

Christmas Greetings to All



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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;- Christmas Greetings to our members.

**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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More information and pictures about this year’s Philatelic Exhibition will be published in our next News Letter. *The editor*

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

Antoine Vassallo Gozo Philatelic Society Secretary ;

VO/0546



July 2021 Issue 103 (July – September 2021) of the quarterly in Maltese *L-Anzjani Llum* carries a second installment in our postal errors series.

1 August AGM held at *Azzjoni Kattolika* HQ (see p20).

15 August Ninth instalment of the thematic philatelic series in the Sunday newspaper *Il-Lehen*.

17 August AGM noted in the Australia-based “Voice of the Maltese”.

21 August Posts are filled at the first committee meeting post-AGM:

1 September A set of GPS publications is presented to the Gozo Curia Archivist Fr Joseph Attard (our new Chaplain).

9 October Committee meeting makes final decisions about November Exhibition.

13 October Il-Haġar showcase changed to Maltese St Joseph stamps, in view of the Silent Witness temporary Exhibition.

13 October CVC Media film a feature about the GPS in our office.

31 October GPS feature shown in *Għawdex Illum* on TVM.

2 November Exhibition setting up begun.

5 – 11 November Exhibition open to general public.

5 November Anthony Grech produces cards for MaltaPost-sponsored personalized stamps.

7 November Judges inspect exhibits.

8 November Long visit by HE President Dr George Vella around the Exhibition (where he also participated.)

THE YEAR IS ALMOST UP!
HAVE YOU PAID YOUR MEMBERSHIP YET?

IF NOT... Rise up Take Courage
and do it.



Its only €5.00 for Seniors and €2.00 for Juniors,

Please send your payment in Malta unused stamp to;
The Secretary, Gozo Philatelic Society , P.O. Box 10 Victoria, Gozo, Malta.

Thank you for your support

E & O not E (56)

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

For this Christmas issue, I offer a couple of New Zealand colour errors & missing value.



Normal Stamp

Christmas Issue
1964
Rev S. Marsden
taking first Christmas
service at
Rangilhoua Bay
1814
Des. by
L.C. Mitchell,
Photo Harrison.
SG No 824



Red Colour Missing



Normal Stamp

Christmas Issue
1975.
(part set of 3)
Painting by
Zanobi Machiavelli
S.G. No 1083



Black Colour Missing

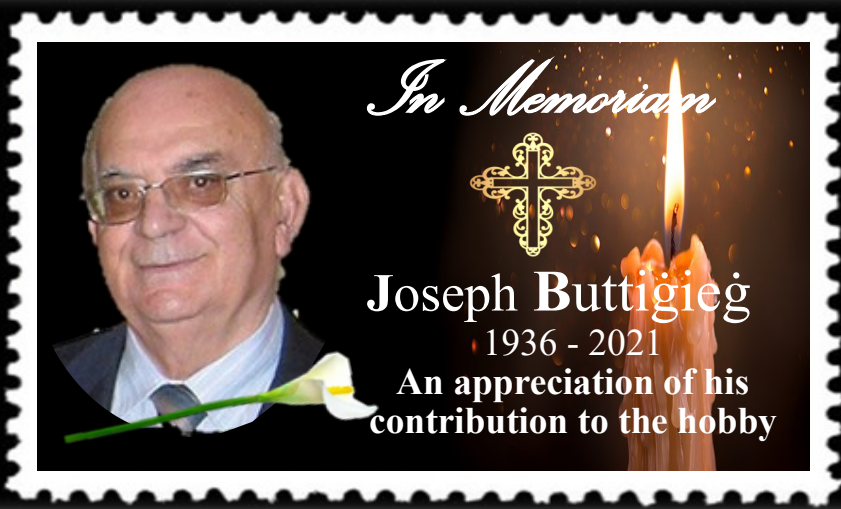


Normal Stamp

Christmas Issue
1975.
(part set of 3)
Cross in
Landscape
Stained Glass
Window
Greendale Church
S.G. No 1084



Missing Value



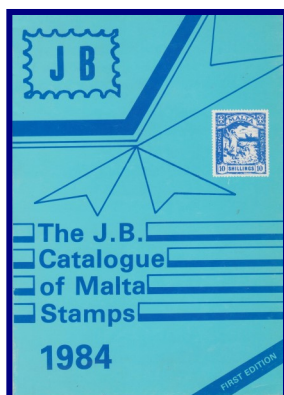
by John V. De Battista

On August 7th, I received a phone call informing me of the sad news that a dear friend and colleague of mine, Joe Buttigieg, had died. I had known him for some forty years, since I started to truly specialize in Malta's stamps and its postal history. Along the years I got to know Joe well and learnt that his interest in stamp dealing had started quite early. As a young man he used to attend group meetings in Hamrun, organised by a fledgling "Hobbies Society", where he traded, swapped and sourced stamps for his collection.

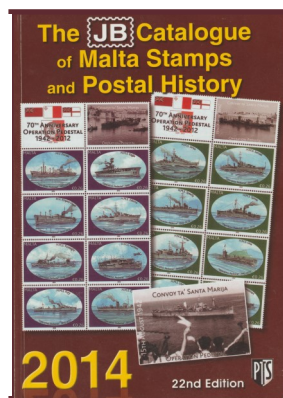
As is narrated by fellow collectors from those early days, during these meetings Joe used to be surrounded by many other enthusiasts wanting to swap stamps with him or purchase philatelic material. It was also not uncommon for him to receive friends and acquaintances at his home in Marsa for private encounters to discuss stamps and trade. Being both an honest person and a good negotiator, he quickly managed to build a healthy reputation and large stock which later served him to be in a position to open up his own stamp dealership in 1979.

