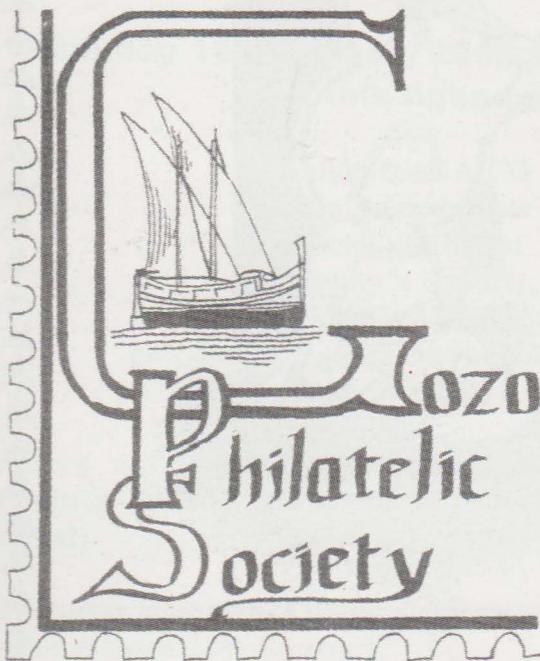


No. 14 October - December 2003 - 4/2003



NEWSLETTER

 Season's Greetings 

NEWSPAPER POST

MERRY CHRISTMAS



&

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

*The Secretary invites
all GPS paid-up members to the*

4th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*which is going to be held
at the Scouts Headquarters,
Sta Domenica Street, Victoria*

Sunday 12th January 2004 at 10.00am.

With this Agenda:

Minutes of 3rd AGM
Statute Amendments
Financial Statement
Secretary's Report
President's Address
Election of members to the committee
Other matters

Members are encouraged to offer their services in the Committee by nominating themselves (no specific form is required).

Any member intending to propose any amendment to the Statute is asked to contact the Secretary.

A members Meeting (with the possibility of acquiring stamps and information) will begin at 9.00am, while Prizes and Certificates will be distributed immediately after the AGM to all those who participated in the October 2003 Exhibition.

GPS NEWSLETTER
Quarterly Organ
of
THE GOZO PHILATELIC SOCIETY

First issued on 12th February 2000 *Editor: Austin Masini*

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

Correspondence (and material for publication) should be addressed to: Editor, GPS, PO Box 10, VCT 101, Gozo, Malta.

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GOZO PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Founded on 3rd September 1999

For "the promotion of the hobby"

"the provision of a point of reference" and "co-ordination"

Postal address: PO Box 10, VCT 101, Gozo, Malta.

GPS DIARY (14)

Antoine Vassallo (Secretary)

1st September 2003: Secretary-Treasurer Mr Antoine Vassallo was nominated by the Association of Gozitan NGO's to the Gozo Regional Council.

4th October 2003: Committee meeting to finalize arrangements for Exhibition.

6th October 2003: Feature on the Gozo Philatelic Society (with the participation of officers and junior members) during a TV magazine programme. The Seminary stamp club was also filmed for a juvenile programme. Moreover the GPS (and stamp-collecting in general) has been publicized on various radio stations.

18th October 2003: The 4th Philatelic Exhibition, was again held this year. Once again it proved to be a success and of a high standard. (see report on pages 6 to 9 & 19).

22nd October 2003: MrAnthony Grech prepares cards (for the issue of the first self-adhesive booklets) commemorating our Exhibition.

25th October 2003: Exhibition dismantled.

29th October 2003: We produce special cards featuring the Xaghra Ta' Kola Windmill.

31st October 2003: Committee meeting decides about Exhibition prize-giving.

Please note that Mr Anthony Grech designed the July 20th handstamp in connection with the commemoration of St George On Stamps.

Errata Re Issue No 13:

Where in the World ?! (4) Page 10: **Avianca** should not have been in italics.

St George On Stamps Page 19: (Hungary) **2 and not 20.**

Christmas Stamps

Emanuel Vella

One of the most interesting thematic subject is surely collecting Christmas stamps. The subject is vast, interesting and these are easier to get more than most other stamps. Besides, most countries issue Christmas stamps in much larger number and so they are often cheaper than other thematic subjects.

