

Great Britain Stamps Used in Malta

Continued Part 2

By Anthony Fenech

Since my publication on this subject in Vol. 12 No. 2, of the P.S.M. Magazine, (Item 1) has come to light. It is a cover sent to Sicily, franked with the 2½d blue (Plate 23) most UNUSUALLY cancelled with the sans serif Malta 25.5mm diameter (Said No. 23) double ring handstamp, confirming that a few G.B. stamps were eventually cancelled by the MALTA double-ring cancellers.

The G.P.O. Date Impression Book record the date of issue of this handstamp as 30. Aug. 1856. However Dr. Bonnici has drawn my attention to an entire (Item 2) written in London on the 2nd June 1856 addressed to Malta where it arrived on the 15 Ju 1856. Two and a half months earlier than what is written in the G.P.O. Date Impression Books. This indeed is the earliest recorded date, Five months earlier than what appears in the "Hand-Book".

C) THE 'M' CANCELLATION

A British Post Office was established in Malta in September 1857.

Seq. ... *S. ...*
I am directed by the
Postmaster General to acquaint
you that the Lords of Her
Majesty's ^{Highness} have authorized
British postage stamps to be
used in payment of the
postage of letters posted
at Malta, and I am to request
that you will cause this
regulation to be made
known throughout the
island.

Circular.

Agents:

Post 48

No - 9

11/7/57

GENERAL POST OFFICE,

31st July, 1857

SIR,

I AM directed by the Postmaster General to acquaint you, that the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury have authorized British Postage Stamps to be used in payment of the postage of Letters posted at Malta.

Letters, therefore, despatched from Malta, bearing British Postage Stamps of an amount equal to the postage with which such Letters are chargeable, should henceforth be treated in the same manner as if the postage had been prepaid in money.

I am,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

ROWLAND HILL,

Secretary.

A supply of current British Stamps was sent to Malta in August, but was not made available to the public prior to the first few days of September 1857. Previously, foreign correspondence was prepaid in money, or postage collected on delivery. (1) Although adhesive postage stamps were introduced at that time, it was not until the 1st March 1858, that the prepayment of postage on letters was made compulsory, as notified in The Post Office Notice, dated 1st February, 1858 by Order of the Postmaster-General John S. Coxon, H.M. Packet Agent.

THE 'M' CANCELLATIONS

Sept 1852

Vol (8(2) p 134



1st Type

2nd Type

3rd Type

' 9 red postage stamps affixed to letters posted at your office must be carefully obliterated by means of the official stamp with the black composition supplied for the purpose. The stock of this composition must never be allowed to become low, and the composition must be limited to this sole use

The first type of the three 'M' handstamps known to exist, was sent out to Malta from London in September 1857. The earliest recorded use of Great Britain adhesives cancelled with the 'M' Cancellation is September 12th, 1857. Two entires, one to Naples and the other to Genoa, both franked with 1d red-brown (plate 44), perf. 14, strip of three, cancelled 'M' and dated SP 12 1857, with the Malta cds 30-mm double-ring on the reverse, were sold by Messrs Köhler, in the André Bollen Gold Medal Collection early this year. Ewen, in the 5th Edition of his "Standard Priced Catalogue of the Stamps and Postmarks of the United Kingdom", page 143, records that Malta cds on the back of covers dated 18th September 1857 had the figures "57" reversed, reading as "75". It seems that the error remained uncorrected for a few days, as is known on the MSC Handbook, page 67, featuring the "M" Cancellation on a wrapper from Malta to Genoa, dated the 20th September 1857, but with the figures "57" reversed. (2) The "M" canceller consists of the letter 'M' which on the first type is 6.5mm wide and 9.7mm high, surrounded by twelve horizontal lines, all broken except the two above and the two below the dominant letter 'M' for Malta. (fig. a)

