

April—June
No. 76—2019
www.stamps-gozo.org



100th Anniversary - St. Paul's 10/- Malta Stamp
Printed on Multiple Crown Block 'CA' Watermark Paper
1919 - 2019

The
Gozo Philatelic Society
Commemorates
the 100th Anniversary of the
appearance of the most expensive
Malta Postage Stamp



H.E. President George Vella's Oath of Office
Photo DOI-Clifton Fenech

**STOP
PRESS**

His Excellency has accepted to honour us
with his patronage – more details later.

Like us on

facebook





Collect Malta Postage Stamps

The Gozo Philatelic Society was founded on 3 September 1999
for the promotion of the hobby,
the provision of a point of reference and co-ordination.

Front cover. Card issued by the GPS to commemorate 100th Anniversary
of Malta's most expensive stamp – the 10/- St Paul's Shipwreck of 1919

GPS NEWSLETTER—Quarterly Organ of The Gozo Philatelic Society

First issued on the 12th February 2000 — Editor: Austin Masini — Issue No. 76 (2/2019)

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

Correspondence (and material for publication) should be addressed to:

The Editor, GPS, PO Box 10, VCT 1000, Gozo, Malta.

© All rights reserved. Requests for reproduction of contents should be addressed to the Secretary. *e-mail address: secretary@stamps-gozo.org*

CONTENTS.

G.P.S Diary	Antoine Vassallo	4
Is it true/a postmaster almost changed US history	Antoine Vassallo	5
A Penny Black story	Anthony Grech	6
Rembrandt's Artistic Philately (6)	Antoine Vassallo	8
In Memory of John Lander	Louis Bonello	11
Philatelic Centennials (23) - Faroes	Antoine Vassallo	12
In Memory of George Gauci	Louis Bonello	13
Promoting Gozo Through Philately: Gourgion Tower	Antoine Vassallo	14
GPS New Office opening days	Louis Bonello	16
An interesting item (Arvid Pardo)	Anthony Grech	17
E & O <u>not</u> E. (49) Canada	Antoine Vassallo	18
Not just paper (18)	Antoine Vassallo	20
Proofing and Designing	J.A. Mizzi MQR	21
Another Postal Saint - St Rufus	Antoine Vassallo	22
Malta Overseas (28)	Antoine Vassallo	24
A little piece of Malta maritime history	Anthony Grech	27
Stamp Number One	Anthony Grech	28
Celebrity Philatelists – President George Vella (14)	Antoine Vassallo.	30

Errata Corrige In article on 1844 sack I noted two typo errors which could give a different interpretation to what actually was meant.

A. On pg 24. para. 2 "1828 up to circa 1835" should read
"1828 up to circa 1853"

B. On pg 25. para. 1 line 4 "recognized Post Office" should read
"reorganized Post Office"

(71) *G.P.S. Diary*

Antoine Vassallo Gozo Philatelic Society Secretary

VO/0546



20 February 2019 Committee begins planning for 20th anniversary events

22 February Newsletter shelving installed in new office

6 March One of the GPS initiatives for this twentieth anniversary is a MaltaPost handstamp for the centenary of Malta's most expensive stamp: the "black Saint Paul". Anthony Grech, who designed the postmark, also produced a cover. (see front cover)

18 March New exhibit in Il-Ħaġar GPS showcase, in "*l-Ghid f'Għawdex*" Gozo Ministry initiative

20 March Committee continues discussing twentieth anniversary events

25 March Funeral of husband of long-time GPS committee member Lina Gauci. (see page 13)

19 April Death of Malta Study Circle President John Lander. (see page 11)

2 May Committee takes various decisions, including Exhibition title

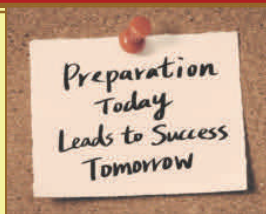
3 May New exhibit in Il-Ħaġar GPS showcase, in "Gozo Alive" Gozo Ministry initiative

3 May Agreement about GPS office signed

4 May GPS *Putirjal* office used for the first weekly Saturday open session

7 May His Excellency President George Vella accepts to give his patronage to the GPS.

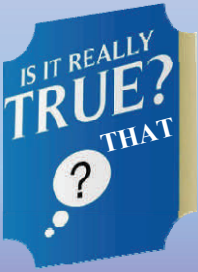
Please note that our publications are included in Malta University's External Research Collection and can be assessed on <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/24814>



The name decided by the Committee for November's Exhibition is, appropriately enough, **"20 Yrs"**.

More details will be announced later but this is wide enough to permit everyone's participation!





..a Postmaster almost changed US history. (13)

Antoine Vassallo

In 1848, the two dominant parties in the United States were the Democrats and the Whigs. In the early days of political parties, it was viewed as unseemly for candidates to attend their party's nominating conventions. Zachary Taylor, a hero of the Mexican-American War, was at his plantation in Louisiana (at Cypress Grove) during the Whigs' Philadelphia convention and almost failed to learn that he was their nominee for the Presidential

election.

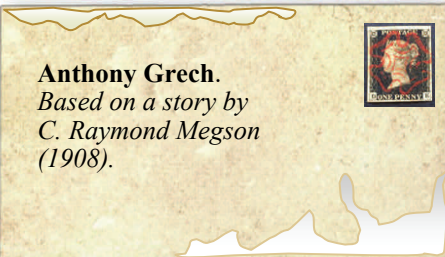
He was still a major general in the regular army: commander of the Western Command, in charge of all army troops west of the Mississippi. The practice of the time defined the headquarters of a command as being merely where the commander was – and so he could in the meantime still oversee the plantations he owned! Taylor simply set up a headquarters a few miles away, staffing it with a couple of aides and (probably) clerks, to keep his own schedule.