Canada issued the first Christmas Stamp in 1898. This was a 2c stamp of the Mercator map and on it was inscribed "XMAS 1898".

There is an interesting story behind the issue of this stamp. At that time the stamps issued by Canada had to be approved by



Queen Victoria because Canada was part of the British Empire. Canada's Postmaster General, The Honorable (later Sir) William Mulock had tried to get an overseas penny postage rate among Empire Nations. It never materialized but a resolution at the July

1898 conference allowed Empire countries to opt for an imperial Penny Postage rate if they chose to do so. Canada's move became effective on Christmas 1898. This is not actually the Christmas Postage Stamp.

As I said before, stamps for the colonies had to be approved by Queen Victoria. The story goes that a post office official in discussing the new Canadian stamp said that the new Canadian stamp could serve as a tribute to the prince. Queen Victoria in a sarcastic guffaw asked : "Which prince?" The official understood that she would not like anybody but herself on the stamps, so he answered: "Why, madam, the Prince of

Peace, of course” referring to Christ the child. As a result, when the stamp was officially released in December 7th 1898, bore not only Mercator’s map, but also the words “XMAS 1898”. So this now ranks as the first Christmas Stamp.

Countries were slow to issue specifically-designed Christmas stamps. The next country to issue Christmas stamps was Austria in 1937. These stamps are referred to in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue as Christmas greeting stamps. Brazil issued 4 semi-charity stamps in 1939 depicting the Three Kings and the star, an angel and Child, a southern cross and Child and mother and Child.



Hungary was the next country to issue Christmas stamps in 1941. These stamps are also semi-postal (i.e. they have a surcharge besides the postal value)



Ten years later, Cuba issued a two stamp set with “Ponsietta and Bells”. Haiti followed in 1954 with a set of two stamps - “Fort Nativity” and “Star of Bethlehem” As we come to the fifties, Luxembourg and Spain issued Christmas stamps in 1955. Liechtenstein, Korea and Australia started in 1957.



Malta issued the first Christmas stamps in 1964. These stamps were designed by E.V. Cremona and consisted of three stamps; 2d - Bright purple and gold, 4d - bright blue and gold and 8d - deep bluish green and gold. It is worth noting that Malta has issued a Christmas set ever since.



In 1967 Malta issued the first Triptych, that is a set of 3 stamps that forms one picture.



In 1971 Malta issued the first Christmas miniature sheet designed also by Chev. E.V. Cremona. In fact the first three Maltese miniature sheets were all Christmas sets.



Today most countries issue Christmas stamps and their variety is enormous. □

WATERMARKS ON STAMPS

George Vella

Reference to my article in issue No 13 on Page 3, my attention has been drawn about Maltese watermarks.

*Further to what has been written I would like to add that the following sets of stamps had also **no watermarks**.*

28.03.1966

Foundation of Valletta

07.07.1965

VII Centenary Birth of Dante Alighieri

Opening of this year's G.P.S. EXHIBITION

Anton V Said Micallef - President

This activity has become a regular appointment in the calendar of cultural activities in Gozo

This is proof enough that our Society is very active and the frequent enrolment of new members stimulates us for further development with greater enthusiasm.

Though still in its infancy, it has grown from a few members four years ago to an encouraging and handsome number of some three hundred and fifty members, the majority of which are young students. This we have managed to achieve through school visits. Lately the society has embarked on another project for schools, that of setting up philatelic clubs on the school premises. The first attempt towards this goal was more than encouraging. A particular school can well be proud of having some forty five members in its club. This success can be well attributed to the administration of this school, which besides co-ordinating the club's philatelic activities with our society, takes other initiatives in this regard to keep fully alive the interest in this hobby among its members. Worth mentioning was the participation by the club's members in this year's exhibition which together with that of other young members was of a very high standard.

This can also be said of the senior section. Items of great interest were exhibited both in The Postal History and also in the Religious Section respectively.

