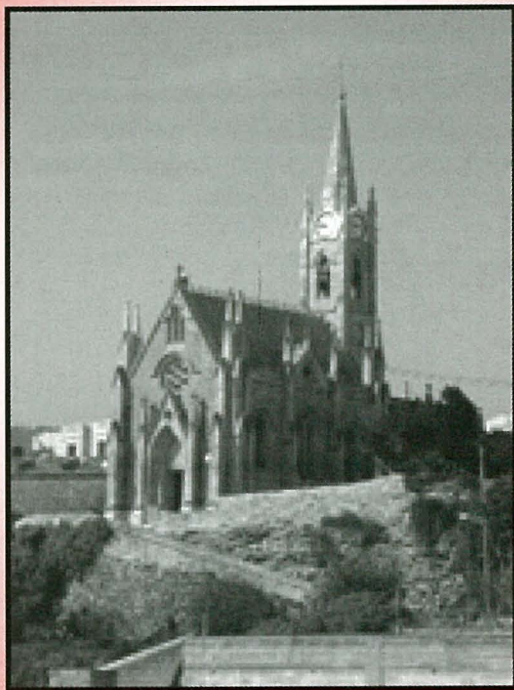




April - June 2008

No.32 - 2/2008

[www.stamps-gozo.org](http://www.stamps-gozo.org)



**GOZO  
PHILATELIC  
SOCIETY**

*Newsletter*

# Għal Kull Servizz Bankarju



**AKTAR VALUR  
BIEX TIXTRI  
JEW TIBNI  
DAREK**

**BOV Homelink**  
success



**Aghze!**  
int u nnota  
d-differenzal

**BOV Notice Account**

**306090**



**BOV TeenSaver Account**

It-tfaddil li jikber malajr daqs it-fal tieghek



**BOV Savings Plan**

**Il-pjan ta' tfaddil b'bonus!**

**BOV**

[www.bov.com](http://www.bov.com) e-mail: [customercare@bov.com](mailto:customercare@bov.com)

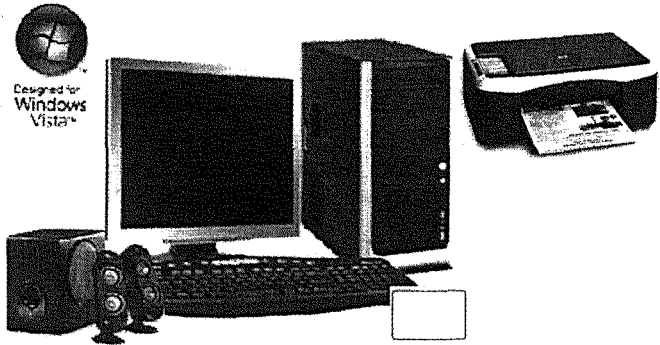
## Front Cover:

- The Gothic-style Chapel dedicated to Our Lady Of Lourdes situated at Ghajnsielem Gozo.
- 14c stamp - depicting Our Lady of Lourdes Church in the background - from a set of a definitive set which was issued on 9th December 1991 commemorating the Natural and Artistic Heritage of the Maltese Islands.

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I enclose annual membership fee for €5.00

.....

Signature

Date

Being under 16, I enclose €2.00 for Junior membership. (Date of Birth.....)

.....

Signature

Date

Introduced by..... Member No .....

I acknowledge receipt of membership application from

.....

with relative fee of .....

An official receipt and membership card will be issued later.

.....

(signed obo Gozo Philatelic Society)

Date



**GPS NEWSLETTER**  
**Quarterly Organ**  
**of**  
**THE GOZO PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

*First issued on 12th February 2000*

*Editor: Austin Masini*

Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the Committee's official policy.

Correspondence (and material for publication) should be addressed to: Editor, GPS, PO Box 10, VCT 1000, Gozo, Malta.

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**CONTENTS**

**No. 32 — 2/2008**

GPS Diary (32)	<i>Antoine Vassallo</i>	2
Gozitan Machine Cancellations	<i>George Vella</i>	3
Australian Malta (11)	<i>John Vassallo</i>	5
Maltapost Cards Numbering	<i>George Vella</i>	6
Malta Overseas (5)	<i>Antoine Vassallo</i>	7
St George Preca - A Phil. Tribute	<i>Antoine Vassallo</i>	8
Where in the World?! (23)	<i>Antoine Vassallo</i>	10
Promoting Gozo through Philately	<i>Etienne Vella</i>	12
Stamp Terms (23)	<i>Emanuel Vella</i>	14
Script by Script (23)	<i>Antoine Vassallo</i>	16
E & O not E (18)	<i>Antoine Vassallo</i>	17
Beg. Sect. - The Hobby of Stamp Coll.	<i>Anton V Said</i>	18
Valuable Stamps	<i>Lina Gauci</i>	20
Posthaste (5)	<i>Antoine Vassallo</i>	21

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**GOZO PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

***Founded on 3rd September 1999***

For "the promotion of the hobby"

"the provision of a point of reference" and "co-ordination"

*Postal address: PO Box 10, VCT 1000, Gozo, Malta.*

*email address: www.stamps-gozo.org*

## GPS DIARY (32)

*Antoine Vassallo (Secretary)*

**24<sup>th</sup> February 2008:** Monthly Members meeting at Victoria Scouts HQ.

**29<sup>th</sup> February 2008:** Committee meeting which discussed future activities.

**22<sup>nd</sup> March 2008:** Overseas member John Vassallo brings over part of his award-winning collection, thus permitting us to resume the “Australian Malta” series. (see page 5)

**30<sup>th</sup> March 2008:** Monthly Members meeting at Victoria Scouts HQ.

**12<sup>th</sup> April 2008:** Committee Meeting discusses participation during GOZO 1 2 3 4.

**27<sup>th</sup> April 2008:** Monthly Members meeting at Victoria Scouts HQ.

The Nottinghamshire Philatelic Society Winter 2008 Newsletter quotes our Newsletter.

