

# GREAT BRITAIN USED ABROAD

## - MALTA -

### From Q.V. to Q.E. II

by GRAHAM SMEED

The use of Great Britain Queen Victoria adhesives and stationery from the Imperial Post Office in Malta over the period 1857 until the end of 1884 is well documented and numerous examples of stamps with the well known 'M' or A25 cancellations are reposing in most collections.

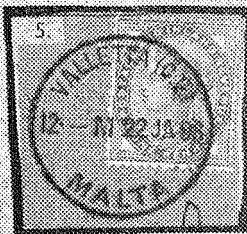
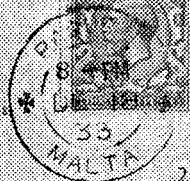
After the 1st January 1885 the Malta Post Office was established and it issued a series of suitably inscribed adhesives and postal stationery which was all accepted by countries of the U.P.U. The use of British adhesives and stationery ceased, but, over the past few years in my usual 'magpie' habit I have formed a collection of Great Britain used either in or from Malta and have examples from all reigns, which illustrate how the rules governing the use of such adhesives could be applied to some items and accepted in payment of postage, while others have incurred the penalty by being 'taxed' or having postage due charges levied.

The instances when British adhesives have been accepted for postage fall basically under two headings: Maritime and Military Mail. The rules governing the posting of mail aboard ships were drafted at several U.P.U. conferences in the 1890s. and eventually the word PAQUEBOT adopted to identify such mail. A straight line handstamp reading this was sent to Malta, by post, on 30 January 1894, a very clear example is shown in figure 1 a picture postcard with K.G.V. 1d. cancelled VALLETTA 19FE12. Later a circular datestamp incorporating the words PAQUEBOT and MALTA was introduced (about 1930), this is shown used on a p.p.c. with K.G.V. 1½d. dated DE 18 33, fig. 2.

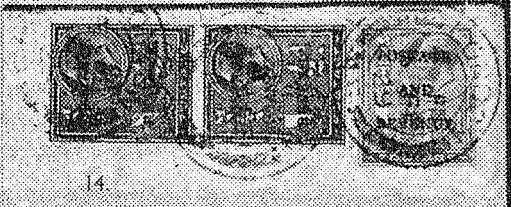
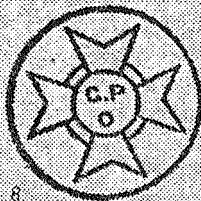
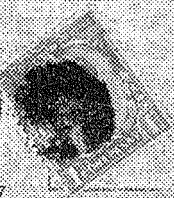
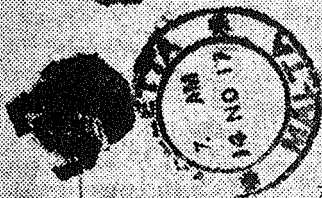
A short time afterwards another similar c.d.s. was introduced with spacer blocks and crosses and examples are seen on fig. 3 which is a strip of three ½d. of King Edward VIII dated AU 9 39. An unusual combination is seen on fig. 4 with a Q.E. II 6d. Air Letter clearly marked with a PAQUETBOT — MALTA c.d.s. of FE 4 66. A Queen Victoria item which raises some speculation as to its origin or use is a small piece with a 1d. lilac cancelled with the VALLETTA (C.O.) c.d.s. dated 22 JA 98. fig. 5. I suspect it may have been from a paquebot cover, but not enough remains to give the true story! These examples all show acceptance of Great Britain adhesives etc., by the Malta Postal Authorities for the payment of postage.

The regulations regarding the use of stamps and/or free mail for service personnel are rather complicated and it depends what type of posting or if the sender was injured and in hospital, so the mail is usually identified as O.A.S.