Another important event in the society's calendar of activities this year was, its involvement in the 17th century of the martyrdom of St. George commemorations. On the initiative of one of the members of our society, a stamp depicting the famous altarpiece, a masterpiece by the renowned artist Mattia Preti, found at St George's Basilica

Victoria, was issued as part of a set of stamps for the occasion. A prominent member of the Malta Philatelic Society who besides being the society's advisor and also one of our benefactors helped whole heartedly in the effort. Another member of our society was instrumental in designing special postcards and the handstamp for post marks for the occasion. A word of thanks goes to these persons not forgetting the reverend archpriest of St George's Basilica for his full co-operation in this matter.

Thanks to the editor and other contributors, the society issues a quarterly magazine which is very much appreciated both by local philatelists and others abroad, for its interesting contents.

Our society keeps abreast regarding new material and information about this hobby, by corresponding with other philatelic societies and stamp dealers even through internet. This is done for the benefit of our members.

Another aim of our society is precisely to encourage also foreign residents on the island to take up this interesting hobby. We would be more than happy to welcome them in our society. Others have already done so.

A word of congratulations goes to our society's secretary for being chosen as chairman of the Gozo N.G.O.'s Federation.

Our society feels much grateful for all the help and co-operation various government institutions and other bodies offer, namely the Minister for Gozo, the Hon. Gov. Debono; The Bank of Valletta, The Department of Culture, the persons who were entrusted with the judging of items entered for the exhibition, the sponsors, not forgetting the committee members who give a lot of their spare time for a good cause. Lastly but not least the outgoing president Dr Michael Refalo who besides being one of the founders is also a great benefactor of our society. □

COMPETITION RESULTS OF THE 4TH GPS PHILATELIC EXHIBITION

Summary of Judging Panel's Report

The Panel consisted of Mr Anthony Fenech, Mr J Buttigieg and Dr Michael Refalo. The range and quality of exhibits have again been very impressive and all participants should be congratulated. The following orders of merit were decided, based on the criteria of Presentation, Content and Philatelic Knowledge. They added that this year's level was higher than last year and this augurs well for the future of philately in Gozo.

- **SENIORS:**

1. TRADITIONAL PHILATELY (FAITH & RELIGION)

- 1st Mr George Vella
- 2nd Mr Anthony Grech
- 3rd Rev Fr Gerard Buhagiar



2. POSTAL HISTORY

- 1st Mr Jesmond Borg
- 2nd Mr Anthony Grech
- 3rd Mr Malcolm Cutajar



• **JUNIORS:**

1st Saviour Attard;

4th Christabelle Galea;

2nd Andrea Borg;

5th Maria Vella;

3rd Elaine Marie Borg;

6th Savio Galea

• **RUNNERS UP: (Juniors)**

A. Daniel Calleja

N. Paul Debrincat

B. Daniel Cardona

O. Margherita Borg

C. Joseph Masini

P. Malcolm Cutajar

D. Godwin Micallef

Q. Marion Muscat

E. Ilona Masini

R. Samuel Masini

F. Kenneth Portelli

S. Joseph Vella

G. Joseph Azzopardi

T. Francesco Pio Grech

H. Steven Vella

U. Carl Xerri

I. Aaron Buttigieg

V. Ian Grima

J. Matthew Cardona

W. Martin Vella

K. Joseph Mizzi

X. Christian Sciberras

L. Daniel Cauchi

Y. Joseph Portelli

M. Gabriella Azzopardi

• **NON COMPETING**

Mrs Grace Xerri; Mr Antoine Vassallo; Dr George Paul Pisani

BANK OF VALLETTA CHALLENGE CUP

The Panel also had to choose one single entry, competing or otherwise, on the level of presentation and completion. The best entry on show was in the **Postal History Section** and was presented by Mr Jesmond Borg .

CONGRATULATIONS !!!

*The GPS Committee would also like to thank
the panel for its in-depth report.*

not just for BEGINNERS

Originating from various requests and comments, this regular section aims at offering help to both juniors and adults. Regular features will include explanations of philatelic terms and details of stamp issuers; but we do invite members to send questions and enquiries (e.g. about identification uncertainties). Moreover you are encouraged to offer your own contributions, even short items or tips.

