

DETAILED INFORMATION OF NEW ISSUES

by JOSEPH FARRUGIA

CHRISTMAS ISSUE 1979

Date of Issue	14th November 1979.
Values	1c+5m, 5c+1c, 7c+1c5, 11c+3c.
Stamp Size	47mm x 29mm.
Art Designer	Chev. Emvin Cremona.
Printers	Printex Limited Malta
Process	Lithography.
Perforation	13.8 x 13.6.
Watermark	Maltese Crosses pointing upwards.
Paper	Chalk Surfaced.
Gum	P.V.A.

Colours

The colour of this set was produced by printing in multicolour using five different colours plus gold.

Designs

This is the sixteenth set of Christmas stamps issued by the Malta Postal Administration. Again, each stamp includes a surcharge in addition to the postal value, the proceeds from which, will be distributed amongst child welfare philanthropic organisations. The set, consisting of four stamps, features "The Nativity" on the 7c+1c5 stamp and "The Flight into Egypt" on the 11c+3c stamp. These two paintings are both by the well known Maltese artist Giuseppe Cali (1846 — 1930). A detail from "The Nativity" is seen on the 1c+5m stamp and a detail from "The Flight into Egypt" is depicted on the 5c+1c stamp. These two paintings are found at the Annunciation Parish Church, Tarxien, Malta. Tarxien became a parish in 1592, and is also closely associated with the rich archaeological history of the Maltese Islands. The Tarxien Neolithic Temples, dating back to about 3,000 years B.C. are world famous and tourists make it a point to visit them.

Colour checks in the form of coloured discs 3mm in diameter are seen in the right hand margin next to the last stamp of the two bottom rows, in all Panes of all values. The colour checks from top to bottom correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers from right to left, in all Panes of all values.

Cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps are seen in top and bottom margins. Figures are 2.5mm high and printed in black.

The Printed Sheets of all four values consisted of two Panes, "A" and "B". All values are of the horizontal format. Each Pane of stamps has forty stamps, made up of five rows of eight stamps.

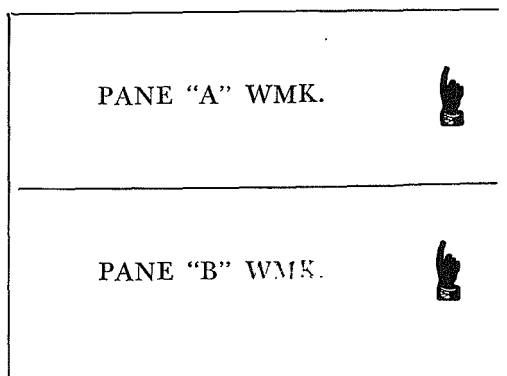
Plate/Pane Numbers

These are seen under the first stamp of the bottom row, in both Panes of each value.

1c+5m = 1A x 6, 1B x 6.
 5c+1c = 1A x 6, 1B x 6.
 7c+1c5 = 1A x 6, 1B x 6.
 11c+3c = 1A x 6, 1B x 6.

Perforation of Margins

The top, bottom and right hand margins, of Panes "A" and "B" of all values are fully perforated. The left hand margin of Panes "A" and "B", of all values are imperforated.



From a study of all the details given, the Printed Sheet of all values, before cutting into Panes, would look as shown on left.

Looking at the Printed Sheet as shown, stamps will be seen the right way up, hence why watermark is also upright.

Imprint Blocks

"PRINTEX LIMITED MALTA" is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row, in all Panes of all values. Letters are 1mm high and printed in black.

An Imprint Block of four will also include the colour checks.

A special handstamp was used for cancellations on the first day of issue. It is inscribed with the words, "L-Ewwel Jum tal-Ħruġ", "Malta 14 Nov. 1979" and the name of the respective locality. A line drawing symbolizing the Star of Bethlehem is also incorporated in the postmark.

This set will remain on sale up to Monday, 14th January 1980, unless stocks are previously exhausted. Sales from this set, up to 4 p.m. on the first day of issue, amounted to £M40,143.