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The Gozo Philatelic Society was founded on 3 September 1999  
for the promotion of the hobby,  
the provision of a point of reference and co-ordination.  
Front page: LAURENT ROPA 130th Birth Anniversary  
Commemorative postcard with special postmark issued by the GPS

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**PHILATELIC SOCIETY  
OF CANBERRA**



Large Silver Medal awarded to the Gozo Philatelic Society Magazine

**GPS Magazine —Official Organ of  
The Gozo Philatelic Society**

*First issued on 12 February 2000*

*Editor: Austin Masini — Designer Anthony Grech*

Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the Committee's official policy.

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**Gozo Philatelic Society Patron His Excellency  
Dr George Vella President of the Republic of Malta**

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(78) *G.P.S. Diary*

Antoine Vassallo Gozo Philatelic Society Secretary

VO/0546 [secretary@stamps-gozo.org](mailto:secretary@stamps-gozo.org)



**10 November 2021** Mass at St Francis' church by GPS Chaplain Rev Joseph Attard in suffrage of deceased members and supporters.

**14 November** Tenth instalment of our thematic philatelic series in the Sunday newspaper *Il-Lehen*.

**20 November** Committee confirms Exhibition prizes and fixes the AGM for 9 January.

**27 November** Anthony Grech used the *Milied f' Ghawdex* handstamp to send a Christmas Card to members.

**2 December** Il-Ħaġar showcase changed to Dun Ġorġ Preca & Christmas

**24 December** Anthony Grech produces Cards for the Laurent Ropa 130th anniversary handstamp, also designed by him.

**January-March 2022** issue of *L-Anzjani Llum* continues our Stamp Errors series: Bill/Ben Pickett US stamp.

**9 January** AGM (see page 16).

**16 January** Another instalment appears in our thematic series in the national weekly in Maltese *Il-Lehen*.

**29 January** The Ħaġar exhibitionis replaced with Prehistoric Artifacts.

**29 January** Committee looks at possible future events.

**4 February** Mr Joseph Said again donates numerous philatelic publications for the GPS library.

**13 February** A further instalment in our thematic series in the national weekly in Maltese *Il-Lehen*.

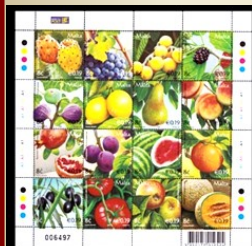
## #84 OOPS!

Hong Cong is, of course, Hong Kong (page 9) and Indonesia Indonesia (page 10)! The 2021 AGM was, obviously, not our 1st but the 21st (page 20).

**Maltese Judaica** (from page 12) dropped these illustrations: Moreover the Flower stamp (bottom of page 13) should have been numbered 17; this resulted in wrong numbering on page 14. A

reference to Our Lady of

Mount Carmel 2018 Festas Statue got lost! A final stamp (Comino) went AWOL too.





## In Memory of Joseph Mary Bajada—Ir-Roger

It is with our deepest sorrow that we inform our members of the passing away of a friend and great member of the Gozo Philatelic Society who went to rest in the Loving Arms of his Creator on 3 December 2021 aged 91 years.

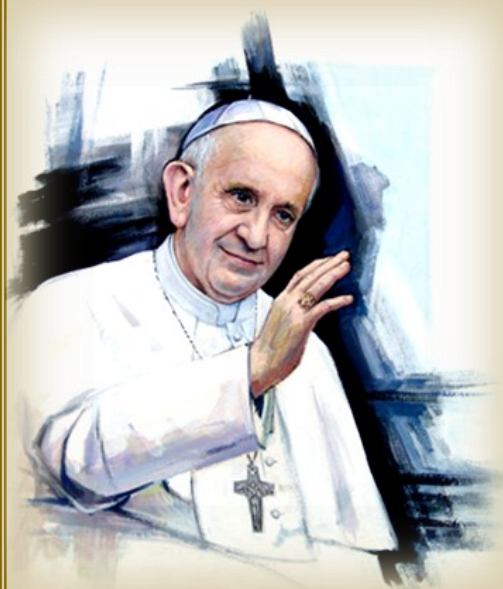


Joseph, better known by his friends as *Ir-Roger*, was a collector of several items but his Malta Stamps collection and the GPS cards were his most treasured. Loved and never forgotten by his wife Maria, and all his family relatives and friends.

*The President & Committee of the Gozo Philatelic Society*

## H.H. Pope Francis Visit to Malta and Gozo The Gozo Philatelic Society

commemorated this event with a limited edition of 100 special Postcard on his visit to Gozo.



Painting by Amadeo Brogli



## Marc Chagall Dead Letter Painting. *Antoine Vassallo*



In my article 'What is Dead Mail' published in News letter no 84 I made a reference about a particular painting by Marc Chagall. This relatively small Oil, gouache, graphite, and ink on paper painting 20cm by

25cm is named 'Study for Over Vitebsk' (*"he walks over the houses."*) was painted in 1914. It depicts an old man a Jewish beggar, wearing a cap, carrying a walking stick and beggar's sack, floating in the sky above the artist's home village of Vitebsk in Belarus. It was on loan exhibited at the Jewish Museum in Manhattan when in 2000 it disappeared. In 2002 it turned up in a sorting center, Dead ka, Kansas. The 'Dead Letter' since address on it. Classification as a dead letter in few instances where postal workers are allowed to violate secrecy of search for clues as to the letter's origin or its destination inside the envelope or package. Upon opening the package, the several stickers from museums and galleries on the back and so turned it over to a superior.



