

1978 AIR MAIL SET

Date of Issue	3rd October 1978.
Values	5c, 7c, 11c, 17c, 20c and 75c.
Stamp Size	47.15mm x 20.5mm.
Art Designer	Richard Caruana.
Printers	Printex Limited Malta.
Process	Lithography.
Perforation	13.35 x 13.5 (comb).
Watermark	Maltese Crosses pointing sideways.
Paper	Chalk Surfaced.
Gum	P.V.A.

Colours

5c Yellow, Brown, Ultramarine and Black.

7c Ochre, Red, Blue, Grey and Black.

11c Orange, Green, Grey and Black.

17c Fawn, Blue-Grey, Grey and Black.
20c Sepia, Red, Blue, Grey and Black.
75c Light-Cobalt, Sienna, Grey and Black.



Designs

This set replaces the Air Malta Inauguration Issue which has been withdrawn at the close of business, on the 2nd October, 1978.

The Malta Postal Administration isued this new Airmail Set, which consists of six stamps featuring three designs. The 5c and 17c values depict an aircraft flying over a megalithic temple, the 7c and 20c values show an Air Malta Boeing 720B in flight and the 11c and 75c values reproduce a Jumbo Jet taking-off from the recently inaugurated 3,544 metres runway at Luqa Airport.

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 bottom row, in all Panes of the 5c, 11c, 17c and 75c values, but next to the last stamps of the two bottom rows, in all Panes, of the 7c and 20c values.

In the values 5c, 7c, 17c and 20c, the colour checks from top to bottom correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers from right to left, in all three Panes of each value. In the 11c value the colour checks from top to bottom are: Black, Green, Orange and Grey, whilst in the Pane numbers from right to left, they are: Grey, Black, Green and Orange. In the 75c value the colour checks from top to bottom are: Black, Sienna, Light-Cobalt and Grey, whilst in the Pane numbers from right to left, they are: Black, Grey, Sienna and Light-Cobalt. It is very difficult to distinguish between the colours Black and Grey in the colour checks and more difficult in the Plate Pane numbers, but I was assured that they are two different colours. If memory serves me right, this is the first time since Printex have been producing Maltese stamps, that the colour checks from top to bottom did not correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers either from right to left, or from left to right.

Cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps are seen in top and bottom margins. Figures are 2.5mm high and printed in black in the 11c, 17c, 20c and 75c values, whilst in the 5c and 7c values they are printed in the same colour as that of the bottom disc in the colour checks of each value.

The Printed Sheets of all six values consisted of three Panes, "A", "B" and "C". Each Pane has fifty stamps made up of five rows of ten stamps. Stamps of all six values are of the horizontal format.

Plate/Pane Numbers

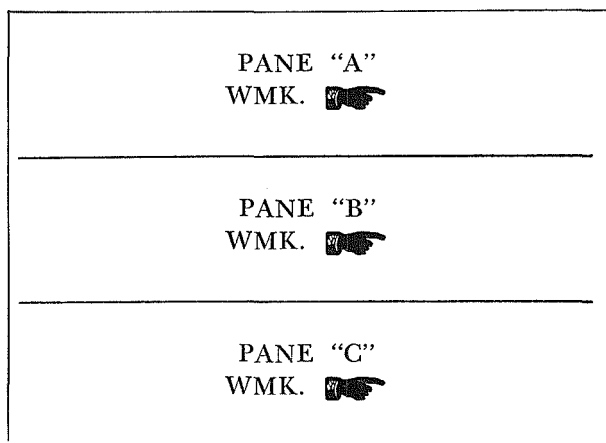
These are seen completely under the first stamp of the bottom row in the 5c and 17c values. Also under the same stamp, but starting with the first vertical perforation line, in the 11c and 75c values, (the first figure "1" is nearly lost in the perforations). In the 7c and 20c values the Plate/Pane

numbers start from the left hand margin, through the first vertical perforation line and continue under the first stamp of the bottom row.

5c = 1A x 4, 1B x 4, 1C x 4.
 7c = 1A x 5, 1B x 5, 1C x 5.
 11c = 1A x 4, 1B x 4, 1C x 4.
 17c = 1A x 4, 1B x 4, 1C x 4.
 20c = 1A x 5, 1B x 5, 1C x 5.
 75c = 1A x 4, 1B x 4, 1C x 4.

Perforation of Margins

The top margin of Pane "A" of the six values is imperforate. The top margin of Panes "B" and "C" of the six values are fully perforated. The left hand, right hand and bottom margins of Panes "A", "B" and "C" of the six values are also fully perforated. No registration marks were seen when all Panes of all values were examined.



From a study of all the details given, the Printed Sheet, of each value, before cutting into Panes, would look as shown on left. Looking at the Printed Sheets as shown, stamps will be seen the right way up. Hence the reason, when individual stamps are examined, the watermark will still be seen sideways.

Imprint Blocks

"Printex Limited Malta" is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row and also extending to the right hand margin, through the last perforation line, in all Panes of all values. Letters are 1mm high, and printed in the same colours as those of the cumulative totals of progressive columns of stamps. An Imprint Block of four will also include the colour checks. A special handstamp was used for cancellation on the first day of issue. It is inscribed with the words, "Posta Bl-Ajru — L-Ewwel Jum Tal-Hrug", and the name of the respective locality together with the date, "3.10.78". The postmark also incorporates a decorative motif representing the sun and an aircraft flying over a megalithic temple. Sales from this set, up to 4 p.m. on the first day of issue, realized the sum of £M130,830.