The "Sliema Stamp Shop" in Manwel Dimech Street soon became a success and one of the only two proper stamp shops on the island, the other being Said in Valletta.

Five years after the shop's opening, in 1984 Joe embarked on the publication of the "JB Catalogue of Malta Stamps and Postal History". Being replete with categorized lists of local postal items and other related historical



information, this specialized catalogue quickly developed and became the standard quick reference work for Malta. Up till its thirteenth edition (1996), the catalogue was issued on an annual basis, becoming a bi-annual publication as of 1998 until the 22nd edition (2014) which was his last instalment.



Joe's enthusiasm, his selfless attitude at helping out stamp collectors to source their needs, support to the philatelic community and sponsorship of activities carried out by local stamp clubs large and small, led to the shop becoming more than a destination for both the local and foreign niche collector. His unstinting support, including his sitting on local philatelic club committees, helped in no small way to foster love for our hobby throughout the years.

Unfortunately, both stamp collecting and Joe's health took a turn for the worse during the last decade or so. They had been in decline for years, and the shop finally closed down in 2018. Since then Joe fully retired and took up residence at St Vincent de Paul, where he passed away at the age of 85. Joe's funeral was held on August 11th at the Holy Trinity Church, in his hometown of Marsa. He will be fondly remembered and sadly missed by many.

A note by the Editorial Board: SSS is being resurrected in Gozo in Victoria's De Soldanis Street. There still exists the possibility of the JB appearing again soon.

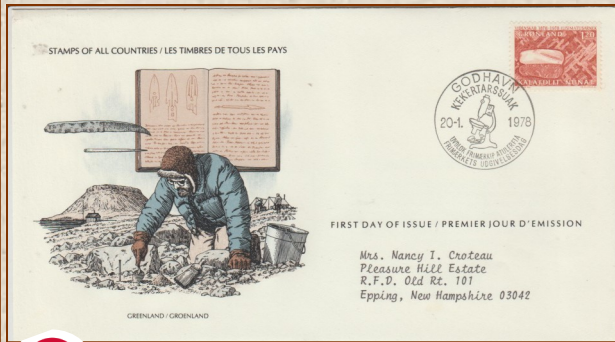
In any case, Joe Buttigieg forever remains in our memory as a great supporter of the Gozo Philatelic Society

It is with our deepest sorrow that we inform our members of the passing away of a friend and distinguished member of the Gozo Philatelic Society who went to rest in the Loving Arms of his Creator on 7 August 2021
Loved and never forgotten by his sons Michael and his wife Mary, Victor and his wife Rose Marie, relatives, friends and hundreds of philatelists.

Jesmond Borg President Gozo Philatelic Society

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



Greenland

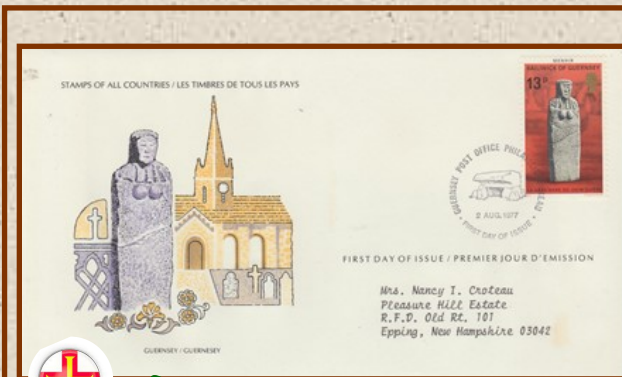
Kalaallit Nunaat

This stamp, issued for the centenary of the Greenland Scientific Research Commission, showing landscapes, was designed by J Rosing and engraved by the famous Slania. The first day postmark was given on 20 January 1978 in the town of Godhavn, now referred to as Qeqertarsuaq.. The cover design depicts geologists studying a meteorite site.



Guatemala

This stamp, part of a set celebrating the bicentenary of Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción shows the national arms. The unusual illustrated first day postmark was given on 16 August 1977 in the capital itself. The cover design depicts fireworks over governmental buildings.



Guernsey

Giernési

This stamp, part of a set featuring Prehistoric Monuments found on Guernsey, shows a granite menhir from the sixth century BC. The appropriately illustrated first day postmark was given on 2 August 1977 at the Philatelic Bureau. The cover design depicts St Martin’s Church, where the statue (called *La Grand-mère*) serves as one of the gateposts.



This stamp was part of a set featuring the Cuffy monument which commemorates the 1763 slave revolt. Representing the variously-spelt revolt leader, it was created by Philip Moore on Georgetown's Revolution Square. The first day postmark was given on 7 December 1977. The cover design depicts a scene from this episode in the convoluted history of this former colony on the northern coast of South America.



former colony on the northern coast of South America.



This stamp, part of a set – designed by Tao Ho - featuring Tourism Transport, shows two types of water vessels: a junk and a sampan. The first day postmark was given on 30 June 1977. The cover design depicts a moonlit scene in the harbour of this British colony which is now a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.