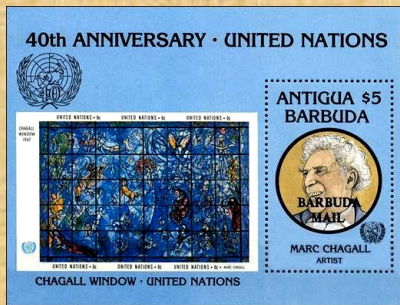
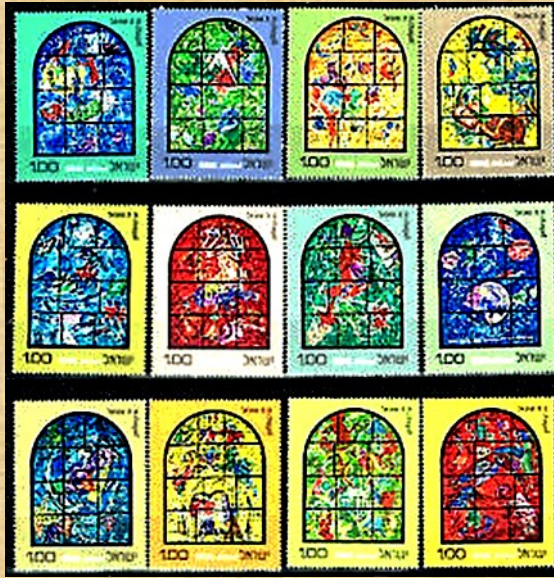
Upon checking the FBI Web site for stolen art, it was found that this Chagall was listed and the FBI were called in. Up to then it was not clear if it was genuine or fake. It was authenticated by Chagall's granddaughter, Bella Meyer, a leading authority on her grandfather's art as being the original. In 1999 Belarus issued a stamp in the CEPT series depicting Chagall painting 'Over Vitebsk'

Several other countries including France, Israel, Antigua & Barbuda, Grenada, United Nations, Sierra Leon, Gambia, Bhutan and Sao Tome e Principe issued stamps showing paintings by Chagall while some countries issued stamps with his image.

Chagall, who left Russia in 1922 and settled in France, died in 1985 at the age of 98. Many of his paintings depict Jewish folklore and scenes of pre-World War I life in Russia.



# MARC CHAGALL



## An FDC from each Issuer

assorted postmarks and designs on the specially commissioned covers in the "Stamps of all Countries / *Les Timbres des tous les Pays*" Collection  
*Victor Gusman*



This stamp (designed by Peter Wildbur) was issued to celebrate the first direct elections to the European Assembly and simply shows the words "European Communities" in the various member languages. The first day postmark was given on 20 August 1979 in the capital Dublin (written in its Irish form which in fact reads "town of the hurdled ford" ). Actually, the cancellation refers also to two other occasions commemorated with stamps issued concurrently. The cover design symbolizes the European Parliament's specialized committees.



This stamp (designed by G Almahiah) was issued to celebrate the Sabbath, the weekly Jewish holy day from Friday evening. It shows an embroidered cloth used to cover the festive loaves. The first day postmark was given on 19 April 1977 in Jerusalem. The cover design depicts the home lady taking part in the ceremony by lighting the candles.

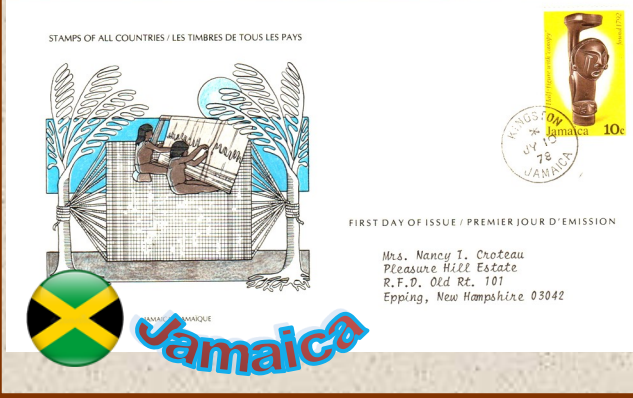


This stamp (designed by E Vangelli) was included in the annual Europa set, themed famous people. It shows Antonio Pigafetta, Italian chronicler and explorer who died in the first half of the sixteenth century. The first day postmark was given on 28 April 1980 in the capital Rome. The cover design depicts Magellan's 1519-22 expedition, on which Pigafetta kept a journal which had long influence.



This stamp (part of a set of 3 stamps — 1st series) shows an Arawak artifact of Jamaica.

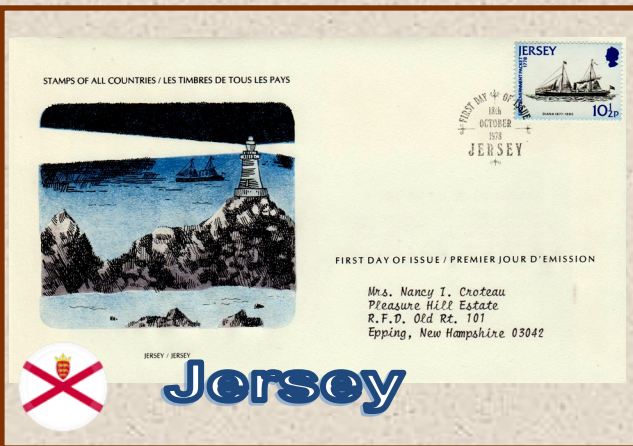
These artifacts were found in a natural cave near the top of a hill called Spots in the Capenters mountains in the Parish of Vere in June 1792. The set was also issued as a miniature sheet on 10 July 1978. This stamp represents a half figure with ‘canopy’.