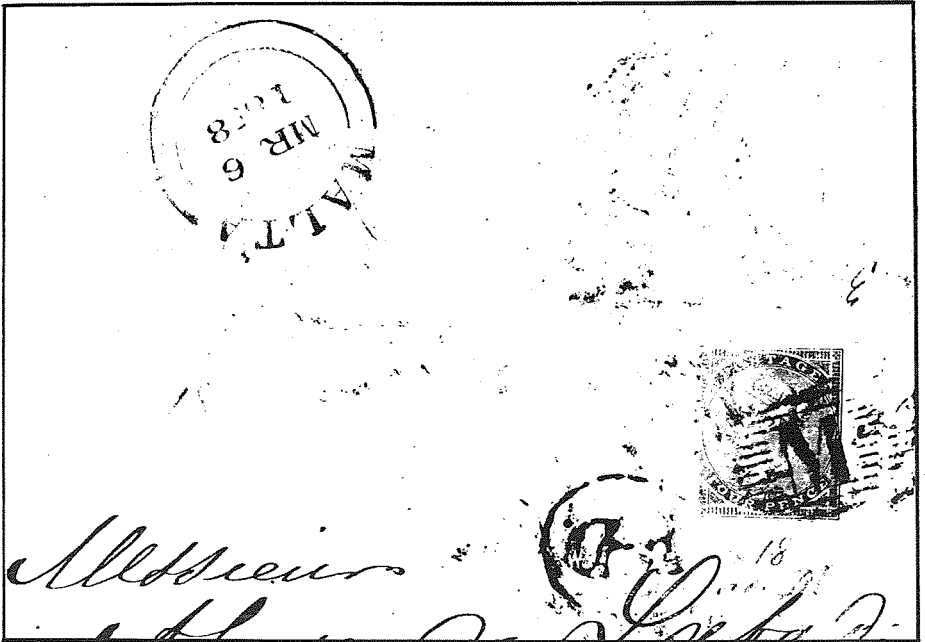
The letter 'M' of the second type of the 'M' handstamp measures 7.0mm in width and 9.2mm in height (fig. b) with all the other features of Type one. This second type of the "M" canceller did not come into use till April 1858, after which both types were used concurrently. (3)

The third type of the 'M' canceller can be detected even with the naked eye, as the surround size of the 'M' is about 1.5mm wider than in the other cancellers. The size of "M" is about 7.5mm in width and 9.2mm in height. (fig. c) Otherwise, the canceller has the same features as the other two types.

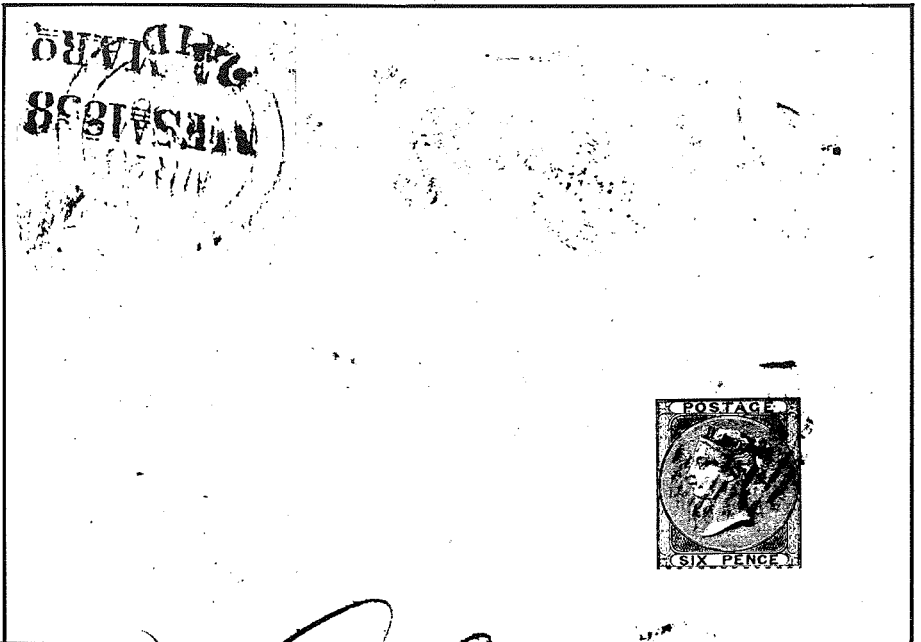
The above G.P.O. Proof Book entry (Vol. 8 (2), page 134) is undated, but these marks, illustrated in this article, are amongst other entries which are dated September 1852. From these marks, it is evident that there were in fact THREE 'M' cancellers sent to Malta from London.