**Erratum:** Please note that Daniel Calleja was shown as David Calleja in the list of Committee members in the 19<sup>th</sup> January entry in Diary 31.

Please note that members can contact the Secretary for free temporary loan of various philatelic publications - a list will be shown in a future issue.

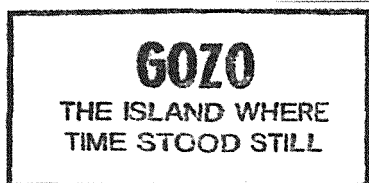
When sending by post, use only cheques drawn on Maltese banks (or Money Orders) or mint Euro Malta stamps to pay your subscription or acquire items shown.

Members can acquire a copy of our Statute (approved during the 5<sup>th</sup> AGM) by contacting the Secretary – it can also be downloaded from our Website.

**Gozitan Machine Cancellations**

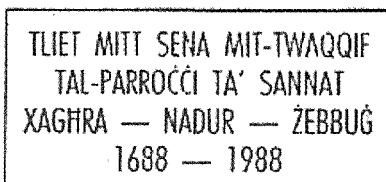
George Vella

Like handstamps, machine cancellations are official Maltapost cancellations bearing a slogan and cancelled by a machine for a week on outgoing envelopes. These are usually ordered by an individual against payment. Up to now ten have been issued that pertain to Gozo. Please note that images and sizes of cancellations are given approximately to scale due to smearing in the process of cancelling.



1. [218] GOZO THE ISLAND  
WHERE TIME STOOD STILL  
Used from 19 July 1984, 86,  
87, 88, 89, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93,  
94, & 95

Size: 23x48 mm



2. [276] TLIET MITT SENA  
MIT-TWAQQIF TAL-PAROĊĊI  
TA' SANNAT XAGHRA-  
NADUR-ZEBBUĠ 1688-1988

Used from 25-28 Apr. 1988

Size: 21x50 mm



3. [278] TLIET MITT SENA  
MIT-TWAQQIF TAL PAROĊĊA  
SANTA MARIA TAL-QALA  
1688-1988

Used from 4-7May 88

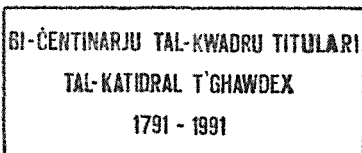
Size: 21x50 mm



4. [362] NGĦOŻŻU WIRT  
GĦAWDEX SAJF 1991

Used from 8-13 July 91

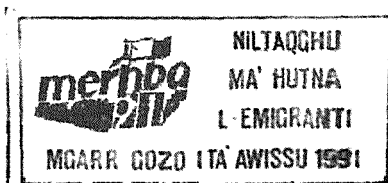
Size: 21x47 mm



5. [365] BI-ĊENTINARJU  
TAL-KWADRU TITULARI TAL-  
KATIDRAL T'GĦAWDEX 1791-  
1991

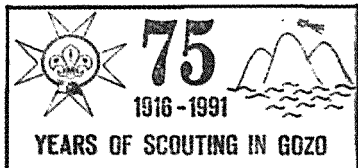
Used from 22-27 July 1991

Size: 20x48 mm



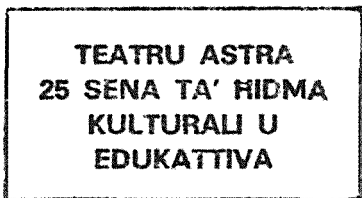
6. [366] NILTAQQHU MA' HUTNA L-EMIGRANTI MGARR GOZO 1 TA' AWISSU 1991

Used from ad-31 July & 1-3 Aug. 1991  
Size: 22x48 mm



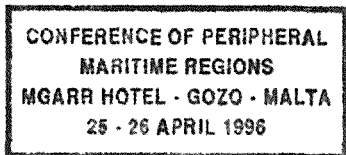
7. [373] 75 / 1916-1991 YEARS OF SCOUTING IN GOZO

Used from 4-8 Nov. 1991  
Size: 22x46 mm



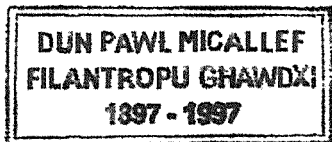
8. [397] TEATRU ASTRA 25 SENA TA' HIDMA KULTURALI U EDUKATIVA

Used from 18-23 Jan.93  
Size: 25x48 mm



9. [427] CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS MGARR HOTEL - GOZO - MALTA 25-26 APRIL 1996

Used from 25-26 Apr. 1996  
Size: 20x45 mm



10. [440] DUN PAWL MICALLEF FILANTROPU GHAWDXI

Used from 27 Jan. to 1 Feb 1997  
Size: 19x43 mm

*Ref.: JB Catalogue Of Malta Stamps, 2006 page 172  
Numbers in brackets refer to catalogue numbers.*



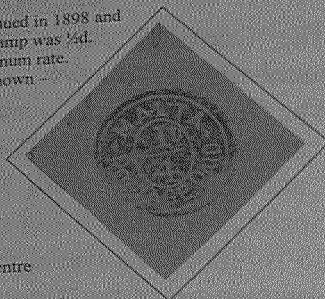
## Australian MALTA (11)

*resuming this series of glimpses at pages from  
the prize-winning collection built up by  
John Vassallo, GPS member in Australia*

