

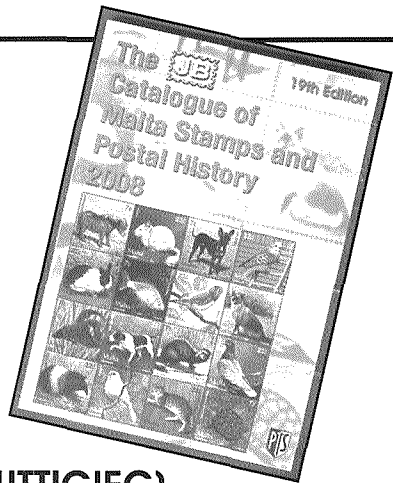
**Journal of**  
**THE MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

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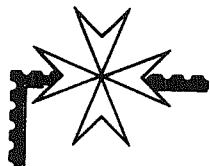


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**Vol. 39/1**

**April, 2010**

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# Varieties or Errors?

By John De Battista

When one starts to delve deeper in our hobby, one possible area in which a collector tends to start specialising in is collecting stamps listed as having differences from the normal issue. Amongst the differences which are generally noted on stamps one may find perforations, watermark orientation, re-entries, retouches, broken type, misplaced type, missing colours and different ink shades.

All these are generally described, rightly or wrongly, as either varieties (in the majority of cases) or errors; with the most known types being classified under the category of “major” and the less known under that of “minor”.

However, I realise that the distinction that should exist between what constitutes a variety and an error has never been really well defined in the mind of most collectors. As such it is very common for one to find that the two terms are usually used interchangeably between one another. Collectors of Maltese stamps are no exception. Such unawareness is further complicated by the fact that even dealers and catalogues, each for their own reasons, tend not to make a clear distinction between the two with the result that more confusion is in the offing for the collector.

My personal view on the matter is that for a stamp to be a “variety” it must have a difference from the normal issue which must:

- a. Be easily identifiable
- b. Is constant throughout a fair percentage of the printing/s.
- c. Can be sourced to the position of the stamp in the sheet / pane or printing/s.

Unless a stamp with a difference falls into **all** of the above categories, I am of the opinion that its proper classification should be as an “error”. The only exception to this is when a stamp has been recalled by the postal authorities and reissued with a distinctive mark. A clear example of such a case is when the Malta 1885 two pence halfpenny blue was recalled and re-issued with a red manuscript tick mark in the top left hand corner of the stamp in 1902. In such instances the stamp can be classified in two ways; as either a distinct issue in its own right or else be considered as a variety.

I feel it is inappropriate to treat errors, whether human or machine, and consider them to be on the same level as varieties. In most other spheres of our existence such products are usually considered as not up to standard and are rejected. However as in other areas, example when a decision needs to be taken whether an interesting item should be restored or not, in direct contrast to most other preservation practices which are commonly deemed acceptable and necessary in other spheres,

this concept too becomes another very controversial issue when looked at from a philatelic perspective.

A simple rule of thumb that one should bear in mind is that if only a very few stamps are known to exist with that “variety”, it is very likely that the “variety” is a wrongly labelled “error”. Also, errors are the result of lack of proper attention on the part of someone in the stamp manufacturing process chain or process quality control, the result of which ended up on the market. It is astounding how the stamp market reacts when this happens and how such mishaps (read errors) are turned into “rare varieties”, obviously fetching nice lumps of money for their sellers! Above all one should keep an open mind on the whole matter, tread carefully and beware of falling into the temptation of trying to collect all the “varieties” as listed in the catalogues. It is certainly not possible.

Do not get me wrong - the point I would like to raise by all the above is not that of trying to incense one type of difference at the expense of the other, but to drive home the importance that when one starts to consider the possibility of starting a collection in this area it is best that one sticks to a well defined objective of what one wants to collect.

I hope the above has given you some food for thought and will help you to decide with care what you would like your specialised collection to represent - varieties or errors?

## **2010 MALTEX XI PHILATELIC EXHIBITION**

The 11th Edition of the Malta Philatelic Exhibition is being held between  
**Friday 8th to Sunday 10th October**  
at the Green Lounge of the Hotel Phoenicia.

The inauguration and blessing of the Exhibition will take place  
on **Thursday 7th October at 18.00 hours.**

This year happens to be the 150th Anniversary of Malta's first stamp, the half penny yellow. To commemorate the event members of the Malta Study Circle of U.K., who are organising a visit to Malta, have been invited to participate.

All members are reminded that, as in previous years, they are invited to attend the official opening on **Thursday 7th October.**

# 2008 Best Maximum Card World Competition

by John A. Cardona

On 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, during the Philatelic Exhibition “Italia 2009” which was held in Rome, the official delegates present were invited to vote, in accordance with the regulations of the World Best Maximum Card Competition approved by the Federation Internationale de Philatelie (F.I.P.), for the three best maximum cards created during the year 2008.

Fortyfive (45) countries took part in the competition which were: Aland, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China (PR) Chinese Taipei, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Moldavia, Monaco, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and U.S.A.

The results were as indicated hereunder. Countries with less than three (3) points are not listed:-

Cyprus	42 Points	1 <sup>st</sup> prize
France	21 points	2 <sup>nd</sup> prize
Greece	15 points	3 <sup>rd</sup> prize
Italy	15 points	3 <sup>rd</sup> prize
Luxembourg	12 points	
Andorra	9 points	
Czech Republic	9 points	
Poland	9 points	
U.S.A.	9 points	
Brazil	6 points	
China (PR)	6 points	
Finland	6 points	
Taiwan	6 points	
Albania	3 points	
Belgium	3 points	
Romania	3 points	
Ukraine	3 points	
United Kingdom	3 points	

## **1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Cyprus**

*Statue of Aphrodite (100 B.C.) Cyprus Museum, Nicosia (Fig 1.)*

The First (1<sup>st</sup>) Prize went to Nicos Rangos the outgoing Chairman of the F.I.P. Maximaphily Commission

The card represented Aphrodite the goddess of beauty and love. Poet Hesiod (8<sup>th</sup> cent. B.C.) describes that “she was born near Paphos in Cyprus when Cronus cut off Ouranos’s genitals and threw them into the sea, and from the “aphros” (sea foam) arose Aphrodite”. Hesiod’s Theogony described that the genitals “were carried over the sea for a long time, and white foam “aphros” arose from the immortal flesh; with it a girl grew” to become Aphrodite. Aphrodite floated on a scallop shell. When she rose, she was hailed as “Cyprian” and is referred to as such very often, especially in the poetic works of Sappho.

Aphrodite played a central role in the Eros and Psyche legend, and later was both Adonis’ lover and his surrogate mother. She led also Zeus transforming himself in a white beautiful bull to fall in love with the princess Europe after “Cyprian goddess Aphrodite has sent to her a sweet dream...” (Moschos poem, 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. B.C.). Aphrodite is also known as Kyris (Lady of Cyprus). Her Roman equivalent is the goddess Venus. Myrtles, roses, doves, dolphins and swans are sacred to her.

Temples in Paphos, statues and other archaeological findings proved that Aphrodite was worshipped for many centuries in the olden days of Cyprus. For the inhabitants of Cyprus she was the goddess of human feelings of love and peace while all the other gods and goddesses were representing just the opposite namely, power and war.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: France**

*The “Grus” and the “Indian” by Vincenzo Coronelli (1650 – 1718) (Fig. 2)*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> prize went to Les Maximaphiles Français Association the creators of the above card.

The “Grus” and the “Indian” are constellations of the south hemisphere near to the South Pole sky. Vincenzo Coronelli was born in Venice. He was a doctor in Theology and Astronomy. He has created hundreds of maps and many terrestrial and celestial globes which are to be found in several collections. Pairs of his most famous large globes (c. 110 cm in diameter) are in the Bibliotheca Marciana in Venice, in the National Library of Austria and in the Globe Museum in Vienna, in the library of Stift Melk, as well as in Trier, Prague, London and Washington D.C. Another 1688 Terrestrial Globe is displayed at the Southwest Special Collections Library of Texas Technological University in Lubbock. Two wooden globes, measuring 348 cm in diameter and weighing approximately 2 tons, are displayed in the Bibliothèque Nationale François Mitterrand in Paris on which can be seen ( as the picture in Fig. 2) the Grus bird, the Crane which is the symbol of the office of an astronomer in ancient Egypt.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Greece and Italy**

### **Greece.**

*Mediterranean healthy Cretan rusks salad with Dakos ingredients (Fig 3).*

The maximum card was created by Nikos Mallouchos, President of the Union of the Greek Maximum Card Collectors.

The cards show Cretan rusks on a plate. If they are small they can be left as displayed on the card but if they are large they can be broken into smaller chunks, or sliced in half before serving. Olive oil can be added over the rusks together with grated fresh tomato. It is important to pour the oil first, so that the rusks or bread do not become soggy. Top them with a swab of mizithra (type of ricotta cottage cheese – the traditional soft white cheese made in Crete). If mizithra is not available, Indian paneer cheese, or Italian ricotta, or grated feta cheese topped with a little oregano can be used instead. Salt is not required because the cheese itself may be salted. It is usually served with sliced cucumber and black or green olives.

### **Italy.**

*Casey Stoner, 2007 MotoGP World Champion (Fig 4).*

The maximum card was created by Cesare Rialdi, President of the Italian Association of Maximum Cards Collectors.

Casey Stoner (born 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1985) is an Australian Motorcycle racer. Born and raised in Southport, Queensland, Stoner raced from a young age and moved to the United Kingdom to pursue a racing career. After competing internationally since 2002, he won the title of MotoGP World Champion in 2007. He currently competes in the MotoGP class for the Ducati Marlboro Team. In 2008, Stoner was named Young Australian of the Year as well as Nickelodeon's Australian Kids Choice Awards.

After nine (9) years as Chairman of the F.I.P. Maximaphily Commission Nicos Rangos has now resigned in favour of George Constantourakis whom he has recommended to the F.I.P. Board of Directors but has not yet been confirmed.