Where in the World ?! (5)

(Antoine Vassallo)

Stamp Issuers Past and Present

Batum Russian town on Black Sea under British occupation 1919-20.

Bavaria (*Bayern*) State of Germany, with own stamps from 1849 (when a kingdom) to 1920.

B.C.A. = British Central Africa.

B.C.O.F. Issues of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force In Japan in 1946.

Bechuanaland British Territory and Protectorate which first issued stamps in 1885. Renamed Botswana on independence in 1966.

BELARUS East European state with own stamps since 1992 on the edge of USSR.

Belgian Congo *see Congo*

Belgian Occupation of German East Africa = Ruanda-Urundi.

Belgian Occupation of Germany 1919 - 21.

Belgien German occupation of Belgium 1914-8.

Belgisch Congo = Belgian Congo.

Belgium (*Belgie, Belgique*) Western European kingdom which first issued stamps in 1849.

BELIZE Central American country which changed its name from British Honduras in 1973 and became independent in 1981.

Bemadir = early stamps of Italian Somalia.

Bengasi Stamps in 1901 and 1911 (Italian Post Offices in Libya).

BENIN Dahomey was thus renamed in 1975; also previous issues in 1892-4.

BEQUIA One of the Grenadines of St Vincent which also issued separate stamps from 1984.

Bergedorf German town (1861-7).

Berlin Issues for the East sector (Brandenburg) 1945. Issues for West Berlin till reunification of Germany 1948-1990.

BERMUDA Islands in northern West Atlantic which first issued stamps in 1865.

Beyrouth = French Post Offices in the Levant (1905) and Russian Post offices in Turkish Empire (1909).

Bhopal Indian state had its own stamps 1876-1908.

Bhor Indian state had its own stamps (1879-1901).

BHUTAN This Himalayan kingdom first issued stamps in 1962.

Biafra The eastern part of Nigeria issued own stamps 1968-70 during the civil war.

Bialystok Issues during German occupation of this town which is now in Poland 1916.

B I E = Bureau International d'Education.

Bijawar Indian state had its own stamps 1935-7.

(to be continued)

Bold italic = Inscriptions;

BOLD CAPITALS = Current Issuers;

Bold = Former Issuers.

(Since it is obviously impossible to be completely exhaustive, you are encouraged to bring any gaps to my notice!)

stamp terms used in PHILATELY (5)

(Emanuel Vella)

Classic: Early issues which by reason of their history, rarity or beauty have earned a position of distinction in philately.

Cleaned: In philately the term usually implies a stamp from which a marking has been removed for fraudulent purposes.

Cleaning Stamps: It is only worth cleaning stamps if they are of high value and should not be tried by amateurs.

Coils: These are stamps that are wound in the form of a reel, rolls or coils for insertion and use in stamp-vending machines. Their manufacture usually results in such departure from the normal as to render them distinct and collectable varieties. Sometimes they have sideways watermark and may be perforated only horizontal or vertical.

Colour Guide: Identification of the many colours used in stamp printing, particularly the minor shades can be a problem. To assist in overcoming this, the colour guide has been devised. It usually consists of a folding card on which all the principal philatelic colours are shown and named. This useful accessory is very important for those who collect old stamps. It also shows some of the differences between philatelic colour naming and that adopted in other spheres.

Combination Cover: A cover bearing stamps of two stamp-issuing authorities. One for internal transmission to the frontier, and the other for another country.

Comb perforation: Machine punch-plate perforation which consists of one full line right across a sheet of stamps, attached to which are short lengths of punches at right angles, corresponding to the length of one stamp and which then has a rough resemblance to a comb with widely spaced teeth.

Commemorative: A stamp usually issued to mark a particular event or anniversary. It is generally issued for a limited period. The first commemorative is probably the 1871 issue of Peru which commemorated the 20th anniversary of the first railway in South America.

Commonwealth: Stamps issued by the Dominions of Great Britain. These were re-named the Commonwealths of the British Commonwealth of Nations by statute in 1947.

