

## FLEMISH TAPESTRIES ISSUE

Date of Issue .....	30th. March 1977.
Values .....	2c, 7c, 11c and 20c.
Stamp Size .....	48mm x 39.5mm.
Art Designer .....	Chev. Emvin Cremona.
Printers .....	Printex Limited Malta.
Process .....	Litography.
Perforation .....	14 x 14.
Watermark .....	Maltese Crosses pointing sideways.
Paper .....	Chalk surfaced.
Gum .....	P.V.A.

### Colours:—

The colour of these stamps was produced by the multi-colour process.

## Design:

The Malta Post Office has chosen the Rubens Fourth Centenary Year to issue the first in a series of sets of postage stamps reproducing the magnificent Flemish Tapestries woven at the end of the 17th. Century.

The priceless Tapestries were commissioned by Ramon Perellos on his election as Grand Master of the Order of St. John in 1697. They were executed by Judocus de Vos, a member of one of the most celebrated families of tapissiers who flourished in Flanders during the 16th. and 17th. centuries. The Tapestries are on permanent exhibition at the Museum of St. John's Co-Cathedral, Valletta.

There are in all fifteen large panels, and fourteen smaller ones. Thirteen of the large tapestries were woven on cartoons made from paintings by Peter Paul Rubens (1577 — 1640). Another large tapestry, showing "The Last Super", was woven on a cartoon made from a painting by Nicholas Poussin (1594 — 1665), while the fourteen smaller panels and a portrait of Grand Master Perellos were woven after paintings by Mattia Preti (1613 — 1699).

The series of Malta postage stamps will feature the large tapestries. This year's "Rubens" set reproduces the "Annunciation" (2c), the "Four Evangelists" (7c), the "Nativity" (11c) and the "Adoration of the Magi" (20c).

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. If one were to look closely at the colour checks, it will be seen that the bottom colour, gold, is repeated twice. As far as I could check, this is the first time, since Printex have been producing Malta stamps that a particular colour check has been printed twice in any one issue. On enquiring for the reason, I was informed that the word "MALTA" on the stamps, (which is the only part printed in gold), was given two runs in gold, for better contrast, because of the background involved especially in the 11c and 20c values. The colours from top to bottom correspond to the colours used for Pane numbers from left to right on 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 consist of two Panes. Each Pane has 40 stamps made up of eight rows of five stamps. All stamps are of the horizontal format. This is the first time also since Printex have been producing Malta stamps, that a Pane consists of 40 stamps instead of the usual 50. This is because of the large size of each stamp, which was necessary to reproduce the great amount of detail involved. This detail will be more appreciated if one were to look at this set through a magnifying glass. In my opinion, Printex succeeded in producing one of the finest commemorative sets, which together with the future "Flemish Tapestries" sets will form one of the most beautiful parts of a Malta collection.

### Plate/Pane Numbers:—

These are seen under the first stamp of the bottom row, and also extending to the left hand side of the first vertical perforation line.

2c = 1A x 7, 1B x 7.

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

11c = 1A x 7, 1B x 7.

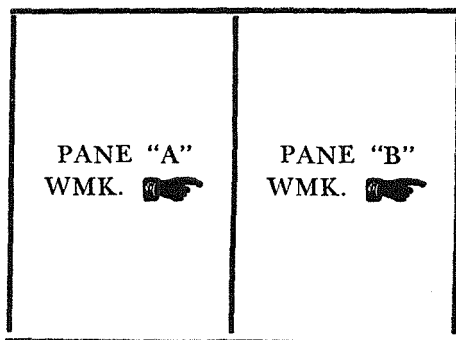
20c = 1A x 7, 1B x 7.

### Perforation of Margins:—

The bottom margins of both Panes of all values are fully perforated. The right hand margins of Panes "A" and the left hand margins of Panes "B" of all values are fully perforated, whilst the left hand margins of Panes "A" and the right hand margins of Panes "B" are fully perforated except for a little space at the edges where there is space for another two perforations. The top margins of Panes "A" and "B" of all values are imperforate.

Registration marks in the form of a coloured horizontal line or lines are seen in the top left hand margin, just under the first horizontal perforation line in Panes "A" of all values. Similar registration marks are seen in the top

right hand margin in Panes "B" of all values. In the top left hand corner of Pane "A" of the 7c value only, I noticed at the edge of the top left hand margin an inverted letter "A" and part of a letter "H" printed in red. Also at the edge of the top margin, in the same corner, the letters "N" and "HY" can be seen printed sideways in yellow. The Printed Sheet of each value, before cutting, would look as shown on left. In this way, stamps would be seen the right way up.



### Imprint on Blocks:—

"PRINTEX LIMITED MALTA" is seen under the last stamp of the bottom row, and also extending to the right hand side of the last vertical perforation line. 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 cancellation on the first day of issue. Up to 4 p.m. on the first day of issue, the sale of these stamps realised the sum of £M59,824.