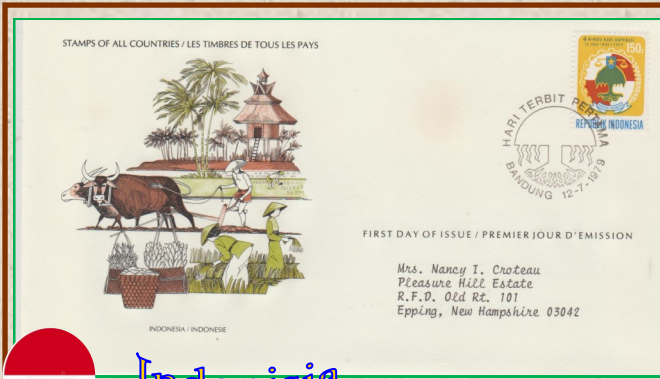
This stamp - designed by J Vertel - celebrates the centenary of the Glassworks in Ajka (in the Bakony hills) and shows a crystal piece, together with equipment. The first day postmark was given on 20 May 1978 in the capital Budapest. The cover design depicts glass craftsmen in front of their furnace.





India *Bhārat Gaṇarājya*

This stamp (within a series of museum treasures) shows a mythological carved statue from the Kachchh Museum in Bhuy. The first day postmark was given on 27 July 1978 by the General Post Office in Calcutta (now called Kolkata). The cover design has a more modern rendition of the god Indra on his elephant.



Indonesia

This stamp (designed by Mahriajub) celebrates Co-operation Day and shows the relative emblem. The first day postmark was given on 12 July 1979 in provincial capital Bandung. The cover design depicts agricultural workers.



Iraq *العراق*

This stamp shows a girl on the flute to represent the Mosul Spring Festival. The first day postmark was given on 15 April 1979 in the capital Baghdad. The cover design depicts a busy market scene in Mosul.

errata corrige #83: please note that

Unfortunately the Czech correction showed a few intrusive words.

Incorrect entries appeared in the FDC series (p8-9); they should be replaced by:

Gabon: This stamp, part of a set honouring agriculture, depicts sugar cane. The first day postmark was given on 9 October 1979 in Libreville, the capital of this former component of French Equatorial Africa. The cover design depicts harvesting of this important crop.

The Gambia: This stamp, part of a set issued for the thirteenth anniversary of Independence, depicts a long rowing boat taking part in the annual Independence Regatta. The first day postmark was given on 18 February 1978 in Banjul, the capital of this former British colony. The cover design depicts participants in the Independence Parade.

Great Britain: This stamp was part of a set celebrating the centenaries of Cyclists Touring Club and British Cycling Federation. The design, by the Austrian-born artist Fritz Wegner, shows a “penny-farthing” and an 1884 “safety” bicycle. The first day postmark was given on 2 August 1978 at the Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh. The cover design depicts a leisurly scene in the late nineteenth century.

The House Numbering article beginning on p14 was missing the final part:

By the early 1960s, the Post Office had started a major mechanisation programme designed to overcome the problems of labour-intensive sorting. The introduction of mechanical sorting depended on reducing the address to a machine-readable form – a code printed on the letter in phosphor dots which could be sensed by sorting equipment. A postcode system was developed, introduced at Croydon. This consists of two main elements: the outward code (to sort from one town to another) and the inward code (to sort within the town). The task of coding the whole country was carried out in stages, finally completed in 1974 with Norwich.

In 1985, after successful trials at Mount Pleasant, the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) system was introduced nationally. This system automatically reads the postcode on printed addresses and prints the appropriate phosphorescent dots (codes) on to the envelope. It replaces the need for an operator to key in the postcode, and can obviously handle letters at a much greater rate than a coding desk operator.

Later, the concept was developed further to create equipment which could combine all the necessary processes into one machine. Integrated Mail Processors (IMPs) were introduced in 1997 to improve the complete processing system. One machine processes the mail from arrival in the Mail Centre to dispatch by road, rail or air. It does everything: culling, facing, coding, sorting and cancelling the mail.

Unfortunately the volume of letter writing is now getting tinier!

The Numismatic article had some details missing (on p19) under the illustration:

- (a)1c = weasel (*ballotra*, nocturnal mammal); (b)2c = olive branch (*żebbuga*, typical Mediterranean tree);
 (c) 5c = crab (*qabru*, freshwater crustacean); (d) 10c = dolphin-fish (*lampuka*, common fish); (e) 25c = evergreen rose (*girlanda tal-wied*, rare flower); (f) 50c = Maltese fleabane (*nulliera*, evergreen plant); (g) LM1 = blue rock thrush (*merill*, Malta’s national bird).

*The Postcard article (p24-27) was written by Antoine Vassallo, in the Really True series.
 The Editor*

Maltese Judaica

Antoine Vassallo

Jews are known to have lived in Malta for at least fifteen centuries, with substantial communities recorded as reaching hundreds. But their history has not always been florid. The first modern rabbi is documented in 1846. Kosher food is available, together with a frequented twenty-year old central synagogue as well as cemeteries. Jewish influence can be evidenced from - for example - surnames, street names, and symbols in churches (where paintings can refer to Biblical episodes).

I highlight a limited range of philatelic connections, besides the obvious “nature” items from the Eastern Mediterranean (eg 2005 insects and 2007 fruits).

