

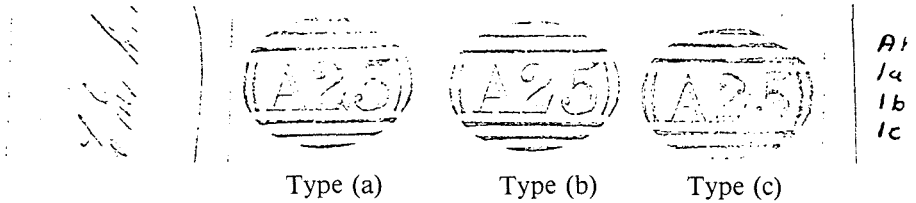
# Great Britain Stamps Used in Malta

Continued Part 4

By Anthony Fenech

## The A 25 Single Horizontal Oval Handstamps

Three such cancellers are recorded in the General Post Office Proof Book (Vol. 8 (2) - Page 156), the entry being dated 2nd February 1859.



The above types 'a', 'b' and 'c' as shown on the Impression Proof Book at the General Post Office, London (22½ mm x 17 mm) have identical features and are indistinguishable.



fig. (b)

Initially, these cancellers appear to have been used as general purpose cancellers (1) at the Sorting Room, (fig. b) along with other circular datestamps or the duplex "A 25" cancellers.

From April 1870 and up to the end of 1882, these single horizontal oval handstamps were assigned a very important duty, namely to cancel stamps on registered covers and entires. The earliest date recorded being the 5th April. On such covers, one finds this handstamp in conjunction with a registered datestamp inscribed "REGISTERED / MALTA" with code letters A, B, or C and date.

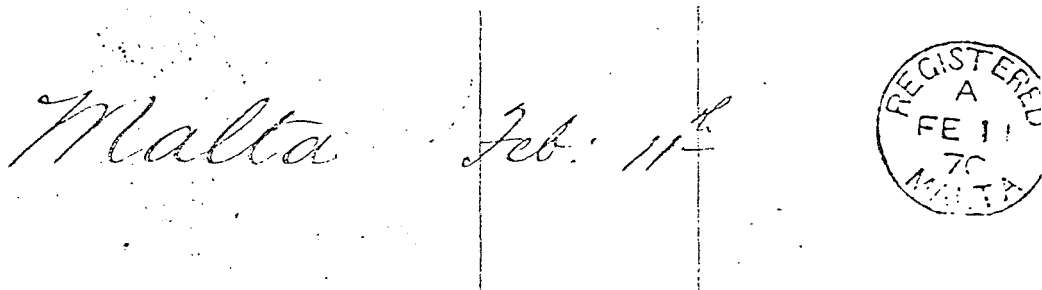


fig. (c)

This 23 mm single Registration datestamp was sent to Malta some time in 1870; in fact its strike is recorded in the General Post Office Proof Book in London (Vol. 22 page 76) and dated February 11th, 1870. It has been noted on Covers and entires always applied in red (except on one occasion when it was struck in black and dated 10 FE 79). (2) This handstamp had to be used together with the single "A 25" horizontal oval, as it was necessary to record the DATE of despatch of the registered letters. (This was one of the requirements to be fulfilled in the despatch of registered mails - Sir Rowland Hill's letter to the Packet Agents - 5th February 1855).

The single horizontal oval cancellers were normally struck in black. However, a strike in red on a registered cover of 1882 is referred to in the "Cann" Sale Catalogue (3) thus:

"Lot No. 102 - 2½d blue and 1881 1d lilac (pair) on Registered Cover to Liverpool, tied by "A 25" strikes in red. . . . . (See photo on page 13)."

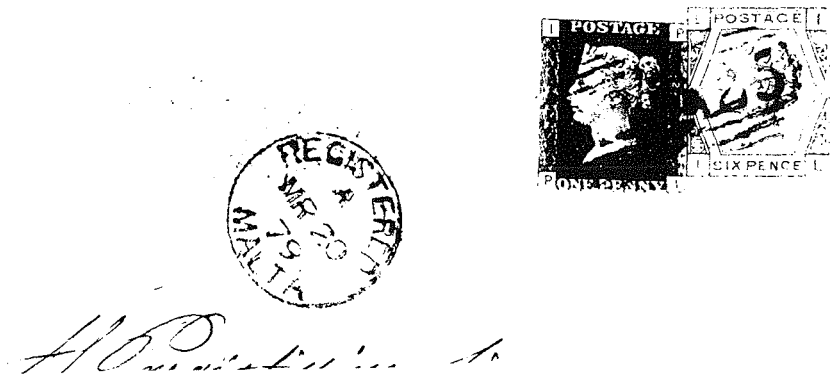


fig. (d)

The strikes of these cancellers on stamps or covers are not usually clear; as seen on the above entire (fig. d) sometimes signs of bad wear or of not having been cleaned for quite some time are shown.