This stamp from the 2nd National Treasure Series (3rd issue) is entitled “Saint on cloud” It was issued on 25 March 1977.



This stamp was issued as part of a set of 5 stamps to commemorate the bicentennial of the England–Jersey Government Mail Packet Service. It shows the cutter ‘Diana’ which ran between England and Jersey from 1877 to 1890. The stamp was issued on 18 October 1978.





## WOMEN IN THE BRITISH POST OFFICE

*Antoine  
Vassallo*



Though women are usually recognised to have been employed by the Post Office since 1870, they had been working as Sub-Postmistresses (conducting Post Office business alongside another business). Moreover—if men were not available - women were also employed as “letter carriers” (postwomen) in rural areas.

The Post Office was given control of the telegraph system in 1870 and the female telegraphists became PO employees. This was the first time women had been employed in substantial numbers by the GPO and their employment was seen as something novel and experimental.



Sub-Postmistress Mrs Helen Hoppe  
outside her post office making lace,  
1939

The ‘experiment’ being judged, in the following years women were employed in clerical roles in the Post Office Savings Bank headquarters as well as in the Returned Letter Office. Obviously social convention meant that the sexes were strictly segregated at work!

In the early days, women were even escorted in and out of the building at times when male workers would not see them. By the 1920s, some women began to voice their opposition to workplace segregation – arguing this allowed Post Office officials to deny women equal pay and working conditions. Working at night was deemed unsuitable for women and so men were employed in the late evenings and overnight.

Women were also employed in individual Post Offices around the country in the dual role of sorting clerk and telegraphist,

handling both mail and telegraph businesses. Here they could expect to work alongside men in much smaller offices!

In 1876, the Post Office instituted a regulation which required women to resign on marriage and forbade the employment of married women in established positions. Married women could remain working as Sub-Postmistresses as these were not established positions. Some women liked the “marriage bar” because they planned to finish working when they married anyway - and found the payment useful for setting up their married home. Others felt that it perpetuated women’s inequality with men.

The bar was lifted temporarily during the World Wars to allow employ-



ment of married women to take over from men who were enlisted into the armed forces. It was lifted definitively in 1946 in the Post Office, though it remained longer in some other parts of the civil service.

One should note that the employment of women expanded massively during World War I. Thousands of women, whether married or single, were employed in temporary positions

for the duration of the war in roles previously reserved to men (who joined the armed forces). In fact quite a few females began delivering mail in urban areas and working as telegraph messengers.

The same needs occurred in World War II. For example, just before Christmas 1940, the Post Office called for women to volunteer as postwomen. Postmen were actually asked to bring along their ‘wives, sweethearts, sisters and ladyfriends’ to help with Christmas mail delivery. Within hours of the announcement in London, four thousand women had volunteered! These new “temporary” employees so impressed the Postmaster General that the decision was taken to retain them. By November 1941, some hundred thousand women were employed by the Post Office. Regarding work conditions, the PO boasts the first women-only association in the Civil Service. Founded in 1901, the Association of Post Office Women Clerks represented women clerical workers and fought for their employment rights and ultimately for equality with men. From 1931, the Association became part of the National Association of Women Civil Servants. Women telegraphists and telephonists were represented by the Union of Postal Workers, with a ‘Woman Organiser’ in the executive committee.

As in so many employment sectors, women were very often paid less than men for doing the same jobs in the Post Office - until the 1960s. Campaigns for



PO equal pay were not lacking, from early in the twentieth century. For example, the Union argued strongly against wage inequalities for women telephonists who worked overnight during the Second World War. The relative Royal Commission led to a 1955 announcement that equal pay would be introduced for most grades.

Numerous examples can be quoted to argue that female employees were actually “ideal”.

(i) **Miss Elizabeth Anderson**, born in Penang, became the GPO Assistant Medical Officer in 1931. Before joining the Post Office, she spent years in hospital work and specialised private practice.

(ii) **Miss Jane Buchanan**, Superintendent of the Female Staff of the Post Office Savings Bank, received an OBE for her service during the First World War.

(iii) **Telephonist Florence Marie Cass** was not unique in receiving the MBE



Mount Pleasant Sorting Office: Letter sorting (women) 1914  
and Holburn Central Telephone Exchange switchroom 1904

during the First World War but she surely rose above her colleagues! In charge of a telephone exchange when an explosion occurred at a nearby munitions works, she made her way in the dark to the engine room to switch on the emergency motors and then prepared her staff to deal with the volume of calls which surely enough ensued.

(iv) **Mrs Annie Cooper**, who completed 50 years' service as Sub- Postmistress of Newbridge Lane in Stockport at 70, had previously assisted her father when he had held the position.

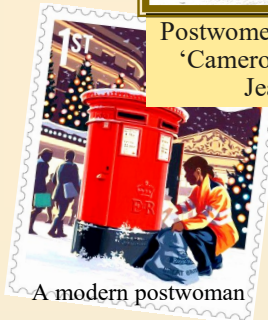
(v) **Mrs Elizabeth Dickson** retired as an unestablished rural postwoman at the end of 1908 after more than 30 years' service. Reportedly, she had never once been late for duty - and had only taken 14 days for illness! She had to walk thirteen miles daily which totalled almost one hundred thirty thousand miles during her career, the staff magazine noted that this distance was “equal to more than five times round the world”.





Postwomen uniform, 1929-1941

Postwomen, one of whom is wearing 'Camerons' (trousers named after Jean Cameron), 1941



vi) **Violette Szabo**, shot by Nazi officers in 1945, had worked as a telegraphist at the Central Telegraph Office before joining the SOE (the secret World War II organization Special Operations Executive).

