

The Postal Services in Malta in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Some Mercantile, Commercial and Social Aspects

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This account is based on the contents of two registers which were found by chance by the present writer in the spring of 1978 during a stroll in the countryside in the area of Tal Mirakli, Attard. They had been discarded and dumped in a rubbish heap.¹

Each register measures 30cm by 21.5cm. Some of the leaves are torn with missing pieces. They have dated entries, written in Italian in faded ink. There are indications that they were originally bound but their hard covers are missing together with their backstrips; joints are broken; the leaves show some foxing and are frayed in the margins. Each page is divided by vertical lines into columns headed:-

Date and time of arrival of letters; name of ship; date and time of dispatch of letters; name and address of person receiving the letter; and a column bearing the name of the employee delivering the letter.

The earlier register starts on the 16th May 1838 and ends on the 18th November 1838 with a few blank folios at the back. The other register has a "titlepage" with the words *Libro resposte dalli 9 ottobre 1848 alli 13 febraio 1850 (sic)*.

The Time of the Order of St John

During the time of the Order of St John in Malta (1530-1798), the main scope for an overseas postal service was to meet the requirements of trade and the administrative affairs of the Order. There was in fact hardly any need of a postal service for purely friendly letters and family news. In fact the population of the island was varying from twenty-two thousand in the mid-sixteenth century to one hundred thousand at the close of the eighteenth and consisted mainly of illiterate rural groupings with hardly any extra-insular connections. Up to the end of the eighteenth century the ceaseless warfare between the Moslems and Christians in the Mediterranean led to the Maltese being captured and taken slaves to the Barbary States and Turkey - a circumstance which rendered these men and women beyond the pale of epistolary reach.

It was only between Malta and Sicily that the carriage of overseas letters was possible. From Sicily the letters were sent to their ultimate destination on the European mainland by means of land couriers. Originally the expense of this service to Sicily was defrayed by the state but some time after 1708 a postal tariff was fixed, the rate being based on the weight or the number of sheets enclosed in the folder. In 1792 a fortnightly service with Italy was replaced by a weekly one, the opportunity being taken to double the postal rates.

The official responsible for the running of the postal service was known as the Commissary of Post, this designation being later changed to that of Post Master. He had a staff of two assistants, a senior clerk and a post deliverer. He was Mr Dominic Montanaro who retired on pension in 1816 and was succeeded by Mr Robert Macnab Agent to the Post Master General of His Majesty the British Monarch.

Direzione delle Lettere

Rimarche

1.	Insidioma Turco, & Hag Abdalla Benarius	E. Vassallo
1.	Caterina Zammit Pisinasca Longo	En. Micallef
1.	John Dilany Esq. Ireland	spediti in
1.	M ^{rs} Thomson Leicester England	Posta
1.	W. J. Eynaud Esq. Malta	F. Berg & Mifs
1.	M ^{rs} W. B. Treiravas, England	spediti con il
1.	M ^r John Crabb, Liverpool	Grand A. Zammit
1.	Brith ^o Wilson Esq. Ireland	spediti in Posta
1.	M ^r Charles Treiravas Cornwall England	E. Vassallo
1.	Dig ^o Giuseppe Fogola, Napoli	} Messag ^o
	Antonis Palazig	
1.	D ^o Vincenzo Mallise	
1.	Bevri Adm ^o Ed ^o Harney Rep ^o	spediti con
1.	M ^{ra} Giacetta Vice Adm ^o Pir M. Pastres	F. Berg
4.	J. Holton Esq. Spain	consegnati al M ^o
1.	St ^a Emmanuele Spisanga	} Messaggieri
1.	Dig ^o Emma Zammit	
1.	Vis. Consul of Spain	
1.	Mons ^r Bertora, Agent des paquebots Malta	Messaggieri
1.	Sir John G. Tindler, Bar ^o Capt of Regt, Southampton	Posta
1.	M ^o L ^o Cavallo con Malta	Malta

II. - - - - - arriva, - - - - - Le - - - - - 17th 1850

Libro risposte dalli 9 Ottobre 1848 all 13 Febbraio 1850. Consegne 17 Ottobre 1848. 10.30 a.m.
Sent on the same day

Plague and the Disinfection of Letters

The possibility of an invasion of Malta by plague was a perennial fear. In those days it was believed that paper and other objects from plague-infected places could convey the disease from one person to another. This explains why there was a close connection between the Post Office administration and the Quarantine system which was based on the Lazzaretto on Manoel Island and which was responsible for the depuration of merchandise, the isolation of incoming travellers at the Lazzaretto or Fort Manoel; the anchoring of ships with their crews in the nearby Quarantine Harbour, and the retention of imported livestock in *ad hoc* enclosures on a stretch of Manoel Island.