Compound Perf: Where more than one gauge of perforation exists on different sides of the same stamp. Thus a stamp with perforations measuring 14 on the two horizontal sides and 15 on the two vertical sides is said to have compound perforations.

Condition: The state of the stamp as measured against the finest examples of the issue concerned. Condition applies to the state of the paper, the nature and colour of the printing, the perforation (if perf) or margin (if imperf.), the gum if mint or cancellation (if used). Condition is the all important factor in determining the value of a stamp, particularly in the case of older issues. Modern stamps in anything less than fine condition are usually practically worthless. Older stamps that are not well centred are worthless. Descriptions applied to condition range from superb, very good, good, average, fair and poor.
(to be continued)

Script by Script (5)

This regular space features stamps without any identifiable name in our normal alphabet, or providing some similar difficulty.

This list of ARABIC letters (and in transliteration) could be useful as a help towards identifying stamps from the numerous entitles who have issued stamps with words in just this script. Obviously details vary even substantially, depending on the designer (and also the location and period).

Countries involved include Egypt, Jordan, Malasian states, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey.

Value	Name	Final	Medial	Initial	Isolated
'(a)	alif	ا	—	—	ا
b	bā'	ب	ب	ب	ب
t	tā'	ت	ت	ت	ت
th	thā'	ث	ث	ث	ث
j	jīm	ج	ج	ج	ج
h	hā'	ح	ح	ح	ح
kh	khā'	خ	خ	خ	خ
d	dāl	د	—	—	د
dh	dhāl	ذ	—	—	ذ
r	rā'	ر	—	—	ر
z	zāy	ز	—	—	ز
s	sīn	س	س	س	س
ś	shīn	ش	ش	ش	ش
s	sād	ص	ص	ص	ص

d	dād	ض	ض	ض	ض
t	tā'	ط	ط	ط	ط
z	zā'	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
'	'ayn	ع	ع	ع	ع
gh	ghayn	غ	غ	غ	غ
f	fā'	ف	ف	ف	ف
q	qāf	ق	ق	ق	ق
k	kāf	ك	ك	ك	ك
l	lām	ل	ل	ل	ل
m	mīm	م	م	م	م
n	nūn	ن	ن	ن	ن
h	hā'	ه	ه	ه	ه
w	wāw	و	—	—	و
y	yā'	ي	ي	ي	ي

Numerals with number names in Standard Arabic

•	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩	١٠
ṣifer	wahid	ithnān	thalātha	araba'a	khamṣa	sitta	saba'a	thamāniya	tisa'a	'ashara
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

QUIZ COMPETITION

Open to all Junior Members of the Gozo Philatelic Society

- i) What country issued the first Christmas set ?
- ii) When did Malta issue its first Christmas set ?
- iii) Give another name for Fiscal Stamps.
- iv) Name the village in Gozo where the only functioning Windmill is found.

Please send your answers on a separate paper together with your name, address and membership number by not later than 31st January 2004 to:

The Secretary,
Gozo Philatelic Society,
P.O. Box 10, Victoria Gozo. VCT 101.

Prize

First Day Cover of Malta or Mint Set of Malta Stamps
generously donated by Mr Jesmond Borg

EDITORIAL NOTE

Merry Christmas

*I would also like
to encourage
every member -
especially Juniors -
to contribute towards
this Newsletter.*



PREVIOUS QUIZ COMPETITION RESULT

Answers to above captioned competition which was published in G.P.S. Newsletter No.13 are as follows:

- i) A faint design seen on some paper when held against light.
- ii) Seven.
- iii) 1899.
- iv) 1919.



PRIZE WINNER:

GPS Prize Winner of First Day Cover of Malta goes to Aron M. Buttigieg of “O’Canada” Plot 20 Horg Street Kercem Gozo VCT 113. (Member No.256)

*This prize was generously donated by
Mr Jesmond Borg
who is also one of our members.*



CONGRATULATIONS !!!