I begin with a depiction of Gerard of Jerusalem by French eighteenth-century artist Antoine de Favray, reproduced both in 1970 (Council of Europe Exhibition) and 2013 (ninth centenary). 3 4



The 1975 Europa set included a depiction of Judith who is however not among the official books in the Jewish Bible. “Judith & Holofernes” - from Malta’s national collection - is an Oil on canvas by seventeenth century French artist Valentin de Boulogne. 5



One of the paintings included in the 1984 Christmas set represents the Temple in Jerusalem (by nineteenth century Maltese artist Raffaele Caruana). 6



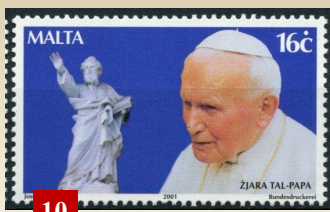
This 1987 Esperanto centenary commemoration (designed by Antoine Camilleri in his inimitable style) has a Jewish connection since its inventor, Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof, is buried in Warsaw’s Jewish Cemetery. 7



This 1990 International Literacy Year celebration (designed by Tony Bugeja) includes the Hebrew alphabet too. 8



9

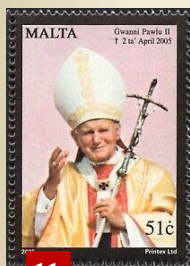


10



10a

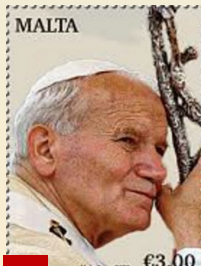
John Paul II, a great friend of Jews, individuals and communities, from when he was plain Karol Woityla in Poland, became the first known Pope to visit a synagogue (in 1986). Maltese stamps appeared for his two visits (1990 and 2001), death (2005),



11



12



13

canonization (2014) and centenary (2020). 9 10 10b 11 12 13



14

The 1991 religious commemorations (designed by Joseph L Mallia) included John of the Cross 30c born in 1542 as Juan de Yepes into a *converso* family (=descendants of Jewish converts to Catholicism). 14



15

The 1992 Christmas set reproduced paintings by Giuseppe Cali in one of Malta's biggest churches (Mosta). The lower part of all three stamps show Prophets: respectively Isaiah, David and Joel. 15 The 1993 Local Councils set includes numerous 6-pointed stars. On coat of arms.

16



16

The 1999 Flowers, designed by Maurice Tanti Burlò, include a "Large Star of Bethlehem" (*Ornithogalum arabicum*). 16





17

The 2010 Occasions include a Jewish betrothal, painted by seventeenth-century French artist Philippe de Champaigne. 17

The 2014 joint issue with Israel, designed by Ronen Goldberg, included a flag-decorated depiction of Acre. 18



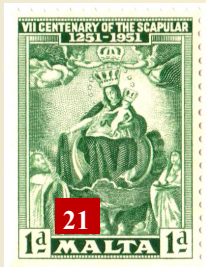
18



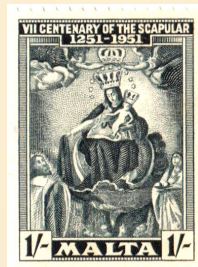
19



20



21



I can also mention the - clear - Mediterranean map (2014 EuroMed) and unclear - Israel flag (2015 UN anniversary miniature sheet). 19&20

Moreover Our Lady of Mount Carmel was shown in 3-stamp set 1951 21 (altarpiece in centenary set)

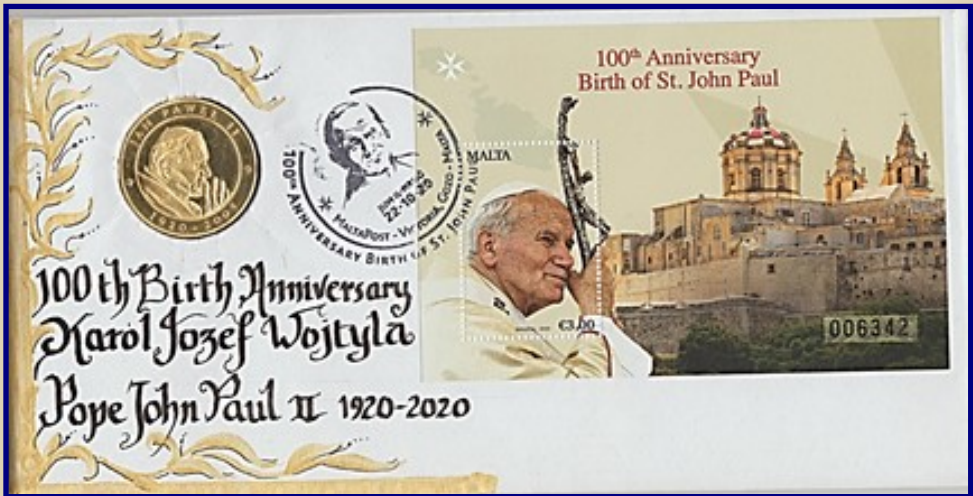
I finally note that 13th century Jewish mystic Avraham Abulafia died in Comino after living there for some years: there he compiled his *Sefer ha-Ot* ("Book of the Sign") and meditation manual *Imrei Shefer*. 23

I conclude by mentioning that the Shalom plaque at the door of my home twice misled tourists into ringing the bell to ask whether it is a synagogue!