The fear of the eruption of a bubonic plague epidemic from overseas by handling paper and other fomites, was ever present in the early decades of the 19th century especially after the invasion by plague from abroad in 1813-1814. All kinds of articles were suspects. In fact Robert Grieves, the Secretary to Government, records that in June 1818 some papers and money were found in "a table drawer which had been purchased from a house in Casal Zebbug five miles distant away from where some inhabitants of that village had died of plague in 1813. The purchaser with the acquired furniture were immediately conveyed to the Lazzaretto and placed under a foul quarantine under proper Health Guards" It was only after no occurrence of disease, neither at the Lazzaretto nor in the village, that the furniture etc., were released from quarantine.(2)

Sea Routes in the Early British Period

With the establishment of the British Protectorate in 1800 and the subsequent British Rule after 1814, overseas trade grew and Malta became a clearing point between East and West in the Mediterranean. Concurrently, with this development, the postal service expanded to keep pace with the new demands made upon it. But those were still the days of sail and the delivery of letters took an appreciable time. The postal ships were of various types and nationalities: schooners, fore-and-aft rigged vessels with two or more masts; brigantines, and single decked vessels using sails and oars (galeotte). The first steamship to call at Malta was the London Engineer on her way to Alexandria on 3rd July 1825. By the early thirties an English Government Steam Packet was plying between England and Malta, the trip taking about seventeen days.

The principal sea routes by which the mails were carried by the mid century were the: (a) Peninsular and Oriental Company engaged by the British Government in 1840 to carry mails between England, the Iberian Peninsula and Egypt calling at Malta on this route; (b) Her Majesty's Packet bringing the London mails from Marseilles and the Indian post from Alexandria; (c) the French Pacquebots carrying letters to France, the United Kingdom, via Marseilles; from Egypt and Constantinople; (d) Italian ships conveying letters to Naples; and (e) occasionally Her Majesty's war ships.

The First Packet Agent

The first Packet Agent in Malta was appointed in 1806. He was responsible for the dispatch of overseas mail between Malta, Gibraltar and Falmouth (UK). This route was extended with the passage of years. A Daily Packet List was published by Her Majesty's

Published under the

By Her Majesty's



Authority of
Postmaster General

DAILY PACKET LIST.

GENERAL POST OFFICE.
(G.R.S.)

No. 15,733

MONDAY, APRIL 16, 1840.

Stations.	Destinations.	Made up in London.	When due in London.	Mails Arr.	Date.	Mails due.
DUNKERQUE	Calais	Twice daily, Sunday except	Twice daily, Sunday except	4	—	—
	Ostend	Every day but Sunday	Daily	2	—	—
THE THAMES	Holland	Wed. & Sat. Morning	Monday & Thursday	1	—	—
	Hamburg	Tuesday and Friday	Tuesday & Saturday	1	—	—
LIVERPOOL	Dublin	Every day but Sunday	Daily	4	13 14 15	—
HELMSHEAD	Dublin	Every day but Sunday	Daily	4	13 14 15	—
PORT PATRICK	Donaghadee	Every day but Sunday	Daily	2	13 14	—
SOUTHAMPTON	Jersey & Guernsey	Mon. Wed. & Friday Even.	Tues. Thurs. & Saturd.	—	—	—

SOUTHAMPTON STATION.

Destinations.	Mails dispatched from London.	Last Packet sailed from Southampton.	Next Packet due at Southampton.	Arr. at Southampton and date of Mails.
Lisbon, Spain, and Gibraltar	(By Day Mail) 7th, 17th & 27th of every Month.	JUPITER April 7.	Next Mail due . . . Apr. 26	MONTROSE Apr. 5 Cádiz 6 Lisbon 9 Oporto 10 Vigo 11
Gibraltar, Malta, Greece, & Ionian Islds.	20th of every Month	INDUS Mar. 30	Next Mail due Apr. 28	
Egypt, Ceylon, India, and China	20th of every Month	SEVERN Apr. 2	Next Mail due Apr. 22	
British Colonies in West Indies, (except Honduras, Nassau & Bermuda)	2d and 17th of every Month.	SEVERN Apr. 2	Next Mail due Apr. 22	
Foreign Colonies in W. Indies (except Havana), Venezuela, & Jamaica	2d of every Month only.	SEVERN Apr. 2	Next Mail due Apr. 22	
(By Day Mail) New Orleans, New Orleans, Mexico, Montevideo, & Havana	2d of every Month only.	TAY Mar. 17	Next Mail due May 7	
(By Day Mail) St. Juan de Nicaragua, & New Granada, Chili & Peru	17th of every Month only.	TAY Mar. 17	Next Mail due May 7	

FALMOUTH STATION.