On 18 June the letter from the presiding officer of the convention (John M. Morehead), officially informing him of his nomination, arrived at the Baton Rouge post office. To everyone's surprise, Taylor did not reply for nearly a month. This delay created huge doubts: was he thinking of refusing? When he did reply, Zachary gracefully expressed his gratitude for the honour – but did not seem apologetic at all. He really seemed to show very limited interest in this development!

But the delay turned out to be the result of a misunderstanding between Taylor and the Baton Rouge postmaster: the future President had notified the official that he would no longer pay for letters on which postage was due. And the PM had initially just treated it as a “dead letter”! So this low-key employee was on the point of changing the history of the United States: Zachary Taylor was in fact elected as its twelfth President, closely winning over Lewis Cass.

However Taylor died in office, replaced (as required by the Constitution) by Vice President Millard Fillmore.





Anthony Grech.
*Based on a story by
 C. Raymond Megson
 (1908).*

This is my life
A PENNY BLACK STORY

Things tend to be destroyed when their period of usefulness is over and that is what I thought was going to be my destiny. But some do outlive that period. Sometimes they are forgotten for years in some obscure place, only to be re-discovered by accident

and are shown the light again. Well this is my story.

I was placed in a small old wooden box for years on end. There were some other things with me, a dried discoloured flower, an old watch, a lace handkerchief and other items that I was not interested in. The only thing that I liked was an old faded envelope with which I spent endless days. Although he was my friend and I liked him a lot and was strongly attached to him and he to me I could never love him. He was old and his face was creased, while I was still bright and fresh as on the day I was born. I know that he loved me and addressed me all the time. The faded dried flower told me that me some compliments, as beautiful impression. But impassioned. Now my the strange workings of several times. He even paid when he told me that I was a now, I feel rejuvenated and dark years are over. Such are Philately.

Although I am old by youth. But anyway this

I am British by my father was someone identity of my mother is me that it is also known it mean that my mother we were 240 identical sis-which means that I have Mary, Jane etc. They nick-Queen I must be because en a crown. I remember had in life as she was left



and line-engraved, I am loved is my story.

birth and have been told that called Rowland Hill but the unknown. It is a mystery for that I was born of a die. Could died at my/our birth? You see ters born on the same day, 239 sisters. There was Rose, named me as Queen and although I am plain I was giv-my sister Rose who lost all she for too long in cold water, I

remember Mary who died in fire. We were a very united family and we never had any pains, although some said that we were new 'panes', but probably that was a spelling error. The only time that we had to endure cruelty was when we were cut off apart from each other to continue our journey in the world. For some time we lived peacefully in a huge house in London. One day we were sent away, but this did not matter, since we were not going to be separated. Some of us did not like the idea that we were going to leave London, yet others, more adventurous, were looking forward to leave. During our voyage we were stacked in a kind of security prison so tightly packed that we thought that our circulation would stop. Yes we did cry and tears escaped, watermarking our white backs. One consol-



tion was that we knew that we were to do useful work in some kind of postal reform. I was born as a perfect specimen and wanted my work to be perfect to the letter. At last we were set free. Suddenly I was separated from my sisters and found myself in the hands of a big young man. I was lifted into the air and felt cold moisture at my back. I was placed on a corner of an envelope. Due to fear I tried to set me free, but received a heavy blow on my face. It felt that I was lost in space. I do not know for how long I was unconscious, but all of sudden I was kissed by sweet warm lips.

“Oh my darling” said a quiet female voice and I was so proud. Suddenly I realized that neither the kiss nor the nice words were addressed to me as I was tossed aside. She was interested in the letter, kissing it, blushing and kissing it again and again. I was glad that I brought delight to a young lady. She returned to me and the envelope again and placed around us a pink ribbon. We were placed on a small table above which hung a mirror. To my disgust I saw that my face was striped with red. My face was obliterated and I was marked for life, crossed for ever. I was so ashamed that I felt glad to be placed in an old wooden box hidden and forgotten.

For years and years I stayed there, crying for losing my freshness, cancelled forever.

Unexpectedly one dull and rainy day I was taken out of my tomb and handled lovingly by shaking old fingers. I was kissed, this time by white lips. A warm tear came down on me while a young voice broke the silence.

“Oh Granny, what are you looking for in that old box? Please may I have a look at the old stamps you told me about?” I was clutched abruptly by a warm young hand. “What a beauty! And a classic Maltese Cross postmark too, wow!” cried the gleeful voice of the young man. “Please Granny, please do give it to me” Brushing a tear from her bony cheeks.. “Take it my boy, but never part with it.”

I was carefully removed from my old friend the envelope. He had visibly aged. I was loved by youth and felt that I was to be only his. I was placed in an album where I met two of my sisters, one looking quite fresh and the other quite worn out.

My owner often brought friends of his to look at me. “Isn’t it a beauty?” He asked time and time again and a repeated answer was “A perfect gem! How I wish it was mine”

This time I knew that these comments were about me and I felt so proud.





REMBRANDT'S ARTISTIC PHILATELY towards the 350th death anniversary (6) Antoine Vassallo



In 1981 **Monaco** issued a set designed by R Baur to commemorate birth anniversaries of assorted personalities, including Rembrandt's 375th. The "Self-Portrait as a Young Man" from 1634 was chosen to be adapted. This Oil on wood, 62 x 54 cm in size, is at the *Galleria degli Uffizi* in Florence. The original half-length figure, depicted in a cap and *gorget*, shows the artist with a strong-willed expression but in an extremely natural pose.

The first Rembrandt stamp was issued in 1930 by, appropriately enough, the **Netherlands**. It was a simple monochrome set with a charity surtax (not shown on the stamp itself) to help *Vereniging Rembrandt* (the Rembrandt Association - the largest group of art patrons focusing on art and art acquisitions in the Netherlands). Jan Stuyters integrated and adapted two paintings, one of which has already been commented on in this series (The Syndics). In the foreground we see a Self-Portrait from 1661: an Oil on canvas (91 x 77 cm) at Amsterdam's *Rijksmuseum*.