(appeared in the April 2021 - #185 - number of "Judaica Thematic Society Newsletter")

The fun of creating your own coin/medal stamps first-day covers.

Anthony Grech



100th Birth Anniversary of Carol Jozef Wojtyla issued 2020 with gold medal depicting Pope John Paul II

Collectors can buy FDCs from the Philatelic Bureau or from a dealer or stamp club; alternatively, they can create their own covers. A more challenging and satisfying way is to create your own first day covers complete with a coin or medal which is complementary to the subject of the stamps to be issued. Since this applies to both, I will henceforth refer simply to coins.

Many FDC collectors prefer a cacheted cover, which is an envelope or postcard with a printed design. The cachet is the design, which usually relates in some way to the subject on the postage stamp. In our case a coin also related to the stamp issue will also be incorporated to make the FDC more interesting and attractive if not unique.

The first step is to choose a good quality envelope that is suitable for a first-day cover. Keep in mind that the envelope has to have enough space for the stamps, the design (cachet), the postmark and the coin. A second step is to choose a medal/coin in relation to the subject of the stamps.



A more sophisticated design for the Honey Bees stamp set issued in 2019 with an old 5mills coin showing a honey bee on a honeycomb on the background.

Now it's time to let your imagination and artistic talent work. Draw your sketch on the left hand side of the envelope leaving enough space for the coin/medal. Do not worry if the coin touches part of the design. A picture in front of you for your design will be of great help. Remember that usually stamps are affixed on the upper right hand side of the envelope: always leave at least a little space between the stamp and the top and side edges to avoid damage to the stamp.



A circular punch and a cut off piece

After drawing your sketch, start giving it colour. Traditionally watercolour is used but acrylic is a good medium too. Mark on the envelope the exact place where the coin is to be incorporated, preferably near the design or just touching it. If you wish you can print a design on the envelope.

Now you need a strong piece of sturdy cardboard, about the same thickness as the coin/medal itself. This cardboard has to fit perfectly in the envelope. You will need also another piece of thin cardboard of the same length and width of the thick cardboard. Insert the thick cardboard in the envelope and with a circular cutting punch the size of the coin

make a hole through the envelope where you had previously marked the place for the coin. In this way the punch will leave a mark on the cardboard. Take out the cardboard and punch a hole all through it, where the mark was left. If no cutting punch is available a very sharp blade and a steady hand will do the trick.

Apply and glue the thin cardboard at the back of the punched thick cardboard. This will serve as a support to the coin and make it immovable. Place the coin in a desired position. Apply some good glue around the

punched hole on the front of the thick cardboard and cover the coin with a piece of transparent plastic at least 1cm larger than the hole.

This will keep the coin in place and protect it. Finally slip in

the complete cardboard with the coin in the envelope.

And there you have it ready to take to the post office for the usual operation of a normal First Day Cover!



ANZAC Centenary miniature sheet issued 2015 with Australian One Dollar commemorative coin and a simple watercolour design



A first day cover with a simple printed design and a 1m coin added. The coin and the stamps show the Malta National Bird—the Blue Rock Thrush—in Maltese **IL-MERILL**

PROMOTING GOZO THROUGH PHILATELY



NADUR STATUARY

One of the *Bambin* statuettes forming the 2017 Christmas set, photographed by Mark Micallef Perconte, adorns Nadur’s basilica. This Spanish figurine was donated by Marija Portelli. This stamp offers an opportunity to add to the – purposely restricted – information about the statues in the parish church dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul offered in issue 83. There are in fact numerous others, besides the titular processional *vara*, which can be mentioned.



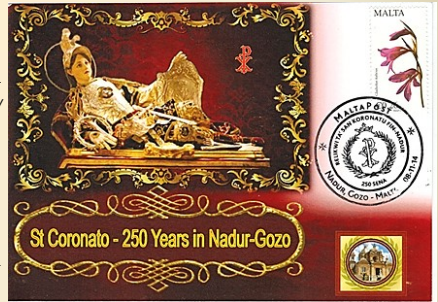
Two stone statues representing the patrons adorn the parvis. They were produced by Salvatore Dimech in 1850.



The Virgin of the Rosary is a good example of an (anonymous) mid-eighteenth century polychomed wood carving. Some 150 cm high, it is set on its original pedestal (gilt wood).



The sculptor of the 1951 papier-mâché effigy for the *corpo santo* Coronatus – called *Kurunat* / *Coronato* by the locals – is however well known: Agostino “Wistin” Camilleri. In 2014 the parish celebrated this relic.



Imported from Italy in the early twentieth century, the Patron of the Universal Church Joseph looks down at a young Jesus. It seems it was so popular that within fifty years it received substantial ornamentation. The three quarter *Ecce Homo* (scourged Christ), traditionally by eighteenth century Saverio Laferla, is less than a metre high.

The *Golgota* (crucifixion scene, consisting of the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist to the sides of the Crucified Christ) is a Carmelo Mallia (1880-1931) papier-mâché.

Other Passion images include an artistic fallen Christ under the Cross (*l-Imghobbi* or *Redentur*) made in the mid-twentieth by Italian firm Insam & Prinoth of Ortisei. The Good Friday procession obviously includes many more subjects such as Gethsemane, Peter's Denial, Veronica and the Dead Christ.



Liturgical *objects d'art* can also be included but I will limit myself to the silver basilica bell (*tintinnabulum*). Showing the two patron saints, it was designed by Carmelo Tonna and produced in 1968 in Milan.