Destinations.	Mails dispatched from London.	Last Packet sailed from Falmouth.	Next Packet due at Falmouth.	Arr. at Falmouth and date of Mails.
Madeira	Evening of 4th of every Month.	HMB LANCET April 6	HMB PERSEUS Apr 26	
Brazil	Evening of 4th of every Month.	HMB LANCET April 6	HMB PERSEUS Apr 26	
Buenos Ayres	Evening of 4th of every Month.	HMB LANCET April 6	HMB PERSEUS Apr 26	

LIVERPOOL STATION.

Destinations.	Mails dispatched from London.	Last Packet sailed from Liverpool.	Next Packet due at Liverpool.	Arr. at Liverpool and date of Mails.
British North America, and United States.	Every alternate Friday (before Decr. 1st, January, February, and March, and every Friday after the remainder of the year).	CAMERA April 14	CANADA Apr. 19	

NOTICE.—Mails will be made up at this Office on the Evening of the 30th inst., for MADRIDA, and the West Coast of Africa, to be conveyed by one of Her Majesty's Ships appointed to sail on the 1st. proximo. Letters for Madeira will be liable to a postage of 1s. 10d. the half ounce, and so on, and Newspapers for Madeira will be chargeable with a postage of 2d. each. Letters for the West Coast of Africa, will be liable to a postage of 1s. the half ounce, but no charge will be made on Newspapers. All Letters and Newspapers for Sierra Leone, not directed to be forwarded by any other vessel, will be dispatched by these Mails. Letters and Newspapers for Madaira, or for any part of the West Coast of Africa, except Sierra Leone, intended to be sent by this vessel, must be specially addressed "By Her Majesty's Ship." Further notice will be given about the 26th inst., as to the name of the Packet, and the port from which she will take her departure.

MADEIRA BRAZIL AND BUENOS AYRES.
[From August to January inclusive, the Packet touches at PENAMBUCO and BAHIA on her outward passage to RIO JANEIRO, and the other Six Months on her return.]

WEST INDIES, &c
Avon, for the Mails of the 17th inst.

AMERICA.
CAMERA, sailed 14th inst., with all Letters for America, &c. that arrived or were posted at Liverpool up to the Morning of that day inclusive.
The United States Mail Packet "WASHINGTON," is appointed to sail from Southampton, on the 20th inst. Letters to be forwarded by this vessel must be addressed "By United States Mail Packet."

HOLLAND AND HAMBURG.
GRAPPE, with the Holland Mails of the Morning of 14th inst., sailed 14th inst.

FRANCE & BELGIUM.

VIGO OPORTO LISBON CADIZ GIBRALTAR.
MEDITERRANEAN EGYPT INDIA AND CHINA.
MONTROSE, arrived, brought Passengers, Lady Home; Messrs. Reppeche, Bermisillo, Sansuro, Le Roy, Pereira (Mother and Wife), Mills, Potter (and Family), Ellis, and Wiles, Miss Potter.
Mails for the Peninsula, &c. Mails of the Morning of 17th inst.
Mails for the Mediterranean, Egypt, India, &c. Mails of the Morning of 20th inst.
The next Mails for GIBRALTAR, MALTA, GREECE, the IONIAN ISLANDS, EGYPT, INDIA, &c., and Southampton, will be dispatched from hence on the Morning of 20th inst.
The next Mails for the Mediterranean, Egypt, India, &c., via Marseilles, will be dispatched from hence on the Evening of 24th inst.

Postmaster General showing the destination of mails despatched from Southampton to Malta, Gibraltar, Egypt and China by the packets *Indus*, *Sultan*, *Erin*, *Ripon* and *Hindustani*(3).

The earliest postal markings on letters consisted of the word *Malta* which first appeared in 1807. Two years later the word *Paid* was added. These markings remained in use until about 1840.

The inland mail was entrusted to a local Postmaster but this office and the Packet Agency were in later years placed under one head.