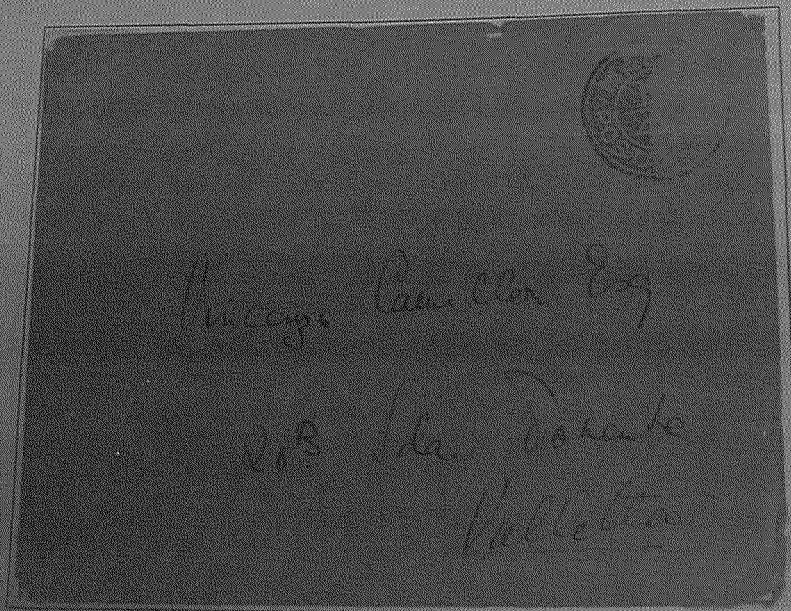
### The 1898 – 1900 POSTAGE PAID

Free delivery of Newspapers within the islands was discontinued in 1898 and replaced by a fee of 1/4d - 'a farthing'. But there lowest stamp was 1/4d. A handstamp was introduced for this prepayment of the minimum rate. Two Intaglio Type "POSTAGE PAID" handstamps are known with either an Oval or Circular centre.

These handstamps were discontinued with the issue of the first 1/4d adhesive stamp issued for this purpose on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1901. These handstamps were also used in 1924-25 prior to the introduction of the new double-ring Handstamps in 1925.



Oval Centre



Circular Centre

**Maltapost Cards:  
Correction Of Card Numbering**

George Vella

Collectors PLEASE NOTE

**Maltapost Occasion Cards**

The Occasion cards issued by Maltapost have irregular numbering as follows:

The 'Europe Counts' card issued on 12-6-2004 is an Occasion card No. 10 and not Postcard No.10 as it says at the back. Card No. 14 is '40th Anniversary of the Malta Philatelic Society'. Yet No. 14 is repeated on both Bishops' cards. No. 15 is '100th Anniversary of Scouting', while No. 18 is '150th Anniversary of the use of Adhesives in Malta'. So Nos. 16 & 17 do not exist.

**Maltapost Postcards**

The Postcards issued by Maltapost have irregular numbering as follows:

Card No. 14 is 'Birds in Malta'. Yet No. 14 is repeated on the 'Cacti and Succulents' card.

*You are all invited to contribute to this, **our** periodical*

Members are encouraged to send comments and suggestions, as well as other contributions for publication (about your collection and experience, about postal history and stamp subjects etc, etc). Because of our numerous foreign members, the language should preferably be English; but a summary in Maltese could be added to an item - in any case the editorial board can translate.

We also welcome letters asking for help regarding stamp identification etc. Anything published will merit a philatelic gift! And Juniors will receive a memento in any case!

## MALTA OVERSEAS

### *local connections on foreign stamps (5)*

*(Antoine Vassallo)*

The **Vatican** records all papal visits abroad through stamp issues - this custom was confirmed on both occasions that John Paul II came to Malta.

His first visit was in May 1990; on the second day (the 26<sup>th</sup>) he stayed for a few hours in Gozo, the highlight being Mass in the square outside the Sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady of Ta' Pinu. This is surely Gozo's best-known church, built around a centuries-old chapel from whose altarpiece depicting her Assumption an Gharb spinster (Karmni Grima) heard her call in June 1883. It is worthwhile to note that this painting (by Amadeo Perugino in 1619) was the subject of the 12c value in Malta's 1988 Religious Commemorations set. And the Basilica was in fact chosen to represent the Pope's visit to our country on the 1500 lire stamp (incorrectly "isola di Malta")



issued as part of a five-value set on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1991. Designed by E Donnini and printed at I.P.Z.S. (Rome), they showed the pope's travels outside Italy during 1990.

Pope John Paul's 2001 visits were covered in a three-value set printed by Cartor and issued on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002. His short stay in Malta, again in May, was notable for the beatification ceremony of our first Blessed but it was actually part of a voyage ("on St Paul's footsteps") which also included Greece and Syria. This is obvious from the 41c stamp itself which simply carries his photo and these countries' names (in the language - and script - of each).



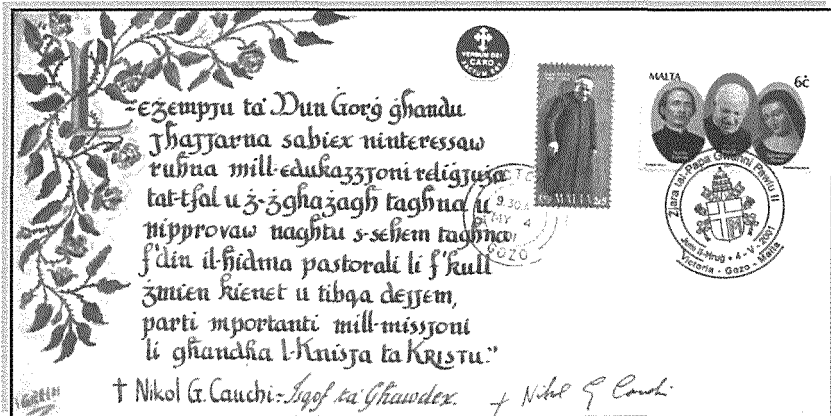
There is probably no real need to add that Malta's postal authorities commemorated these two papal visits too!