(vii) **Miss E E Wade**, who retired as Sub-Postmistress in Essex after 37 years' service, had succeeded her mother in the role.

As they had during the First, women's employment opportunities again expanded in the Second World War and alongside came tensions about what women should wear. A postwoman, Jean Cameron, demanded the right to wear trousers, though they were viewed by many as controversial. This change in uniform was authorized in 1941 and thus postwomen could choose to wear either trousers or a skirt on duty.

It was agreed that theirs was a physically demanding job, for which a skirt was not always practical. The media argued that “the question is not so much ‘should women wear trousers’ but rather ‘when, where and how’”. Jean Cameron’s description surely confirms the challenges: “I go 15 miles a day with the mail. I use a cycle and where there are no roads, I have to walk. There are dykes to climb, rocks to be got over, and very often, I have to cross the River Eske. The mail you see, even in this lonely glen, has to go through.” Jean Cameron became something of a celebrity, and the trousers became known as ‘Camerons’ in honour of their pioneer. Two films were made in 1944, featuring Jean on her postal route. She was excited to be a trendsetter and explained that “what I was doing now thousands of posties would be doing later. But I was the first, and I shouldn’t be a woman if I wasn’t pleased to be the first to start a fashion.”

More than 500 pairs of postwomen’s trousers were ordered in just two months and, by November 1943, 14,000 pairs issued. Trousers were actually chosen for their practicality by women in lots of different circumstances during the Second World War. Putting on trousers meant, not only that women were more able to undertake physical tasks, but that they saw themselves differently and were seen differently by society.

Postmistresses were some of the longest serving - as well as some of the longest lived of all Post Office workers - during the nineteenth century. In contrast to postmen and sorters, many of whom had to retire early because of ill health, postmistresses often worked well into their sixties and seventies. In the second half of the century, more than a third of postmistresses were aged over 54 compared to just four percent of sorters.

When they retired, postmistresses (and subpostmistresses) had worked on average for more than 25 years – and nearly one in six had performed the role for forty years or more. Many of the hundreds employed in the Post Office could be found in small market towns and remote rural areas. They often inherited their role from their parents or took over from their husbands - but cases were also numerous when the women were appointed in their own right. Their longevity and role meant they were highly respected figures in their communities.

Miss Maria Beeson was a person of strong opinions, with an aptitude for organisation. She had first been employed by the London District Telegraph Company in 1859, prior to it being taken over by the Post Office in 1870. After helping to set up the Jersey telegraph office, she took over as the Honiton postmistress in 1894. She retired, aged sixty, in 1899; when asked by the editor of the in-house Post Office magazine ‘To what cause do you assign your promotion or want of promotion?’, her reply was ‘Lack of promotion for twenty-three years for the serious offence of being the only woman in an office.’ She was described as having continuously tactfully enforced the rules of the Department which had long lain a dead letter - and ultimately overcoming the “prejudice of both officers and townspeople to a female head of the Post Office”.

The photograph that accompanied the account shows Miss Beeson at her



desk gazing confidently at the camera surrounded by maps, books and official paperwork – very much in control of the complex and demanding tasks that a rapidly growing Post Office required. To mark her retirement, she was presented with a handsome marble time-piece on behalf of the staff of the head office and the fourteen sub-offices under her control. Given the forty years that she had served, it was a well-deserved token of esteem.

**Eliza Adamson**, who was reputed to have been the oldest postmistress in

Britain when she died in May 1898, had served for 58 years in the small fishing village of Auchmithie, on the east coast of Scotland. Eliza Adamson's age and length of service were noteworthy but not exceptional.

**Mrs Limond**, who was born in 1815, was the subpostmistress of Minishant, a village in Ayrshire, for 53 years. She had met Sir Rowland Hill on several occasions! In 1906 - aged over ninety - she was described as 'tall and erect, lithe and nimble, with memory and eyesight unimpaired, her handwriting, for legibility and steadiness, resembling that of a lady of nineteen rather than of ninety.'

In 1900, following her retirement as the town's postmistress, the grateful inhabitants of Tewkesbury presented **Mrs Elizabeth George** with a beautiful diamond and sapphire ring and an illuminated address to recognise the long service given to the town since 1841 – by her, her deceased husband and her parents before her.

Of course, she was not alone in receiving such gifts. Gold chains, bracelets and signet rings, clocks, silver tea services and epergnes were amongst the many gifts presented by grateful inhabitants to postmistresses in villages and towns across the country to mark their retirement from office – tokens of esteem to recognise their status and the valued role that they performed in their local communities.

*with acknowledgments to [www.postalmuseum.org/](http://www.postalmuseum.org/)*





## 22nd AGM (9/1/2022) - Secretary's Report

Back to our normal period in January, I have the duty to report about the strangest of years due to pandemic-connected restrictions.

At the first Committee meeting following the 21<sup>st</sup> AGM in August, posts were agreed – exceptionally extended to also include 2022. Thus no nominations are necessary at this AGM but anyone interested will be gladly accepted to be added in since certain duties remain pending! We have a new chaplain and treasurer, the full list being:

Jesmond Borg - President and statutory duties coordinator

Anthony Grech – Vice President and Production Manager

Antoine Vassallo – Secretary

Mary Grace Xerri - Membership Secretary

Saviour Grech – Treasurer and Funding coordinator (Gozo NGOs Association President, GPS nominee)

Mark Poulton – Website manager

Raymond Buttigieg – Exhibition coordinator.

Fr Joseph Attard – Chaplain and GPS-Kurja coordinator.