During the term of office of Nicos Rangos the popularity of Maximaphily increased considerably as the following positive results achieved over the years indicate:-

- Increase in the number of delegates of the member federations in the F.I.P. Maximaphily Commission (38 in 2000, 42 in 2001, 45 in 2002, 47 in 2003, 50 in 2004, 51 in 2005, 52 in 2006, 54 in 2007, 57 in 2008 and 61 in 2009).
- Increase in the participating countries in the worldwide Maximaphily activity report (18 in 2001, 18 in 2002, 21 in 2003, 30 in 2004, 36 in 2005, 43 in 2006, 46 in 2007 and 49 in 2008).
- The idea of establishing the Best Maximum Card World Competition turned out to be a successful philatelic innovation. In a period of seven (7) years



worldwide participations increased by well over 100% (18 in 2003, 26 in 2004, 31 in 2005, 34 in 2006, 37 in 2007, 40 in 2008 and 45 in 2009).

The next event “Cyprus 2010” incorporates Maximaphily besides Traditional and Literature. This international Exhibition which is organized jointly by the Cyprus Postal Services and the Cyprus Philatelic Society has had to be put forward to 18 – 25 November 2010 owing to unforeseen circumstances.



Fig. 1

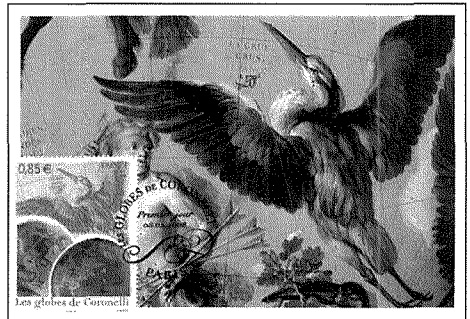


Fig. 2

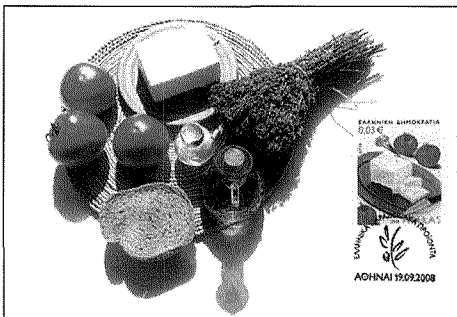


Fig. 3

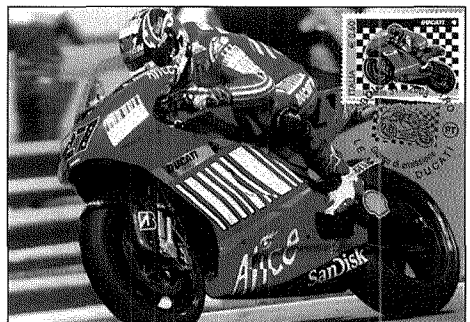


Fig. 4

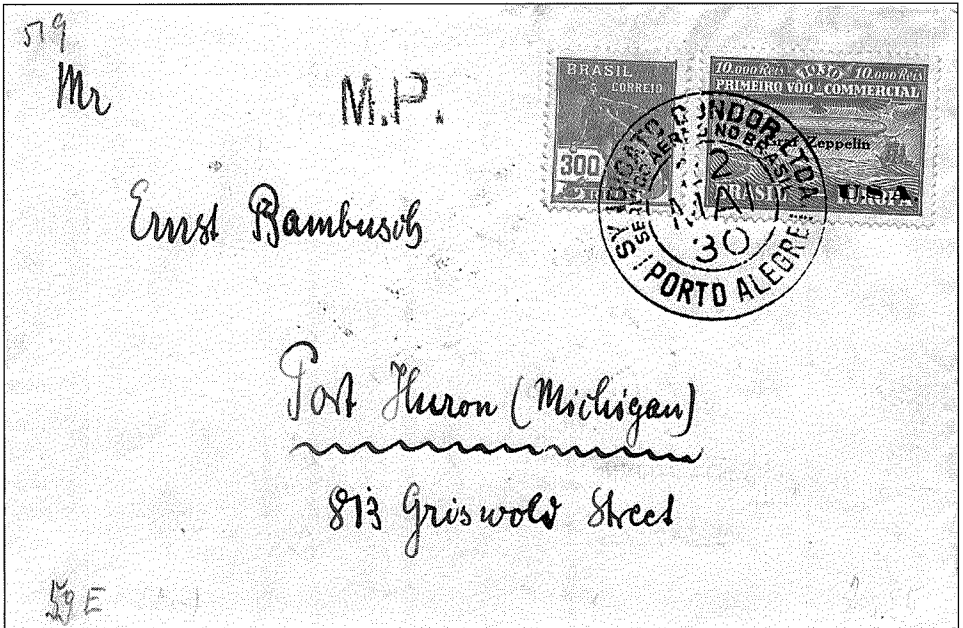
## The Brazilian M.P. marking

*The following Zeppelin articles are being reproduced by kind permission of the Editor-in-Chief of the Zeppelin Post Journal Dieter Leder and the permission of the authors*

Alfred Nuzinger

Most of the Brazilian mail flown on the 1930 Pan-America Flight of airship LZ-127 Graf Zeppelin was mailed either at Recife or Rio. Mail from Brazilian cities other than Rio and Recife usually comes with a M.P. cachet applied next to the Condor markings.

M.P. means *mão própria* which translates to personally. The purpose of the M.P. marking was to indicate airmail which was delivered at a Condor agency rather than at a Brazilian post office. The Arbeitsgemeinschaft Brasilien is working on a documentation of all known Condor agencies, and according to their information Condor agencies were operating in 25 Brazilian cities. And most of these agencies used the M.P. cachet according to the regulation. The size, color and design of the



M.P. cachets comes in different variations, depending on the place of usage. Black and dark purple are the most common colors, while the design changes from just the letters M.P. up to a boxed variety.

The M.P. cachet has not yet been traced on 1930 Pan-America Flight zeppelin mail originating at Recife or Rio. Based on pure observation, but it seems obvious that there must have been a special regulation in place that the M.P. cachet was not obligational in Rio and Recife. This might have been to reduce work since 99% of the Brazilian mail originated at Rio and Recife.

TRANSMITTED

## The British Connection in 1936

### Michael Dixon

The Fall08, Winter08 and the Spring09 issues of the Zeppelin Post Journal reported in detail about the British Connection Flights and that beginning with the 9th South America Flight in 1934 British mail was no longer stored and flown to Germany on the last connection, but British mail was rushed on the first outgoing flight to Germany to connect with DLH or the zeppelin airmail service to South



8th South America Flight 1936 - via Friedrichshafen Registered cover with zeppelin flight cachet featuring the letter «C».

America. The two illustrated covers are good examples to demonstrate how the British connection service was organized in 1936.

The covers are almost identical: Both originated in London, both were dispatched on July 8, 1936 and both were flown by LZ-127 Graf Zeppelin on the 8th South America Flight to Buenos Aires with corresponding July 13, 1936 arrival markings on the reverse. One cover is registered, this cover bears the red German zeppelin flight cachet with the letter «C» indicating a routing through Friedrichshafen. The other cover was sent without registration service, and this cover bears the red German zeppelin flight cachet with the star-symbol indicating a routing through Frankfurt. The different letters and symbols in the flight cachets are the most interesting differences of these two covers, and they are the key to explain the different connections from London to reach the zeppelin.

Airship LZ-127 Graf Zeppelin left Friedrichshafen for the 8th South America Flight 1936 on July 9, 1936 at 5.12 a.m. Due to the early morning departure of the airship and since there were not many same day connections from London to Frankfurt and Friedrichshafen to connect with the zeppelin, it is quite easy to reconstruct the routing of the two covers although the covers bear no transit markings.

The registered cover which made the zeppelin connection at Friedrichshafen must have been dispatched in London in the morning hours of July 8, 1936. The London dispatch postmark of this cover has no time indication, but to reach Friedrichshafen in time to connect to the next day early morning zeppelin departure did not leave a wide time-frame for the London departure: The 7.00 a.m. KLM departure to Amsterdam with DLH (Deutsche Lufthansa) connection via Cologne to Frankfurt or Stuttgart and from there by train to Friedrichshafen was the earliest connection, the last connection on that day was the 1.20 p.m. Imperial Airways London departure with a 20 minutes tight connection at Cologne and a 5.10 p.m. arrival at Frankfurt. Closing time at Frankfurt for the Friedrichshafen zeppelin connection was 50 minutes later, at 6 p.m.

It is not clear on which of the two London - Friedrichshafen connections the cover was on. But it is clear that the cover went on one of these connections as all later flights from London would have reached Germany too late to make any connection to meet the departure of the zeppelin at Friedrichshafen.

The second, non-registered cover was dispatched in London also on July 8, 1936 and was flown on the same zeppelin flight. But the red zeppelin flight cachet with the star-symbol indicates a routing through Frankfurt. This cover bears a time indication in the London dispatch postmark: 8.15 p.m. There is also a second London air mail machine postmark from London with the same time given.

Germany has a different time zone and is 1 hour ahead of London. When the cover was dispatched in London on July 8, 1936 at 8.15 p.m., the local time in Germany was 9.15 p.m. This was already three hours after the regular 6 p.m. Frankfurt closing



**8th South America Flight 1936 - via Frankfurt Regular cover with zeppelin flight cachet featuring the star symbol.**

time for zeppelin mail to reach the zeppelin at Friedrichshafen. But Frankfurt had a second closing time for zeppelin mail, a so called late closing time, which was 2.45 a.m. the next morning.

Due to the late dispatch at 8.15 p.m., the second cover was flown by the special postal night flight from London to Cologne. The flight left London at 10 p.m. to reach Cologne at 12.15 a.m. the next day, July 9, 1936. There the cover connected to a second night flight from Cologne to Frankfurt to reach Frankfurt at 2.45 a.m. This was in time to connect to the DLH (Deutsche Lufthansa) flight from Frankfurt via Marseille, Seville and Las Palmas to Bathurst. DLH departure at Frankfurt was at 5.00 a.m., Marseille was reached at about 9 a.m. and at about 3 p.m. the DLH flight landed at Seville.

But the DLH airplane from Frankfurt was not the only German aircraft arriving at that time at Seville. Being on the way from Friedrichshafen to South America, the zeppelin reached Seville at about the same time as the DLH airplane arrival from

Frankfurt. The reason for this coincidence was the Seville mail exchange from the DLH aircraft to the zeppelin.

The plane from Frankfurt landed at Seville, but the zeppelin did not land at Seville, the airship hovered only over the landing field. The zeppelin put down a rope with a hook, the mail bags from the DLH plane were put on the hook and the mail was hauled aboard the zeppelin. The zeppelin then proceeded on its journey to South America, now with the mail from Frankfurt on board. Already on board was the mail from Friedrichshafen which included the registered British cover routed through Friedrichshafen. Both covers reached Buenos Aires four days later, on July 13, 1936.

