

# THE CIRCULAR VILLAGE STAMPS OF MALTA

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Extract from the Postal History Bulletin No. 85.

A search through the Post Office Records reveals that cancellors were dispatched on July 10th 1900, for 28 post offices and strikes were impressed in the records on July 9th 1900, all with PM index. Many of these village marks have been recorded with both AM and PM, and a number with only AM. Therefore it is safe to assume that the cancellors were sent with changeable slugs for date and time index. The cancellors range from 19mm to 23mm in diameter — name of village arched across top of circle time index immediately beneath, month and day, or day and month across the middle with abbreviated year at the bottom. Offices in Gozo were so indicated by Gozo across the bottom of the circles and with a short vertical line at each inner side.

These offices were — Asciak, Attard, Caccia, Circop, Crendi, Curmi, Dingli, Garbo, Gargur, Chain Silem, Gudia, Lucia, Micabbiba, Misida, Musta, Nadur, Naxaro, Paula, Safi, Sannat, Siggieui, Tarxien, Victoria, (B.O.) Xeuchia, Zabbar, Zebbug, Zeitun and Zurrico, all of which have been recorded used with the exception of Sannat.

Cancellors, not sent by the G.P.O. with the above are similar, with the exception of Sliema and Valletta. These are 27mm and 29mm diameter respectively and differed in make-up. Sliema cancellor reads in four lines — Sliema B.O.; time of posting; date; Malta, whilst Valletta condenses to three lines reading — Valletta (C.O.) time of posting, day, month and year in one line; Malta. These two cancellors, incidentally, are the only ones to indicate Malta.

Nothing has been traced in the G.P.O. Records as to when or whether these were sent from London, neither have any records come to light indicating when the offices were opened, with the exception of the following. Cospicua opened 1st August 1890, Migiarrò 1st December 1885, Notabile 15th November 1897, Sliema 1st May 1895, and Rabato (later Victoria) 1st December 1885.

In 1921, Malta was divided into six postal areas, viz. Valletta, Birchire-ara, Cospicua, Notabile, Sliema, Victoria, Gozo, and the village offices ceased to function or at least ceased to cancel mail.

The period then for these village cancellations is from 1900 to 1921, with the exception of the six main post offices which eventually became area

post offices in 1921 and also Hamrun, Malta, and Migiarrro, Gozo from which cancellations have been recorded from 1892 and 1887 respectively.

As is only to be expected, these village posts were used chiefly for local post and the cancellations are generally found on the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d values of the Queen, Edward and George V issues, but they have been recorded also on the 1d, 2d, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d Queen,  $\frac{1}{4}$ d, 1d, 2d,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d, Edward,  $\frac{1}{4}$ d, 1d, 2d,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d, and the  $\frac{1}{3}$ d War Stamp of the Georgian period.

Generally, these cancellors were use for the "life" of the office, with the exceptions of Ascialek and Hamrun, which both used two cancellors as described.

ASCIK. 1st type was used for the A.M. period until 1909, my latest record being June 9th; and for the PM period until November 3rd 1911, my latest recorded date. Distance between right bottom of 'A' and of 'K' meet roughly in the middle of the upright strike.

2nd type, possibly a fraction of a mm. larger than the first type. I have recorded for the PM period from August 15th 1910. In this type, the distance between 'A' and 'K' is 1.0 mm. and the top arm of the 'K' joins the upright very near the base.

The two types placed side by side are readily identifiable as there are many other differences in measurements, not mentioned.

Hamrun. 1st type — 20 mm. diameter, with time index letters A or B was used until 1912, my latest date recorded being 20th.

2nd. type — 24 mm. diameter with time index AM or PM, brought into use in 1912, my earlier date being 21st April.

Surprisingly few errors occurred in the use of the cancellors — an occasional omission of time indicated — noted in Misida; an occasional inverted date, month or index letter in various offices; '10 for '01 in the Mellieha, Tarxien, Zurrice, cancellation of 1901; and strangest of all, FE in the place of a time index in Zabbar cancellations on a  $\frac{1}{2}$ d adhesive used on January 15th.

*(To be concluded in the next issue).*

## ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

The editor is grateful to those members who have kindly either produced their own articles or sought out articles of interest for this edition of the Newsletter. It is preferred that the articles are not more than 300 words unless it is intended that the articles be serialised.