Since this first meeting, three further formal meetings were held but it's been very difficult to plan anything in the midst of so much uncertainty.

The annual GPS Exhibition, held as usual in the Gozo Ministry Hall (5-11 November), had restrictions but was honoured with a participant in the GPS Patron, HE George Vella who also made a long visit. Prizes, certificates and medals are being distributed today – with MaltaPost as main sponsor.





Anthony Grech designed a personalized stamp for the Exhibition cover and handstamp, again offered by MaltaPost as part of our strong relationship. As our resident designer, Anthony prepares covers - or even the handstamp itself - whenever the opportunity arises (sometimes in collaboration with other bodies). During 2021 these occasions were

limited to Map and Gharb statue stamps and Ropa and *Milied f'Ghawdex* commemorative handstamps (the last as a Christmas Card sent to members).

Our *Il-Ħaġar* showcase has seen regular replacements of the temporary mini exhibitions and has continually attracted positive comments.

Visits to schools have resumed, beginning with Sannat and San Lawrenz.

Details about all this (and much more) are given in our quarterly Newsletter, for which Junior and new contributors are ardently invited to send letters and articles. Unfortunately only three numbers could be issued in 2021. Our Facebook page offers some coverage too and we hope we can soon be able to update the Website.

We grasp all opportunities to thematically publicize stampcollecting. For example the national Maltese weekly *Il-Lehen* includes irregular instalments of a Saints thematic series. A full set of GPS publications is now housed in the Bishop's *Curia* Archives. *Ghawdex Illum* carried an informative feature, filmed in our Putirjal office. Moreover, quite a few local and foreign publications again featured our society and productions. Attractive leaflets are available for distribution as publicity for our society.

Besides serving our Committee, the room at the top of Main Gate Street of course houses our library and the Juncker collection. Do imitate Wolfgang Juncker and an other benefactor Mr. Alfred Consiglio! Anthony tries to keep this *Putirjal* office open on Saturday mornings for enquiries and library dips.

*Antoine Vassallo*

## CELEBRITY PHILATELISTS

Antoine Vassallo highlights famous stampcollectors

# MYSTIC!



# Mystic Stamp Company

*America's Leading Stamp Dealer*

## Frederick Maynard Sundman



(or "Maynard" as all knew him) was one of the most successful and innovative stamp dealers of the twentieth century – not just in the United States. Born in 1915, Sundman was a stamp dealer from the age of twenty, beginning a small mail order company which he operated out of his home – or his parents'!

After marrying Fannie Kasper, Sundman joined the army at the outbreak of WWII and was sent to North Africa where he won the Bronze Star which was given for “meritorious achievement in a war zone.” Returning to the United States in 1945, he renewed his interest in stamps and continued as a stamp dealer.

Sundman's great contribution to the hobby of philately was founding – with his wife - of the Littleton Stamp and Coin Company (run in a one-room office) and later purchasing the Mystic Stamp Company - which, under Sundman's guidance, became the largest stamp company in the world. It is now involved in selling stamps and printing albums and catalogues and marketing philatelic materials of all kinds.

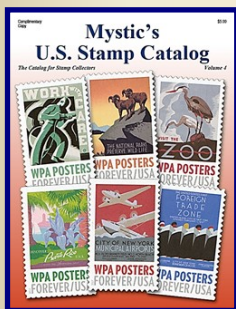
He strongly developed the “approval” concept and combined it with an impressive advertising and marketing prowess. For example the packs of cigarettes from the 1950s to the 1970s included “fifty stamps for \$1 with our approvals” ads. Sundman also began advertising in Sunday newspaper

advertising supplements to attract new people to the hobby.

The high point of response came from a 1952 advert all around the US in which Sundman offered ten WWII Hitler stamps for a dime. Over 500,000 people requested this premium and Mystic's approvals.

Mystic expanded and changed with the times - and tried to move their approval collectors to more advanced phases of the hobby. Mystic publishes a United States price list and is the largest retailer of better US stamps. Mystic sells foreign stamps too and purchased Fleetwood, the largest US First Day Cover company, to expand their cover business.

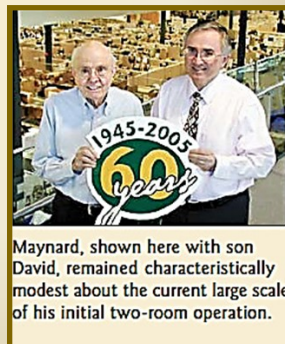
In later years Mystic Stamp Company continued to be owned by the Sundman family and new ideas and ventures were developed, including publishing and an online presence. With his expertise in mass market advertising, Sundman brought, through mail order approvals, more stamp shops to more Main Streets USA than any other stamp dealer or society. More stamp collectors in the US today are part of the philatelic fraternity because of Maynard Sundman than for any other reason.



F. Maynard Sundman transformed a boyhood love of stamp collecting into two of the world's largest collectibles firms before dying peacefully of natural causes in 2007 (31 October 2007). He was a major and usually anonymous contributor to many local and state charitable organizations and efforts.



Littleton Headquarters.



Maynard, shown here with son David, remained characteristically modest about the current large scale of his initial two-room operation.

*photos Littleton Coin company website*

IS IT REALLY  
**TRUE**

By Antoine Vassallo

**THAT**  
famous “postie” found  
lyrical inspiration on his  
rounds?!



On 7 April 2020 singer and songwriter John Prine lost his life to COVID at 73. A musical giant who had survived two bouts with cancer, Prine had received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award only two months earlier and was still actively producing albums. As evidenced by the outpouring of tributes, he had touched innumerable

lives with his creative genius.