These two British covers demonstrate how the British mail reached the zeppelin after the 8th South America Flight 1934: There was no longer a British Connection Flight, but British mail was put on the next flight to Germany.

## ZEPPELIN POST JOURNAL

The Malta Philatelic Society recommenced that those who are interested in Zeppelin mail should become members of this association.

It was founded by JOHN Duggan, a TOPO | VERLAG publication and the EDITOR-IN-CHIEF is *Dieter Leder*

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The ZEPPELIN POST JOURNAL is published quarterly.

The 2010 subscription rate is 28 Euro including international airmail delivery.

A single issue is 7,50 Euro plus shipping.

Subscribers become members of the ZEPPELIN STUDY GROUP.

# Malta Zeppelin (LZ-129)

*reproduced in Vol.35 No.1*

*More information from Mr. Dieter Leder*

The Cover endorsed Zeppelin LZ-129 is very interesting, because it is the only Malta cover I have seen so far which was intended to go by LZ-129 Hindenburg. And it is of course the only one I have seen which was intended to go on the 1st North America Flight 1936. And just by my wording you can see, that your cover was not flown.

As per the routing instruction, the cover was intended to go from Rome via Milano to Frankfurt, this was the unusual way of zeppelin mail coming from Italy/Rome. But have a look at the back: There is a Roma April 30 transit marking, there is a Milano May 1 transit, but then the cover left the route to go via the Gotthard railway via Zurich and Basel to Frankfurt – instead the next transit marking is Torino May 2. Instead of going from Milano northwards, the cover left the intended route and went from Milano westwards to Torino.

I have no idea about the further way of the cover, I assume it went via France any perhaps Cherbourg. What I can see on the cover is a NY arrival on May 8. Let me first say that this Europe-USA trip was double in seven days by regular sea ship, so the May 8 arrival is within the time frame of surface transportation.

The zeppelin arrived on May 9 at 6 am, and all the zeppelin mail is postmarked NY May 9. So your cover arrived one day ahead of the zeppelin. In addition, as you have mentioned already, there is no Frankfurt transit marking and of course the red zeppelin flight cachet is also missing. The reason is clear: The cover went by surface. Due to the early dispatch, the cover was faster in NY by surface transportation then waiting for the zeppelin transportation.

Anyhow, there is no reason to be disappointed now. The cover bears high franking which would have covered the zeppelin transportation (I think you are the better Malta rate expert then I am), and the cover bears a clear routing instruction for the zeppelin mail transportation. This means, even if the cover was not flown, it was properly intended for that service. And according to the definition of aerophilately, even a cover only intended for airmail service is worth to be shown, although for any reason the cover did not make the flight. The intention is sufficient that a cover can be added to your airmail collection. And as per my first words, this is the only Malta cover I know which was intended for the LZ-129. It is a great piece!!!!

# Kalkara and Birzebbuga in early postcards

Giovanni Bonello

There appears to be a great imbalance in the production of early Malta postcards, with views of the harbour towns turning up ever so frequently, and all the others, it seems, ranging from moderately to extremely rare. The scarcest of them all probably belong to the so-called ‘south’ of Malta, a rather recent label which sounds as politically loaded as it is geographically slipshod: what passes for the south more correctly leans to the east. Along with the three harbour cities, this area comprises Haz-Zabbar, Zejtun, Imqabba, Qrendi, Hal-Safi, Zurrieq, Marsascula, Kalkara, Hal-Luqa, Hal-Ghaxaq, Hal-Kirkop, Gudja, Birzebbuga and Marsaxlokk. Early postcards of these localities prove considerably hard to come by.

Why this is so should not be too difficult to discern. The bulk buyers of Maltese postcards consisted of the British armed forces and other visitors who sporadically visited the islands. These necessarily became the market of choice that postcard publishers targeted, as those foreigners would be more easily induced to part with their money to purchase postcard views of places frequented or familiar. The ‘south’, apart from the three cities, lay quite off the main traffic lanes of soldiers, sailors and other visitors.

Not many barracks, no equipped harbours, sparse concentration of leisure amenities, few remarkable sandy beaches, scant bars and lodging houses: that probably accounts for the dearth of postcards with subjects from the ‘south’. When they do exist, the numbers printed of each must not have been high at all. In this feature, by early I mean the 1930s latest, even if the majority date to World War One or before.

My first intention was to survey cards of the south of Malta, but, despite their scarcity, one feature would not possibly cope with their voluminous production. For no particular reasons, I homed on two localities, Kalkara and Birzebbuga, and I hope to publish here some views few or none have seen before. Both towns have grown mercilessly since those photographs were taken, and the changes in the urban fabric, as in their demographic density, have been truly amazing. Many look like images of corners of places unknown.

## Kalkara

This picturesque town, which presumably derives its name from some lime kiln in the area, over the years became better known for another activity: a place for boat building – not ships, but the more homely Maltese models: *fregatini*,



*kajikki, xprunari, dghajjes tal-pass, firilli, dghajjes tat-tigrija*, perhaps even the more substantial *dghajjes tal-latini* and *luzzijiet*. Kalkara also attracted a moderate number of summer residents, mostly from the three cities.

Although the population grew, Kalkara never really became a large town. Records show 150 households in 1870, and that went up to 2870 inhabitants in 2005. Apparently, apart from some isolated fisherman's hut, serious building only started towards the very end of the knights' rule, round 1790.

I got to know Kalkara quite well in my early days because Archbishop Michael Gonzi, brought up there, always kept Kalkara quite close to his heart. Enemy action had destroyed the old 1890 parish church on April 10, 1942, and the prelate made it one of his life's missions to give the village he so fondly loved a new, sumptuous church in a position more prominent than the one it had to replace, to be built on land he had personally bought for the purpose.

To project the new architecture he chose my father and asked him to draw plans and elevations. Vincenzo Bonello, just back from exile in Uganda, proposed several alternatives, ranging from the overtly baroque to far more restrained designs. The Archbishop chose one of the most austere of father's concepts, possibly on aesthetic grounds but perhaps on economic ones too. Besides providing the master plans and elevations, father worked hard at each architectural, structural and ornamental detail.

As father did not come with an architect's warrant, he had to have at his side someone who did, to sign the plans and certify structural stability from an engineering point of view. The Archbishop's choice fell on Guzè Damato, and the two were born not to collaborate. What father understated and hinted, Damato wanted grander and showier. The compromises, generally unhappy ones, mostly left both dissatisfied. This was father's first large-scale architectural work and it occupied him from his return from Uganda's barbed wire in 1945, till the laying of the temple's foundation stone the following year, to the consecration of the bare new church on the tenth anniversary of its destruction, and up to the completion of the dome in 1962. The stacks and rolls of drawings related to the Kalkara church, elaborated by father, my sister and I quite recently donated to the Wignacourt Museum in Rabat.

Father visited the Kalkara building-site regularly, frequently taking me there with him. What a treat to cross Grand Harbour by coal-fired ferryboat, and then walk from the landing place to the rising stone traces of the new church. Father insisted on seeing and checking personally all the masonry work and in the process became friendly with those master artisans, scalpellini and stone sculptors. I kept my eyes and my ears wide open, lapping up every word the old-time wisdom and experience of those highly competent craftsmen let fall. Sometimes Monsignor Gonzi would

turn up too. Kalkara became a regular cultural and spiritual pilgrimage shrine for me, and a mesmerized me in short trousers could eavesdrop on the formidable Archbishop well before anywhere near my early teens.

I am here publishing sixteen postcards of old Kalkara. I had one card (or was it a photograph?) of the small old parish church before enemy bombing destroyed it, but I failed to retrace it. Most of the cards obviously concentrate on the more photogenic features of the village, but a few show moments of the everyday life that went on around it. Although Bighi and Ricasoli could be considered as belonging to Kalkara, I have opted to overlook them for the purposes of this feature.

**Fig. K1** and **K2** come from the handsome series of postcards printed in Germany before World War One and are thus datable as c. 1912 -1914. The same images also exist in the extensive dark mauve series of real photographs, the colour favoured by Richard Ellis but so far unattributed to any named photographer. Some of these photo cards have faded disastrously (that would seem to rule Ellis out). These two printed postcards show, in dark sepia, an overall view of the little bay crammed with boats, in the sea and on the beach. **Fig. K2** is particularly interesting as it gives a glimpse of the old parish church of St Joseph against a background of St Elmo's lighthouse and the double iron bridge over the harbour breakwater (both demolished or destroyed during the war). Most buildings reach two stories in height, but a couple of extravagant skyscrapers stretch upwards all the way to three floors. **Fig. K3**, a real photograph, taken from a higher vantage point on the Cottonera fortifications, shows the same stretch of waterfront, perhaps slightly later.

The photographer Salvatore Lorenzo Cassar contributed **Fig. K4** and **K5** from virtually the same viewpoint, but shot at considerably different times. The boathouse on the extreme left has some posters affixed to it, and on it the shop sign reads clearly: "Frank Attard and Scicluna boat builders, Calcara strip", and what could be a date painted on the wall: 1930. A poster advertises a film *SOS Iceberg*, released in 1934 and another one has a mixed bill: *Early to Die – Beauty – Man of Aran*, also released the same year. A couple of houses still have their facades painted in the by then old fashioned burgundy red (*demm il-baqra*). These two Cassar postcards exist in other formats too. **Fig. K6** has much the same scene but probably earlier, and the real photo suffers from a notable lack of contrast.

Also real photos, **Fig. K7** and **K8**, almost certainly date to the 1920s and illustrate different segments of Kalkara creek, with a multitude of typically Maltese boats berthed there or serenely afloat. Their photographer remains so far unknown.

And, what relief, a postcard of Kalkara that, instead of reworking some sea view, has a charming photograph of a road – Strada Rinella – bedecked in *fešta* decorations, and dated 1927 (**Fig. K9**). Seeing the photographer position his tripod, a horde of village children in gala clothes and shoes worthy of the *fešta* day, gather in front of his bulky camera – being captured on film was then a rare and exciting

treat, and the unknown camera artist had the good grace not to shoo them away. The chances are that very few of those boys and girls would be around today.

Follow two postcards from the splendid *Vela Photo* series, popular since the late 1920s, produced and marketed by that gifted amateur photographer Alfred Vella Gera, a bank manager (**Fig. K10** and **K11**). Curiously, though very different, both views carry the same progressive number, 10, which seems to indicate that at some stage Mr Vella Gera substituted a new image to the previous one but retained the original sequential run in his numbered series. The first includes a small commercial outlet “Bighi Sally Port Kiosk” flying the Union Jack.