*All statue photos by Mario Muscat.
Special thanks to our member Charles Caruana*





Antoine Vassallo – Secretary



1st AGM (1/8/2021) **Secretary's Report**

At this unusual AGM, I have the duty to report about a strange year which led to numerous postponements. I will limit myself to the actual 2020, hoping for a routine AGM early in 2022!

At the first Committee meeting following the 20th AGM, posts were agreed – exceptionally extended till this belated AGM. Because of Covid, only four further formal meetings were held but contacts continued between a few committee members.



A restricted annual GPS Exhibition was held in the Gozo Ministry Halls from 30 October; it was dismantled on 6 November, the last event there for long months! Prizes (including those sponsored by MaltaPost), certificates and medals are being distributed today.

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 prepared covers - or even the handstamp itself - whenever the opportunity arose (sometimes in collaboration with other bodies): *San Gorg' tal-Hagar* stamp and Ta' Pinu centenary, Xewkija statue anniversary, San Lawrenz statue anniversary, Bishop Anton Teuma ordination, photographer Carmela Buhagiar, Cardinal Mario Grech and *Milied f'Ghawdex* commemorative handstamps (the last as a Christmas Card sent to members).

Our *Il-Hagar* showcase has seen regular replacements of the temporary mini exhibitions and has continually attracted positive comments. We also continued to collaborate with other organizations, such as a Card exhibit (within the *Inhobbok* Gozo Ministry initiative) at the Sannat Local Council hall and running sessions at the Don Bosco Oratory Summer Club. A sustained effort at the Seminary secondary continue offering support for the GDH stamp shop.



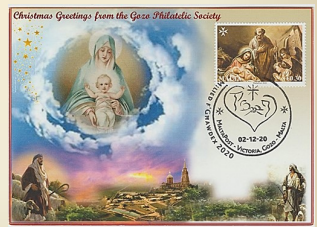
Details about all this (and much more) are given in our quarterly Newsletter, for which Junior and new contributors are ardently invited to send letters and articles. Unfortunately only three numbers could be issued in 2020. Our Facebook page offers some coverage too but we are still finding it impossible to regularly 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 and the diocesan *Hajja f'Ghawdex* carried a series of articles about Gozo-related stamps during 2020. Moreover, quite a few local and foreign publications (such as Gibbons Stamp Monthly and *Filatelia Religiosa Flash*) again featured our society and productions. Attractive leaflets are available for distribution as publicity for our society.

In spite of the Covid-related problems, the room at the top of Main Gate Street is becoming increasingly useful as the site for our library and the Juncker collection. Wolfgang Juncker is still sending more material: do imitate him! Anthony tries to keep this *Putirjal* office open on Saturday mornings for enquiries and library dips. We have an increasing range of philatelic publications for free perusal and loan.

The incoming Committee will cover the rest of 2021 and the whole of 2022.

Don't be discouraged



Commemorative cards issued by the Gozo Philatelic Society



Emvin @ Il-Ħaġar



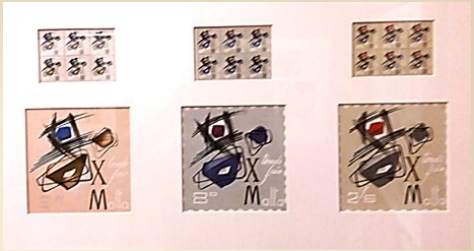
The Gozo Philatelic Society is honoured to have been involved in the exceptional Exhibition at Il-Ħaġar Museum – within the 2021 edition of the Victoria International Arts Festival - featuring over eighty oeuvres by Emvin Cremona, together with numerous documents. A section offered all his stamps, as well as samples of his original designs (loaned by the MaltaPost museum).



I show here one of his early Christmas sets: in 1968 he was still experimenting with unusual shapes. As all of us appreciate, Chev Cremona implemented a bold style which is perfectly suited for the miniature size of stamps, also introducing modern techniques such as gold and silver inks.



H.E. President Dr George Vella being greeted by our secretary Antoine Vassallo at Il-Haġar Museum.
Photo by Sam Cefai



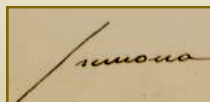
More original stamp designs by EV Cremona



If BC (Before Cremona!) Malta's sets could hardly be distinguished from other colonial stamps, this changed as soon as he became our regular designer in the late fifties. He of course inaugurated the annual Christmas set in 1964, only forgoing this regular appointment in 1980 (when his health became precarious).

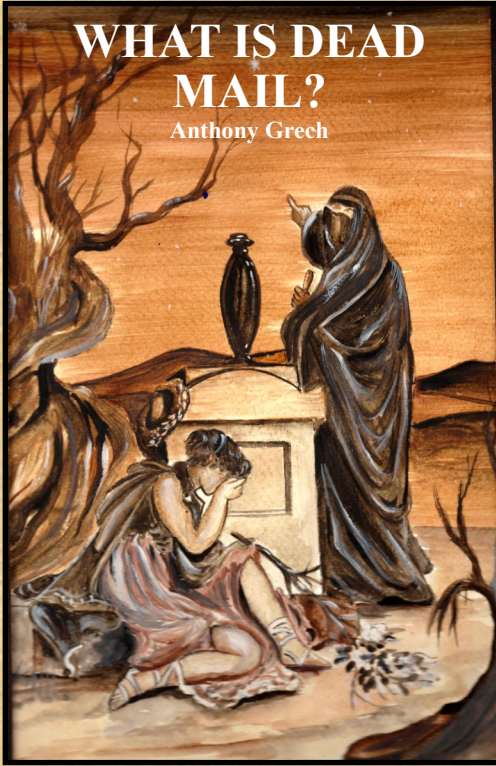
As noted by the Malta Postal Museum's curator Lara Bugeja in the Exhibition catalogue which gave due importance to the stamp aspect, "His philatelic artworks are finely executed, demonstrating mastery of the gouache medium."

