety!

Then quite abruptly, a few days later, the 4d value ran out of stock, and collectors and dealers were gently advised to wait patiently for a new reprint which was to be forthcoming in the near future.

The "near future" became over six months, and on May 30th, 1968, another series of Postage Dues was put on sale. The date here is rather important, as it was the reason of some controversy. The Crown Agents Trade Circular No. 13/68 dated 28th May 1968, had stated that the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d, 1d, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d, 3d and 4d were released on the 21st of the same month, while the 6d, 1s, 1/6 were to follow on June the 4th.

May 30th, therefore, saw the the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d green, 1d violet, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d brown, 2d grey, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d orange, 3d blue, 4d olive-green, 6d purple, 1s black and 1/6 carmine repeating approximately the colours for their corresponding denominations. The printers were again the same, and the photogravure product on the "Malta Cross" water-marked paper looked rather attractive.

The only different feature, and this carries a considerable amount of weight, was the perforation. As has been stated before, all the other previous issues had been perforated 12; this time the printers made use of a comb perforator changing the gauge to 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ , thus creating a major variety for the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d, 1d, 2d, and 4d. Postage Dues on "Malta Cross" paper now exist with two differing perforations.

To a certain extent, history was repeating itself. Last November, we were also presented with the 2d Postage Due, Block CA issued unheralded. Fantastic prices were charged by dealers for this stamp, rightly so as, when the change came to light, stocks of the mint Block CA were nearly exhausted; hence the reason for the new "Malta Cross" consignment. A rough calculation based on records of sale, suggests that there are only 5,000 mint copies in existence.

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