Both the next postcards link Kalkara with sad events – funerals. **Fig. K12** shows a long procession of British seamen heading for the burial of their comrade Harold Crawley of HMS *Triumph*, who died not yet 20 years old in consequence of an accident on March 15, 1910 – exactly one hundred years to the day of my writing this feature. Crawley’s touching funerary monument can still be seen in the Kalkara naval cemetery. **Fig. K13** records an actual funeral inside the capuchin’s cemetery, better known as Santa Liberata. This comes from a larger series of S.L. Cassar postcards, probably datable to the 1920s. **Fig. K15** illustrates the actual capuchin church dedicated to Saint Barbara but popularly known as Santa Liberata from the holy relics of the saint preserved in that precinct.

And a proficient, unusual close up of fishermen with their large wicker traps near land on the Kalkara waterfront (**Fig. K14**). The photographer remains unknown; he skilfully captured atmospheric details, including a small toddler under an enormous straw hat. Everyone then covered their heads, and none would dream of defying the sun. The suntan fashion had yet to catch on and what darkening of the skin occurred was actively unwanted and resented.

My last Kalkara postcard (**Fig. K16**) presents one of the street decorations for the feast of the patron saint of the fishing village, St Joseph and the Holy Family, larger than life size, in papier maché, with a group of villagers posing proudly in front of its elaborate pedestal. I wonder whether that impressive statuary ensemble still exists today.

## **Birzebbuga**

This small seaside town retains traces of human activity from early ages and comprises in its immediate vicinity that living zoological showcase that is Ghar Dalam. It saw most of its recent urban development since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, though it had shown its utility to the British navy since Nelson’s times. Sir Jahleel Brenton, the Anglo-American naval hero, mentions in his 1809 memoirs that the launch which supplied explosives to the warships was not allowed to berth in Grand Harbour, as a precaution against some disastrous explosion. Instead, the admiral kept the barge in Birzebbuga, whose name the British had, by that early time, already

bastardized to ‘Bizzy Bay’!<sup>1</sup> Differently from Kalkara, Birzebbuga boasted of two guest houses at the turn of the century: *Dowdall’s* (established 1895) or *Flagship Hotel*, and the *Sea Maid Hotel*.

Of the few postcards that represent Birzebbuga, only one is printed by typography – all the others come as real photographs. I have excluded several of Ghar Hasan, which lies within the precincts of Birzebbuga. The cards have interrupted ribbons of buildings on the waterfront and very little else in depth. Obviously both the locals and the summer residents preferred a house with a sea view. That quaint Birzebbuga appears virtually unrecognizable today, with the great Freeport development close by and the high blocks of modern housing stretching far back in the hinterland. The present parish church was only started in 1926 and consecrated in 1938.

**Fig. B1** comes from the extensive black and white series of printed postcards issued by Cesare Bornaccini, c. 1900. It shows a small cluster of buildings round a neo-gothic chapel, all surrounded by fields. Richard Ellis has a real photographic card, from about the same time, of the Birzebbuga waterfront that came to be known as Pretty Bay (**Fig. B2**). Another panoramic view of the bay and the urban front, of the 1930s, includes one solitary motor car parked on the slope leading to the promenade (**Fig. B3**).

Salvatore Lorenzo Cassar marketed his postcards of Birzebbuga in the 1920s or earlier. **Fig. B4** displays the ribbon development on the waterfront, some rooms on the beach and a building with neo-gothic windows close to the sea shore. More striking is a card of four boys drinking water for the village’s public pump – running water in homes was then quite unlikely (**Fig. B5**). All the boys have a cap and not one wears shoes. A large devotional stone statue of the Virgin and Child dominates the scene.

And finally, another unattributed real-photo postcard of Pretty Bay (**Fig. B6**). This must belong to the late 1930s: as many as four parked motor cars clutter the promenade. Other Birzebbuga cards and views have already been published by me.<sup>2</sup>

## **Acknowledgements**

*My thanks are due to Hadrian Wood who put at my disposal for this feature five Kalkara postcards from his collection. The two volumes Bliet u Rhula Maltin by Alfie Guillamier, Malta, Vol. I (2002) and Vol. II (2005), proved particularly useful.*

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<sup>1</sup> Jahleel Brenton, *Memoir*, ed. Henry Raikes, London, 1846, p. 377.

<sup>2</sup> Giovanni Bonello, *Histories of Malta*, Vol. VI, 2005, p. 195, 196, 213.

*Calcara Bay, Malta.*



Fig. K1

*Calcara Bay, Malta.*



Fig. K2



Fig. K3



Fig. K4



Fig. K5



Fig. K6



**Fig. K7**



**Fig. K8**





Fig. K9

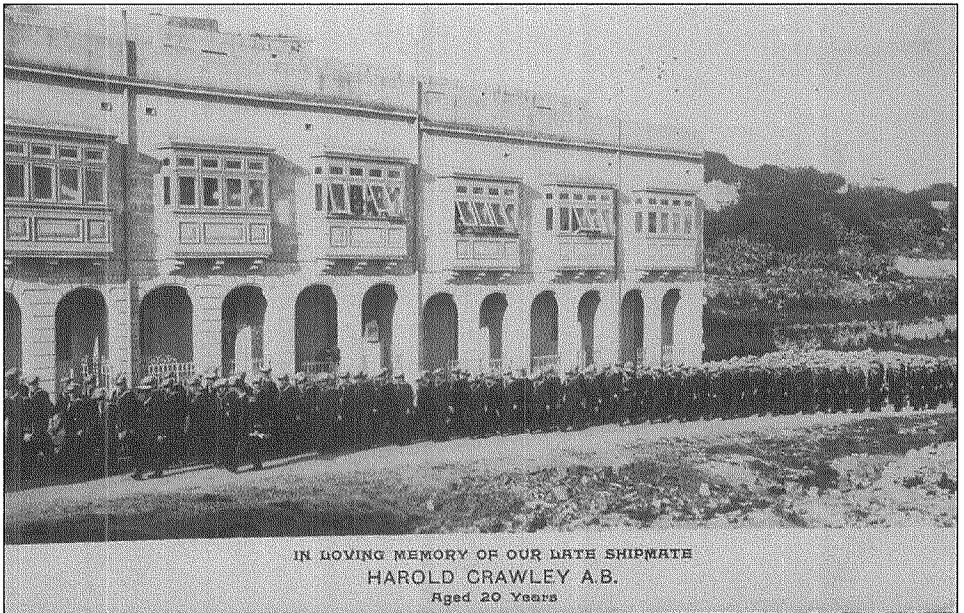


Fig. K10



10. MALTA- Calcara Bay (Boat Building Place)

Fig. K11



IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR LATE SHIPMATE  
HAROLD CRAWLEY A.B.  
Aged 20 Years

