

THE TRADE FAIRS

PART II

by

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Temporary Post Offices

For the first time Malta Trade Fair, held in 1952, in San Anton Gardens, two cancellers with arc as spacers, the first of this type to be used in Malta, were used at the Temporary Post Office at San Anton. They were superseded from mail cancelling duties in 1969, when the word "International" was included in the original name. However, the two cancellers have been retained for counter duties (on Registration receipts, etc.) until 1973. The times of the posts were only shown on the date stamps of the first three fairs and on the St. Paul's Shipwreck Centenary date stamps at The Fourth Fair.

The cancellers with the inscription TRADE & INDUSTRY EXHIBITION, MALTA (Expo 59), cancelled mail between 18th July and 2nd August 1959. Special commemorative postcards were prepared for the occasion.

Between the 3rd and 13th September 1959, a Temporary Post Office was opened at The College run by the Nuns of St. Joseph, Blata l-Bajda, in aid of their Building Fund. The special datestamp was not available on the 3rd, the opening day; so one of the two cancellers MALTA TRADE FAIR was used on the first day mail cancelled at the Temporary Post Office. But mail posted between the 4th and 13th September was cancelled by the new datestamp with the words TRADE & INDUSTRY FESTIVAL, MALTA with two small arc spacers.

A Temporary Post Office was opened at The Fourth Malta Trade Fair held for the first time at the Palazzo Parisio, Naxxar, between the 30th June and the 10th July 1960. Since then, each year, at each Trade Fair, a Temporary Post Office has been provided for the transaction of the following business:

- (a) Sale of stamps and postal stationery;
- (b) Registration of letters;
- (c) Issue and Payment of Money and Postal Orders;
- (d) Posting of parcels and other postal articles.

All postal articles posted at these temporary Branch Post Offices have been postmarked by the date-stamp(s) provided.

Different Date-stamps (Handstamps)

Up to 1968, the two cancellers with arc as spacers, were used to cancel all mail posted at The Trade Fair Temporary Post Offices. From 1969 to 1973, one of the cancellers was retained to date Registration slips and some other counter duties. Since then, no less than 15 different rubber handstamps, summarised hereunder, were used:

Date	Description	Inscription
1969	36mm double ring	XIII MALTA INTERNATIONAL date * TRADE FAIR *
1970	37mm double ring	XIV MALTA INTERNATIONAL date * TRADE FAIR *
1971	30mm double ring	XV MALTA INTERNATIONAL date * TRADE FAIR *
1972	31mm double ring	XVI MALTA INTERNATIONAL date Trade Fair Emblem
1973	34mm concentric circles	XVII MALTA INTERNATIONAL FAIR date Posthorn NAXXAR — MALTA
1974	(a) 37mm concentric circles	(Words in Maltese) XVIII IL-FIERA INTERNAZZJONALI TA' MALTA NAXXAR MALTA date Posthorn
	(b) 13th July 1974 only Europa First Day Commemorative c.d.s. (similar to those supplied to all Post Offices and Sub-Post Offices in Malta and Gozo).	L-EWWEL JUM TAL-ERUG — MALTA Fiera Internazzjonali Naxxar Date Posthorn Cept Emblem and Maltese Cross.

1975 (a) 37mm concentric circles

XIX MALTA INTERNATIONAL FAIR
NAXXAR — MALTA

date

Trade Fair Emblem

(b) 15th July 1975 only
Europa First Day of
Issue

L-EWWEL JUM TAL-HRUĠ 15-7-1975

Cept Emblem

Commemorative c.d.s.
(similar to those
at all Post and Sub-
Offices in Malta and
and Gozo).

Fiera Internazzjonali
NAXXAR — MALTA

1976 (a) 33mm circular but
without outer rim.

XX MALTA INTERNATIONAL FAIR
NAXXAR

date

MALTA

Trade Fair Emblem



(b) 8th July 1976 only
Europa First Day of
Issue
Commemorative
postmark used at all
Post Offices and Sub-
Post Offices in Malta
and Gozo, rectangular
with rounded corners.