The figure is identified as St Paul by the hilt of a sword (his traditional attribute) in the opening of his coat. A sheaf of papers, symbolizing the word of God, is also associated with St Paul. Critics note that the artist endeavoured to convey the emotion of the writer who desires to hearten the recipients of his epistles but is himself imprisoned and knows he will die by the sword. The mood is sombre, like the majority of the religious works of his late period.





The **Netherlands Antilles** celebrated Rembrandt's fourth birth centenary in 2006 through reproductions of details from his paintings: a block of four and a miniature sheet. I show a Self-Portrait painted when the artist was 22 years old. It's an Oil on wood (23 x 19 cm) from the *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam. This is a good example of the way early in his career he used the self-portrait to experiment with facial expressions and to explore the effect of light and shade.

The island of **Nevis** included a Rembrandt in a 1993 set to commemorate the bicentennial of the Louvre museum (in Paris). An Oil on wood (68 x 52 cm) from 1637 was chosen. Titled "Archangel Raphael Leaving the Family of Tobias", it shows the climatic scene from this Old Testament book when sight is regained miraculously through Raphael's guidance.



In 1971 **Nicaragua** issued a set of paintings referring to the ten commandments. Rembrandt was represented with three works, including "Joseph and Potiphar's Wife" for the VIth. This is a 1655 Oil on canvas (106 x 98 cm) housed at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, illustrating the Old Testament story (chapter 39 of the book of Genesis).



We can note how Rembrandt (probably not without the contribution of his workshop) has used light to emphasize the salient features as if on a stage - at the dramatic climax. Potiphar's wife seems to speak eloquently and nervously as she gestures towards Joseph's scarlet cloak at the foot of the bed. Joseph (standing in the shadows at the left) denies the accusation while - following the principles of Baroque painting - Potiphar (his hand resting uneasily on the shoulder of his wife) clearly shows his indecision and conflict of emotion.



In 1981 **Niger** issued a set of portraits by Rembrandt, including this old man (who may even make the viewer think of the artist himself). The costume and ornaments actually suggest some stage production! This painting is a 1651 Oil on canvas (79 x 76 cm) from the Devonshire Collection (at Chatsworth, in central England).

The island of **Niue** included a detail from an episode in the New Testament. The original, a 56 x 44 cm Oil on wood, is



uncertainly dated but the museum where it is housed (the Hamburg *Kunsthalle*) have decided on 1627. In accordance with Mosaic Law, as described by Luke in his Gospel, Jesus's parents Mary and Joseph made their way to Jerusalem to present their newborn son Jesus to



the Lord and offer up a pair of turtledoves in sacrifice. A just man, Simeon, encouraged by the Holy Spirit to go to the Temple that day, took the child in his arms and recognized the Messiah in him: his canticle is recited daily in

Night Prayers. Anna, a prophetess who lived in the Temple, also began to enthusiastically talk and proclaim.

Poland included a Rembrandt landscape in a 1967 set of famous paintings. The top value in fact reproduced a 1638 Oil on oak panel (47 x 66 cm) from Cracow's Czartoryski Museum. Interestingly, it was looted by the Germans in 1939 but was recovered by famous art historian Karol Estreicher in 1946.



Though the figures seem completely immersed in the scene, the actual subject is the parable of the Good Samaritan about one who cared for a wounded man lying by the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

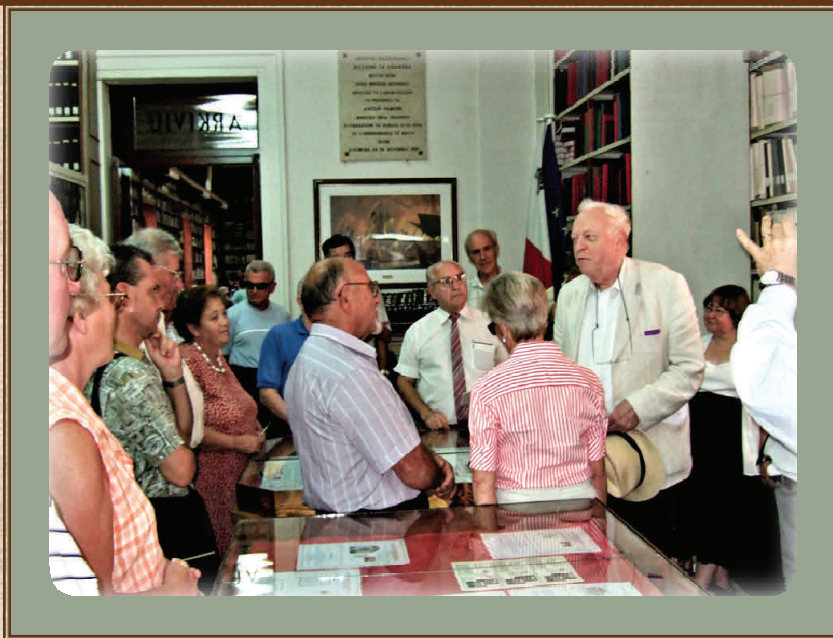


Please Note This illustration (Korea) went AWOL in issue no 74

Now that the anniversary has arrived, this series is suspended - but an "excuse" may be found in the future to look at other Rembrandt stamps.

In Memory
of
JOHN LANDER

President of the Malta Study Circle
who went to meet his Lord on Friday 19 April 2019.



The sad news of the Malta Study Circle President's death makes us recollect the MSC visit in 2006 (covered in issue 26).