MUST BE GIVEN TO AN OFFICER  
REGISTERED AND A RECEIPT

REGISTERED.

OF THE POST OFFICE  
OBTAINED FOR IT.



Handwritten text on a registered mail cover:  
14  
20  
Messrs Stanley Gibbons & Co  
25 Abchurch Lane  
London

fig. (e)



fig. (f)

Type 'd' 19½ mm x 17 mm

The fourth type 'd' (fig. e and f) appears in the years 1879-82. It is quite distinctive from the other three. It is about 2 mm narrower (19½ mm x 17 mm) with the 'A' of 'A 25' visibly smaller than the '25'. Its strikes are poor and sometimes smudgy. I think that it was introduced on the Counter Registered Mail as a subsidiary handstamp. Strikes from this handstamp were at one time thought to be forgeries, but this handstamp is known genuinely used on quite a few registered covers.

On the 17th Dec 1880 the oval registered postmark was dispatched from London to Malta to replace the ring Registered cancellor. The new Registered cancellor in Red began to be used in Malta in early 1881 having the same function as the previous one. fig. (g)

It is worth noting that the Great Britain High Values used contemporarily are obliterated by these four types of the 'A 25' horizontal oval handstamp. Among these one finds:

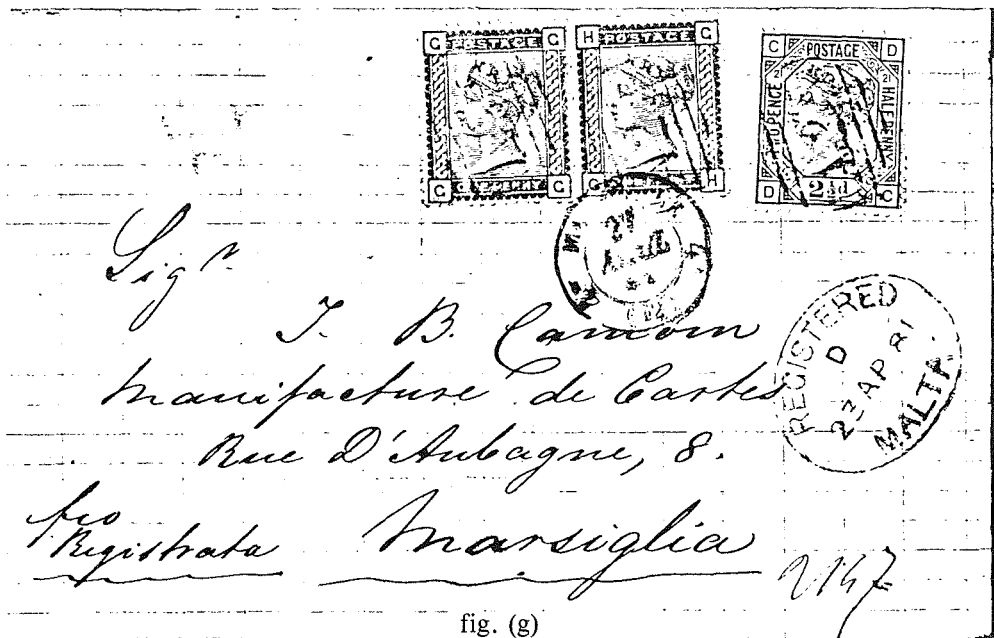


fig. (g)

- 1876 - 4d sage green;
- 1872/73 - 6d chestnut and buff and later the 6d buff and grey;
- 1876 - 8d orange;
- 1876 - 10d red-brown;
- 1873-80 - 1/- green;
- 1880 - 1/- orange-brown;
- 1867 - 2/- milky blue or cobalt;
- 1880 - 2/- brown;
- 1867-74 - 5/- rose (on white and blue papers);
- 1878 - 10/- grey-green.

This does not exclude several lower denominations, even the ½d struck with the 'A 25' single horizontal oval handstamp. As a matter of fact a 1880 (AU 19) Registered Cover to Livorno is known franked with ½d (Plate 8) and 4d (Plate 16) and cancelled with this type of 'A 25' cancellation. (4) The use of the lower values on Registered envelopes gives rise to many strips (of three, four, or more), as well as to blocks (of four, six, and even more), nicely cancelled with the 'A 25' single horizontal oval handstamps. The inclusion of these strips and blocks in one's G.B. Used in Malta Collection render it most fascinating.

1. Malta - The Stamps and Postal History 1567 - 1960 Handbook, p.33.
2. The Malta Study Circle. M.S.C. Study Paper No. 46 Malta Registered Edited by John C. Lander in February 1978.
3. Cann Sale Catalogue - Harmers Ltd - June 15, 16th, 1970. pp. 14, 15.
4. 1238 Kohler Auction Catalogue - The André Bollen Collection of Great Britain Used Abroad (Feb 8th, 1983).
5. fig. b, fig. e, fig. g, from the collection of Mr. J.H. Birkett Allan.