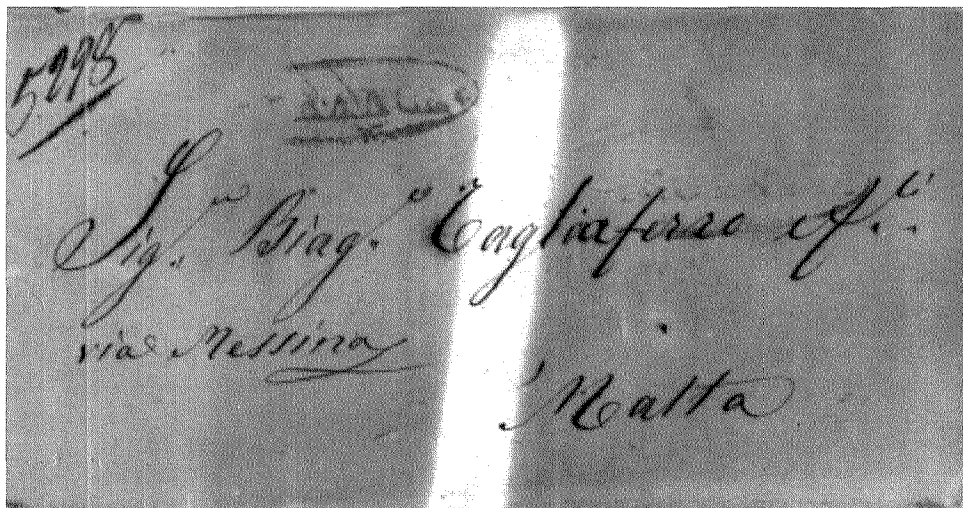
Difficulties Encountered by the Postal Service

In the registers under review there are no records of complaints from senders or recipients regarding any missing, delayed, mis-sorted or mis-directed letters - and this in spite of the fact that quite a number of letters risked being undelivered because of such adverse circumstances as:-

1. Those insufficiently addressed rendering the receiver difficult to identify. Example: Thomas Bell; Mr Smith Strada Teatro; Sig. Rosario Messina (the letters having been found at sea on 16 October 1848); a letter addressed *Nix Mangiari* without the name of the addressee(4); a letter for the Town Major, Malta on 13 November 1848; a letter "*in idioma arabo nella chiesa dei Cattolici, Malta*"; Signor Michele Amodeo di Salvatore Malta; Sig Vincenzo e Giuseppe Farrugia or their sisters nicknamed *TA GAUDI*, Gozo.
2. Letter with addresses in Greek or Turkish scripts. These were passed on to Mr Giovanni Farrugia, the Ottoman Consul, for eventual delivery to the addressee (19 October 1848 and 11 April 1849).
3. Two bills of exchange of fifty pounds sterling each for James Bell.
4. A letter from Constantinople addressed to Laferla and Said Bey "to await for Laferla's arrival in Malta".
5. A sealed package marked "thirty gold napoleons" for the Russian Consul in Malta" dated 27 April 1849.(5)
6. Seventeen passports, three of which were wrapped in a piece of hide on 26 September 1849.
7. *Un libretto* for the French Consul with his *giornale di navigazione* and three loose sheets of paper.
8. There is one recorded mishap which was noticed immediately by the postal officials and attended to without loss of time. It concerned a letter, in a batch of one hundred and thirty-five ones, destined for England and addressed to a corporal of the Royal Marines. While this letter was being slit with a chisel to expose its interior to the *profumo* fumes for disinfection it was accidentally divided into two portions. These were brought together as "perfectly as possible" and enclosed in a new envelope bearing the address of the corporal and "sent to England with all the other letters".

Letters in quarantine

As all postal matter from overseas was considered liable to be infected with the contagion



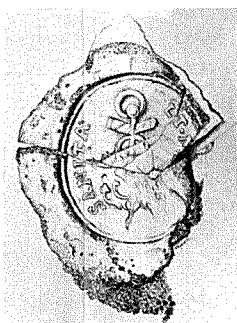
Entire showing Tong Marks

of plague, letters were not delivered directly to the Post Office for distribution to the recipients in Malta, but were first taken to the *profumo* office at the Lazzaretto on Manoel Island for disinfection by “fumigation” or “smoking” as this procedure was popularly called. Paper money was dealt with in the same manner; but coins were disinfected by immersion in vinegar.

Letters written by travellers already undergoing quarantine were similarly treated before being sent to local residents or sent abroad. The letters were taken from the writer to the *profumo* office by one of the employees of the Lazzaretto known as Health Guardians.

The names of these men are recorded in one of the columns of the registers under study. A separate column contains the names of (a) the employees who delivered the letters to the addressee, (b) the boatman who took the post to ships; (c) and the recipients who called personally at the post office to collect their mail themselves.

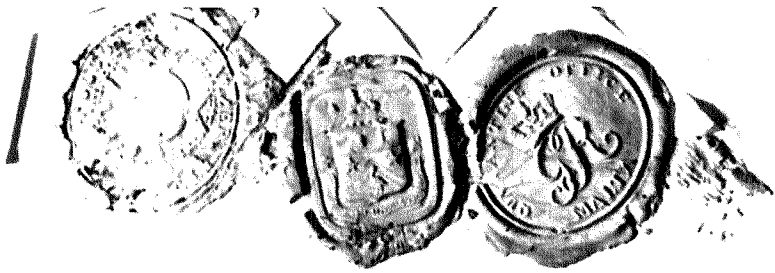
Letters were opened for fumigation and resealed by means of red wax seals.