John Lander led members for a day around Gozo in October. For the occasion, the Gozo Philatelic Society set up a small Gozo-themed Exhibition – in memory of Tony Fenech (who had died suddenly). Being hosted in the Gozo Archives hall, documents and other material could be included too.

President Lander talked about his interest in Gozo, referring to his 1955 visit to photograph pre-1921 agencies. He was most impressed by our progress (still in our infancy), confirmed by the nice letter he sent us in which he mentioned our school efforts and research.

Photo supplied by Mr Hadrian Wood (representative of MSC in Malta)

Louis Bonello GPS President

100 PHILATELIC CENTENNIALS

1919-2019

glances – and longer looks – at events from a hundred years ago . (23)

presented by Antoine Vassallo

Faroes: When were their first?! (1919)



Early this year, the Faroe Islands issued a special miniature sheet celebrating the centenary of the “Chair Leg” provisionals.

The basic letter rate in fact increased from 5 to 7 øre on 1 January 1919, necessitating stocks of 2 øre stamps. Because of World War I, shipments to the Faroe Islands were problematic, making it unlikely that the new 7 øre stamps would arrive in time.

The 1 øre and 2 øre definitives, being sold with the plentiful 5 øre to make up the new rate, rapidly ran out.

The solution was to bisect 4 øre stamps (perforated both 12 and 14) - but those



soon finished too, even though customers could use their own copies. It is also known that 4 øre printed-matter cuttings were bisected too and glued on.

So the postmaster was given permission to make a 2 øre surcharge on existing 5 øre stamps (showing King Christian X).

We are, of course,

referring to stamps of Denmark. The officer concerned, Godskesen Andersen, made a draft of how an overprint could be implemented but the printer rejected the task; he however did provide him with the necessary single character types. Andersen instructed carpenter Peter Poulsen to embed them in a chair leg: thus, the “chair leg” overprints.



The first day of use was 13 January. One sheet of 100 stamps was overprinted at a time – the total was 155 sheets, creating 15500 stamps. They were not sold without being cancelled by the post office; as can be expected, forgeries exist.



The commemorative sheet contains two 11 krona stamps; the smaller depicts the bottom of the chair leg used to create the overprint and the other shows three essays submitted to the printer. Interestingly, the 1979 Europa set featured these provisionals too.

These provisionals – used only in the Faroes - are usually catalogued under Denmark, as are the others created during World War II in 1940-41. The islands only got their own stamps in 1975 when they acquired postal autonomy – over fifty years after the first!





In Loving Memory of
GEORGE GAUCI
 beloved husband of
 Lina,
 Committee Member of the
 Gozo Philatelic Society.
 Went to rest in the Loving
 Arms of the Creator on
20 March 2019





Promoting Gozo through Philately

Antoine Vassallo

Lost but not forgotten

The subject of the €2.19 2017 Europa stamps, unfortunately, no longer exists. As is well known, Gourgion Tower (*It-Torri Gorgun*) was demolished in June 1943 to permit the construction of a runway to be used during the Allied invasion of Sicily a few days later – and actually needed for a very short time. Another war casualty!

This fortified farmhouse in Xewkija was built by Giovanni Gourgion, a Gozitan nobleman who had made his fortune through corsairing – licenced piracy - against Ottoman (or “Turkish”) shipping. Completed in 1690, this building became the centrepiece of his vast estate.



Postcard issued by the Gozo Philatelic Society

I am unqualified to describe the architectural and historical importance of this building but can mention that the Tower was “resurrected” in 2002 by *Fondazzjoni Belt Victoria* which produced limited-edition numbered prints of an original etching by Italian artist Rosalia Ferreri.

However I would like to write something, hopefully interesting, about the owner. This prominent member of Gozo’s community was one of the first who can be described as a patron of the arts, exemplary among 17th century Gozitan gentry.

At about the time the *Torri* was finished, Gourgion ordered a painting from the *bottega* of Mattia Preti - now quite elderly. Intended for the church of the Augustinian friary in Rabat, it remains behind the main altar: depicting Augustine, John the Baptist and William of Aquitaine.

In 1686 he had commissioned from this foremost artist the altarpiece representing “The Virgin of Mercy with Souls in Purgatory” (or *Madonna tal-Erwieħ*) for a transept altar in the church dedicated to Saint George (in Rabat too), near which he had a townhouse.



"The Virgin of Mercy with Souls in Purgatory"

This painting – distinctly meditative - includes what are believed to be full-length portraits of both Giovanni and his wife Elena Moscati. Interestingly, she was the great-granddaughter of Pinu Gauci – who gave his name to the small Marian chapel in the neighbourhood of Ghammar which has developed into the Ta’ Pinu national sanctuary.

The Gourgion family seems to have had a rapidly-strengthening relationship with the Order of St John: by 1687 there were Gourgions in Valletta and in Mdina - with a Palazzo Gourgion in both cities. The family also possessed property elsewhere, including a famous villa in Lija with a different “Gourgion tower”.

By the end of the century, they even succeeded in marrying into the aristocratic de Piro family. Numerous members eventually held important ecclesiastical and civil positions. They then acquired one of the six apse chapels in the newly reconstructed Mdina cathedral - an impressive social climb!

Giovanni was appointed *secreto*, a sort of personal secretary, by Grand Master Gregorio Caraffa towards the end of his reign. The appointment was confirmed in 1690 by Adrien de Wignacourt, whom he served for a further seven years.



Gregorio Caraffa

Thus, he was in charge of quarrying, property alterations, water supplies, soil transportation, planting and felling of trees, leases of salt-pans, public land and open spaces. He had the right to hunt on the Knights’ Comino preserve, had a *kales* (small carriage) at his disposal and even received a salute of three salvos when boarding - or disembarking from – any of the



Adrien de Wignacourt

Order’s ships. His income included the revenue from a leaseholders tax.