A wide-ranging and prolific songwriter, Prine confessed that he found lyrical inspiration in his early career as a mail carrier in the Chicago metro area. Having recently returned from service in the Army during the Vietnam War, the late 1960s found him deeply pensive about the human condition - and felt compelled to put to paper thoughts on topics many considered “out of order”. John Prine did not actively strive to make political statements with his songs, but he had an unswerving dedication to truth and authenticity that often led to social commentary. Throughout his years as a postman, he closely observed all types of details, and showed an extraordinary ability to relate to experiences beyond his own.

One of his most famous songs Sam Stone explores the consequences of the trauma felt by veterans returning from conflict, while others examine ordinary domestic troubles. As Prine himself explained in an interview with Paste Magazine: “I knew there were a lot of GIs out there, who came out of the war and they weren’t quite right.... I knew there were homes where nobody was talking to each other (Angel from Montgomery) ... I knew there were kids who didn’t have fathers and nobody ever acknowledged it (6 O’Clock News)... I saw all that. I knew, and I couldn’t figure out why no one would say anything.” With ample opportunity for reflection while walking his mail route day after day, Prine deftly distilled timely concepts and transformed them into simple yet breathtaking artistry.

His years as a mail carrier were such fertile ground that he later enshrined them with a double album entitled *The Singing Mailman Delivers*, produced by the label Oh Boy Records that he founded in 1981. The recordings date back to the beginning of Prine’s journey as a singer/songwriter but were only released in



2011 - after Prine unexpectedly discovered the pristine reel-to-reel tapes while cleaning out his garage.

The first album is a 1970 recording of the earliest versions of many of his popular songs, mostly written on his mail routes. The second album is a live show recorded at the Fifth Peg in Chicago, where Prine performed several nights a week while delivering mail during the day.\* As he said, "I always likened the mail route to a library with no books. I passed the time each day making up these little ditties."

The Fifth Peg was not only his performing home for several formative years, but it was the spot where he was first discovered at 23 and propelled to prominence. John had been delivering mail for five years when film critic Roger Ebert wandered into his show and was blown away by Prine's raw talent. "I wasn't the music critic for the Chicago Sun-Times, but I went to the office and wrote an article."



After Ebert's awestruck and unexpected review, Prine's career could really begin. He was offered a recording contract by Atlantic Records agent Jerry Wexler and his first album, simply called *John Prine*, was released within a year. Almost thirty albums were produced over a luminous career spanning five decades!

An unassuming mail carrier deeply interested in plumbing the depths of human experience became a musical legend, a Grammy winner, and a member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame. John Prine rose out of the folk revival scene in Chicago as a young man who quickly made his mark

in history through heartfelt stories and sincere emotion, ultimately becoming a music icon.

### The opening verses of the song SAM STONE

Sam Stone. came home  
 To his wife and family  
 After serving in the conflict overseas  
 And the time that he served  
 Had shattered all his nerves  
 And left a little shrapnel in his knees  
 But the morphine eased the pain  
 And the grass grew round his brain  
 And gave him all the confidence he lacked  
 With a purple heart and a monkey on his back



## E & O not E (57)

*glances at stamps with design or printing mistakes  
(well-known or obscure)  
Antoine Vassallo*

CORRECT

### CIA Inverts

INVERTED



In 1985, news of a newly discovered U.S. invert stamp rocked the philatelic world. It was the first major inverted stamp for well over half a century, possibly quite rarer than the coveted Jenny inverts. But the details were cloaked in secrecy, hidden in a maze of deception that took two years to unravel.

The story began when a specialist auctioneer announced the discovery of 85 inverted copies of the 1979 \$1 Rush Lamp stamps. The stamps had been discovered by a "business in northern Virginia" and the finder wished to remain anonymous. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing launched an internal investigation and found that there were no indications of impropriety by its employees.

A few months later, Mystic Stamp Company joined with others to buy 50 of these inverts. Curious about their origin, Mystic President Don Sundman filed a Freedom of Information Act request with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Months passed: when the report finally arrived, it was accompanied by a cover letter – from the Central Intelligence Agency! Though names were blocked out along the thirty five pages, Sundman was able to gather enough information to trace the stamps back to the CIA.

The facts were that an on-duty CIA employee had purchased the partial sheet of 95 inverted stamps at a small post office near McLean (in Virginia). When he and his co-workers realized what they had, they pooled their money and substituted normal \$1 Rush Lamp stamps for the inverts. Each of the nine co-workers kept a stamp. The remaining 86 stamps, including one that was damaged, were quietly sold to the auctioneer.

The story made headlines across the United States and was featured on every major television network. The CIA launched an ethics investigation and seemed really serious: it obligated the employees to surrender their inverts -or face ten years in prison and a \$10,000 fine, the crime being conversion of government property for personal gain. Five employees returned their stamps, one claimed his had been lost, and three people resigned.

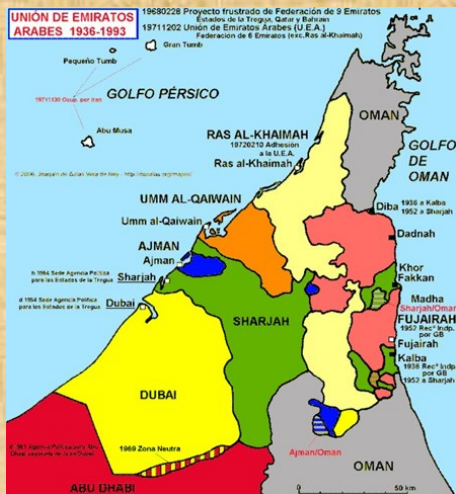
The CIA donated the recovered inverts to the National Postal Museum, where they joined a copy donated earlier by Mystic. Investigations conducted by the Bureau of Printing and Engraving and Justice Department cleared the co-workers of any wrongdoing. However the employee who had purchased the sheet and claimed to have lost his copy years later offered to sell the stamp to Mystic.

