

A display from the Royal Philatelic Collection was shown recently in London at the headquarters of the Royal Philatelic Society by the kind permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The material chosen gave a fairly complete representation of the stamps of Cyprus and Malta.

The Malta Collection was moderately specialised as regards the first ½d stamp. Unusually there was a selection of used stamps and also a fine assembly of covers. These were added to the collection to facilitate the dating of the shades of the various printings of this rather difficult stamp. In fact it was on this basis that E.D. Bacon published the full list of the shades of the various printings in the London Philatelist for October 1929 (Volume 38, Number 454), pages 219–226. This was connected with the display of Malta from his Collection on 17 October 1929 at 41 Devonshire Place. This listing has stood the test of time extremely well and is very close to that of the present day, as listed in the PSM by Dr. A. Bonnici vol 8 no 2, which was acknowledged by Stanley Gibbons in their 1979 Commonwealth catalogue.

It is interesting to recall that J. Speranza, a founding member of the R.P.S., wrote on the shades of the early printings of the first ½d in the Stamp Collectors Magazine for 1866–67 and R.B. Yardley contributed an important article which ran in the London Philatelist for the year 1921. For those who may be unaware of this, the pages from Speranza's diary recording the meeting at which the R.P.S. was formed are in the display case mounted on the far wall of "their Small Library".



Unique-marginal MINT Pair of the very rare 1878 Perforation variety 12½ × 14 reproduced by kind permission of Mr John B. Marriott Curator of H.M. Q. E. II collection.

Frame
Number

MALTA

1. *1860 (1 December)*: die proof and no watermark ½d on blued paper overprinted 'SPECIMEN', Mint block of four, and used on cover obliterated 'M'.
1861 (November): no watermark on white paper ½d buff and pale buff; ½d brown-orange block of six.
2. *1863 (June)*: Watermarked Crown CC ½d buff including block of four, used JU 4 63, used strip of four and two examples on cover fronts.
1864: ½d bright orange; *1867* ½d brown-red block of nine
1868 (November): rough perforation 12½d ½d buff-brown two blocks of four and an example of cover DE 16 68.
3. *1870 (April)*: ½d dull orange block of four, strip of four and two examples on covers.
1871 (May): clean cut perforation 12½d including an example on piece MY 19 71.
1872 (May): ½d orange-buff, three on covers the first MY 8 72.

However the yellow tends to disappear and the shade is subject to alterations especially when the stamps are immersed in water. The four stamps on the last but one row of the page are probably so affected, but could be the 187 2 orange-buff shade.

4. 1875 – 77: ½d yellow-buff and pale buff with blocks of four and six and a range of covers between MR 20 77 and MR 10 79.
1878 (July): perforated 14 × 12½ ½d yellow-buff with a block of four, a pair with the very rare perforation variety 12½ × 14 and a used example JY 2 78. There is also a fine range of covers; those of SP 21 78 and OC 19 78 with the code letters D and E above the date are worthy of notice.
5. 1880 (April) and 1881 (April): perforated 14 ½d bright orange-yellow block of twelve and ½d yellow block of six, with another block of six in an intermediate shade probably a paler shade of the bright orange-yellow; the used example of the bright orange-yellow AP 19 80 and the yellow in a strip of three on piece AP 30 81 are possibly the earliest known dates of these shades.
1882 (February): Watermarked Crown CA ½d orange-yellow including a plate number pair and 1884 (September) ½d red-orange block of four together with an upper half sheet.
6. 1885 – 90: with ‘SPECIMEN’ stamps, plate number pieces, 1d printed on the gummed side and 4d pair imperforate.
7. 1899 – 1901: including 2/6 imperforate proof in brown overprinted ‘Specimen’ and 10/- blocks of four.
1902: 1d on 2½d surcharge double, one of the surcharges being the ‘PNNEY’ error and also a used block of six with double surcharge.
8. 1903 – 04: ½d – 1/-; 1904 – 06: ¼d – 1/-.
9. 1907 – 11: ¼d – 5(- universal colours including 5/- blocks of four.
10. 1914 – 22: ¼d, ½d, 1d, 2d, 2½d, 6d all in blocks of four with plate Number 2 on more noticeably blued paper than many such varieties in the catalogue: 3d purple on yellow white back single overprinted ‘SPECIMEN’ and a plate number block of four without the overprint – this was unissued as the supply of 3d King Edward VII was sufficient at last until 1920.
12. 1917 – 18: War Tax issue again including the ½d on bluish paper.
1919: 2/6, 10/- with a proof of the latter in red-brown on thick paper and a block of four of the issued stamp.
1921 – 22: with 2d plate proof in carmine on unwatermarked paper, 2/- with Crown flaw in block of four and 10/- block of four.
- 13-14. 1922: Self-Government issues.
- 15-17. 1922: issue with De La Rue artist’s sketches and master die proof for the low denominations; 1923 – 24 colour changes and new denomination. These issues contain 6d, 1d, 1½d blocks showing Plate Number 3 from a special printing made for the Collection.
18. 1926: ‘POSTAGE’ issue, with 3d inverted overprint.
19. 1926 – 1927: including Waterlow artist’s sketches and 1/- die proof.
20. 1928: ‘POSTAGE AND REVENUE’ overprints.
21. 1930: Waterlow artist’s sketches showing the introduction of the word ‘REVENUE’, the amendment hand painted and the essays overprinted ‘SPECIMEN’.