L-EWWEL JUM TAL-HRUĠ (Posthorn)
8-VIL-76

Fiera Internazzjonali
NAXXAR — MALTA

1977 (a) 31 x 31mm square with
rounded corners.

XXI MALTA

FAIR

date

NAXXAR — MALTA

Trade Fair Emblem

(b) 5th July 1977 only
Europe First Day of
Issue
Commemorative c.d.s.
28mm concentric
circle common to all
Post Offices and Sub-
Post Offices in Malta
and Gozo.

L-EWWEL JUM TAL-ĦRUG (arc) MALTA
Cept Emblm
5-VII-77 FIERA INTERNAZZJONALI
NAXXAR

1978 34mm circular but
without outer rim.

XXIII MALTA INTERNATIONAL FAIR
(reading anti-clockwise)
Large Trade Fair Emblem
date
NAXXAR
MALTA



1979 35mm circular but
without outer rim.

XXIII INTERNATIONAL FAIR
OF MALTA
Trade Fair Emblem
NAXXAR
date
MALTA

Registration

Valletta Registration Labels and handstamps were used at The Trade Fair Temporary Post Offices held at San Anton in 1952, '53, '55; at The Trade and Industry Exhibition and the Trade and Industry Festival held in 1959. The Valletta labels used at these Temporary Post Offices seem to come from the same coil and it is believed that not more than 200 labels were used in all. The Valletta handstamp was applied in black except at the Trade and Industry Festival where some examples in red have been recorded.

At the 1960 Trade Fair Temporary Post Office, Valletta labels (different from those used previously) and a new cachet 50mm x 18mm R TRADE FAIR (MALTA) and No. were used to number Registered Mail. The use of labels, however, was discontinued after 1960, but the cachet R TRADE FAIR (MALTA) No. continued to be used until 1969, with the exception of 1967 when an R MOSTA (MALTA) and No. (41mm x 17.5mm) cachet was used.

After 1969, the following Registration Cachets (2 of each type) were applied on Registered Mail:

Year Description

- 1970 51mm x 18mm R/INTERNATIONAL/TRADE FAIR (MALTA)/No.
1971 Same as in 1970.
1972 51mm x 18mm Very thick R/INTERNATIONAL/FAIR/ (MALTA)/No.
1973 50mm x 18mm Long R/XVII MALTA INTERNATIONAL/FAIR (NAXXAR MALTA)/No.

(Until this year, the Registration slips had been dated by the double ring "MALTA TRADE FAIR" with arc as spacers introduced in 1952).

Row 8 No. 1 White spot below "E" of "TRADE".

Row 9 No. 4 Retouch at top of figure in top right corner.

Quantities sold: 4d — 721,699; 8d — 322,084; 3/- — 274,297.

First Day Sales up to 4.30 p.m. was £32,400.

- 1974 (For the first time the inscription on the cachet was in Maltese; and the Registration slips cancelled by the rubber stamp used on all other business).

40mm x 17mm R/FIERA INTERNAZZJONALI/TA' MALTA : — NAXXAR/Nru.

(Two rubber Registration cachets were provided, as usual, but one had to have the "R" part of it cut off and used, together with a small cachet 'Parcel Post' to number parcels posted at the Temporary Post Office).

- 1975 42mm x 18mm R/MALTA JNTERNATIONAL/FAIR — NAXXAR/No.
Note that "J" instead of "I" appears on the Registration Cachet used.

1976 Same cachet used in 1975.

1977 Same cachet used in the previous two editions.

1978 Same cachet used in '75, '76, '77.

1979 41mm x 12mm with very bold letters

R/INTERNATIONAL FAIR/OF MALTA — NAXXAR/No.

The REGISTERED (RECOMMANDE) cachet was first seen on Registered Mail at the Trade Fair Temporary Post Office in 1976. It continued to be applied in the following years, sometimes in black, but oftener in red.

AR (Avis de Reception), Advice of delivery or Payment strikes have been recorded since 1974, when an oval AR 22mm x 12mm was used. In 1977, '78 and '79 an oval AR, 22mm x 12mm, was applied mostly in black, but sometimes in red also.