As has been referred to in the previous article on this subject, the "M" canceller was always used to obliterate the stamp or stamps, in conjunction with a circular date stamp on the reverse of the wrapper or cover. Three types of dater handstamps are known to have been used together with the "M" cancellation, naturally on the back of the entire. I have seen:-

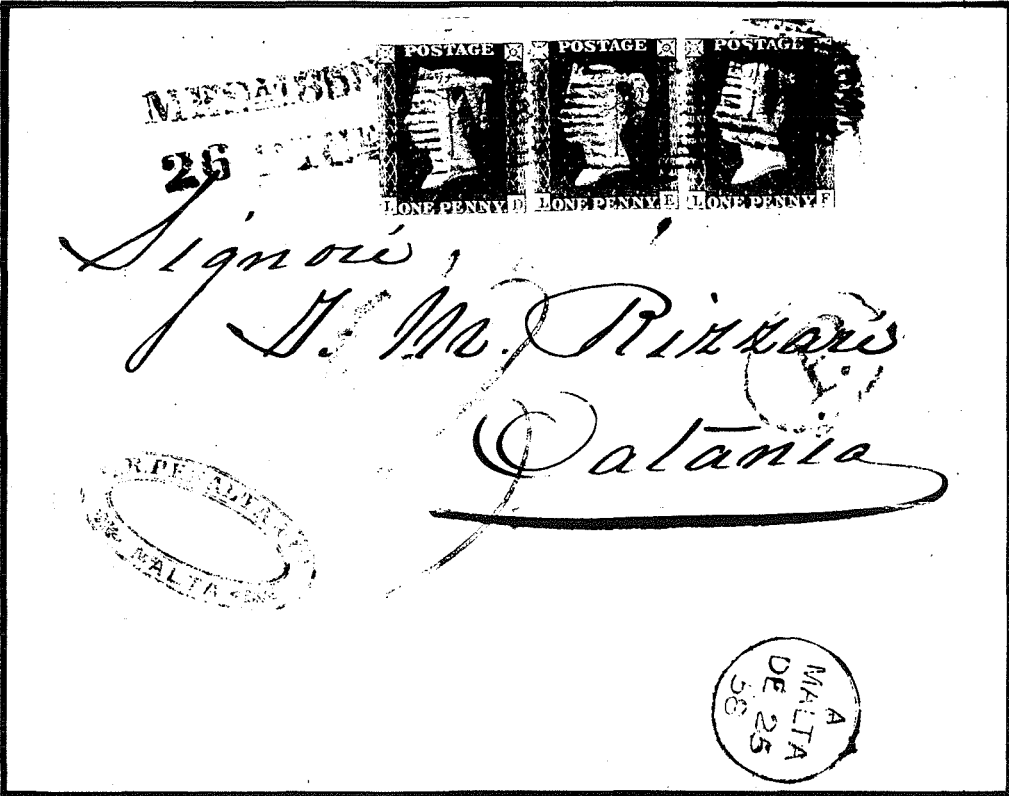
- (a) the 30mm Double Ring MALTA in black and red, with the date in two lines within; the red being extremely rare. The latest dates recorded of this type on the reverse of a cover in conjunction with the "M" cancellation are in "RED" April 3, 1858; and "BLACK" 13th March 1858.
- (b) the 30mm Double circle broken with MALTA/PAID in serif letters in red. It was used for a short time, possibly from 20th March to 10th April 1858. (4)
- (c) the 19mm circular date stamp, always in red, with a "A"/MALTA in a straight line, and the date in two lines. This was superseded, in February 1859, by the dated Malta and "A 25" duplex canceller, as it was felt that the obliterator and dater should be incorporated into one handstamp. Thus the idea of using the obliterator on the front and the dater on the reverse of the entire, was temporarily abandoned.



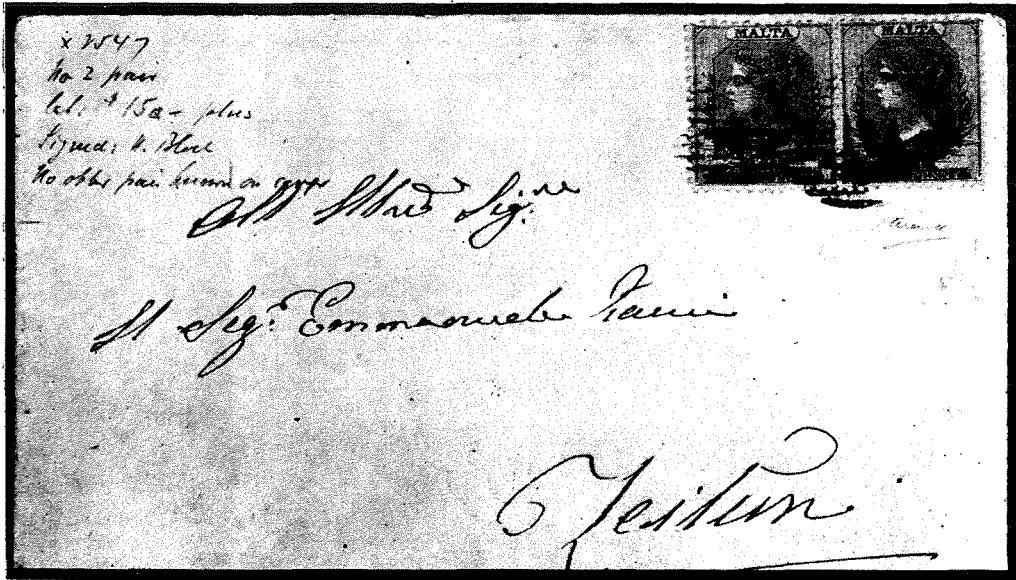
(a) (in Black)