In 1692, this personality was also appointed *Capitano della Verga*: head of the *Università* or Mdina local government. He retained this, by then, honorific title under both Wignacourt and Ramon Perellos y Rocafull. As *Capitano*,

Gourgion was allowed by Wignacourt to construct the Saqqajja Hill loggia used to present the palio to the Mnarja horserace winners (“*Barrakka tal-Mnarja*”). Then Perellos gave him another more remunerative post: Wheat Procurator, through which he received a commission on all grain he brought to Malta.

The impressively imposing country house, together with two paintings of such quality – and, obviously, cost - were surely meant to be clear reflections of his status and refined taste. Nowadays we would probably interpret his efforts as deliberate propaganda; thus he could appear as an equal among the Maltese nobility, as well as high officials of the Order.



At least we still remember him through the name!



The Gozo Philatelic Society is pleased to announce, in this twentieth year of existence, that it now has an office in Victoria: at 31 Main Gate Street (*Putirjal*). It is room 2 on the first floor (above Playpen).

It is open regularly on Saturdays 9.30 to 11.30 am for stamp collectors to peruse and borrow publications, acquire and discuss philatelic material and even look at the Melitensia items in the Juncker Collection.

More events connected with the 20th Anniversary will be announced soon.

Louis Bonello GPS President




AN INTERESTING ITEM *donated by J A Mizzi MQR*

This commemorative item, owned by the Gozo Philatelic Society, speaks for itself. It is signed by Mr Justice William O Douglas (Convocation Chairman), Dr Arvid Pardo (Malta's representative at the UN) and HE Hamilton S. Amerasinghe (UN Sea-bed Committee Chairman).



W. O. Douglas

Mr. Justice William O Douglas
Convocation Chairman







Arvid Pardo
Dr. Arvid Pardo

**An
International Convocation
on
Frontiers of the Seas
to Explore Peaceful Uses of
The Oceans and the Ocean Floor**

Hamilton S. Amerasinghe
H.E. Hamilton S. Amerasinghe, Chairman, U.N. Sea-bed
Committee

**Conducted
On the Island of Malta
June 28 - July 3
1970
by the
Center for the Study
of Democratic Institutions**

... I think it is clear that there can be no doubt that an effective international regime over the seabed and the ocean floor beyond a clearly defined national jurisdiction is the only alternative by which we can hope to avoid the escalating tensions that will be inevitable if the present situation is allowed to continue. It is the only alternative by which we can hope to escape the immense hazards of a permanent impairment of the marine environment. It is, finally, the only alternative that gives assurance that the immense resources on and under the ocean floor will be exploited with harm to none and benefit to all. Finally, a properly established international regime contains all the necessary elements which should make it acceptable to all of us here: rich and poor countries, strong and weak, coastal and land-locked States. Through an international regime all can receive assurance that at least the deep sea floor will be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that there will be orderly exploitation of its resources.

ARVID PARDO
The Representative of Malta
U.N. Document A/C.1/PV 1516

E & O not E (49)

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

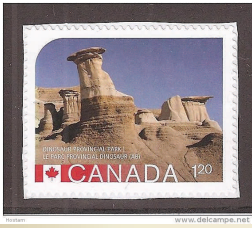
Antoine Vassallo

In 1916 **Canada** Post celebrated five of the country's UNESCO World Heritage Sites within a booklet pane but it was immediately informed of an error: the stamp supposedly showing Dinosaur Provincial Park actually included a photo of hoodoos in Drumheller. Both sites are in the province of Alberta but are some two hours away from each other.



It took the blame for the mistake in the choice of photos and announced that it immediately contacted the Drumheller mayor, Alberta Parks as well as Canadian Badlands Tourism to apologize. The stamps stopped being sold and were recalled from the thousands of postoffices around the vast country - to be destroyed. In collaboration with Parks Canada and Dinosaur Provincial Park, a correct stamp was issued a few weeks later.





Hoodoos (also called tent rock, fairy chimneys or earth pyramids) are tall, thin spires of rock that protrude from the bottom of an arid drainage basin or badland. Ranging from under two metres to over forty, they typically consist of relatively soft rock topped by harder, less easily eroded stone that protects each column from the elements. Their variable thickness may make you think of totem poles. They generally form within sedimentary rock and volcanic rock formations and do serve as tourist attractions.

Dinosaur Provincial Park contains some of the most important fossil specimens ever discovered from the “Age of Dinosaurs”. The property is unmatched in terms of the number and variety of high quality specimens which represent more than forty species, thirty genera and at least ten families of dinosaurs - dating back 75-77 million years. The park contains exceptional riparian habitat features as well as badlands of outstanding aesthetic value.

This was not the first Canadian photo error. Something unusual had appeared in 2007 when a group of five lighthouses was issued as small-sized booklet self-adhesives. Interestingly, the face value - originally 52 cents - was represented by a “P”.

That showing Pachena Point lighthouse in Vancouver Island had the image accidentally flipped at some stage prior to printing. The mistake was made apparent especially through the keeper house. In this case, the stamp was not withdrawn but a corrected version - with the house at right - was issued the next year.

This lighthouse, opened in 1908 (two years after an American passenger ship sunk in the area), was recognized as a heritage building in 1991.



Not just PAPER (18)

examples of unusual stamp production

Antoine Vassallo

Today I feature four assorted aromatic stamps from different countries, listed alphabetically.

I begin with **BHUTAN**, whose postal authorities released what was probably the world's first-ever scented stamps in 1973. The 6-stamp series depicted beautiful roses and each stamp was perfumed to smell like one. This was achieved by adding rose essence to the underlying paper.

CHINA issued a stamp with the aroma of sweet and sour pork in celebration of 2007 as the Year of the Pig. Made by adding

sauces to deep-fried small morsels of breaded pork, this recipe is possibly the most widely recognized from Chinese cuisine.

