

An Interesting Entire In My Collection

by

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In the MSC Handbook, on page 32 we find details with regards to the MAL-11 hand stamps used during the reign of Queen Victoria. These three circular hand stamps consisted of MALTA in a straight line with a code letter above it and the date in two lines below. In the Handbook it is recorded that the two identical 19mm circular daters Small MAL-11 a & b, are to be found only with code letters 'A', 'C', and 'O'. These were in use between 15th May 1858 and 2nd November 1866. The third hand stamp in the group, a 20mm dater known as Large MAL-11 c, is recorded as being used with the 'A' code letter only and was in use between 9th June 1868 and 8th April 1874.

In the supplement to the Handbook, on Pg. 4 we find an amendment to these details where we read: Page 32 "Large MAL-11. Code letter 'B' known used 18 Sep. 61."

This same information may also be found in the MSC Study Paper 2 "Malta Post Office 1806-1885" on pg 6, with the additional information that the Small MAL-11 a & b have a 12 ½ mm long MALTA, while that of the Large MAL-11 'c' is 15 mm long.

As can be seen from these major reference works, it looks that no reports have as yet been made of the use of the Small MAL-11 a & b with a 'B' code letter.

I am pleased to record that recently I acquired an entire and to my surprise discovered that it bore such a marking and not what I initially thought was a MAL-

11 c. Unfortunately the strike is not as clear as one would wish, but clear enough that close inspection reveals without doubt that this is truly a 'B' code with the date it was used on being the 15th May 1863 (*Fig. 1*).

The two page entire bearing this marking is on paper watermarked C ANSELL, is written in English on behalf of James Bell & Co. and concerns the payment of a remittance. It is addressed to Messrs. Clossmann & Co., reached Marseilles on the 18th May and its final destination, Bordeaux, on the 19th (*Fig. 2*).



Figure 1

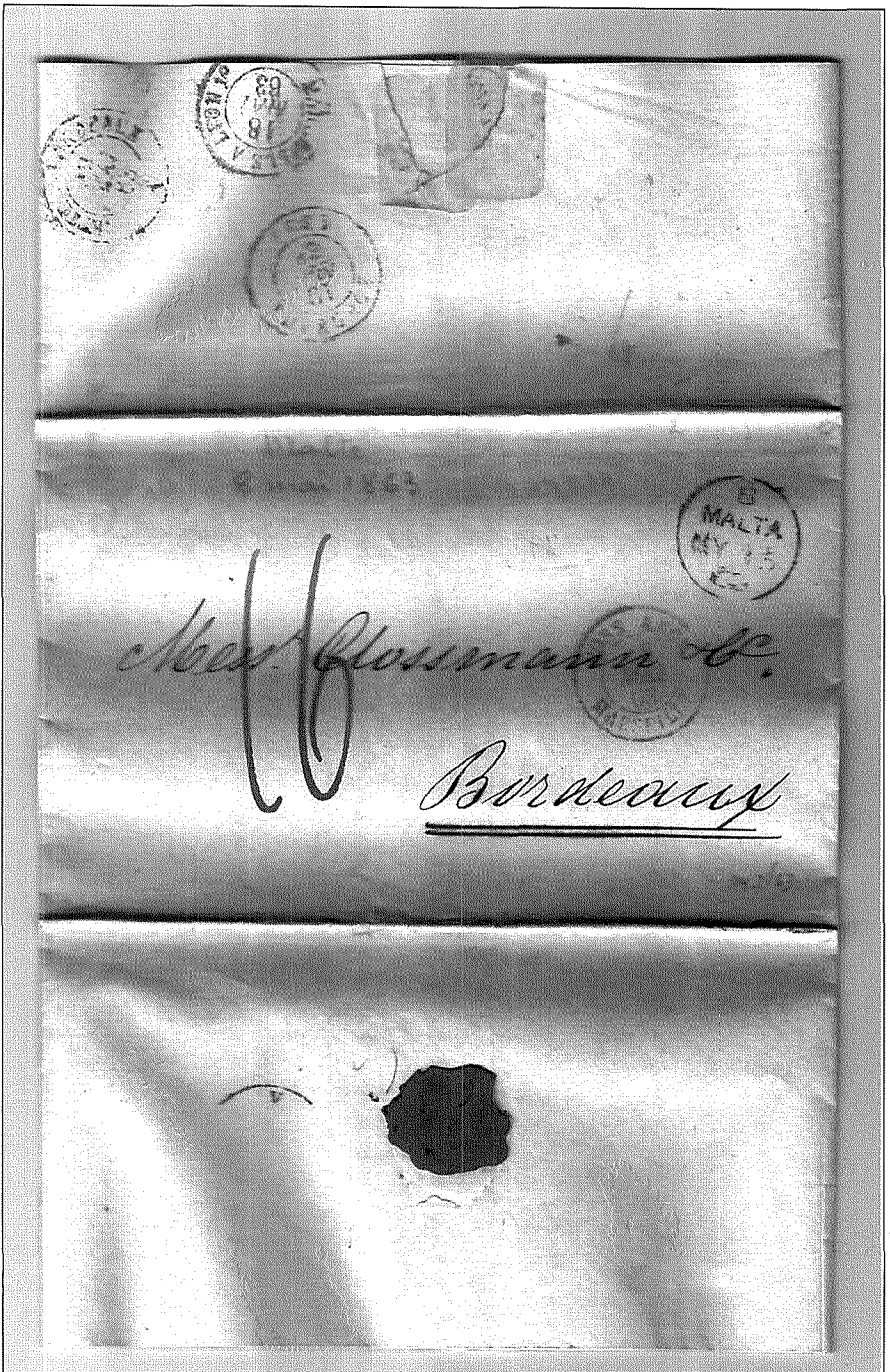


Figure 2