Branching Off

Zaru Vella

There comes a time when a philatelist who has specialized in a particular country and collected almost every stamp to date, (save perhaps the very expensive ones or those that are just about impossible to acquire) suddenly finds himself facing a dead end. Gone are the days spent searching for that elusive stamp and the elation in having found it. So now what? Of course he may continue to purchase the latest issues and simply add them on, but the exercise may begin to feel rather humdrum, and this is where other variants of philately may be considered.

For instance, revenue stamps have begun to take on an entirely new dimension. At first, stamp catalogues never gave revenue or fiscal stamps any mention, and perhaps this was why so many philatelists showed little or no interest. These once neglected fiscal stamps or “Cinderellas” as they are often termed, were actually the forerunners of the stamps we know today, since they were used profusely to denote the payment of a tax or duty on various legal documents. Although taxes have existed in various forms for thousands of years, the idea of using adhesive labels dates back to 1694 during the reign of William III, when duty on legal documents became payable by this means. It is therefore worth noting that many of these ‘revenues’ have established themselves in a field of their own and are attaining much recognition especially those still on cover, with some fetching very good prices on the philatelic market.

Revenue stamps have often been closely linked to postage stamps of the same period often employing similar designs but differing only by their inscriptions. Later on, stamps unified postage and revenue duties, although the higher denominations were mainly used for tax purposes. ➔

Malta too had its own revenue stamps and many businesses used them in the managing of their accounts or the issuing of cheques, where many of the higher values may be found. Sometimes an embossed design was used to denote fiscal payments and these too are collectables in their own right.

An old custom, which has now died out in Malta was the payment of land rent mostly for agricultural use. Farmers who worked government or other privately owned land such as the Church, used to pay a yearly rental, which was due around the feast of the Assumption in mid August. The farmers, or land tenants kept booklets where procurators who collected the fees would write down a receipt which usually stated the area where the land was situated, the amount of rent received and the name and often nickname of the farmer.

At the bottom, the receipt was endorsed by affixing a postage stamp and the date written over it. On very old receipts the wording was often written in Italian or English and in later times it was in Maltese. Many of the older receipts were often written in very elegant style indeed, showing that high-ranking persons made them.

This form of rent-collecting continued right up until the late 1980's when the payment of all land rents was handed over to the Lands Office.

It is significant to say therefore that these receipt booklets have now attained a certain level of importance in the philately of Malta and should not be neglected, as they are also part of our heritage. □



4TH PHILATELIC EXHIBITION

Words of encouragement during and after this exhibition poured in from all quarters. We are reproducing some of these comments chosen at random, left on the visitor's book which was available during this period.

* * *

- Vincent Grech - Zabbar Malta *"I am very pleased"*
Saviour Farrugia - Victoria Gozo *"Highly interesting"*
Anthony Fenech - Balzan *"A fantastic show. Keep it up"*
Victor M Zammit *"A really good job"*
Brian Simons - West Midlands *"Great"*
Tony Camilleri - S.Gwann Malta *"Very informative and educational"*
Teacher and 26 students from Ninu Cremona School *"Prosit and keep it up"*
Rev Fr Manwel Magro - Headmaster Sacred Heart Minor Seminary Gozo *"Very impressive and very well done"*
Anton Galea - Victoria *"Kull sena qed tkun iktar interessanti. Prosit!"*
Richard and Vanessa Freeman - England *"We learnt a lot, thank you"*
E.L. Woodward and M Fields - Qala Gozo *"Very well done everyone"*
Anthony Portelli - Sacred Heart Minor Seminary, Gozo *"It is a very interesting collection"*

When sending by post, use only cheques (or Money Orders) or Mint current Malta stamps to pay your subscription or acquire items shown.

GOZO on Malta's Stamps

(Antoine Vassallo)

ADDENDA

42. 2002 Christmas 75c Gozo “*Dg]ajsa tal-latini*”
 43. 2003 St George Paintings 14c Main altarpiece at St
 George’s Basilica in Victoria.
 44. 2003 Queen’s Jubilee 15c Visit to Gozo in 1951
 45. 2003 Windmills 27c Mit]na ta’ Kola - Xag]ra

Members were invited to send further suggestions;
 so we have these additions:

- 1996 Buses** 30c Valletta-Marfa route directly for
 Gozo mail.
1996 Clocks 25c Sundial at Xewkija’s *Torri tal-Kosta*.
2000 Flowers 1c “Gozitan” name.