Sandalwood is a type of tree that produces wood

that is easily worked – and also one of the most fragrant and expensive of woods. In 2006 **INDIA** graced our noses with a miniature sheet – designed by Sankha Samanta - containing that scent (*santalum album*). Sandalwood is in fact considered an integral part of its heritage (also because of numerous medicinal and religious uses) – and was chosen for this country's first fragrance.

Though **SWITZERLAND**'s climate does not allow the growing of cacao beans, the source of cocoa, Swiss chocolate is world famous for its smoothness and richness of flavour – and its inhabitants are among the strongest consumers. Obviously all of the cocoa – huge volumes - has to be imported from tropical areas. This 2001 stamp came in a foil-wrapped booklet, much like a chocolate bar; but only the shape and smell are chocolaty – not the taste!

Similar stamps have already been mentioned in issues 44 (French Polynesia), 65 (Croatia) and 69 (Brazil).



proofing & designing

looking at the material donated by J A Mizzi MQR

End of “Maltese” coins

31 XII 2007

(designed by Frank X Ancilleri)



The Suggested design for the Miniature Sheet



The Miniature Sheet issued on a hand made and painted First Day Cover with the complete coin set inserted



Saint Rufus *Antoine Vassallo*
Yet another “Postal” saint?

The mortal remains of Rufus were found in the Roman catacombs not even three centuries ago. A broken inscription there (now in the Vatican Museum) identified him as *tabellarius*, meaning “messenger”. The next, obvious, step was to declare this early Christian martyr the patron – or protector – of postmen: this happened in 1975.



RELICS OF ST RUFUS

St Rufus’s relics are venerated at the Belvedere Ostrense, where an International Museum related to the Post was inaugurated in 1989. Here a clearer copy of the funerary slab (discovered in the

Italian village of *coemeterium Maius* (on *via Nomentana*) is displayed, stating that Rufus the courier was buried on 10 December. The accepted period of death was 284-305 AD, during the persecutions against Christians under Diocletian. I should add that the Church’s liturgical calendar includes various Rufuses – our Rufus is commemorated on 28 November.



And San Rufo was immediately taken to heart well-publicized healings and other graces

The relics arrived in this Anconese church simply because a couple of centuries ago they requested some from Rome – and these arrived (in a crystal urn) on 13 Aprile 1808.

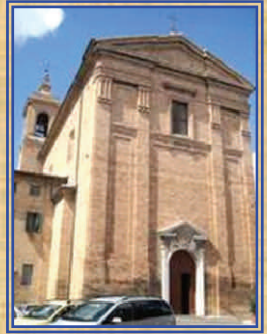
surely helped push the cult forawrd! Interestingly, a philatelist is involved in collecting these details: Gennaro Angiolino who also served also as treasurer of the Italian Union of Philatelic Publications.

Expert Ivan Di Stefano Manzella clarifies that the Roman *tabellarii* were employed by administrative offices (on both imperial and municipal levels) to carry written letters and oral messages – especially on financial matters. This distribution



was not organized centrally but each section had its own couriers. Thus they were not under the *praefectus vehiculorum* (head of the *cursus publicus* or imperial posts).

The *cursus*, founded by Augustus – originally to satisfy military needs – to make despatch of messages in the various regions easier and swifter, simply provided the practical means (such as stations



for rest and for changing animals, as well as the carriages themselves). The *tabellarii* could use this system when their messages concerned the emperor. Considered as slaves, their health and safety was not given any attention; in fact researchers have calculated that they rarely lived over forty!

Obviously other types of messengers are known: *geruli* transported documents between offices within Rome, *cursores* went on foot for shorter distances, *equites* used a horse during the day and *numidae* carried messages in imperial territories.

To return to the Post Museum, this was the brainchild of art critic and historian Armando Ginesi. The idea was to provide documentary evidence showing the story of postal systems along the years and around the world: through uniforms, bags, transport methods and so on. Unfortunately, because of the range of material (including, for example, lines by futurist poet Armando Mazza) the premises became less than adequate and those interested often have to make an appointment to be able to visit, guided by volunteers (after following a specific course).

The twentieth anniversary of this specialized museum was commemorated on St Rufus's day in 2009.



Stamp issued by 'Poste Italia' 1996



MALTA OVERSEAS

local connections on foreign stamps (28)

Antoine Vassallo

The French Post is issuing attractive miniature sheets featuring European capitals: Valletta's turn came in March 2017. One of the stamps within the sheet (designed by Jacques de Loustal and Marion Favreau) shows St John's Co-Cathedral - which has already been the subject of Malta stamps, beginning with the 3d in the 1938 definitives.



Built as their conventual church by the “Knights of Malta” and dedicated to their patron saint, St John's is a gem of Baroque art and architecture. The construction, designed by the Maltese military architect Gerolamo

Cassar, was commissioned in 1572 by Grand Master Jean de la Cassière. Grand Masters and more junior members donated gifts of high artistic value to enrich it with only the best. This church, administered by the St John's Co-Cathedral Foundation, remains an important shrine for worship and a venue for cultural events.



The plain façade flanked by two large bell towers is austere and has the character of a fortress reflecting the sober mood of the Order after the Great Siege. The Calabrian artist Mattia Preti transformed the interior into a celebration of Baroque art. It is the contrast between the austere architecture of the façade and the richness of the interior that renders St John's church a unique monument. Even the inlaid marble tombstones that cover the floor merit inspection! The nave is fifty-two

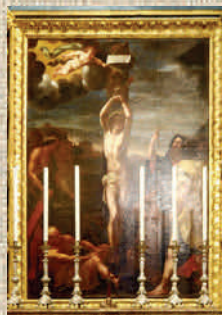
metres in length and fifteen metres wide with chapels on either side (assigned to the various langues according to seniority).