a Philatelic Tribute to

St George Preca

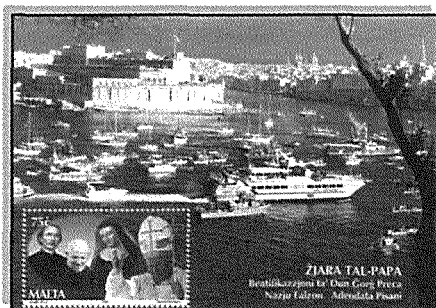
(*Antoine Vassallo*)

Maltapost's 2007 set (designed by Edward Pirotta) celebrating the canonization of Malta's first saint was not the only philatelic depiction of *Dun Gorg* (as he remains popularly known amongst us). In fact a simple 2c5 stamp, designed by Raymond Pitre', had already been issued to commemorate his birth centenary in 1980. The artist used one of the very few existing clear "portrait" photos of this priest who, in his humility, avoided any photographer – it was taken by stealth during the ceremony of the laying of the first stone of the Blata l-Bajda Headquarters of the Society of Christian Doctrine (which complex includes the Miraculous Medal chapel shown as background on the 2007 set).



He was of course the founder of the *Muzew* (the Maltese version of the acronym MUSEUM), the "prophetical" structure through which he trained the laity to become "professional" catechists. Its centenary was honoured through

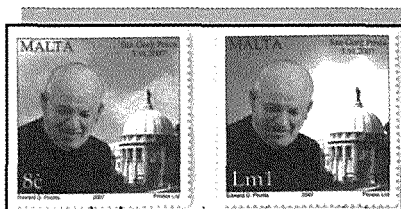
the 9c stamp among the 2007 Anniversaries set (besides an earlier handstamp - in fact various handstamps exist connected with the "Precan" theme). This organization was instrumental in introducing various traditions, mostly connected with Yuletide. So it is not surprising that quite a few Christmas sets feature them. For example the three 1981 values depict a crib, the Baby Jesus procession and the boy's sermon. These characteristic aspects (together with *bambini* statuettes) of a local Christmas were also included in other sets: 1977, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2004.



*Dun Gorg* was among three Maltese beatified during Pope John Paul's second visit to Malta - in May 2001 - and so he of course appears prominently in the set - designed by Joseph Mizzi - issued on 4<sup>th</sup>

May: on both the 6c and 75c (miniature sheet) stamps.

I should further note that a silver reproduction of the LM1 Canonization stamps was issued by Maltapost (in collaboration with Lombard Bank - now its majority owner - through a subsidiary). Moreover Gozitan Mgr Alfred Xuereb



(now assistant private secretary to His Holiness) presented, on behalf of Maltapost (and Malta's bishops), a gold replica to Pope Benedict on this auspicious occasion. One final

comment: innumerable special cards and covers have been produced; so it is probably impossible to acquire everything!

## Where in the World ?! (23)

(Antoine Vassallo)

### Stamp Issuers Past and Present

*Haute-Volta* = Upper Volta.

*Haute-Senegal & Nigël* = Upper Senegal.

**Hawaii:** Pacific islands (kingdom) with own stamps 1851-1899, now one of the USA.

**Hebrides** see New Hebrides.

**Heilungchang** see Manchuria.

**Hejaz:** Kingdom in the Arabian peninsula with stamps from 1916 to 1925 when joined with Nejd.

**Hejaz-Nejd:** Kingdom in the Arabian peninsula with stamps from 1926 to 1932 when renamed Saudi Arabia.

*Helena:* United States civil war provisionals in 1861.

**Heligoland:** North Sea island with stamps from 1867 when British colony until 1890 when given to Germany; Hamburg agency (*Helgoland*) 1859-67.

*Hellas* = Greece.

*Helvetia* and *Helvetica* = Switzerland.\

**Hermosillo:** Mexico civil war provisionals in 1914.

**Herzegovina, Hercegovina** = Bosnia.

**Herruhut:** German town issue 1945.

*Herzogthun* = Schleswig.

*H H Nawab Shah* = Bhopal.

**HIROSHIMA:** Separate stamps for this Japanese prefecture were issued from 1989.

**Hoi-Hau:** French and Indo-Chinese (*Hoi Hao*) Pos in China 1901-22.

**HOKKAIDO:** Separate stamps for this Japanese prefecture were issued from 1989.

**Holkar** = Indore.

**Holland** = Netherlands.

**Holstein:** German state with own stamps 1864-7.

**Honda:** Colombian 1896 surcharge provisional.

**HONDURAS:** Central American republic with stamps from 1866.

**Honduras:** see British Honduras.

**HONG KONG:** British colony with stamps from 1862; now a region of China but still with own stamps; Japanese occupation issues 1945.

**Horta:** Portuguese island in the Azores with own stamps 1892-1905.

**Hrvatska** = Croatia.

**Ht Senegal-Niger** = Upper Senegal.

**Huacho:** Peru 1884 provisionals.

*(to be continued)*

***Bold italic*** = Inscriptions;

**BOLD CAPITALS** = Current Issuers;

**Bold** = Former Issuers.

*(Since it is obviously impossible to be completely exhaustive, you are encouraged to bring any gaps to my notice!)*

## PROMOTING GOZO THROUGH PHILATELY

### Our Lady of Lourdes chapel at Ghajnsielem

*(Etienne Vella)*

When one is coming to Gozo from Malta by ferry, to land at Mgarr harbour, the individual sees a breath taking view. Perched beautifully on the promontory overlooking the harbour he sees, poised marvelously in front of him a gothic-style chapel. This chapel, immediately attracts his attention.

This chapel was featured on at least two stamps. The 5c commemorating the European Artistic Heritage of the Maltese Islands on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1991, and the 14c definitive of the Natural and Artistic Heritage of the Maltese islands on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1991.



This chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, is at Ghajnsielem. This is the village one arrives to, as soon as he disembarks from the ferry at Mgarr harbour. The word Ghajnsielem means Salem spring. Salem was a popular, personal Arab name at the time the Arabs were in Malta and it is possible that a spring belonging to Salem was situated at the end of Wied Simirat, the valley that terminates in the present Pjazza tad-Dehra at the centre of the village. The name is first recorded as hain selem in a notarial act drawn by Joannes Domenico Formosa on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1587.

