

country; their use is legion, and covers a wide field; from the birth of a Prince to the death of a King or, present day a Dictator.

Philatelic exhibitions, Scout jamborees, Royal Visits and a host of other more or less important occasions have been the subject of special commemorative cancellations.

The collection of these items engenders a thirst more knowledge and you suddenly find yourself with such a wealth of information that — to quote an old phrase-form being a humdrum collector knowing nothing about everything you now know everything about nothing.

Those of you who have already "seen the light" will probably be angry that I should attempt to encourage others to enter your preserves, but I cheerfully take that risk in the hope that others present — particularly the younger collectors — will have some encouragement to extend their activities by paying more attention to the cancellations on the stamps of the countries they collect. Their reward will be worth the time and trouble they expend in acquiring the knowledge necessary to recognise the cancellations they need.

Speaking again to the younger collectors, my concluding observation is that less time spent with the standard catalogues and more study of the philatelic literature in the libraries of the various societies will soon enable you to gain more pleasure from our hobby.

STAMPS OF MALTA

(by **Edmund Rizzo** — Continued)

POSTMARKS — We have had four varieties of postmarks, the 'M' (large $7\frac{1}{2}$ mm wide) and the 'M' small $6\frac{1}{2}$ mm wide, both being $9\frac{1}{2}$ mm high; and the round and oval types of the A 25.

According to some catalogues the M type would have taken place between 1857 and 59, and that would have been before the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow local stamp came into being! Such a statement is therefore incorrect as many collectors possess the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow on bluish paper, obliterated with both types of the M cancellation. This stamp is not easy to find but it may be seen, and its value is about 20s more than the same specimen cancelled by the A 25. The former obliteration, therefore, continued to be in use after 1861; we cannot with certainty date the time in which this postmark was disused, but from what we could conclude after referring to the correspondence mentioned in the former paragraph of this article, the M was replaced by the A 25 towards the close of 1861. **

Together with the A 25 which represents the number of the colony, another postmark was brought into use, namely MALTA and date with C at the top. Of the latter there are many designs varying very little from each other.

The A 25 which was so heavy for stamps and which has ruined so many fine specimens of the ½d Yellows on bluish paper has been disused lately, and a more decent timbre is now obliterating Malta stamps.

As I have stated in my foregoing paragraphs, the Post Office at Malta was in 1885 transferred from the Imperial to the Local Government, and consequently on account of this transfer, the stamps of Great Britain which was still in stock at our Post Office were returned to England, while a new set was brought into use.

The set is the current one consisting of the following values: 1½d, 1d, 2d, 2½d, 4d, 1s, and 5s.

The main design of these stamps like all the other stamps of British Colonies consists of the head of the Queen, which are very tastefully and artistically executed. I need not give an elaborate description of the stamps in question, because they are common enough to be within the grasp of everybody, and therefore seen by all. Although I need not mention the stamps in question, I think that by noting the several errors which are to be found among the same it would benefit philatelists in general and Maltese collectors in particular.

Four errors have been noted, namely:

- ½d watermark reversed
- 1s watermark reversed
- 5s watermark reversed
- 4d imperforated

With the exception of the 4d imperforated, I cannot state the importance of the errors as I do not know the number of the same to be found, yet I can affirm that high prices have been asked for such errors.

Of the 4d imperforate, only one sheet had been issued, and was bought by a Maltese gentleman who sells the same at £3 per pair.

EDITORIAL NOTE: It has to be borne in mind that this article originally written circa 100 years ago. Some adjustments had to be made to render its construction more in line with the language of today.

Some light has also been thrown both on the M cancellation which as we know it today was employed on the ½d yellows (blued paper) for one month only, namely December 1860; it was withdrawn in January 1861.

As for the 1885 issue, several other major varieties are known to exist. Thus both the ½d green and the 5s rose are found with an inverted watermark, while some specimens of the latter value were printed on blued paper.

To conclude, not all the views expressed by the writer, conform with those of the editors.