The chapel assigned to the **Anglo-Bavarian** langue was originally the shrine where the Order's holy relics were kept. The altarpiece represents St Charles Borromeo.



The chapel of the langue of **Aragon**, dedicated to St George, is one of the most richly embellished. The altar painting, showing the patron saint on horseback, was executed by Mattia Preti. Other paintings represent St Francis Xavier, St Firmin and St Lawrence. Four Grand Masters are buried here, with the funerary monuments of Martin de Redin, Raphael and Nicholas Cotoner and Perellos Y Roccaful. This langue included the priories of Catalonia and Navarre too and the chapel received important relics, among which there were arms of St George and St Vincent Ferreri.



The chapel of the langue of **Auvergne** was dedicated to St Sebastian and includes paintings depicting him. Grand Master Annet de Clermont de Chattes Gessan is buried here.

The chapel of the langue of **Castile, Leon and Portugal** is dedicated to St James the Elder, Spain's patron saint, and houses Mattia Preti paintings showing this saint. Two Grand Masters are buried here with their monuments: Anton Manoel de Vilhena and Pinto de Fonseca.



The chapel of the langue of **France** is dedicated to St Paul the Apostle, with an altarpiece by Mattia Preti depicting the Conversion. Here we have four funerary monuments, including those of Grand Masters Adrien de Wignacourt and Emmanuel de Rohan and of the brother of King Louis Philippe of France.

The embellishment of the **German** chapel commenced in 1664 with the intricate wall carvings. This langue included the priories of Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, Alsace and the Netherlands.

The chapel of the langue of **Italy**, dedicated to St Catherine of Alexandria, includes statues of St Catherine and St Alexandria on either side of the altar (in which the relics of St Euphemia of Calcedonia are kept). The Preti altar painting depicts the Mystic Marriage of the langue's patron saint.



The chapel of the langue of **Provence** is dedicated to St Michael the Archangel. The funerary monuments within belong to Grand Masters Antoine de Paule and Jean Lascaris Castellar.



The first chapel on the south side of the cathedral, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, was the first to be given a particular devotion: it housed an icon “of Philermos”, believed to be miraculous, brought by the knights from Rhodes. Grand Master Von Hompesch took it with him when the Order left Malta on Napoleon’s arrival in 1798. The icon currently in the chapel depicts the Virgin of Lenciano known as the Virgin of Carafa. The inner sanctuary is enclosed by a silver gate installed in 1752.



The focal point is obviously the high altar manufactured in rare marbles, with the apse bearing large marble figures - by Italian sculptor Giuseppe Mazzuoli - depicting the Baptism of Christ.

Moreover the Oratory, rather separated from the rest of the church, holds numerous treasures: the two Caravaggio masterpieces are probably the most well-known.

with acknowledgements to www.stjohnscocathedral.com

You are invited to send write-ups (or even just suggestions) about other foreign stamps with themes or designs related to Malta



A LITTLE PIECE OF MALTA

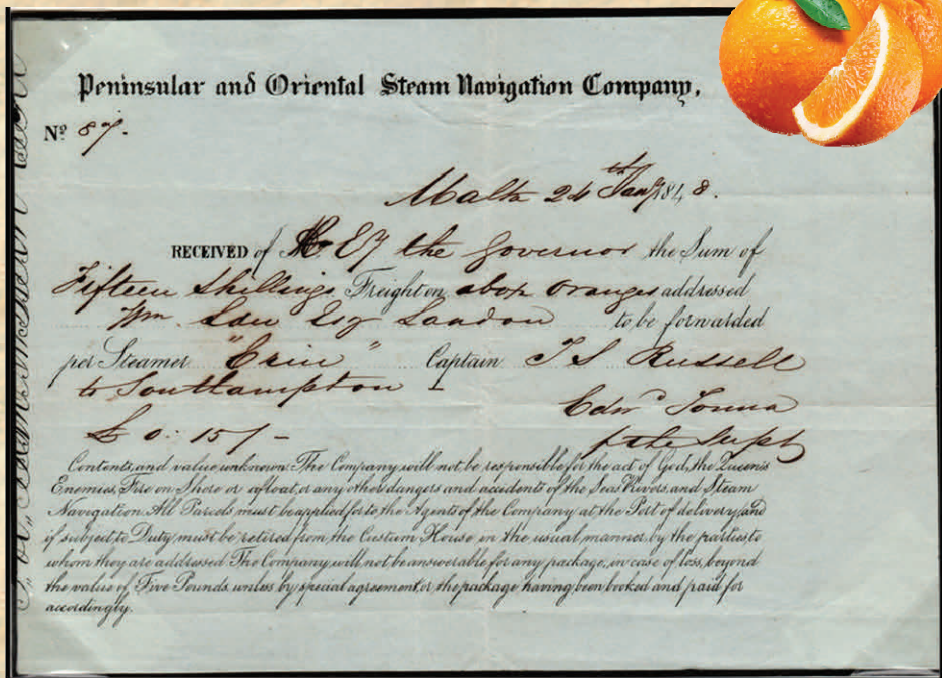
MARITIME
HISTORY

Anthony Grech



“RECEIVED of H.E. the Governor the sum of Fifteen Shillings Freight on a box of oranges addressed (sic) Law Esq London to be forwarded per Steamer “Erin” . Captain T S Russell to Southampton.

Contents and value unknown. The Company will not be responsible for the act of God, the Queen’s Enemies, Fire on Shore or afloat, or any other damages and accidents of the Seas, Rivers and Steam Navigation. All Parcels must be applied for to the Agent of the Company at the Port of Delivery and if subject to Duty must be retired from the Custom House in the usual manner by the parties to whom they are addressed. The Company will not be answerable for any package, in case of loss, beyond the value of Five Pounds unless by special agreement, or the package having been looked and paid for accordingly.”