(b) (in Red)



(c)



(d)

The official use of the “M” cancellation came to an end on the 17th February, 1859. However, “emergency duty” of this canceller necessitated its re-use. (5) As a matter of fact the “M” canceller was used again. Examples of the “M” strike on the first Malta ½d yellows, issued on 1st December, 1860, are known to exist. Remarkable is the cover (d) bearing the horizontal pair of half penny buff, well tied to the envelope, to Zeitun, old spelling of Zejtun, with “M” type (Type Three) cancellations, highlighting Harmers’ Cann outstanding Collection, put to auction on Monday and Tuesday, June 15th and 16th, 1970, and again re-auctioned by Messrs Feldman International in Zurich, on Friday, May 21st, 1982. The M.S.C. Handbook records the use of this type of “M” Cancellation on 2d stamps, plates 8 and 9, of Great Britain, some time in 1861, and on the 6d, plate 9, also of Great Britain, on the 3rd May, 1870.

The following Great Britain stamps are known to exist with the “M” cancellation.

- 1d 1841 Red-brown (Imperforate)
- 1d 1854 (Feb.) Red-brown Die I, Small Crown, Perf. 16
- 1d 1855 (Feb.) Red-brown Die II, Small Crown, Perf. 14 - plate 7
- 1d 1855 (Mar.) Red-brown Die II, Small Crown. Perf. 16
- 1d 1855-57 Red-brown Die II, Large Crown, Perf. 14:
 - (i) Alph.II on blued paper - plates 15 and 16
 - (ii) Alph.III on blued paper - Plates 26, 27, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37
- 1d 1856 (Dec.) - 1862 (Jan.) Rose-red Die II, Large Crown, Perf. 14 - Plates 27 (also the ‘Gothic K’ variety), 34, 36, 37, 38, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, and 60.
- 2d 1841 Blue (Imperforate)
- 2d 1854 Blue Small Crown, Perf. 16 - plate 4
- 2d 1855-57 Blue Large Crown, Perf. 14 - plates 5 and 6
- 2d 1858 (Feb.) Large Crown, Perf. 16 - plate 6
- 2d 1858-61 Blue Large Crown, Perf. 16 - plates 7, 8 and 9
- 4d 1857 Rose Large Garter
- 4d 1857 Rose Large Garter (on thick glazed paper) also with Wmk Inv
- 6d 1854 Violet (embossed)
- 6d 1856 Lilac Wmk.Emblems
- 6d 1856 Lilac (on thick paper) - also with watermark inverted
- 6d 1856 Lilac Wmk. Emblems (on blued paper)
- 6d 1870 Mauve Wmk. Spray of Rose - plate 9
- 1/- 1854 Pale Green (Embossed)
- 1/- 1856 Green Wmk. Emblems
- 1/- 1856 Green Wmk. Emblems (on azure paper)
- 1/- 1856 - Green Wmk. Emblems (on thick paper).

1. H. L’Estrange Ewen, Standard Priced Catalogue of the Stamps and Postcards of The United Kingdom - No. 6 Edition - 1898 p.175.
2. The Malta Study Circle, Malta - The Stamps and Postal History 1576-1960 Handbook compiled by The Malta Study Circle, Edited by R.E. Martin Chap.7 pp.66-88.
3. Mc Gowan Bertram, The British Philatelist No. 2 - Vol. XXIII, April 1930 “Malta Postmarks on British Stamps” p.11-14.
4. *ibid.*
5. John A. Trory, The John A. Trory Specialised Catalogue of Malta 1979, 4th Edition p.2.