The village centre is the area around the former Ghajn Sielem at the end of Simirat valley. At the beginning of the twentieth century development began at ta' Gliex, along the Mgarr - Nadur Road, when the Franciscan Minors came to Ghajnsielem on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1899 and took up residence in a house on that road. Later on, in 1901, the Franciscan built a church and monastery. The church is dedicated to Saint Anthony of



Padua, and is the first church in Gozo dedicated to this Saint. The project was designed, executed and completed by 1905 and the church was blessed on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1906 and consecrated on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1912. The area of Ghajnsielem formed part of Nadur. It became a parish in 1855.



When the knights of Saint John were in Malta they had harboured the idea of building a new town that would replace the Citadel as the new city of Gozo. They were convinced that the construction of this city would augment the safety of the Gozo-Malta channel, increase the commerce between the two

islands and attract new settlers to Gozo. The project of this city was approved by the council of the knights of Saint John in 1722. Yet the project had to be shelved due to lack of funds. In 1749, soon after the appointment of Bailiff Jacques Francois de Chambray (1687-1756) as Governor of Gozo he offered to finance the construction of the fortifications of the new city, on the promontory overlooking Mgarr harbour, known as Ras it-Tafal. Fort Chambray, as it became to be known, is the masterpiece of the military engineer Louis Francois D 'Aubigne de Tigne. Work began almost immediately after, although consultations were undertaken to improve the original plans. Until his death on 8th April 1756, he had spent 40,000 Scudi on the project and he bequeathed one fifth of his property to secure the completion of the fortifications. By 1760 Fort Chambray as the new town was spontaneously called, was ready to attract and receive settlers. It was planned that in the town a Governor's palace, a parochial church and an administrative building were to be built. Besides, each building block was to have a central courtyard to shelter more people in case of an emergency. The town however never materialized. The knights did however built a two storey barrack block with eight very large rooms, four on the ground floor and another four over them. When the British came to Malta in 1800 they took over the fort.

*(continued on page 23)*

**stamp terms used in PHILATELY (23)***(Emanuel Vella)*

**Major Varieties:** These are variations of importance, either in type, colour, design or format from the basic design and which the serious collector would feel he must include in his collection.

**Malayan Postal Union:** Stamps thus inscribed are Postage Dues. These were first issued in 1936 for use in Straits Settlements, Nagri Sembilan, Pakang, Perak and Selanger. After the last World War similar stamps were used throughout the Malayan Federation and in Singapore until recently.

**Malta Key type:** The design of King George V 1914 series of Malta was used for several of the Crown colonies and is thus referenced as a key type.

**Malta Ticks:** The 1885, 2½d blue of Malta was surcharged 'One Penny' in 1902. Once on each pane, the error 'One Penny' appeared, and to counter forgery, the Postmaster of Valletta ticked all the remaining un-surcharged sheets in the upper left hand corner in red ink.

**Maltese Cross:** Obliterations made to the Maltese Cross design were used on the 1840 Great Britain stamps, the 1d black, and were the first cancellations used on British stamps. They vary in details as they were hand cut. They were in use from 1840 to 1844. The London stamps bore central numbers, from 1 to 12 and red ink was at first used, but was changed to black when the penny red was introduced; there are, however, records of blue, magenta

/cont.....⇒

and yellow inks having been employed, but they are rare. The Maltese cross as a watermark was introduced on the 5s Value of G.B. 1867-63. It is also incorporated and forms part of the motif of many of the stamps of Malta, the 1886, 5s, value has 7 in its design. The Victory issue of Malta 1946, bear both the Maltese and the George Cross, the latter having been awarded to the Island for its war services, courage and bravery. As a watermark it was used on most Maltese stamps from 1964 (European Congress of Catholic Doctors) to 1999 (Christmas). Afterwards the Malta Post Office used un-watermarked paper to 2004. Then from the Olympic Games set of 2004 to date we still use Maltese Cross watermarked paper.

N.B. From 1964 to 1999, the only sets of Malta printed on un-watermarked paper were the sets of Dante Alighieri (1969) and the IV Centenary of the foundation of Valletta (1966).

***Manoel Keotype:*** The 1910 portrait stamps of King Manoel (February 1908 to October 1910) of Portugal, with republican O/P was in use as a colonial Keotype for some time after his abdication.

***Map Backs:*** Stamps of Latvia issued on 18th December 1918, were printed on the backs of German ordinance-survey war maps.

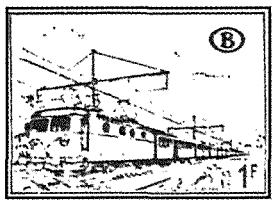
***Map Stamps:*** Maps have a very wide use as designs for stamps, and can form a most interesting 'subject' collection. Canada's 1898 Christmas British Empire map stamp is a popular item; while the controversial map stamps that were used as 'ammunition' in the 1948 Antarctic 'war' deserve special attention. The South American republics have produced members of such map designs, and they have always a popular appeal to the average collector. *(to be continued)*

## Script by Script (23)

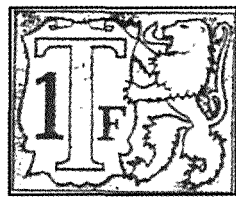
(Antoine Vassallo)

*This regular space features stamps without any identifiable name in "latin" script or providing some similar difficulty.*

**Belgium** was among the first issuers of adhesive stamps: in 1849. The early designs can be recognized as "Belgian" through the prominent presence of King Leopold I (or the heraldic lion) since the country name is not usually very apparent.



Various later Railway Parcel stamps have a capital B in an oval, at most. 3 (1968)



Most Postage Dues are "nameless" too but other words can help. Their last design (which appeared in 1966) is however completely "anonymous", showing just the value – again the heraldic lion does help identification.