Fig. K12



Fig. K13



Fig. K14

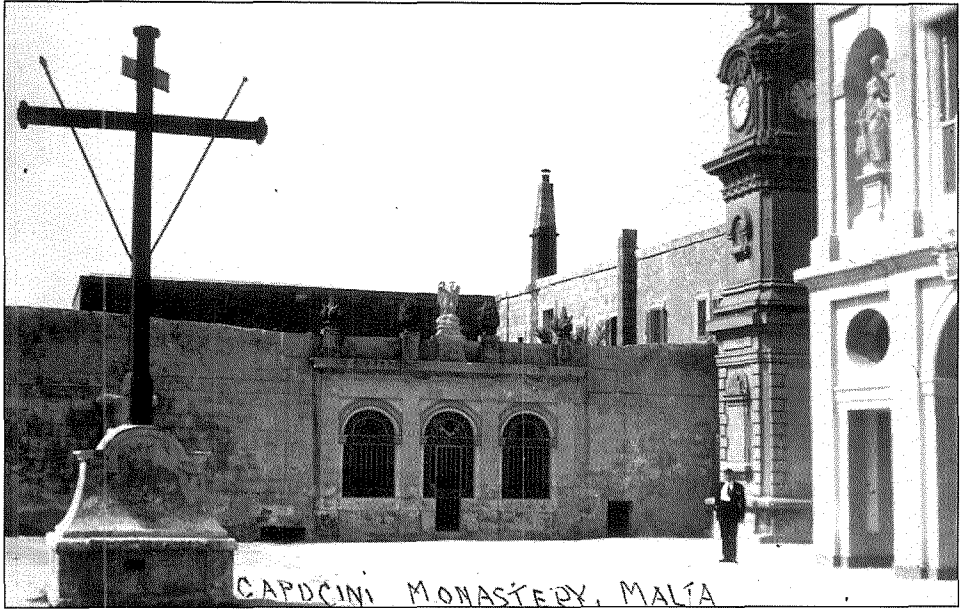


Fig. K15



Fig. K16

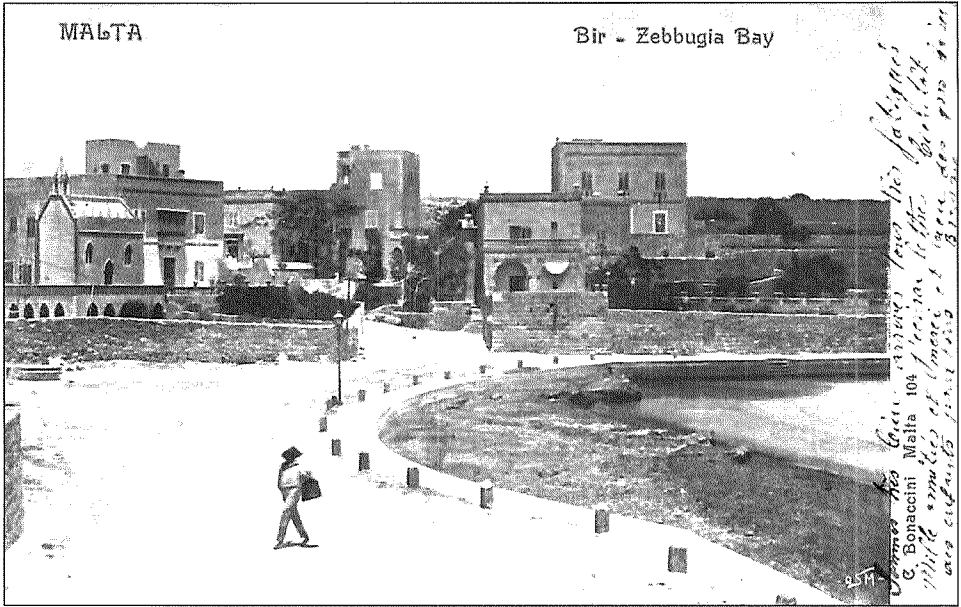


Fig. B1

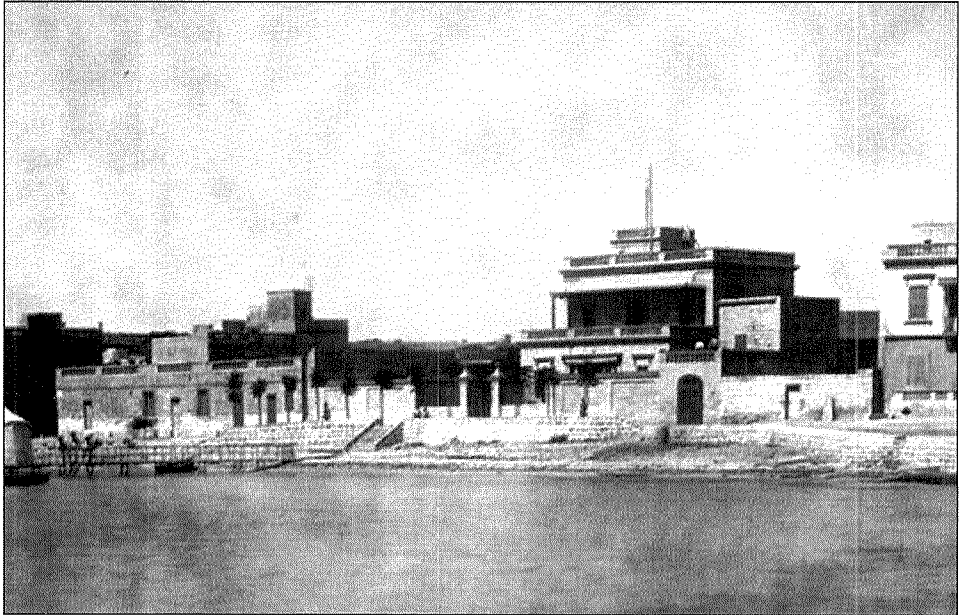


Fig. B2



Fig. B3



Fig. B4



Fig. B5

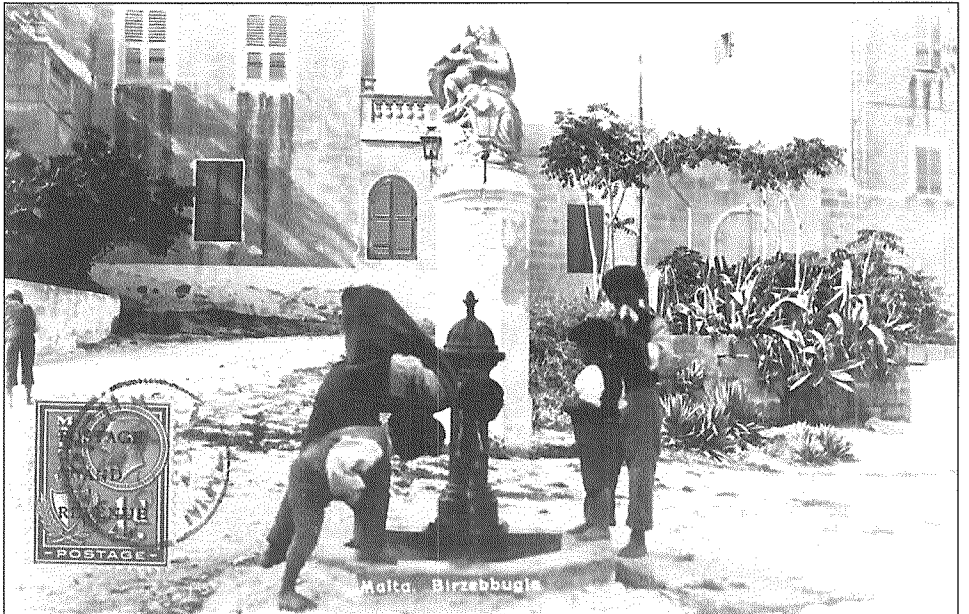


Fig. B6

# The Maltese Postcode System and Hub Handstamps

By John De Battista

In the early 1990's Malta's Department of Posts initiated a restructuring and enhancement program for its domestic mail distribution system. An integral part of this restructuring was the introduction of postcodes, a system which was adopted for the very first time in these islands on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1991.

The basis for the system implemented for postcodes was that the islands were divided into twenty-four postal zones. In their majority, zones were made up of a group of localities that confine with one another. The alphanumeric Postal Code adopted for each zone consisted of three letters which were followed by two digits, with the exception of Gozo where only one letter, G, was used. In addition to these twenty-four zones there was the **CMR** postcode which was reserved for the Central Mail Room. The letters in the postcode indicated the zone, while the digits indicated a predetermined post person's mail distribution route or "beat".

The different postal code zones and the localities that fell under them may be found below:

- BBG:** Birżebbuġa, Hal Far.
- BKR:** Birkirkara, Mrieħel.
- BZN:** Attard, Balzan, Iklin, Lija.
- CSP:** Vittoriosa (Birgu), Cospicua (Bormla), Senglea (Isla), Kalkara, Ricasoli (Rikażli).
- G:** Fontana, Ghajnsielem, Għarb, Għasri, Kerċem, Munxar, Nadur, Qala, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Victoria (Rabat Gozo), Xagħra, Xewkija, Iż-Żebbuġ (Gozo), Comino (Kemmuna), Marsalforn, Mġarr Harbour, Ramla Bay, Ta' Pinu, Xlendi.
- GZR:** Gżira.
- HMR:** Hamrun, Marsa, Santa Venera.
- LQA:** Luqa.
- MLH:** Ċirkewwa, Għadira, Mellieħa, Manikata.
- MSD:** Msida, Pietà, Ta' Xbiex.
- MST:** Mġarr, Mosta.
- NXR:** Għargħur, Naxxar.
- PLA:** Fgura, Paola, St. Lucia (Santa Luċija), Tarxien, Corradino (Kordin).
- QRM:** Għar Lapsi, Qormi, Siġġiewi, Tal-Handaq.



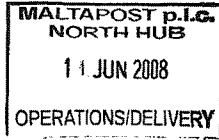
**RBT:** Dingli, Mdina, Mtarfa, Rabat, Bahrija, Ta' Qali.  
**SGN:** San Ġwann.  
**SLM:** Sliema.  
**SPB:** St. Paul's Bay (San Pawl il-Bahar), Qawra.  
**STJ:** Pembroke, St. Julian's (San Ġiljan), Swieqi, Madliena.  
**VLT:** Floriana, Valletta, Grand Harbour (Port).  
**ZBG:** Haż-Żebbuġ.  
**ZBR:** Marsaskala, Xghajra, Żabbar.  
**ZRQ:** Kirkop, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Żurrieq, Wied Iz-Żurrieq.  
**ZTN:** Ghaxaq, Gudja, Marsaxlokk, Żejtun, Bulebel.

The above mentioned postcode system was superseded through the introduction of a new alphanumeric system in October 2007; this after MaltaPost informed all residents in Malta and Gozo of their new post code by means of a card sent during the Christmas 2006 period and through a letter giving details of the change the following April. This revised system which is still presently in use consists of three letters which are followed by four digits. The three letters in the new postcode, as before, indicate the zone / locality; while the first three digits refer to the road or street with the fourth and last digit referring to the actual street segment. However, MaltaPost offered to allocate personalized post codes to addresses in particular identifiable localities where it had already allocated post codes according to the new scheme. As such, on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2008 the residents of Tigne` Point became the first to have their request upheld and MaltaPost conceded that their post code be changed to TP01, thus breaking away from this second generation post code format within only a few months of its introduction.

This restructuring program also involved the setting up of centrally located "hubs" which were established and took over a large portion of the work previously done by the sorting rooms at individual branch post offices. Since the above change in the domestic mail distribution system took place, there have been a total of five hubs in Malta and Gozo, with each zone falling under the direct responsibility of one of these hubs.

As time went by each hub started making use of its own handstamp for back stamping mail under certain circumstances. This consists of a rectangular box with the words "MALTAPOST p.l.c. / \*\*\*\*\* HUB / DATE / OPERATIONS/ DELIVERY" in black ink. Since their introduction different versions of such handstamps have been put in use. Examples of such handstamps may be seen below.

HUB OPERATIONS DELIVERY HANDSTAMPS



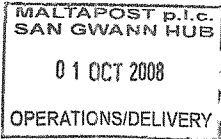
47 mm x 28 mm

North Hub  
Mosta Road, Lija.

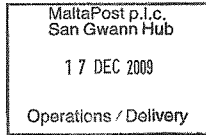


47 mm x 28 mm

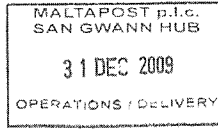
Central 1 Hub  
Qormi Road, Marsa.



47 mm x 28 mm



43 mm x 28 mm



46 mm x 25mm



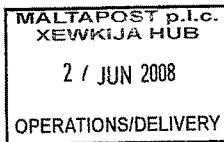
43 mm x 27 mm

Central 2 Hub  
Mensija Road, San Gwann.



47 mm x 28 mm

South Hub  
Our Lady of Sorrows Street, Zejtun.



47 mm x 28 mm

Gozo Hub  
Saint Elizabeth Street, Xewkija, Gozo.

# Unannounced Introduction of Maltapost peelable postage labels for letter packets

By John De Battista

Early in January this year it came to my knowledge that, unannounced by MaltaPost, a new label started to be used on letter packets. The label is very similar to the parcel label which was introduced by Maltapost back on the 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2006 except that it does not contain a barcode. This parcel label has already been recorded in the “Postal Diary” section of Vol. 35/3 of the Malta Philatelic Society Journal published in December 2006 (Pg. 40). Apparently this new “*postage*” label actually started to be used sometime during the first week or possibly on Monday of the second week of December 2009, although this is still to be verified.

Unfortunately at the time I learned of its existence I could not obtain further information. It looked as if the decision to start using the labels was taken very hurriedly just before the busy Christmas period and as a result not all postal counter clerks had received detailed instructions / training on its use.

Further enquiries to various sources over the next couple of months have now revealed the following information.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009 an internal circular in the form of an e-mail was issued to all MaltaPost offices informing them of the new label.