First Group during the period 1816-1825



These have been described as having the legend “SANITA / DI MALTA”. And “QUARANTINE OFFICE MALTA” having a fouled anchor with distinct ring and stock; shank with ring like structure and small flutes measuring 25mm by 22mm and 30mm by 26mm respectively.



A Second group of red wax seals was used during the period 1825 – 1840 bearing the crown and Royal Cipher G.R. (George IV Rex King) with the inscription “*QUARANTINE OFFICE MALTA*” measuring 33mm by 25mm.

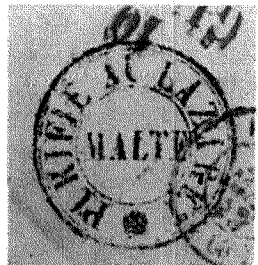
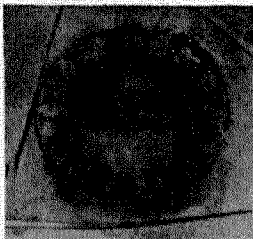
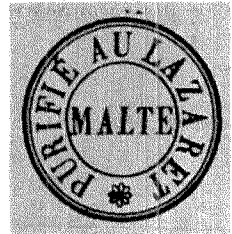
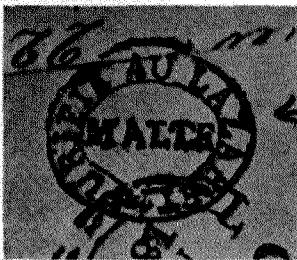
Third group between 1825 – 1844

A horizontal double oval heavy line frame red wax seal measuring 25mm by 21mm. In the centre there is a crown and royal cipher GR, while between two frame lines the inscription reads “*OPENED AND RESEALED / LAZZARETTO OF MALTA*”.



Cachets:

The Business and Diplomatic Community protested very strongly against the opening of their mail, and so, after a serious diplomatic incident, it was agreed that letters would no longer be opened, but slits applied by means of a chisel so that fumigation vapors could enter the entire, and so disinfect it, and the “*PURIFIÉ AU LAZARET MALTE*” applied. The following types have been recorded.



1836-38
26mm by 22mm

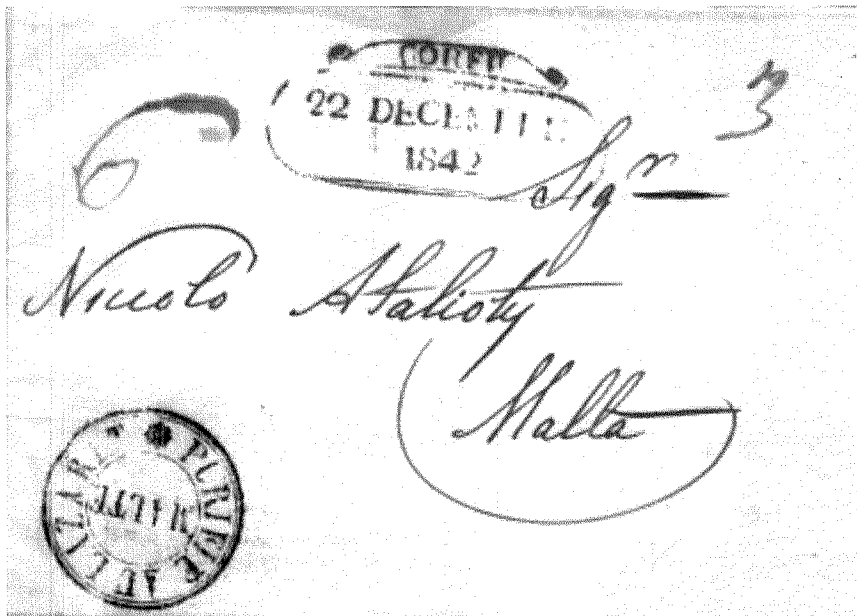
1838-79
25mm & 26mm

1838-79
25mm & 26mm

To further allay any fears, on the part of the recipient, of catching the plague from his letters the envelope was prominently stamped with the words *PURIFIÉ AU LAZARET MALTE* (Disinfected at the Malta Lazzaretto).



Entires showing two different types of "PURIFIÉ AU LAZARET MALTE"



Other circular cachets were used between 1896 and 1904.

Who were the correspondents?