## E & O not E (18)

(Antoine Vassallo)

*Glances at stamps with design or printing mistakes  
(well-known or obscure)*

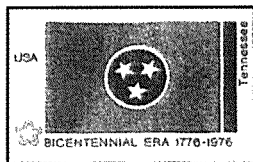
Among the numerous stamps issued by the United States to commemorate the 1976 Revolution Bicentennial there was a sheet of 50 different 13c stamps showing the state flags, arranged *se-tenant* in the order they joined the Union. One of these (in the top half, since this state was the sixteenth – on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1796) caused an immediate uproar: the orientation of the Tennessee stars was incorrect – upside down.



A representative in the state House (Ed Williams who was in fact a member of the American Philatelic Society) even introduced a resolution calling for the US Postal Service to issue a corrected version “and recall all such stamps already issued”. It was adopted by the legislature and signed by the governor; a copy was then sent to the postmaster-general.

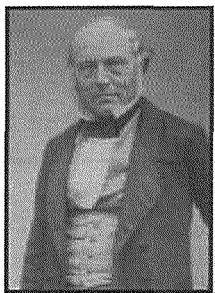
A press release from the USPS later explained that the design (by Walt Reed) had been based on the description in “Tennessee Code Annotated”. But it seems that no Tennessee officer (such as the official keeper of the flag – the secretary of state – or even the governor) had been contacted during this stage. As a matter of fact it does seem that an inexact colour plate was simply reproduced from “Living Webster Dictionary”.

The Memphis Stamp Collectors Society went so far as to sponsor the preparation of an essay portraying the flag correctly. This was then used on the front cover of the programme for Memphex’76 (90th annual convention of the APS, held in this major Tennessee city).



An official corrected flag has not yet been issued but this gap should be filled in the coming months through the Flags of Our Nation series. This flag was designed by LeRoy Reeves (of the Third Regiment, Tennessee Infantry) and officially adopted by the Tennessee State Legislature on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1905.

The geometric design symbolizes the geographical and cultural heritage of the state, the colours being those of the national flag of The USA. Moreover white is taken to symbolize purity, blue the love that Tennesseans feel for their state and red the fact that - in times of war and peace – they are true-blooded Americans. Mr. Reeves continues to explain that the three stars represent the three sharply contrasting geographical divisions of the state, bound together indissolubly by the endless circle of the blue field.

**BEGINNERS section****The Hobby of Stamp Collecting***(Anton V Said)***Sir Rowland Hill**

Stamp collections started when Sir Rowland Hill introduced the first postage stamp in 1840. It represented the beautiful portrait of Queen Victoria. Apart from the fact that people in those days considered these stamps to be small pieces of art, yet they were also popular because they signified the end of a scandalous system under which such high rates were charged for postage, that many people had to save up to post a letter. Then some people started to save the new stamps simply as a means of decoration. Ladies used to cool themselves by fans all covered with "Penny Blacks", the original 1d letter stamps. People used these stamps also to cover screens in their dining rooms. Another man boasted that he had covered a whole wall with them!

But then a few people were fascinated by one tiny detail of the stamps, the tiny detail which began the hobby of philately. At the bottom corners of the stamps were small capital letters. These were different in every stamp throughout the sheet in which they were printed.

**One Penny Black**

People began to wager each other that they could find three with the same letter in a row, or in a square block of sixteen. Others were more ambitious and started collecting the whole sheet and mounted these stamps in albums. The arrival of the "Two penny Blues" provided variety and so the hobby of stamp collecting was born. Other nations copied Britain, and after ten years there were few major countries in the world which had no stamps of their own.



**Two Penny Blue**

In those days the total output of stamps throughout the world came to, perhaps a hundred a year. One must remember that the printing process was very slow in those days.

With few new issues to worry about, stamp collectors of more than hundred years ago could safely collect the stamps of the whole world. To-day to keep pace with new issues alone, besides its time consuming, a collector would have to spend fortunes.

In view of this, stamp collectors, especially beginners should be wise enough to choose one special branch of philately and limit their interest principally to it.

*(Ref: Instructions to young stamp collectors - Robert Batman)*  
*(to be continued)*

## Valuable stamps

*presented by Lina Gauci*

### Post Office Mauritius, 1847



In 1847, the Governor of the island of Mauritius, a British Colony located in the Indian Ocean, decided to issue the colony's first postal stamps. A local watchmaker from the capital city of Port Louis was awarded a contract to produce two stamps - a one penny stamp and a two pence stamp. In the course of preparing to print the stamps, the watchmaker erroneously engraved the words "Post Office" instead of the correct words "Post Paid" on the stamps. By the time the error was discovered, over 200 copies of the stamps had already been printed and sold.

It is estimated that fewer than 30 individual copies of these stamps have survived.

### U.S. Franklin Z-Grill, 1867



This stamp is the rarest of all U.S. stamps, as only 2 copies are known to exist. These stamps depict a portrait of Benjamin Franklin and are embossed with a "Z-Grill" - a pattern of tiny squares embossed into the paper and visible on the back of the stamps. The purpose of the "Z-Grill" was to permit the cancelling ink to be absorbed into the stamp paper, thus preventing those who wanted to cheat the post by washing out cancellation marks.

The use of "Z-Grills" was not found to be practical and the practice was soon discontinued.



## **POST HASTE (5)**

*continuing an irregular series about the interesting  
Story of the Post*

*(Antoine Vassallo)*

### **Russian origins**

Letters written on birch bark have been found around Novgorod (one of the oldest Russian cities, on the Volkhov River) dating from the first half of the eleventh century. They are of a personal and commercial nature and would seem to confirm the existence of an organized postal system - the earliest known postal service anywhere in Europe. Letter carriers would probably have travelled by horse or cart – or even by river boats. Thirteenth century rules for the mail carriers have survived and we also have the detail that military information could travel without limitation of cost or distance.