No public announcement regarding the introduction of these postage labels was made and although some post offices eventually occasionally made use of them during December 2009, the philatelic community remained totally unaware of their existence. It is known that quite a number of post offices did not even make use of this label before the first weeks of January and then only on the odd occasion. The main reason for this is that at present it is much more time consuming for a counter clerk to print and process a label than to sell ordinary postage stamps for use on packets; hence it is only natural that this option is utilised only as a last resort. In effect this means that any such postage labels issued during the months of December 2009 and January 2010 are all to be considered as very rare recent postal history items.

Two versions of the label exist, one for Local and the other for Foreign destinations. The difference between them is that on the Foreign version the postal zone and country of destination is included.

The labels can be printed on-line by the postal clerks at the post office counters in all branch post offices in the islands together with the Mobile Unit. This is possible through the use of standard laser printers located next to them on the

counter and which are linked to their workstation. It is to be noted that during the first two months of use, a major printing problem surfaced in that printing of labels could not be aligned properly on most of the printers at the post offices. As such, frankings can be found used spread over two labels, with the MaltaPost Logo and printing date section being printed on the lower side of the top label and detached by the blade line from the rest of the print which continues onto the bottom label. In an effort to overcome this problem, some Post Offices sometimes resorted to using the larger label intended for printing parcel labels and trimming off the excess material, instead of using the proper sized labels!

The procedure presently used for these labels is for the counter clerk to affix the label onto the postal item personally. The franked item is then deposited by the clerk inside the post office bag located at the post office and which is accessible only to the clerks. This bag is then later picked up by other MaltaPost personnel to be processed in the usual manner applicable for such postal bag handling at the sorting centre.

Postal clerks are prohibited from issuing and handing over such postage labels to customers. It is assumed that security investigations will be held in case any postal items franked with such labels are found at the sorting centre in postal bags not originating from post offices, and that disciplinary steps will be taken against the postal clerk not following procedure.

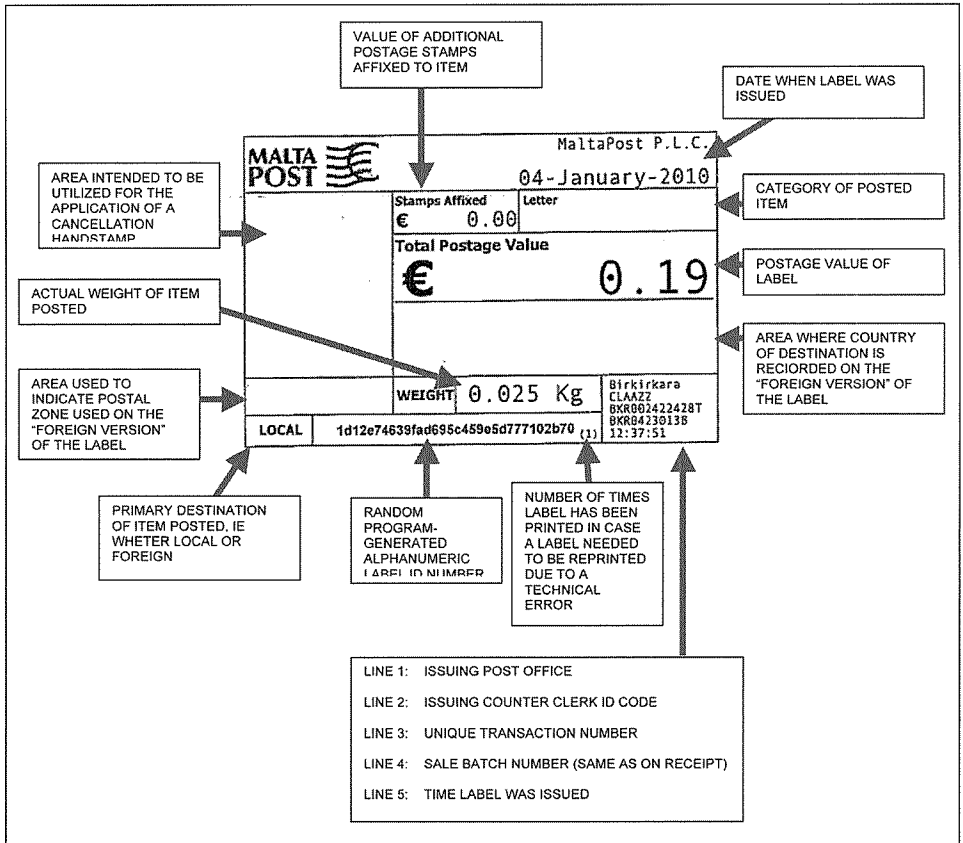
The customer is obviously given the usual electronic receipt for the sale as is obligatory for the sale of all items made from the post office. This in itself acts as an on-line record of the transaction which is used for administrative control purposes by MaltaPost and its number is also recorded on the label in the fourth line in the lower right hand corner block. Also for accountability purposes, the total number and details of such franked items in the bag is recorded by the postal clerks on the usual contents forms which accompany such bags for eventual tallying purposes at the mail sorting centres.

As for the labels themselves, I have prepared the following diagram which gives some technical information.

## **Technical Details:**

Label Sheet Format:	Individual Straight Edged (Non-Sprocketed) Printer Sheet Comprising Two Same Size Labels, Separated By A Straight Horizontal Blade Line Cut Through Paper With “Wax Type” Backing Layer Joining Both Labels.
Overall Sheet Size:	107 Mm X 148 Mm
Label Type:	Self Adhesive Peel Off
Paper Characteristics:	Unwatermarked Ordinary Paper

Paper Id Markings: None  
 Label Orientation: Horizontal  
 Outer Size Of Label: 107 Mm X 74 Mm  
 Size Of Printed Area: 94 Mm X 60.5 Mm (Outer Box)



# Postal Diary

## 15 October 2009 – 11 January 2010

by Joseph Fenech

### Corrigendum

With reference to the Postal Diary appearing in Vol. 38/3 (December 2009) of the Journal of The Malta Philatelic Society, it has to be pointed out that the heading of the said Diary should have read “Postal Diary: 7 May 2009 – 9 October 2009”.

### 15 October

MaltaPost plc notified that the letterbox in Ġnien il-Kunsill ta' l-Ewropa, Ta' Xbiex, had been damaged by fire. The last collection from this letterbox had been effected on Monday, 12 October 2009, at 19.44 hrs. and MaltaPost officials became aware of the incident at about 20.05 hrs. on Tuesday, 13 October 2009. Some mail items may have been totally destroyed in this incident. MaltaPost advised those persons who had posted letters between the times indicated, to verify receipt or otherwise with the addressees. MaltaPost informed that due to this incident, for a brief period the letterbox was temporarily out of service. However, the letterbox was quickly repaired and rendered fully operational again.

### 30 October

By means of notification No. 871 appearing in the Malta Government Gazette No. 18,500 dated 30 October 2009, it was notified that the Telephone Box and the Letter Box in Triq il-Marina corner with Triq it-Telgha ta' Guardamangia, Pieta`, should be classified as Grade 2 Monuments in terms of Structure Plan Policy UC07. The Malta Environment and Planning Authority will exercise its powers of enforcement, as set out in sections 46, 52, 53 and 55 of the Development Planning Act (CAP. 356) in the case of any contravention to the provisions of this Act as regards to Scheduled Property.

### 2 November

On 2 November 2009, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published an overview of the MCA's Small Businesses Market Research on Postal Services. The key purpose of this research was to assess the extent of consumer satisfaction with the services provided by MaltaPost plc (the Universal Service Provider). The target population for this survey consisted of companies employing between 1 and 20 employees. The total net valid sample size consisted of 258 entities. The 2009 research

contained in the MCA report was based on a survey carried out by EMCS – the survey was conducted by telephone during June 2009. Where applicable the report provides trends with a similar survey conducted in 2006 by the National Statistics Office.

The research report concluded that small businesses are sending and receiving fewer letters in 2009 than in 2006. The use of e-commerce (60.5%) and e-mails (33.3%) were the main reasons given for this decline. The majority of small businesses were satisfied with various aspects of the postal service offered by MaltaPost. 38% of the small businesses interviewed claim that they do not use MaltaPost's website. 94.6% of the small businesses interviewed stated that they had used the post office services/facilities during the previous 12 months, an increase of 14.8% when compared to the results obtained in 2006. Of these, 96.3% highlighted that they used the post office to buy stamps, 93% to post letters and 75.4% to register mails. The majority of small businesses (39.8%) highlighted that they spend between 11-20 minutes queuing for a postal service at a post office. The majority of the small businesses interviewed (86.5%) claimed that they were satisfied with the services/facilities provided by the post office. The use of MaltaPost's registered mail service (78.3%) increased slightly when compared to 2006 (77.5%). The level of satisfaction (96.5%) increased considerably when compared to 2006 (72.8%). The use of MaltaPost's parcel post service has increased (57%) when compared to 2006 (21%). Of those who have used MaltaPost's parcel post service, 72% claimed that they had used this service in relation to orders placed via distance selling methods to their firm. The majority of small businesses (53.5%) indicated that they were not aware of MaltaPost's complaint handling procedures compared to 83.8% in 2006. The main type of complaint related to mail delivery or collection. A higher percentage of small businesses (43%) – when compared to 2006 (27.1%) – claimed that the service provided by MaltaPost over the previous year had improved. A lower percentage of small businesses (69.8%) – when compared to 2006 (79.8%) – indicated that the services provided by MaltaPost were fairly good or very good.

## **2 November**

On 2 November 2009, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published the communications market review report for the period January – June 2009. This report provides up-to-date information on key areas of the Maltese electronic communications industry, the postal sector and eCommerce. The review also provides a summary of the main regulatory developments during the period under review.

With regard to the postal sector, the report indicates that the provision of postal services is characterised by the designated Universal Service Provider, namely MaltaPost plc, falling within the universal area and another 16 registered postal operators, falling outside the universal service area. Premiere Post Ltd. also holds a licence to provide non-reserved postal services within the scope of the universal service area. Overall,

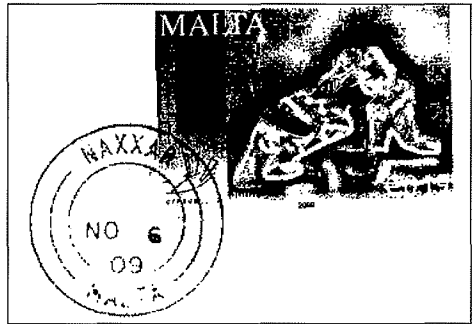
postal activity in the first half of 2009 was lower than that registered in the corresponding period for 2008. During the first half of 2009, MaltaPost delivered around 17.9 million *Domestic Mail* items and 2 million *Inbound Cross Border Mail* items. Compared with the corresponding period in 2008, *Domestic Mail* items delivered by MaltaPost declined by 2 million (9.9%). *Inbound Cross Border Mail* volumes remained practically unchanged whilst *Outbound Cross Border Mail* reached 1.4 million items, 0.4 million items less than that registered in the first half of 2008.