PAQUEBOT



*10*



i.e. On Active Service. During the 1914-18 war Malta was a busy base for Allied activities, and large numbers of servicemen passed through the port of Valletta either to or from the war zones, consequently large numbers of O.A.S. cards and covers are known. However some of these 'travellers at the King's expense' were under the impression that a stamp would speed their missive to love ones back home and I have two examples showing this: fig. 6 p.p.c. with K.G.V. ½d. just tied by VALLETTA c.d.s. date 6 NO 14, the card also has a faint censor mark, no postage due has been raised, but on fig. 7 a p.p.c. with K.G.V. 1d., again only just tied, with the VALLETTA c.d.s. 14 NO 17, the Post Office has struck a 'T' mark, and then somewhere, not necessarily in Malta, the adhesive and 'T' mark have been obliterated by a rather smudgy black 'dumb' cancel. Another mark found applied to G.B. adhesives is the G.P.O. in Maltese Cross. This handstamp was originally intended as a canceller for adhesives on registered mail and this use is found from about 1906, but, during and just after the 1914-18 war this mark is found on items of mail with military connections and bearing G.B. adhesives. I have several examples in my collection including (fig. 8) a letter bearing a K.G.V. 1d which has been passed by ship's censor, this was probably from a ship in Grand Harbour, to Italy and backstamped Genova 23.12.17. Another example showing use of the G.P.O. in Maltese Cross is a p.p.c. from Constantinople and addressed to H.M. Dockyard, K.G.V. two ½d. card dated in manuscript 13/7/21.

As there was usually a large naval presence in Grand Hargour the Malta Post Office introduced a suitably inscribed circular handstamp; RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIPS — MALTA. fig. 9. Q.E. II 2½d. dated SP 13 54. Over the years a number of Forces Post Offices were operated in or near large military establishment, and mail posted in these received a FIELD POST OFFICE cancellation. There was a concessionary postal rate in Malta whereby service personnel could send letters locally, i.e. within Malta and Gozo for a fee of 2d.; example is a cover bearing a Q.E. II 2d., posted at Floriana F.P.O. 16 JY 77 and delivered in Balzan. However, the Malta Post Office did not take too kindly to a letter bearing a Q.E. II 2d., which was quietly popped into a G.P.O. posting box. The offending label has circular handstruck marks to indicate zero value and 2 x 2c postage due labels have been added before delivery. The treatment of unacceptable items has varied slightly over the years; the circular 'zero value' handstamp is known from about 1885 and an example is shown in fig. 10 K.G.V. 1d. not cancelled but dated Sliema 12 NO 12 with attendant 'T' and 1d. Foreign Branch postage due handstamps. A cover posted at Notabile B.O. DE 28 14 has received similar treatment to the previous item, but in addition the K.G.V. 1d. stamp has been well obliterated by a 'dumb' oval of nine lines, as well as having a G.B. 1d. postage due label added before delivery.

An even more curious obliterator, which looks like some of the U.S.A. cork cancels, fig. 11, a p.p.c. date MR 21 30 and has an interesting message "am writing in the G.P.O. at noon" so presumably the makeshift cancel and 'T' mark were applied in Malta? Another 'dumb' cancel is found on a commercial cover, fig. 12, this was probably a S.A.E. sent out by the company to facilitate reply, the K.G.V. 1½d. is blobbed out alongside is the Sliema c.d.s. ?MY 31 and 'T'. The Foreign Branch h/s 1½d. and three ½d. postage due labels have been applied in London before delivery.

Not many examples of irregular use of Great Britain postal stationery are recorded, however, a couple of 'philatelic' items have come my way; a Q.E. II 2½d. stationery envelope with manuscript circles to indicate zero value and manuscript 'T', dated VALLETTA JA 3 55, no other marks are apparent so it looks as if no charge was made!

A registered 'combination' cover is really exceptional, fig. 13, an H. size G.B. K.G. VI 8½d. with Malta Q.E. II 1/6 adhesive cancelled PRINCE OF WALES RD. SLIEMA.

To give this story a final twist I show an envelope bearing Malta adhesives, K.G.V. 2 x ½d. and 1½d. cancelled in London 6 FE 29, fig. 14, no postage due or other marks are applied, so this letter either missed the sorter's eye or was mis-routed to Switzerland to where it was addressed.

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