Russian colonization expanded in later centuries and so the postal service grew too. Post roads were established and under Ivan the Great (late fifteenth century) the postal department got its own centralized control and can be said to have acquired an “official” basis. It is reported that by 1526 mail could travel up to 125 miles per day. During this century a new office (*Yamskoi Prikaz*) organizing the post villages was established – and a tax was raised to pay for the service. This “post-coachman’s office” was also responsible for recruitment for manning the coaches. A century later postmen, wearing a special uniform and chosen from literate coachmen, delivered the mail.

Most probably this was the best organized postal service in the continent in the mid seventeenth century. 1668 saw the introduction of a statute of international postal

communications, connecting Moscow with the Baltic and, later, Poland. Interestingly, this foreign service was maintained separately and charges were very high (2 roubles was quoted for a 1698 letter to Siberia). Peter the Great reorganized the post, closing a good proportion of the internal service; a main post office was opened in St Petersburg, the new capital. A standard postage rate for the whole of Russia, together with a single postal service, was established in 1783 (under Catherine II).

The first Russian postal markings appeared in 1766, initially showing the name of the town on foreign mail. At first French was used, with the introduction later of German and Russian bilingual wording.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russia had almost five hundred post offices and over five thousand officials. The volume of letters increased, with the reduction in postal rates. Postmarks, in many shapes and colours, began to show the date. Although efficiency was evident, the enormous distances made overall control difficult. So contracts were made with private firms to establish additional local services where required.

With the construction of railways and the greater use of river steamers, the old post roads slowly fell into disuse. Further developments included the independence of the post in the 1830s, after being transferred to a new ministry in 1819. In 1845 prepaid envelopes appeared. Preparatory work for stamps (finally issued at the beginning of 1858) began in 1850.

*with acknowledgements to Rossiter & Flower's Stamp Atlas*

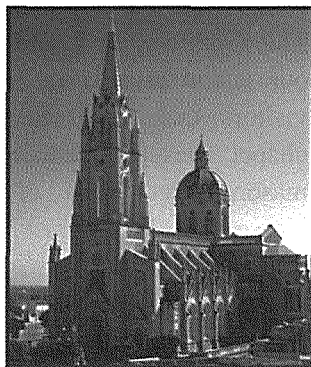
### *Promoting Gozo through Philately*

*(from page 13)*

At first they used it for the French prisoners of war, and eventually stationed part of their troops in Gozo within. The British vacated Fort Chambray in 1928. From January 1934 to 1979 Fort Chambray served as a mental hospital. Today it is being developed as a tourist complex and housing units.

The first chapel was built at the centre of Ghajnsielem in the second decade of the nineteenth century. It was blessed on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1820 and dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto. The first vicar was Dun Guzepp Xerri, who was succeeded by Dun Frangisk Schembri and in 1842 by Dun Anton Cauchi. The population had grown considerably and Dun Anton succeeded to convince the Archbishop of Malta Publius Sant to erect a new parish. It was officially established as a parish on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1855. The original church was enlarged twice, in 1867 and 1877.

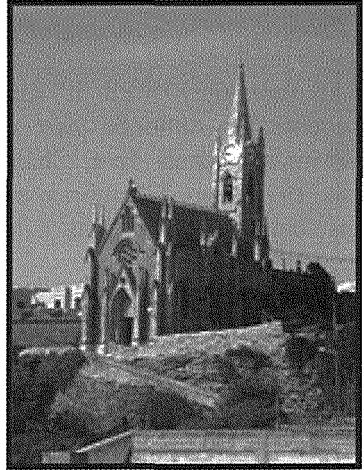
By the beginning of the twentieth century the old church was proving to be too small for the growing population. So it was decided to build a new church. Work on the site began on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1922 and the foundation stone was laid on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1924. Because of several problems the project of the church took a long time to be completed. In fact the dome was ready on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1974 and the belfry was completed on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1979. On 27<sup>th</sup> August of the previous year the new parish church had finally been opened and blessed.



*(to page 24 →)*

Ghajnsielem has several chapels but the only chapel featured on stamps is that of Our Lady of Lourdes.

On 11<sup>th</sup> February 1858 the Immaculate Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous at Massabielle in the vicinity of Lourdes, in France. Devotion for the Blessed Virgin of Lourdes spread all over the world. In Gozo the devotion increased when a statue of the Virgin Mary of Lourdes, sculpted in stone by Antonio Busuttill, was placed in a natural cavity in the rocky cliff overlooking Mgarr harbour. Devotees began making offerings to raise a chapel. So on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1888 the foundation stone was laid on the promontory. The Gothic-style Lourdes chapel, overlooking the main port of our island attracts the attention of locals and the thousands of visitors that travel to Gozo every day. The designer of the chapel was Emmanuel Galizia and it was built by master mason Wigi Vella of Zebbug. The chapel was opened and blessed on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1893, by Bishop Pietro Pace.



This chapel has a steeply pitched roof, lance windows, buttresses topped with pinnacles and a square tower topped by a slender spire. The tower has a set of five bells, and at its top, immediately under the spire, there is a clock with four dials which are lit at night.