The Il-Haġar exhibition was inaugurated by President George Vella (actually, the GPS Patron) on 27 June and remained open till 29 August, by which date numerous personalities had visited – sometimes in special sessions. These included, to mention just three church dignitaries, Archbishop Scicluna and Bishops Galea Curmi and Teuma.



WHAT IS DEAD MAIL?

Anthony Grech



No DEAD MAIL is NOT letters coming from the Dead

Dead Mail or, as some call it, Dead Letter is mail considered to be undeliverable because the address is invalid and it cannot be returned to the sender. Incomplete addresses and cases where the persons involved changed address are the commonest reasons. Postcards are the easiest to declare as dead since any information is easily seen.

When an enveloped letter is classified as dead mail, in some instances and countries, postal services are allowed to 'violate' secrecy of correspondence to search for clues as to the letter's origin or destination. But, to do this, countries must also set up regulations for the

disposal of dead letters, particularly should they contain items of value. Sometimes valuable items do turn up: a stolen Marc Chagall was found in 2002 in Kansas.

If an address is found inside, the envelope is usually sealed using tape or postal seals - or enclosed in plastic bags - and delivered. Many countries have issued special labels for envelopes that have travelled through the dead letter office. If the letter or parcel is still undeliverable, valuable items are auctioned off while the correspondence is usually destroyed. Despite this practice, in the past undeliverable envelopes were in fact acquired by philatelists.

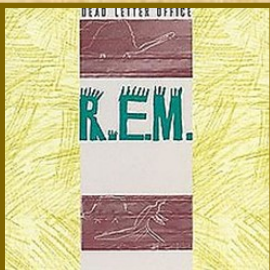
A Dead Letter Office was first established in 1784 in London.

In Malta undeliverable mail was sorted in the General Post Office in Valletta. The facility was initially known as the Returned Letter Branch, but later on it was also referred to as the Returned Letter Office or Dead Letter Office. Various postal markings were used at the facility from 1889 onward.



A Dead Mail (Maltese postcard) sent on 17 July 2008 to Poland. Not delivered and marked as Insufficient Address. Also script marked in Poland. Not delivered and returned to Malta on 24/08/2008

Some curiosities about DEAD LETTERS;



In April 1987 the rock band R.E.M. released a compilation of B-sides and rarities entitled *Dead Letter Office*.

In the movie *Miracle on 34th Street*, mail sorters handle a letter addressed to "Kris Kringle" at the New York City courthouse, and decide to deliver all the Santa Claus mail now in

the dead letter office to the courthouse, where a man calling himself Kris Kringle is facing a mental competency hearing. The man's attorney uses the huge volume of mail as evidence that the federal government recognizes his client as "the one-and-only Santa Claus."



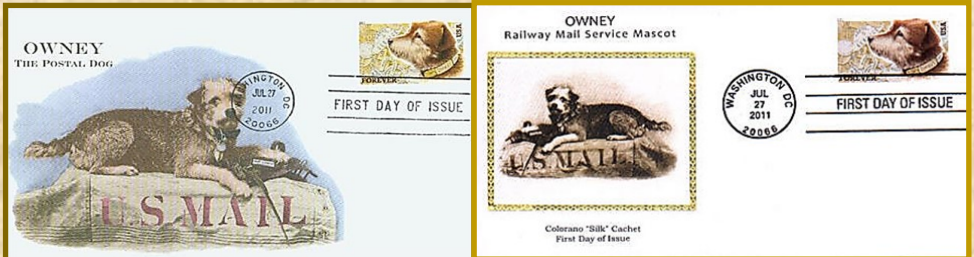
Is it **REALLY** True that.... US Mail Mascot was shot?!



On one autumn evening in 1888, clerks at an Albany (New York) Post Office were so busy that they didn't notice immediately a stray

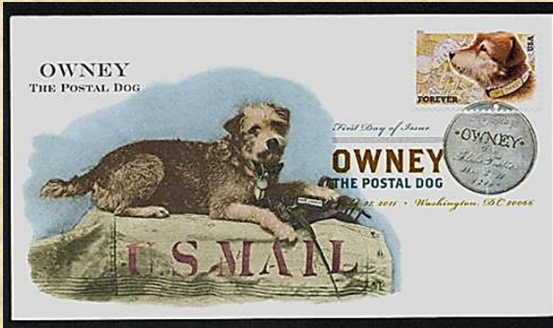


puppy curled up on a pile of old mailbags. But they adopted the mixed-breed dog (probably with Border terrier blood), naming him Owney. The dog seemed to enjoy the texture or the smell of the mailbags, so much that he rode with them as they were transferred from the Albany Post Office to the railroad depot. He eventually started traveling with the mail to New York City. The railway mail clerks considered the mascot as somewhat like a good luck charm: though train wrecks were common then, none occurred while he was on board during the almost ten years he was “on service”. This



was statistically a dangerous occupation: over eighty mail clerks were killed in train wrecks (and more than two thousand injured) between 1890 and 1900