These inverted “America’s Light Fueled By Truth and Reason” sell for thousands of dollars whenever copies appear on the market.





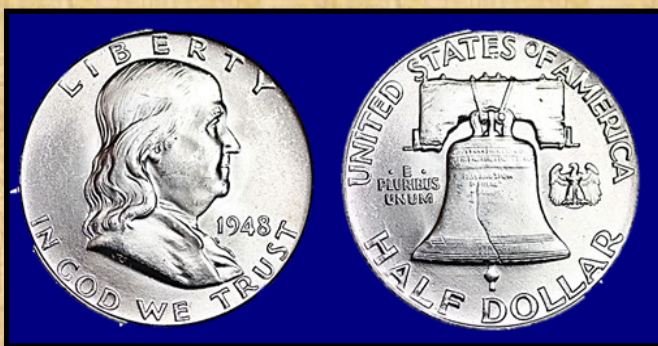
## NUMISMATIC Special (3) *Antoine Vassallo*



The Trucial State of Ras al Khaima (variously spelt) issued its own stamps from 1964 until 1972, on joining the United Arab Emirates.

During these few years, hundreds of sets appeared – including two “coins” in 1969 on the fifth anniversary of the assassination of US President John F Kennedy.

These 2 riyal (the currency from 1966) and 3 riyal stamps were available in “gold” and “silver” editions but they all reproduced the obverse and the reverse of the United States half-dollars hewing the late President.



The half dollar has a rich American history, beginning in 1794. Till 1947, it was made of silver and decorated with an allegorical image that symbolized liberty on the obverse. In 1948, Benjamin Franklin’s likeness was placed on the obverse and the Liberty Bell on the reverse.



The Kennedy half dollar was first minted in 1964 to commemorate President John F. Kennedy after his assassination in 1963 – possibly his greatest tribute. Interestingly, this coin represented the quickest introduction ever in the country. The Kennedy profile on the observe was created by Gilroy Roberts (improving on the widow’s suggestion). The reverse

featured an adaptation, by Frank Gasparro, of the Great Seal of the United States.

Due to the rising price of silver bullion, after 1964 no US coins for circulation were minted in 90% silver. The only coins that continued to contain silver were 40% silver clad Kennedy half dollars. In 1971, further increases in the cost of silver forced the complete removal of the precious metal; since then Kennedy half dollars have been normally struck in copper-nickel alloy. Though the half dollar is almost forgotten today, it was once the major silver coin of circulation. One should note that half a dollar was often more than a person made in a day’s work! They are now only produced for the annual coin sets and other numismatic products.



Flowing Hair 1794-1795



Draped Bust 1796-1807



Capped Bust 1807-1839



Liberty Seated 1839-1891



Barber 1892-1915



Liberty Walking 1916-1947





## MALTA OVERSEAS

local connections on foreign stamps  
*Antoine Vassallo*

### *Sant'Iermu*

**Fort Saint Elmo** (*Forti Sant'Iermu*) is depicted on one of the stamps in the miniature sheet issued by France in the European capitals series (already treated in issues 76 and 78). France had previously featured this example of international heritage, through a 1981 UNESCO stamp, but the relative Newsletter article (in #33) was really threadbare! It is time to make amends.

The fort stands on the shore of the Sciberras Peninsula that divides the Grand Harbour from Marsamxett, commanding the entrances to both.

Probably best known for its role in the 1565 Great Siege, its strategic importance had long been appreciated. In 1488, the Aragonese built a watchtower there dedicated to Erasmus of Formia, known as St Elmo (but the first documentary reference to *Santo Eramo* dates back to 1417). This martyr from the beginning of the fourth century is venerated as a protector of sailors. In 1552 it was demolished to be replaced by a “star” fort (designed by four Italian architects and constructed in just some six months) with a cavalier, covertway and tenaille – together with the hasty addition of a ravelin.



As depicted on one of the Maltese stamps issued in 1962, Fort Saint Elmo was the scene of some of the most intense fighting in 1565 – with an initial garrison of around 150 knights, 600 soldiers, and 60 armed galley slaves. It survived the attacks for four weeks: by then all the knights had died and the nine Maltese left swam to safety! But there was an important casualty on the other side: Ottoman admiral Turgut Reis (which we know as Dragut) was mortally injured by debris created by a misfiring cannon.

After the “Turks” left Malta at the end of their unsuccessful campaign, a new city began being structured on the peninsula – and the ruined Saint Elmo was rebuilt and integrated within its walls. During the next centuries, there were modifications and additions, including Pinto Stores in the area known as Lower Saint Elmo.

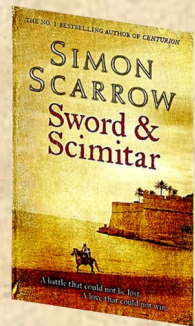
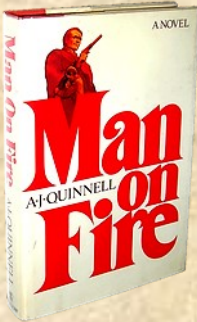


various modifications and additions, including Pinto Stores in the area known as Lower Saint Elmo.

