

MALTA FROM THE MAGAZINES.

The following items are re-printed from various stamp magazines and acknowledgement is made in each case.

Stamps of the Island continue to be in good demand and although, generally, "Omnibus" issues lack some popularity — this is not the case with Malta. The 1963 Freedom from Hunger 1s 6d and the 1963 Red Cross pair are in demand locally, where supplies are now short and where prices are higher than our catalogues. S.G. Freedom from Hunger. 3/- mint 3/6 used; Red Cross 4/2 mint, 4/10 used: CW., 3/3 mint/used and 4/3 mint, 4/6 used. So they are tipped at best for a good increase in value.

W.E. Fyndem on Market Movements. Acknowledgements to Stamp Collecting.

MALTA MARVELS.

Did the person who coined the description, "Malta Marvels" for the recent issue of Malta stamps consider them from a purely aesthetic view and was he referring to the many marvellous designs which continue to appear from the Studio of Chev. E.V. Cremona, Malta's own versatile and complete artist? Of was it because, being a dealer, or an investor in, or a collector of, the stamps of Malta, he found himself nicely stocked with sets of the 1964 Independence issue with a face value of 5s. 11d a set? If so, he has recently been able to unload his stocks, and any others he could lay his hands on, in Malta and Italy at £5 and up to £6 a set. Not bad! From 6s. to £6 in just over two years. He would think they are "Marvels"!

Will Malta increase the numbers printed and, if so, will it, and can it, go too far? The answer will depend on whether you are a speculator, investor, dealer or collector. The speculator will want a limited printing with a sale period of not more than two months, so that he can get in sharply and do a bit of concerning. The investor may also prefer a limited printing, but is perhaps content to wait for a steady increase in market prices. The dealer, with of course some exceptions, would prefer a steady market and does not like buying stocks at inflated prices, with the risk of being left expensive stocks when the bottom falls out of the market. The collector wants a not-too-restricted issue, available over a longer period so that he can pick and choose the items he wants at overface value, but, having done that, he expects his collection to appreciate in value steadily over the years.

There is also the Government Dept., issuing the stamps, to consider. What is their attitude to the stamps? This can, and does, vary considerably. There are those who are not concerned merely with meeting postal needs, plus additional income from philatelic sources, who find it impossible to resist the tempting offers of a fixed guaranteed income from the "Philatelic Agencies".

Fortunately, for the collectors of Malta stamps, the Post Office there has resisted, so far, the tempting offers of the certain would-be agencies. The Post Office, of course, wants to get an increased revenue from its stamps, but are concerned that they should continue to have a high standing with philatelists, and have tried to avoid recurrence of the speculation which has happened recently; but having once put the stamps on sale at the counters, it is difficult to introduce a form of rationing.

It seems likely that future Malta commemoratives will have larger printings, to cover a three or four months' demand with, perhaps, a rationing of supplies to the Post Office counters. It has been rumoured that a set of the designs of the prehistoric temples in Malta has been prepared but has been held back; the current issuing policy being no thematic, but a restricted number of worthwhile commemoratives each year.

What then are the reasons for the increasing demand for the stamps of Malta? There are several contributing factors. There can be no doubt that the designs by Chev. E.V. Cremona have attracted an ever-widening field of collectors to the stamps of Malta. Indeed, there are many who say that his symbolic designs and consistent colour harmonies have brought a new dimension to stamp design.

Then there is the fact that the number of collectors in Europe (including Great Britain) has increased tremendously in recent years. There have been trade estimates that there are now ten times as many collectors in Europe as there were ten years ago.

What may seem odd to some people is that although Malta remains a member of the Commonwealth, it is now considered (since Independence) to be a European country and, as such, is included in some European catalogues.

It has, of course, for many years been popular with Commonwealth collectors and particularly with Commonwealth collectors and particularly with those who have collected "Islands", especially when grouped with Cyprus and Gibraltar. But it is now the Italians, perhaps more than anyone else, who have interested themselves in the stamps of Malta, and some Italian dealers are offering the stamps from Independence complete, ready mounted in albums.

The sales figure for the 2s.6d. value of Independence set is shown as 151,358, which number governs the amount of complete sets available. As this set has been in such demand as to have sold for more than £5 per set in Italy, one is entitled to ask, "What of the 1965 Great Siege set, the 2s.6d. value of which had sale of only 140,093?"

What ever else happens, we can certainly expect to see many more "Malta Marvels" from the Cremona Studio.

By M.E. Jetten.

Acknowledgements to Stamp Collecting.

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I WILL BUY ANY PHILATELIC PUBLICATIONS ON MALTA.

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