## 4 November

MaltaPost plc notified that as from Wednesday, 4 November 2009, the Sub-Post Office at 'Mimics', Triq Giovanni Curmi, Iklin IKL 1070, ceased to operate as a Sub-Post Office.

## 6 November

MaltaPost plc notified that the €0.19 stamp of the XIII Edition of the Games of the Small States of Europe set which had been issued in June 2009, was reprinted for the second time and made available for sale as from Friday, 6 November 2009. The stamp is 44.0mm x 31.0mm in size with a perforation of 13.9 x 14.0 (comb). The stamps were printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten.



## 13 November

A special handstamp inscribed “Gozo Philatelic Exhibition – 13-21 November 2009”, was used during the Gozo Philatelic Exhibition organised by the Gozo Philatelic Society, and held at the Ministry for Gozo Exhibition Hall, St. Francis Square, Victoria, Gozo between Friday, 13 November and Saturday, 21 November 2009. The exhibition was open to the public between 8.30am and 12.00 noon and 1.15pm and 4.30pm from Monday to Friday, and between 9.00am and 12.00 noon on Saturdays and Sunday. Five different personalised stamps were also issued to mark this tenth edition of the Gozo Philatelic Exhibition.





To commemorate this special event, as well as MaltaPost plc's first participation in the Gozo Philatelic Exhibition, MaltaPost issued an Occasion Card. This Occasion Card, No. 23 in the series, features the imprinted €1.07 (46c) stamp from the Scenery set issued in 2007 (depicting the harbour at Mgarr, Gozo). The card itself shows the Azure Window in Dwejra, Gozo.

## 25 November

On the occasion of the visit of King Juan Carlos I to Malta, a special postmark “Il-Miġja tar-Re Juan Carlos I u r-Reġina Sofia ta’ Spanja – Valletta – Malta – 25-26-XI-2009”, was used on Wednesday, 25 November and Thursday, 26 November 2009 at the MaltaPost Valletta (Dar Annona) Branch. This special postmark was designed by artist and philatelist Alfred Caruana Ruggier, a Committee member of The Malta Philatelic Society.



## 27 November

The Malta Communications Authority published an overview of the Large Business Mailers Market Research on Postal Services. The key purpose of this research was to assess the extent of consumer satisfaction with the services provided by MaltaPost plc. (the Universal Service Provider). The target population for this survey consisted of companies which send large quantities of mail on a regular seasonal basis. 32 companies decided to participate in the survey. The 2009 research contained in this report was based on a survey carried out by EMCS – the survey was conducted through personal interviews during June 2009. Where applicable, the report provides trends with a similar survey conducted in 2006 by the National Statistics Office. Results show that the proportion of Large Business Mailers sending less than 3,000 mail items has increased (+20.8%) when compared to 2006. The percentage of companies which send more than 30,000 letters per month increased as well, though to a lesser extent (+6.3%). 37.5% of the large businesses interviewed claimed that they use other providers, besides MaltaPost plc, for their postal services. The majority of these (50%) claimed that the level of quality of the services provided was fairly good. The mean level of satisfaction, when compared to 2006, has improved for the ‘last collection times’, ‘time at which post is delivered’, and ‘value for money’. It decreased for the ‘duration taken to deliver letters’ and ‘information available about the services provided’. A slight decrease was registered in the percentage of Large Business Mailers who use the

post office service facilities (2006 – 79.2%, 2009 – 75%). The main purpose for visiting the post office was for registering (95.8%) and posting (91.8%) letters.

Out of the 24 Large Business Mailers who used the post office, 29.2% spent between 11-20 minutes queuing at a post office. The majority of the respondents (73.9%) highlighted that they were satisfied with MaltaPost's post office service facilities. 96.9% of the Large Business Mailers interviewed indicated that they used MaltaPost's registered mail service. Of these, 90.3% highlighted that they were satisfied with this service. 40.6% (13) of the Large Business Mailers interviewed highlighted that they had used MaltaPost's parcel post service within the last 12 months. Of these, 92.3% indicated that they were satisfied with the service. 93.8% of the Large Business Mailers interviewed highlighted that they have used MaltaPost's bulk mail service within the last 12 months. A higher level of satisfaction was expressed for this service when compared to 2006. 93.8% (30) of the large businesses interviewed indicated that they did not use MaltaPost's addressed or unaddressed advertising services. The majority of the Large Business Mailers interviewed (56.3%) were not aware of the appropriate letterbox standard size. 75% of the large businesses interviewed were aware of MaltaPost's complaint handling procedures. The majority of the Large Business Mailers interviewed (56.3% - 18) highlighted that they have made some form of complaint to MaltaPost in the last 12 months. The main type of complaint (4 out of 18) related to loss or substantial delay of postal items. Nearly all of those who made some form of complaint (17 out of 18) highlighted that their complaint had been solved. Out of those who made some form of complaint, the majority (88.8% - 16) were not compensated for loss, damage or delay of postal items or for non-compliance with established quality of service standards. A higher level of satisfaction was expressed with the overall level of quality of postal services provided by MaltaPost when compared to 2006.

### **30 November**

On Monday, 30 November 2009, MaltaPost plc issued the set of Christmas stamps for 2009. The three stamps in this set depict images of three nativity paintings, two found at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta, and one preserved in a private collection. The stamps, which were designed in-house by MaltaPost plc, have values of €0.19 ("Mater Admirabilis" – tempera on panel in the manner of Alessandro Botticelli), €0.37 ("Madonna and Child" – oil on canvas by Corrado Giacchino) and €0.63 ("The Madonna and Child" – oil on canvas by a follower of Simone Cantarini). The stamps are 44.0 mm X 31.00 mm in size, with a perforation of 13.9 X 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on Maltese Crosses watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten. MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative double-ringed handstamp to cancel the stamps

on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 8\2009). The handstamp was inscribed “MALTAPOST - ----- MALTA” in the outer ring and “CHRISTMAS/JUM IL-HRUĠ/30.11.09” in the inner ring. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 278. Together with the stamps, MaltaPost also issued for sale a Christmas card bearing the image of the painting shown on the €0.19 stamp (“Mater Admirabilis”).



## 1 December

To further enhance its service during the peak Christmas period, MaltaPost extended the opening hours of the Head Office Branch at Triq Hal Qormi, Marsa, so as to enable clients to pick up their notified non-dutiable parcels, bulky parcels and EMS items until 21.00 hrs. between Mondays and Saturdays. Besides, postal services and customs clearance service at the MaltaPost Head Office were made available between 8.00 hrs. and 12.45 hrs. and from 13.45 hrs. to 19.00 hrs. between Mondays and Fridays, and from 8.00 hrs. to 12.45 hrs. on Saturdays. MaltaPost could also clear items from customs on behalf of customers at a nominal fee upon authorisation from clients. The country-wide delivery service was extended until 21.00 hrs. from Mondays to Sundays, as well. This extended service was to be continued until 23 December 2009.

## 1 December

On Tuesday, 1 December 2009, the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) published its Decision Notice on “Postal Sector – Managing Common Operational Issues in a Multi-Operator Environment”. In order to create the conditions for an environment that is conducive to the onset of competition and in preparation of full market opening of the postal sector by the end of December 2012, the MCA had issued a consultation document in August 2009 proposing a set of minimum standards setting out the duties and obligations of licensed postal operators (i.e. postal operators operating services falling within the scope of the universal service) relating to common inter-operator issues that arise in a multi-operator environment. The objective of these minimum standards, which the MCA issued as a Decision Notice, is to minimise postal operator and consumer confusion in a multi-operator environment, thereby ensuring prompt handling and delivery of postal articles. These minimum standards will also help to maintain mail integrity, preserve customers’ confidence in the postal system and provide operational certainty to new entrants. The common operational issues discussed in the consultation

document related to: (a) the identification of mail as carried by a postal operator; (b) accessing elements of the postal infrastructure and services; (c) the timely and efficient extraction and repatriation of mail which has entered the postal facilities of a postal operator which is not the intended operator; and (d) the redirection of misdirected customer enquiries.

## 2 December

On Wednesday, 2 December 2009, the MaltaPost plc Philatelic Bureau issued Occasion Folder no. 1 to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bush - Gorbachev Summit held in Malta in 1989. This folder, with a retail price of €5.00, includes the Bush and Gorbachev 1989 stamp as well as a personalised stamp commemorating the occasion. This personalised stamp portrays the two leaders during the 1989 summit, and is cancelled with a Valletta circular date stamp (marking 2 December 2009).



## 3 December

On 3 December 2009, the National Statistics Office issued News Release 217/2009 highlighting the post and telecommunications statistics for the third quarter (July – September) 2009. According to these statistics, in the quarter under review, total postal traffic amounted to around 10.4 million items, a drop of 3.7% when compared to the corresponding quarter in 2008 (when the amount stood at circa 10.8 million items). The total number of parcels sent through the national post in the period under review was 18,269 (compared to 16,131 in the same quarter of the previous year, and 20,830 in the second quarter of 2009).

## 11 December

MaltaPost plc notified that service from the letterbox situated in Misrah Dorell, Santa Luċija, was temporarily suspended due to maintenance works. The nearest letterbox which could be used in the interim was LB No. 013 located at the Civic Centre, Dawret it-Torri, Santa Luċija.

## 22 December

MaltaPost plc notified that the letterbox in Misrah Dorell, Santa Luċija, which had been temporarily inaccessible due to maintenance works, was back in service.

## 24 December

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, an early collection from all public letterboxes took place on 24 December 2009 (at 14.00 hrs.).

## 24 December

The St. Julians MaltaPost Branch situated within the Lombard Bank plc branch in Triq Paceville, was open for business between 8.30am and 12.30pm (early closure) on Thursday, 24 December 2009.

