

CHRISTMAS ISSUE 1977

Date of Issue	16th November 1977.
Values	1c + 5m, 7c + 1c and 11c + 1c5.
Stamp Size	43mm x 21.4mm.
Art Designer	Chev. Emvin Cremona.
Printers	Printex Limited Malta.
Process	Litography.
Perforation	13.3 x 13.75 (comb).
Watermark	Maltese Crosses Sideways.
Paper	Chalk Surfaced
Gum	P.V.A.

COLOURS:

The colour of these stamps was produced by the four colour process.

DESIGNS:

This is the fourteenth set of Christmas stamps issued by the Malta Postal Administration. Each stamp includes a small surcharge, in addition to the postal value, as in the previous eight Christmas issues. The proceeds from this surcharge will be distributed by a Government appointed committee amongst various child welfare philanthropic organisations and charitable institutions.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Please attend whenever possible and bring a guest; the warm friendly atmosphere of philately is always in evidence at our monthly meetings.



The devotion to the Christmas Crib is of very ancient origin. St. Francis of Assisi popularized it and gave it the tangible form in which it is known at the present time. During Yuletide, in Malta, Cribs with artistically sculptured figures made of clay and carefully coloured are exhibited in churches, social clubs and homes. The Cribs, which vary from small, humble coves to elaborate representations of the Bethlehem countryside, with mechanical movement, are the focal point in the home around which the family gathers over Christmas. The stamps of this Christmas issue feature three figure compositions from the Crib exhibited at the Dis-calced Carmelite Priory, Cospicua, Malta.

The 1c + 5m stamp shows the Shepherds listening to the good tidings. The 7c + 1c stamp features the Nativity, whilst the 11c + 1c stamp depicts the Shepherds proceeding to the manger.

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

Cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps are seen in the bottom margin only. Figures are 2.5mm high and printed in black. I have noticed that the value of cumulative totals of columns shown is for the postal value of the stamps without the surcharge. In earlier sets the value given included the surcharge.

The Printed Sheets in single form of the 1c + 5m, 7c + 1c and 11c + 1c consist of two Panes. Each Pane has 50 stamps made up of ten rows of five stamps. All three stamps are of the horizontal format. The same three stamps have also been printed in se-tenant form, the 1c + 5m on top, 7c + 1c in the

middle, and the 11c + 1c5 at the bottom. The Printed Sheet of the se-tenant consists also of two Panes. Each Pane has 75 stamps (25 sets in se-tenant form) made up of 15 rows of 5 stamps. The five stamps in each row are of similar design and value, i.e. the bottom row in each Pane consists of five 11c + 1c5 stamps, the row above it has five 7c + 1c stamps and the row above this has five 1c + 5m stamps. The fourth row from the bottom of the Pane is again made up of five stamps of the 11c + 1c5 value and so on towards the top of the Pane. Thus in each of the five vertical columns (15 stamps in each column), will be seen five se-tenant sets, hence 25 sets in se-tenant form in each Pane. From this it is easy to see, that people buying stamps in pairs from the single form, should buy them one on top of the other, because if they are a horizontal pair, they could have been cut from a se-tenant Pane. It is of interest to note that since Printex have been producing Malta stamps, this is the first time that a Pane consists of 75 stamps. Besides small sheets of ten (Europa sets), Panes of 60 stamps (Xmas. 1975 Triptych), Panes of 40 stamps (Tapestries 1977), all other sets since 1972 consisted of Panes of 50 stamps.

PLATE/PANE NUMBERS:

These are seen under the first stamp of the bottom row, whether in single or se-tenant form.

1c + 5m = 1A x 5, 1B x 5.

7c + 1c = 1A x 5, 1B x 5.

11c + 1c5 = 1A x 5, 1B x 5.

Se-tenant = 1A x 5, 1B x 5.

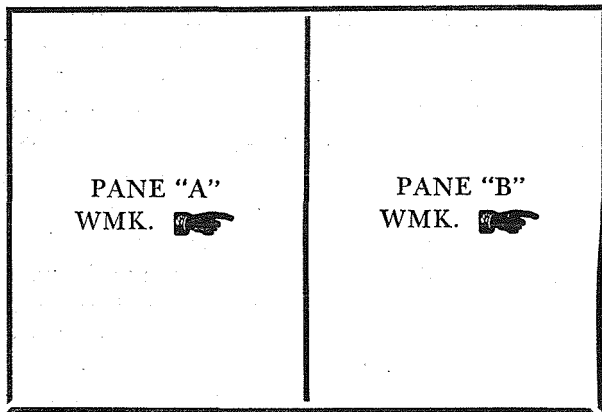
PERFORATION OF MARGINS:

The top margins of Panes "A" and "B" in single form values as well as in se-tenant form are imperforate. The right hand margin of Pane "A" and the left hand margin of Pane "B" in single form and se-tenant are fully perforated. The left hand margin of Pane "A" and the right hand margin of Pane "B" in single form values and se-tenant form are also nearly fully perforated except for a little space at the edges, where three more perforations could have been inserted. The bottom margins of Panes "A" and "B" in single form values as well as in se-tenant form are perforated. Some Panes I have seen, have this bottom margin so wide that even an extra horizontal perforation line can be seen. I have noticed this on Panes "A" and "B" of the 1c + 5m, 7c + 1c and se-tenant values but not on Panes of the 11c + 1c5 value.

S M A L L A D S

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Members of the Philatelic Society of Malta qualify for one free advert in any one year, of not more than 30 words, including name and address. All copies must be received two months prior to publication date.



From a study of all the details given, the Printed Sheets of all values in single form as well as in se-tenant form before cutting, would look as shown on left. Stamps would also be seen the right way up. In the case of the se-tenant form, the Printed Sheets would be a little larger in height as each Pane consists of 75 stamps instead of 50 as in the single-form values.

IMPRINT BLOCKS:

"Printex Limited Malta" is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row in all single form values as well as in the se-tenant form. Letters are 1mm high and printed in black. An Imprint Block of four from the single form values and an Imprint Block of two se-tenant sets will also include the colour checks. A special hand-postmark inscribed with the words, "L-Ewwel Jum tal-Hruġ", the name of the respective locality and the date "16.XI.77" plus a decorative star in the centre, was used for cancellation on the first day of issue. Up to 4 p.m. on the first day of issue, the sale of these stamps realized the sum of £M45,460. This is the highest ever amount to be realized from a Christmas issue on the first day.