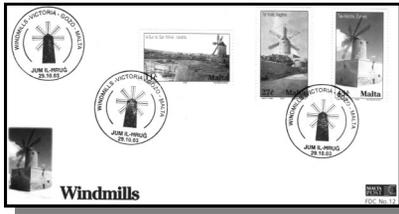
- C) vii) 2002 35c (=41.2) “Personalities” undotted c.
 F) i) 2001 16c Dogs (=39)
 ii) 2003 14c St George (=43)
 G) 1987 13c Ships (=23)
 H) 2003 A “Snapshot Malta & Gozo” Pack issued by
 Maltapost (which included a stamp Booklet) had views
 of San Blas and Dwejra among the set of five Cards.
 Q) xii) Gozo Siege (2001)
 xiii) Model Aircraft Flight from Gozo (2002)
 xiv) St George’s Centenary celebrations (2003)

WINDMILLS ON MALTESE STAMPS

George Vella

Malta post had again honoured us with a nice monochromatic set of three stamps depicting Maltese windmills. This complements well with the set of stamps featuring lighthouses issued on 21st March 2001. The philatelist welcomes these kind of stamps because they are thematic.

So it is of interest for the collector to know something about Maltese windmills. In Malta and Gozo there were two



kinds of grinding mills that worked on the same principle, that is both used grinding stones. Fine examples of the two still exist. One windmill was driven by wind power and the other, housed in a mill

room, was driven by a beast, usually a mule. Such a unique mill, which the public can visit, is to be found at the Folklore Museum at the Citadel in Gozo. Yet it is justified here to say something about mills driven by wind because the set of stamps features these kind of mills.

Windmills were probably first used in Persia about the 7th century A.D. These were different from the mills we know today, having a vertical shaft and the sails rotated in a horizontal plane. By time all this changed by having a horizontal shaft and the sails rotated in a vertical plane. Windmills may have been introduced in Europe around the 12th century. One good theory is that the Crusaders in the Near East must have imported the idea. In England a windmill is documented in 1191 at Burry St. Edmunds. In the 13th century windmills appeared in illuminated documents and references to them are to be found in title deeds. ➔

In the Maltese Islands windmills already existed in 1530. This is documented by the report of the Commissioners sent by Grandmaster Vilkiers de L'Isle Adam prior to taking possession of the islands. While in Malta the Knights of St John encouraged the building of windmills because they were an important factor to grind grain as a source of food. In fact during the time of the Knights, Grandmaster Nicholas Cottoner, 1663-1680, erected eight windmills while Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena, 1722-1736, built another nine. These state-owned windmills were rented to millers for a sum of money per annum. This has continued to this day, for mills owned by the government, though none of them is functioning in that merit. In Gozo such Government owned mills are those of Xaghra, Xewkija, Nadur and the one on the way to Ta' Pinu. The Xaghra or Ta' Kola windmill is still in the hands of the Government and in 1860 was rented for 20 pounds per annum, quite a big sum for those days. Yet during the period of the Knights, privately owned windmills were also erected. At that time mills were to be found all over Malta and Gozo. Apart from the four mentioned above, in Gozo we find mills in the villages of Santa Lucia, Gharb, two in Qala, one at Sannat (now used as a lime kiln) and three in Victoria, a total of twelve. With the advent of the industrial revolution in the 19th century, wind power started to decline. Thus by the 20th century all Maltese windmills stopped functioning. Yet during World War Two some windmills were set to work.

In Europe there exists different windmills, but all work on the same principle and are an early source of power. Most Maltese windmills were erected on high ground to catch wind and are a bit different from those in England and Holland. First of all the housing of the wooden machinery is built in local stone and not in wood like northern European ones. Those in Greece and its islands are also built in stone, but ➡

consist of a low round tower. The Maltese ones consist of a round tower, which can be about 50 feet high and 10 feet in diameter, surrounded by a lower rectangular building of one or two storeys. The lower building can be hexagon, six-sided, in shape like the ones of Birkirkara and Xewkija.