Who were the persons who sent and received letters from overseas? Their names reflect the interests of commercial, professional and ecclesiastical classes that dominated social life in the island. It is not possible to pry into their contents and we can only speculate as to their themes! Were they simply personal or family news? Or business affairs? Or matters concerning government policies or political moves of a confidential nature? And what about the contents of letters of the Italian political refugees living in Malta during the turbulent years of the Risorgimento?

An attempt has been made to classify the hundreds of letters noted in the two registers in accordance with the status or known activities of senders and recipients by referring to information from other sources. They may be grouped as follows:

Senders and Receivers of Letters

Government Officials

His Excellency The Governor (Frederick Henry Bouverie (1836-43). Major General, a veteran of the Napoleonic wars.

Sir Hector Greig, KCMG,

Chief Secretary to Government (1841). Member of the Council of Government, Ex-Superintendent of Quarantine.

Mr Henry Lushington who succeeded Greig in 1846.

Sir John Stoddart.

King and Admiralty Advocate in Malta; Chief Justice until 1838. Friend of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1804).

Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby, Major General. Governor of Malta (1826-36). Veteran of Battle of Waterloo at which he lost his right hand.

Admiral Sir Robert Stopford GCMG

Commander-in-Chief of British Fleet in the Mediterranean (1841)

Admiral Sir William Parker

British Naval Commander-in-Chief based at Malta. When in 1848 Rome was proclaimed a Republic Sir William Parker sent the *Battleship* HMS *Bulldog* to give protection to the Pope and to receive him on board if he so wished, but the Pope fled to Gaeta instead.

Luigi Casolani, Captain of the Lazzaretto

Sir Vincent Borg, *Direttore del Lazzaretto*

Rear Admiral Edward Harvey, Senior Officer, Malta. A letter was sent to him "on immediate service" in December 1849 with the boatman Francesco Borg.

H. Brown Esq., Dockyard, Malta. A letter was sent to him "On Her Majesty's Service".

The Prince of Capua. He was the brother of the King of Naples who seized the Prince's estates as he did not approve of the Prince's marriage. He was in Malta between 1836-7 and again in 1846.

Ecclesiastics

Rev. Mgr. Annetto Casolani, Member of the Council of Government in 1849. Through his interventions in this council the Catholic Religion was recognised as the dominant religion vis-a-vis any other Christian Church (6).

Rev. Mgr. Saverio Caruana who in 1848 spent some time in quarantine at Fort Manoel. Letters were addressed to him as Bishop and Archbishop of Malta.

Rev. Mgr. Publio dei Conti Sant.

Successor to Archbishop Caruana on 17 December 1847.

Prominent Businessmen

Badger, George Percy

Barbar, Lewis, 26 Strada San Giovanni, Valletta. A wine merchant. He was a Sicilian but became a naturalised British Subject (1833).

Dalzel, George 225 Strade Reale, Valletta. Agent of Life Insurance. United Kingdom (1844)

Dalzel and Gingell, same address. Auctioneers (1841)

Eynaud, William 341 Strada San Paolo, Valletta. American Underwriter and insurance agent.

Kilburn, Anne 271 Strada Reale, Valletta. Fashion shop (1841)

Muir, G 247 Strada Reale, Valletta (1840). Bookseller and printseller. Printer of Muir's Almanack. By 1871 this firm appears as W. Watson.

Petrocchino, Eustachio. 13 Stada Reale (1868) Merchant

Portelli, Agostino 268 Strada Reale, Valletta. Member of the Council of Government (1841); one of the chief Maltese merchants; promoter of the Chamber of Commerce (1840); Vice President of the Bank of Malta

Slythe, Robert 156 Strada San Christoforo (1848) and 206 Strada Reale (1868), Valletta.

Tagliaferro, Biagio e figli. St John Street, Valletta. He founded a band in Valletta in 1812. His brother Gio Batta was born in Genova, later became a naturalised British subject.

Watson, A 248 Strada Reale, Valletta. He was still active in 1898.

Watson, John 277 Strada Reale, Valletta. Bookseller and merchant still active in 1822. There was also a Watson, E. Bookseller.

Zimelli, Ettore 124 Strada San Domenico, Valletta. Consul for Sweden and Norway; member of the Commercial Rooms founded in 1809 in rooms of the Jesuit College (later the University of Malta); member of the Society of British Merchants who were a group of leading businessmen.

Men of letters

Editor of the Malta Times (1849-1868) published by the British Press, Strada Zecca.

Filippo Izzo, Editor of the **Mediterraneo** (1850), 93 Strada Vescovo, Valletta (in 1868)

George Mitrovich (1795-1885) Merchant at Strada Zecca (1868). Senglea born, he belonged to a group of intellectuals who exerted pressure on the British Government to grant liberal reforms in the field of public instruction and a moderate liberty of the press.