*References: Ghajnsielem (the gate way to Gozo) by Joseph Bezzina.*

## FOR SALE

- Capitulation of the French Special hand stamp cards (set of 2). Lm1.00c  
€2.33
- A commemorative Registered Cover from Victoria Gozo Post Office to commemorate two Gozitan Patriots namely:- Sir Adrian Dingli & Arch Saverio Cassar. Lm2.00c  
€4.66
- A Commemorative Card showing Guzeppi Grech known as Zeppu Kola, the last owner of the Xaghra Windmill doing maintenance work. Lm1.00c  
€2.33
- Card to commemorate the 200th Death Anniversary of Gozitan patriot Archpriest Saverio Cassar. Lm0.50c  
€1.16  
Limited Edition of 50.
- Card to commemorate Holy Week Traditional Celebrations. Lm0.50c  
€1.16  
Limited Edition of 100.
- Special card issued to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The card is cancelled with the special handstamp issued from Victoria Gozo Post Office. Lm0.50c  
€1.16  
Limited Edition of 100. (very few left)
- Registered cover commemorating the issue of Comino Tower stamp. Cancelled at Ghajnsielem sub post office with the first day of issue hand stamp Lm0.75c  
€1.75  
Limited Edition of 75.
- Card to commemorate the 7th Gozo Philatelic Exhibition (3 to 12 November 2006) including the 8c Christmas stamp and cancelled with the Christmas First Day of Issue hand stamp Lm0.75c  
€1.75  
Limited Edition of 130.
- Special card issued on the occasion of the TOY STAMP issue. Cancelled on the first day of issue at Xaghra Post Office featuring the "POMSKIZILLIOUS MUSEUM OF TOYS" found in Xaghra Gozo. Lm0.75c  
€1.75  
Limited Edition of 75.



## FOR SALE

- Special “In Memory” card hand stamped at Gharb Sub Post Office on the occasion of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist held at Ta’ Pinu Shrine, for the repose of the soul and in memory of Mr Anthony Fenech, a great philatelist and a sincere friend of the Gozo Philatelic Society. Limited edition of 160. Lm0.75c  
€1.75
- Card in the form of First Day of Issue of the re-printed 1c stamp from the 2004 Definitive Flowers set. This stamp was first issued in Gozo on the 19th October 2006. Limited edition of 183. Lm0.25c  
€0.58
- Cover issued on the occasion of the Christmas set stamp issue (2005) with a personalized stamp of Chev. Paul Camilleri Cauchi - the stamp set designer. These covers are individually signed by the artist himself. Limited edition of 130. Lm1.00c  
€2.33
- Card to commemorate the 50 years of Europe. Cancelled with the special handstamp issued for the occasion during the festivities held at Nadur Gozo. Limited edition of 75 cards. Lm1.00c  
€2.33
- Registered Hand Coloured cover to commemorate the issue of two stamps depicting Gozo Balconies (one at Victoria and the other at Gharb). The covers were hand stamped with the First Day of issue Post-Mark. Limited edition of 75 covers. Lm1.00c  
€2.33
- Card commemorating the GPS 8th Annual Exh. 2007 and the launching of the GPS website. Lm0.50c  
€1.16
- Set of two cards with first day of operation hand-stamp of the new Post Offices at Xlendi and St Lawrence. Lm1.00c  
€2.33
- Set of two registered covers with two Gozo Scenes Stamps (Xlendi and Mgarr) on their first day of issue Lm2.00c  
€4.66
- Malta stamps in mint condition are also available at 2/3 catalogue price.

*Those interested may contact:*

Mr Anthony Grech on Tel No. 21553338

### Members' Meetings

are held regularly on the last Sunday of the month:

27 April

25 May

29 June

from 9.00am to 11.00am

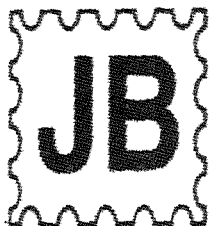
at Victoria Scouts HQ (Triq Santa Dminka).

exchange, purchase, information etc.

Entrance Free!

*Members meeting will be stopped during the three summer months i.e. July, August and September*

- Please note that members can contact the Secretary for free temporary loan of various philatelic publications - a list will be shown in a future issue.
- When sending by post, use only cheques drawn on Maltese banks (or Money Orders) or mint Malta Euro stamps to pay your subscription or acquire items shown. Stamps with values in old currency are not accepted.
- Membership fees include Newsletter delivery and so for overseas members is 12 Euro - they can use Money Orders or new currency notes.
- Members can acquire a copy of our Statute (approved during the 5<sup>th</sup> AGM) by contacting the Secretary – it can also be downloaded from our Website.
- Young members who will renew their membership for year 2008 will be given a token of free stamps. Now is the time to renew your membership.
- We also welcome letters asking for help regarding stamp identification etc. Anything published will merit a philatelic gift! And Juniors will receive a memento in any case!



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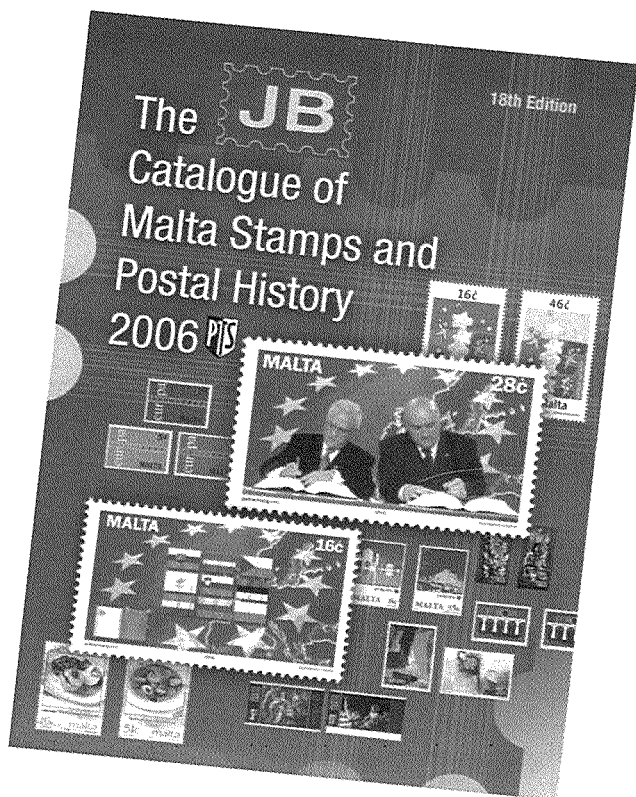
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