22. 1937: SURCHARGE issue with Bradbury, Wilkinson, De La Rue and Waterlow artists' essays including the accepted design; a series of fifteen colour trials printed from the master die; 2½d, 6d, 1/- with extra flagstaff.
23. 1925: type-set Postage Due issue – a representation with the tête-bêche pairs and 2½d with '2' of '½' omitted.
24. 1938: King George VI definitive issue and 1950 Royal Visit issue artists' sketches.

Frame
Number

CYPRUS

25. 1880: ½d including Plate 19 block of four; 1d Plate 174 unused and Plate 184 used; Plate 208 overprint double and pair, one without overprint; Plate 218 overprint double; Plate 220 unused and used.
26. 1880: 2½d, 4d, 6d, 1/- with 4d, 6d unused blocks of four and 1/- used block of four.
1881: Essay of surcharge on 1d Plate 201 overprinted 'SPECIMEN'; surcharged 'HALFPENNY' 18mm, 16mm and 13mm with the double surcharge on Plate 205 and treble surcharge on Plate 215 on the last named; surcharged '30 PARAS' double one inverted on Plate 220 unused, and used pair.
27. 1881: definitive issue, De La Rue artist's designs, the imprimatur set imperforate, unused examples and ½pi, 1 pi in blocks of four.
1882: 'Postal Surcharge' stamps used on Letter Bills from Sub Post Offices.
28. 1882 – 86: 30 pi. and 12 pi. approved designs, ½pi. emerald-green single and pair, plate number blocks of all denominations and 12 pi. imperforate imprimatur.
29. 1882: Watermark Crown CC overprinted '½ ½' or surcharged '30 PARAS' locally, including the latter in a block of four; De La Rue '½ ½' overprint narrow setting marginal single; wider setting unused and large '1' at left used; Watermark Crown CA De La Rue overprint wider setting large '1', large 2, and small '1' varieties the former two in a block of twelve.
30. 1894 – 96: colours changed, with plate number pieces and 18 pi, 45 pi each in a pair with Plate Number 3 and each in a block of four.
31. 1902 – 04: a selection including 45 pi pair with Plate Number 1 and a block of four.
1904 – 10: Watermark Multiple Crown CA.
32. 1912: with 4 pi, 6 pi, 9 pi, 12 pi on bluish paper.
1923: 10/-, £1 in plate number blocks of four.
33. 1924 – 28: 'Postage and Revenue' series including £1 Watermark Multiple Crown CA and £5 Watermark Multiple Crown and Script CA both in plate number blocks of four.
34. 1928: 50th Anniversary issue with ten approved Bradbury Wilkinson artist's sketches.
35. 1934: Waterlow artist's sketches for the 11 denominations.
36. 1938: Waterlow artist's sketches for the twelve designs of the definitive King George VI issue.
- 37-42 1955 – 60: definitive issue of the present reign and 1960 Cyprus Republic' issue including artist's sketches, rejected and approved colour proofs and the various printing of the issued stamps.