The Priests Revolt took place in 1775 and the thirteen rebels succeeded in holding the Fort for a short time, resulting in execution or exile. In 1917 it was the site of the first heart operation on a soldier (World War I). The fort suffered the first aerial bombardment of Malta (World War II: 11 June 1940), with six fatalities. The year after the coastal artillery there disrupted completely a major Italian coastal attack but St Elmo bridge (linking the breakwater with the tip of the peninsula) collapsed on being hit by an explosive motorboat (*Motoscafo da Turismo*).

The war damage was compounded after the Royal Malta Artillery left this home in 1972. This led the World Monuments Fund to include it in 2008 in the list of endangered world sites – it is worthwhile to note that the Fort and its separate elements are specified in the National Cultural Property Inventory. Restoration works did begin, including major projects with interesting archaeological excavations. In the meantime the National War Museum (with a superb collection of items back to prehistoric times) was located in a part. Other areas housed the Police Academy, as well as military reenactments.

Fort St Elmo was described as a “stunning venue” when used as a media centre for the 2015 Migration Summit. It has also served as a film and video location, as well as featuring in novels (such as AJ Quinnell’s *Man on Fire* and Simon Scarrow’s *Sword and Scimitar*) and games.



This prominent site can be seen on a couple of local stamps: a photo in 1980 and a plan in the 2003 Military Architecture set. St Elmo Lighthouse (*Gran Fanale*), with origins going back five or six centuries, was included among three in 2001.





# of independent Ireland

Marygrace Xerri

On 6<sup>th</sup> December 1921 an Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed bringing an end to the war of independence. All this started with the Easter Rising in 1916 against the British rule, in which Irish republicans seized key locations in Dublin and declared an Irish republic. The treaty was narrowly approved by Dail Eireann on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1922.

Prior to Irish independence - and for a period afterwards - British stamps decorated with English monarchs and imperial iconography were used in Ireland. From early 1922, these British designs were overprinted with text, "Rialtas Sealadach na hÉireann 1922" (Provisional Government of Ireland 1922) or "Saorstát Éireann 1922", to indicate an independent Irish postal system. Control of the Postal system transferred from British to Irish authorities on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1922.



1922 Overprinted stamps of Great Britain (King George V)

RIALTAS  
SEALADACH  
na  
hÉIREANN  
1922.

Two different  
overprints

SAORSTÁT  
ÉIREANN  
1922



In February 1922, Postmaster General J.J. Walsh TD launched a competition to design stamps for the nascent State. Designs were required to be 'symbolical in character, and the inscriptions must be in Gaelic characters'. A prize of £25 was offered for each design accepted. The first stamp used in the Irish Free State was designed by James Ingram. It had a denomination of 2d and was printed in deep green on white wove paper, it was watermarked with a monogram S.E. for *Saorstát Éireann*. In a frame of a Romanesque arch, shamrocks and Celtic-revivalist zoomorphic ornamentation, it featured a map of Ireland without designating the border, 'the image had political as well as symbolic importance' Williams' design featured a cross based to the 12th-century Cross of



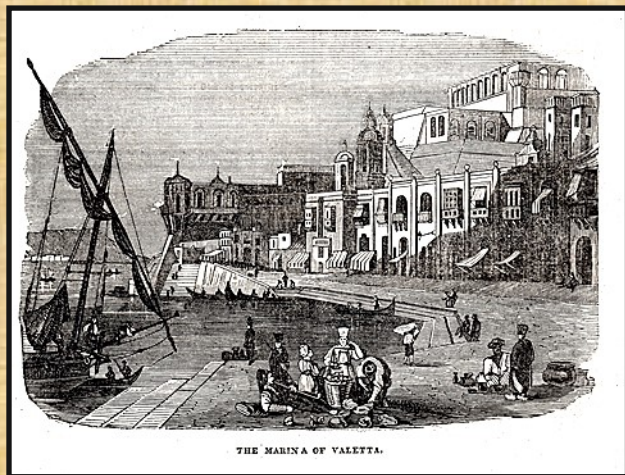
First Éire own postage stamps including  
THE SWORD OF LIGHT, MAP OF IRELAND,  
IRISH ARMS, and CELTIC CROSS

Cong with shamrocks around it. Girling's design features a shield decorated with the emblems of the four provinces, again representing the whole island. O'Reilly's design was of *An Claidheamh Soluis* ('Sword of Light') within a mandorla (a shape associated with Christian art) and a Celtic-revivalist zoomorphic design. All the stamps had Éire in Gaelic font, although Éire was not the official name of the country until the 1937 Constitution was enacted. These stamps symbolised Irish nationalism as Catholic and an ancient nation with a distinctive cultural identity.



1840

What Malta looked like to an engraver artist when the World first postage stamp was issued.



Two line engravings published by The Saturday Magazine (supplement no 535 October 1840

Published in London by JOHN W. PARKER, West Strand and sold by all Booksellers

‘THE HARBOUR OF MALTA’ & ‘THE MARINA OF VALETTA.’ Both showing the Gozo Boat ‘Tal-Latini’.



# The GOZO PHILATELIC SOCIETY OFFICE



*The Committee*

THE GPS OFFICE is open for ALL Members and all those interested every Saturday from 9.30 am to around 11.00am.

All Junior members and friends attending will get a packet of foreign stamps **FREE**.

Past Newsletters and other philatelic material, including foreign stamps, can be acquired for **FREE**.

We also have a good amount of Malta First Day Covers from the 1960's, 70's & 80's which can be acquired for a small donation of 1 Euro each.

**We are at Triq Putirjal, Victoria, on the first floor above Playpen Stationary.**

You can't make it on Saturdays? No problem! Just call Anthony Grech on 21553338 and an appointment will be arranged.