If any mail intended for registration (bearing the word "Registered" or the letter "R" or a rectangular cross) and franked with the necessary postage and is dropped into a letter-box, is cacheted POSTED OUT OF COURSE. In 1976, a 37mm long POSTED OUT OF COURSE cachet with small letters was used on such mail. A different P.O.C. cachet, 45mm long and in block letters was used

for this purpose in the 1977, '78, '79 Trade Fair Temporary Post Office.

Letters which contained coins and found posted in the letter-box annexed to the Trade Fair Post Office were compulsorily registered. The first type of cachet to be used was in 1976 when a 42mm (small lettered) cachet "Compulsory Registration" was used. The Post Office officials noted the mistake in the spelling of the word "Compulsary"; in fact in 1977 a new cachet, this time 49mm block lettered cachet reading "COMPULSORY REGISTERED". In 1978, the cachet was again changed and a 52mm long "COMPULSORILY REGISTERED" replaced it. It is interesting to note that at the 1979 Trade Fair Temporary Post Office this cachet was once again changed to be replaced by a new 53mm long cachet worded "COMPULSORY REGISTRATION".

Money and Postal Order Service, Sale of International and Commonwealth Reply Coupons

Postal Orders, International and Commonwealth Reply Coupons were sold at the Trade Fair Temporary Post Offices opened at the Fair Grounds each year; but the sale of the Commonwealth Reply Coupons was discontinued when Commonwealth preferential postal rates ceased. The last date recorded of the use of these Reply Coupons at a Trade Fair Office is 1st July 1975, the opening of the 1975 Temporary Post Office.

No record has been kept of the use of The Money Order Service at the Trade Fair Post Offices before the year 1975, when a Valetta B.P.O. Money Order block with the name of the Post Office was crossed and cacheted by a 34mm x 10mm "Malta International/Fair — Naxxar" cachet. Money Orders issued at the Trade Fair Post Office in the years 1976, '77, '78 came from blocks Printed Valletta (C.O.) with the name of the Post Office struck off and Money Order endorsed by the same cachet used in 1975. In 1979, the new Money Order blocks (both for local and foreign use) were available. The name of the Issuing Office "Valetta" was erased by a new cachet 32mm x 9mm inscribed "International Fair/of Malta — Naxxar" in block letters.

Parcel Post Service

No record of such a Service has been recorded at the Trade Temporary Post Office before 1974. In fact, no Parcel Post labels or cachets were available at the 1974 Trade Fair Post Office. Parcels were offered to the Counter Clerk to be posted. The Clerk ingeniously applied one of the Registration cachets with the "R" part cut off to number the parcels, and above it, a small one-line metal "Parcel Post" 21.5mm x 2mm cachet to indicate the service.

In 1975, a rectangular 42mm x 32mm rubber cachet PARCEL POST/MALTA INTERNATIONAL/FAIR — NAXXAR/No. was available. The same cachet was applied at The Temporary Post Office during the next three Trade Fairs. In 1978, parcels had to be examined by the Post Office Clerk and

marked with a cross and signed before they were accepted for transmission. This was a precaution against the delivery of letter bombs, one of which caused the death of a doctor's daughter, Karen Grech.

In 1979 a new rectangular 43mm x 31.5mm rubber cachet "PARCEL POST/INTERNATIONAL FAIR/OF MALTA — NAXXAR/No. was employed at all parcels posted at the Temporary Post Office, at The International Fair of Malta, held in Naxxar. As in 1978, the parcels posted at The Trade Fair had to be examined by the Clerk, marked with a cross and signed before accepted to be forwarded to their addresses.

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The writer welcomes any Addenda to this article and is very anxious to extend his knowledge regarding the posting of parcels at The Trade Fair Post Office prior 1974; Money Orders and Postal Orders issued at these Temporary Post Offices between 1952 and 1973; and A.R. Registration before 1974. Anything relevant to the matter is very much appreciated.