A P&Q receipt given to the Governor of Malta (Richard More O’Ferrall), for a box of (Maltese) oranges shipped to Southampton per steamer “Erin” dated 24 January 1848.

GOZO PHILATELIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Anthony Grech



Based mainly on Stanley Gibbons Catalogues.
 Abbreviations; Op.=Overprint or Overprinted.
 Ins.= Inscribed, Sur.=Surcharged
 Prot=Protectorate

KYRGYSTAN
1992

LA AGÜERA
Op. Rio De Oro STAMPS
1920

LABUAN
1879

LAGOS
1874

LAOS
1951

LAS BELA
1897

LATAKIA
Op. SYRIA STAMPS
1931

LATVIA
1918

LEBANON
Op. FRANCE STAMPS
1924

LEBANON
Own Issue
1924

LEEWARD ISLANDS
1890

LESOTHO
1999

LIBERIA
1860

LIBYA
Italian Colony
Op. Stamp
1912


LIBYA
ITALIAN COLONY
OWN STAMPS
1921

LIBYA
KINGDOM
INDEPENDENT
1952

LIECHTENSTEIN
1912

LITHUANIA
1918

LOMBARDY & VENETIA
AUSTRIA
STAMPS
1850




**LOMBARDY
& VENETIA
OWN ISSUES**
1861



**LOURENCO
MARQUES**
1895




LUBECK
1859



LUXEMBOURG
1852



**MACAO
Op. PORTUGAL
STAMPS**
1884



**MACAO
OWN ISSUES**
1948





**MACEDONIA
Op. BULGARIA
STAMPS**
1944




**MACEDONIA
OWN ISSUES**
1992

**MADAGASCAR
& DEPENDENCIES**





**Op. Value on
France Stamps**
1952

**OWN
ISSUES**
1903



**MADEIRA
Op. PORTUGAL
STAMPS**
1868



**MADEIRA
PORTUGAL
OWN STAMPS**
1980




**MAFEKING
Op. GOOD HOPE
STAMPS**
1900




**MALACCA
Malaya
State**
1948




**MALAGASY
REPUBLIC**
1958



MALAWI
1964



**MALAYA
BRITISH
MILITARY
ADMIN-
ISTRATION STRAIT
SETTLEMENTS
Op. STAMPS**
1945



**MALAYAN
FEDERATION**
1957



**MALAYAN
POSTAL UNION**
1936

CELEBRITY PHILATELISTS

Antoine Vassallo highlights famous stampcollectors (14)

Republican Head



Commemorative card—Private collection

George Vella was born in Żejtun in 1942 – on 24 April (the morrow of Saint George’s Day), which I assume brought about his given name!

He graduated in 1964 from the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery at the Royal University of Malta, where he was very active in the student scene (even serving as President of the Malta Medical Students Association and

Executive Board Member of the International Federation of Medical Student Associations). He was the Medical Officer at the Malta Drydocks till 1973 when he became a General Practitioner for decades – and very popular at that! He also specialized in both Aviation and Family Medicine.

He contested his first general election in 1976 and got elected in 1978, through a by-election. This began well over thirty years of parliamentary (and party political) service, during which he held numerous memberships and posts. Examples include the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly, Rapporteur on Marine Pollution and permanent representative at the Council of Europe.

After refusing the leadership of the Labour Party, he stayed for years as deputy leader. His party now in government, between 1996 and 1998 Dr George Vella was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. While in opposition, he was party representative to the International Parliamentary Union.

His next ministerial stint – from 2013 to 2017 (when he retired from active parliamentary life) – was again as Foreign Minister. As can be expected, he led numerous delegations abroad, welcomed innumerable personalities and



President's Official Visit to Gozo and
Bishop Mario Grech
Photo DOI Omar Camilleri

participated in a long string of conferences and seminars - with relative speeches. He was especially active during the 2015 EU-Africa Summit and Conference of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth. His career seemed to climax with Malta's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

But this was destined not to be so! In fact in April 2019 he became Malta's President: the oldest to be so appointed (and the second doctor – after Vincent “Ċensinu” Tabone, 1989-1994).

Our Head of State is married to Miriam (Grima), with two daughters and a son - and several grandchildren. His declared pastimes include antique bargain hunting, reading and music.

But he is included in this series because he is a philatelist, specialized in Melitensia and GB. In fact the December 2018 issue of the Journal of the Malta Philatelic Society carried a detailed article of his (as Dr George W Vella MD, Cert GAM, KOM, KCMG) about Queen Victoria Postal Stationery. Actually he may well have earlier contributed further, having written hundreds in a range of subjects – in Maltese and English – in a long list of newspapers and periodicals!

He began collecting stamps when a youngster but, on realizing the impossibility of getting every single one, decided to concentrate on a few countries – specifically, Malta, Australia, Germany, USA and Great Britain. He keeps up to date for this last through the Philatelic Bureau but, for the others, has a preference for pre-1950 issues.

Slowly he tended to prefer the Victorian period, expanding (in the '70s) into Postal History. He then developed into all types of Postal Stationery produced by the British Post Office (and also by Somerset House which, for centuries, hosted the Inland Revenue and other government departments).

I finally note that at least one predecessor (Agatha Barbara, President between 1982 and 1987) was interested in music and stamps too.



HE President George Vella and First Lady
Miriam Vella n.ee Grima.

Photo DOI Clodagh Farrugia O'Neill

ISLAND TECH

We offer:
Network & Accessories.
Cartridge and toner refill
After sales services
& a variety of Computer &
Laptop Systems.



Call **Manuel Grech** Tel. 21566777
Mob.99206525 E-mail: mangrech@maltanet.net
TRIQ IL-MUNICIPJU RUMAN VICTORIA GOZO.



Computer problems?
Don't Smash it
and don't worry.
We will find
a solution.