Quintano, J. Stationer and bookseller (1848), 27 Strada Stretta, Valletta.

Consuls

Giovanni Farrugia, Ottoman Consul (1848)

Thomas Mac Gill. Consul for Greece, 27 Strada Stretta, Valletta (1811). Director of a Silk Factory at Verdala Castle Buskett Gardens. Member of Commercial Rooms.

Joseph Slythe. Consul of Sardegna.

William Slythe son of Joseph and his successor as Consul of Sardegna.

Robert Slythe. Nephew of Joseph and successor of William as Consul of Sardegna. He was an import merchant of wine, wax, etc., a member of the Commercial Rooms and one of the founders of the Anglo Maltese Bank (1809).

F. Tagliaferro. Consul for Russia. Other members of the Tagliaferro family were Biagio (Banker, 1812) and Giovanni Battista both born in Genova and later becoming British subjects.

Medical Practitioners, Maltese

Luigi Gravagna, 67 Strada Britannica, Valletta. *Medico di Polizia, del lazzaretto* (1838 and 1841) and Member of the *Comitato medico* (1841).

Gio Carlo Grech Delicata, 26 Strada Mezzodi, Valletta (1848). Secretary of the *Societa' Medica d'Incoraggiamento*, at 145 Strada Stretta, Valletta. He was the leader of a group of sympathisers of Italian refugees known as the *Associazione Patriottica Maltese*.

Publio Monreal, 86 Strada Mercanti, Valletta. *Medico di polizia*, and Anatomical Dissector (1841).

Arcangelo Pullicino, address? Member of the *Societa Medica*

Professor Costantino G. Schinas, Professor of Medicine, University of Malta.

Emanuele Speranza. address?.

Giuseppe Maria Stilon, 167 Strada Stretta, Valletta and Strada Reale, Valletta.

He was of Italian origin. He was taken prisoner by the British armed forces at the Battle of Maida (Sicily) and taken to England where he was freed and joined the British naval medical service. In this capacity he was later sent to Malta where he died in 1848. He is the author of an account of the cholera epidemic that struck the island in 1837.

British

Francis Fremoult Sankey, 76 Strada Forni, Valletta

? **Witmarsh,** address? He was the recipient of a letter enclosing a key.

John Liddle, The British Naval Hospital, Malta. This hospital consisted originally of a section of the military hospital set up in a part of the erstwhile Holy Infirmary of the Knights at Valletta. On the 5th June 1804 seven British merchant firms and two sea captains had complained about the absence of a naval hospital for the reception and treatment of sick and injured merchant seamen and suggested that mariners be received in one of the Maltese hospitals where they could be provided with the necessary medicines and food. They proposed that the expenses be provided by British ships using Malta harbours.

William Londsey, Deputy Inspector, Royal Naval Hospital Malta

William Davey, Assistant Surgeon, The Admiralty, Malta

G Richardson, Fort St Angelo

? **Nicholson,** HMS *Martin*

Pharmacists. Maltese

Carmelo Arpa, 89 Strada Vescovo, Valletta (1862) and 241 Strada Reale (1868)

Antonio Emanuele Borg (?)

Giuseppe Fenech

Farmacia della Carita. (17.5.49)

Farmacista Giuseppe Mamo, nell'Ospedale Civile, Malta. (18 September 1849); 134 Strada Reale, Valletta (1862).

Italian Refugees

The first half of the 19th century was a period of revolutionary movements in Europe. A secret Neapolitan organisation with liberal and republican aims was known as the **carbonari** perhaps from the fact that they disguised themselves as charcoal burners (7). Their persecution led to the Neapolitan revolution of 1820 and to an influx of Italian political refugees from Sicily to Malta (8). In fact Malta was considered as the centre of the majority of Italian revolutionaries to the chagrin of the Bourbon King of Sicily.

The postal register under study records that in 1838 two batches of seventeen and nineteen letters from the **carbonari** refugees in Malta were sent to England by Mr H Holton, the acting Superintendent of the Peninsular and Oriental Line; on the 25th November of that year.

Emilio Usiglio took refuge in Malta, on and off, between 1835 and 1842. He was in close touch with Giuseppe Mazzini and may have been a relative of Cesare Usiglio from Modena who was also in Malta by 1832 when he graduated in medicine at the Malta University (9).

Luigi Fabrizi was in Malta between 1834 and 1848. He joined the ranks of Giuseppe Garibaldi and took part in the Crimean War (10).

Paolo Fabrizi, brother of Luigi. He was a graduate of the University of Pisa in 1827 and later of the University of Malta. (1839-40). He was a plastic and orthopaedic surgeon.(11) Politically he propagated the idea of the unity of Italy.