The tower houses the grinding machinery while in the rectangular building we find the stores and workshop on the ground floor while the first floor houses the miller's living quarters. If it is a one-storey windmill all this is to be found on the ground floor. The machinery, in a simple description, consists of six long antennae each having a canvas sail attached to it. These antennae are fixed to a main horizontal shaft, with a boom heading out from it. A big cogwheel, called the brake wheel and in Maltese "*laqqata*", is attached to the main shaft and when this turns the motion is transmitted to another smaller cylindrical cogwheel, in Maltese called "*id-dawwara*", attached to a vertical shaft. This shaft is fixed to the top round grinding millstone, which is turned by the vertical shaft. Under this stone there is another fixed millstone. Grain is poured through the middle of the top stone and is ground when this is turned by wind power. The flour is then collected in sacks when it leaves the grinding stones.

The top of the wooden mechanism, that is the main shaft with the antennae and cogwheel, can be turned to face the wind to have the best turning power. When the miller knew that the wind was right to start the mill moving he used to go on the roof and blew the conch, a sea shell trumpet, which in Maltese we call "*Bronja*". People from the surroundings would then know that the windmill is going to function and would take the grain to be ground.

One of the windmills in the set of three stamps is the one that was erected on the bastion of St Michael within Valletta, featured on the 11 cents stamp. This was an old one but ➔

was still functional by the end of the 19th century. Another one is the windmill of Zurrieq, the 45c stamp, called “*tax-Xarolla*”. This was restored in the 1990’s and all the wooden machinery and iron supports are all brand new. It is of medium size and having a round tower surrounded by a rectangular building. It is in the hands of the government.



Zeppu Kola repairing the sails of the Windmill.

The other windmill, the 27c stamp, is that of Xaghra, Gozo and is built on the highest point of the village. It is one of the biggest in Malta and Gozo, having a round tower surrounded by a two storey rectangular building. It is the only and unique one that remains. It still has the original machinery except for minor changes of wear and tear that were done over the years. It happens that it was restored in the 1990’s under my supervision. It is owned by the government and converted into a museum.

Ta’ Kola and Tax-Xarolla windmills are both functional. The windmill at Xaghra was built during the reign of Grandmaster de Vilhena and was hired. In fact the last miller in Malta and Gozo was the Gozitan Giuzeppi Grech from Xaghra, known as Zeppi Kola, hence its present name. Before the mill was returned to the government in the 1980’s it was rented to Grech, a fact for the reason why it is still intact, because he kept it in good working order till his old age. □

Ref: “*How It Works*” Vol.7. Pp 2669-2676.

Author’s Documents.

Għal Kull Servizz Bankarju



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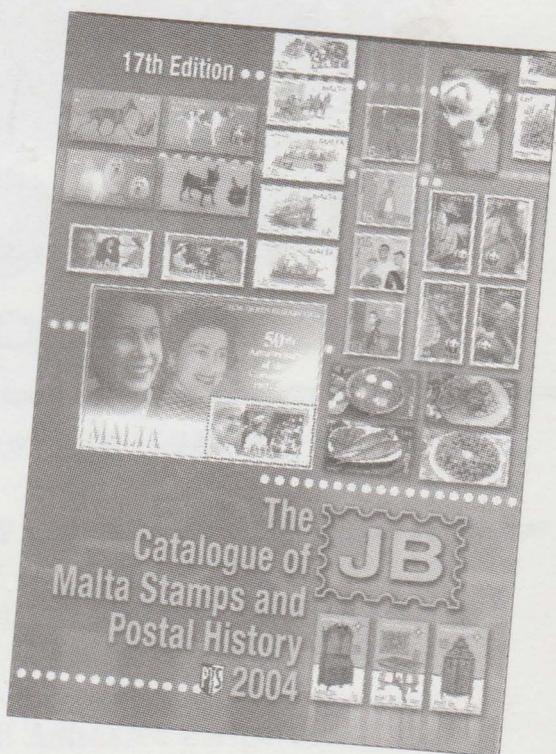
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