## 26 December

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, MaltaPost was on shut-down, and all Branches were closed, on Saturday, 26 December 2009. Normal service was resumed on Monday, 28 December 2009.

## 29 December

On Tuesday, 29 December 2009, MaltaPost plc issued a Definitive Set of 17 stamps, celebrating Malta's heritage through stamps. The set was designed by Edward D. Pirotta and Paul Psaila, and each stamp is 44.0 mm X 31.0 mm in size, with perforations of 13.9 X 14.0 (comb). The stamps were offset printed on watermarked paper by Printex Limited, and are available in sheets of ten, or as a souvenir sheet. Each souvenir sheet (face value amounting to €11.42) is 169 mm X 262 mm in size, and is individually numbered. The face values of the stamps are €0.01 (Pleistocene Period), €0.02 (Early Temple Period), €0.05 (Late Temple Period), €0.07 (Bronze Age), €0.09 (Phoenician and Punic Period), €0.10 (Roman Period), €0.19 (Byzantine Period), €0.26 (Arab Period), €0.37 (Norman and Hohenstaufen Period), €0.50 (Angevin and Aragonese Period), €0.51 (Knights of St. John), €0.63 (French Period), €0.68 (British Period), €0.86 (Independence), €1.00 (Republic), €1.08 (EU Accession) and €5.00 (Coat of Arms of the Republic of Malta). MaltaPost plc issued a special commemorative handstamp to cancel the stamps on the first day of issue (on FDC No. 9/2009). The handstamp was inscribed "MALTAPOST - ----- - MALTA/DEFINITIVE ISSUE/JUM IL-HRUĠ/29.12.09", and also included the coat of arms of the Republic of Malta. The MaltaPost Philatelic Bureau featured these stamps in the stamp bulletin No. 279.



To celebrate this new Definitive Set, MaltaPost plc, in collaboration with Midsea Books Ltd., published a book titled "The Historical Collection – Celebrating Malta's Heritage Through Stamps". The book, edited by Heritage Malta, narrates Malta's history through a number of essays by

specialist historians. A uniquely numbered souvenir sheet bearing the 17 stamps in the Definitive Set was also included in the first 2,500 numbered copies of this publication, with both the souvenir sheet and the book having a matching number. The various essays in the book were written by John J. Borg, Reuben Grima, MariaElena Zammit, Nicholas C. Vella, Anthony Bonanno, Charles Dalli, Mario Buhagiar, Kenneth Gambin, Emmanuel Magro Conti, Joseph M. Pirota and Richard Cachia Caruana.

### **31 December**

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, an early collection from all public letterboxes took place on 31 December 2009 (at 14.00 hrs.).

### **31 December**

The St. Julians MaltaPost Branch situated within the Lombard Bank plc branch in Triq Paceville, was open for business between 8.30am and 12.30pm (early closure) on Thursday, 31 December 2009.

### **2 January 2010**

By agreement with the Malta Communications Authority, MaltaPost was on shut-down, and all Branches were closed, on Saturday, 2 January 2010. Normal service was resumed on Monday, 4 January 2010.

### **2 January**

The Sub-Post Office at Pen House Stationery, Pjazza l-Eroj, Birkirkara BKR 4252, was closed for business between Saturday, 2 January and Saturday, 16 January 2010, both days included.

### **11 January**

In line with the Malta Communications Authority Decision Notice of September 2009, MaltaPost installed two new public letterboxes. One was installed at Triq Profs Walter Ganado, Pembroke (opposite the ITS, next to the bus shelter), and the other at Triq il-Marfa, Ċirkewwa (on the way to the Riviera Hotel from Ċirkewwa, next to the bus shelter). Service to these letterboxes commenced on Monday, 11 January 2010, with the collection time being after 7.00pm on weekdays and 3.00pm on Saturdays.

# MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

## BALANCE SHEET

31 December 2009

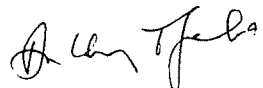
		2009	2008
	Page	€	€
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
At Cost	7	4,304	
Less Depreciation		<u>4,094</u>	420
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Sundry Debtors	8	0	1,398
Interest accrued on Fixed Deposit Account		28	28
Subscriptions in Arrears		0	0
Fixed Deposit Account	9	1,631	1,631
Current Account	10	<u>3,625</u>	<u>1,520</u>
		5,494	4,997
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Subscriptions in Advance		<u>(653)</u>	<u>(289)</u>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>		4,841	4,708
<b>ACCUMULATED FUND</b>		<u><u>4,841</u></u>	<u><u>4,708</u></u>



John A. Cardona.  
Hon. Secretary & Treasurer.



Prof. G. Camilleri.  
Auditor



Rev. Fr. A. Galea.  
Auditor.

NOTE: Published above are the audited accounts for the year which ended on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009 and which were approved and adopted at the Annual General Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010. It will be noted that reference is made to a number of pages on the Balance Sheet and a series of notes on the Income & Expenditure Account. These are not enclosed to save space. However, if any member would wish to receive these documents please contact us and we will be delighted to furnish a copy.

# MALTA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

31 December 2009

INCOME	Notes	<u>2009</u>		<u>2008</u>	
		€	€	€	€
Subscription receivable	(1)	1,601		1,899	
Interest received	(2)	75		107	
Donations	(3)	<u>487</u>		<u>50</u>	
			2,163		2,056
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Journal distribution costs	(4)	597		507	
Circulars/Newsletters distribution costs	(5)	331		567	
Sundry administrative expenses	(6)	443		263	
F.I.P. affiliation fee	(7)	184		169	
St. Publius Hall - rental	(8)	131		130	
Christmas "get together"	(9)	195		135	
Suffrages	(10)	25		25	
Subscriptions written off	(11)	95		255	
Maltex X Philatelic Exhibition	(12)	20		70	
Bank Charges	(13)	<u>9</u>		<u>7</u>	
			2,030		2,128
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>			133		(72)
<b>FUND OPENING BALANCE</b>			<u>4,708</u>		<u>4,780</u>
<b>FUND BALANCE AT YEAR END</b>			<u><u>4,841</u></u>		<u><u>4,708</u></u>



Head Office: Lombard Bank - Palazzo Spadola, Republic Street, Valletta



**LOMBARD**

Lombard Bank Malta p.l.c.

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*Licensed to conduct Investment Services Business by the Malta Financial Services Authority  
Regulated by the Malta Financial Services Authority & listed on the Malta Stock Exchange*

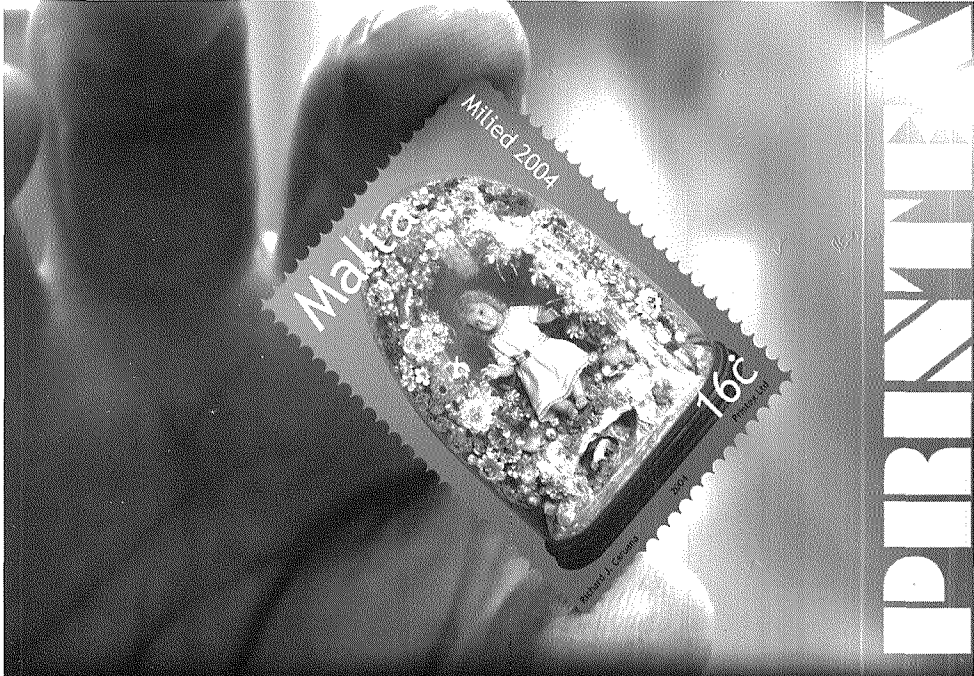
The Brandstätter Group - Malta has been producing Playmobil locally for over two decades. The global success of this product has resulted in significant growth and diversification of the Group, which now consists of seven companies. With each specialising in its own field and producing a comprehensive range of diverse products from steel moulds to system software. Of course the same high levels of quality and service that has come to be expected of Playmobil are offered by all of the companies that form the Brandstätter Group - Malta.

*For further information contact:*

## **BRANDSTÄTTER GROUP - MALTA**

HF 80 Industrial Estate, Hal Far BBG 06

Tel: 2224 0000 Fax: 2165 8258



PRINTING

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# PAPAL VISIT 2010



www.maltapost.com



## Miniature Sheet

Stamp 44.0mm x 31.0mm,  
Miniature sheet 130.0mm x 85.0mm,  
Watermark: Maltese Crosses.



## Silver Replica Stamp

A Limited Edition Silver Replica Stamp which is a stunning reproduction of the Papal Visit 2010 Stamp Issue and depicts Pope Benedict XVI. The Silver Replica Stamp is struck in 99.9% Fine Silver. Each stamp is individually numbered and the issue is limited to 2,000 pieces.



## Commemorative Folder

A Limited Edition of a numbered Commemorative Folder (limited to 4,000), including a miniature sheet of the Papal Visit 2010 Stamp Issue. Commemorative Folders have been reserved so as to also allow you to match the folder with your numbered Silver Replica Stamp order.



## Occasion Card

Size: 100mm x 151mm

## ORDER FORM

Available from all MaltaPost Branches or book your order as follows:

I enclose cheque or postal money order made payable to MaltaPost p.l.c. for the amount of € \_\_\_\_\_ covering my order for:

Silver Replica Stamp (€50.00)       Commemorative Folder (€5.00)       Miniature Sheet (€3.00)       Occasion Card (€1.00)

Name & Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ ID No: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Delivered to the above address - please add €3.50 per order.

Will Collect from \_\_\_\_\_ MaltaPost Branch



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