Nicola Fabrizi (1804-1885). He was a native of Modena but had his political headquarters in Malta (1837) where he lived in the house of Emilio Usiglio (1838). He kept a constant correspondence in code with Giuseppe Mazzini in London and with other patriots in various parts of the world. He fought in the ranks of Giuseppe Garibaldi (1860) and welcomed him in Malta in March 1864.

Adriano Lemmi had been secretary of the Hungarian revolutionary Kossuth and at one time Grand Master of Italian Masonry. The Austrian Charge d'Affaires urged the Tuscan Consul in Malta to keep a watch on Lemmi's activities. The discovery of the smuggling into Italy of a revolutionary pamphlet over the initials A.L. was ascribed to Lemmi; and the latter was ordered to leave Malta. On one occasion he spent a period of quarantine on board the steamer **Rostand** anchored in the Lazzaretto creek. A letter was delivered to him on board by the Lazzaretto boatman. He left Malta on 12 October 1852.

Women recipients

Lady Hamilton Chichister, Pieta, Malta, 1838

Lady Julia Lockwood, Sa Maison. A letter was delivered by an officer of the 65th Regiment.

Lady Stoddart, wife of lawyer Sir John Stoddart (1773-1850), King's and Admiralty Advocate and President of the High Court of Appeal in Malta (1826-40). Sir John was a friend of S.T. Coleridge. He resided at the Auberge d'Allemagne, the site now occupied by St Paul's Anglican Pro-Cathedral.

Mrs I Rodgers, Strada San Nicola (?) Marina, Isola (Senglea).

Mrs (name?) Barnes, 10 Strada San Paolo, Valletta

Mrs (name?) Baxter, 85 Strada Sant'Anna, Floriana

Madam (name?) Goodenough (address?)

Miss (name?) Waugh, (address?), received some newspapers on 23 August 1838.

Antonia moglie di Gio Maria (surname?), 47 Strada Stretta, Floriana

Signora Vincenza Abela (address?)

Margerita Sciortino, Zebbug

Maria Zammit detta ta' Gian (no address)

Hotels receiving letters from abroad

Clarence Hotel, 249 Strada Reale, Valletta

Morelli, 224 Strada Reale, Valletta

Dunsford (locandiere) 254, Strada Reale, Valletta

Princess Royal Hotel (formerly Baker's Hotel), 111 Strada Vescovo

Payment of postage

Until 1817 postage was levied in accordance with the number of sheets enclosed in the envelope. Letters with unpaid postage were returned to the sender. A letter to the United Kingdom was charged fifteen pence (1850) and those to India and Singapore were charged two shillings sixpence (1848).

Number of letters sent abroad

The number of letters sent overseas in one day varied from time to time. To give an idea of the quantities involved here are some figures taken at random. In 1848 the smallest number for England (via Marseilles) was thirteen, and for India forty-eight. Eighteen letters with Turkish addresses were sent to Constantinople in the same year. In 1849 a "sack" of thirty-eight letters from British army officers was despatched on the 17 June 1849. Another batch of one hundred seventeen letters, also for England, followed soon after.(12).

The only disruption of the overseas service was due to rough seas. Thus no ships arrived for three days between November and December 1848; and for four days at the beginning of 1849.

References and Notes

The Philatelic Section was contributed by Dr. A. Bonnici.

- 1 Cassar, P. The Correspondence of a Senglea Merchant During the Plague of 1813, *Hyphen* Vol. II, No. 4, 1980, p.147.
- 2 Lib. 483, no pagination, letter dated 18 September 1818. National Library of Malta
- 3 Daily Packet List, No. 15, 788, 16 April 1849, Cripplegate.
- 4 **Nix Mangiari** was the name of a short street near the Victoria Gate, Valletta.
- 5 A **napoleon** was a French twenty-franc piece of Napoleon I.
- 6 Laferla, A.V. *British Malta*, Vol. I. 1938, pp. 189, 207 & 209.
- 7 *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1929, p. 166.
- 8 Laferla, A.V., op., cit., p.121.
- 9 Cassar, P. *Overseas Medical Graduates and Students at the University of Malta in the 19th Century*, *Melita Historica*, Vol8 1981, p93
- 10 Bonello, V. *Fiorentini & Schiavone, L' Echi del Risorgimento a Malta*, Malta, 1963, pp. 138-9.
- 11 Cassar, P. *Medical History of Malta*, London, 1965, p.536.
- 12 It may be noted that in 1841 there were three British Regiments in Malta besides the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery.

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D'Angelo Michela, *Mercanti inglesi a Malta 1800-1825*, Milano, 1990.