An incident shows Owney's “love” of the mailbags. Once, one fell off a wagon during a delivery: he stayed behind to protect it. When the clerks at the post office realized that Owney – and the bag - were missing, they retraced their steps and found the mascot guarding the bag. To ensure their friend made his way home, the Albany clerks gave him a collar inscribed “Owney, Post Office, Albany, New York.” They attached a note to his collar asking Railway Mail Service employees to fasten leather or metal baggage tags to his collar to record his travels. They soon realized Owney was travelling really far! When Owney's collar became too heavy for him to wear, Postmaster General John



Wanamaker gave him a special jacket to display his many tags and badges.

Over the years, Owney received over a thousand souvenirs from his travels. It was reported that “When he jogs along, they jingle like the bells on a junk wagon.”

Owney’s adventures took him all across the country and around the world. In 1895, he even rode rains and steamships to arrive to Asia and across Europe. It seems that the Emperor of Japan gave him two passports and several medals. By the time he came home, he was famous around the world.

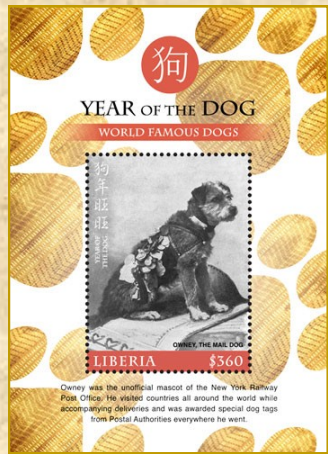


By 1897, the Post Office believed his travelling days might be nearing their end. That June, Owney was to take his final trip before retiring. On reaching Toledo (Ohio), something happened which was not reported in detail. It seems he was shown to a newspaper reporter by a postal clerk but became aggressive (as old dogs can). What is sure is that Owney received a bullet and died on 11 June. It could very well be that he

was actually shot on the orders of the local postmaster, afraid of endangering employees and customers.

America’s postal workers were distraught at the loss and raised funds to have the US Railway Mail Service mascot preserved, given to the Post Office Department’s headquarters in Washington. After being displayed at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair In 1911, the department transferred Owney to the Smithsonian Institution. He can be seen on display in the National Postal Museum’s atrium, wearing his harness and surrounded by several of his tags.

Owney the Postal Dog was honoured on a US stamp on 27 July 2011. This was a “Forever” which meant that, though originally sold for 22cents, it could continue being used even when the fee increases. Featuring a new illustration by artist Bill Bond, many of this famous dog’s tags and medals gleam in the background. Interestingly, this was the first US stamp that used augmented



reality technology. A tech company built a smartphone app (which is not active any more) that when the stamp was viewed through the camera, Owney

popped up and then trotted across the stamp and barked!

Publicity material referred to Owney as “an icon of American postal lore whose story highlights the historical importance of the Railway Mail Service”. Developed during the 19th century, the Post Office Department’s Railway Mail Service was an efficient and decentralized way to process mail by sorting it aboard moving trains.



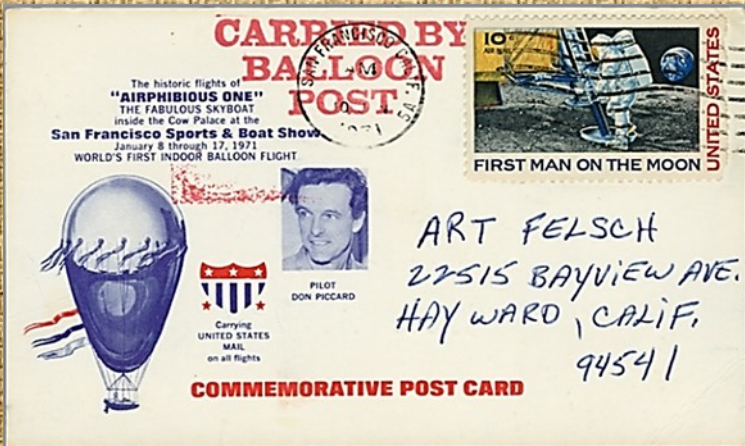
POST HASTE (22)

continuing an irregular series about the interesting story of the Post

Antoine Vassallo



Suspending this mini series, this – obviously “philatelic” - US cover includes quite an assortment of transport methods: pack mule, auto, motorboat, rail and finally plane.



An unusual 1971 card claims to represent the “World’s first indoor balloon flight”.

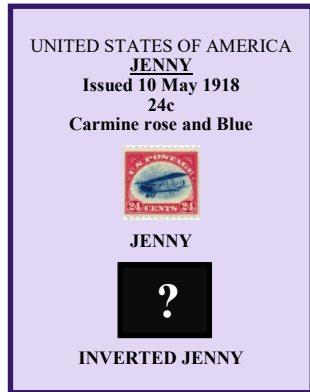
PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES, MEDALS AND PRIZES TO PARTICIPANTS OF THE GPS ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2020 IN PHOTOS BY CHARLES SPITERI



Poor Mary

O Mary found a little stamp,
 A rarity, conceded.
 In fact 'twas just the very one
 Her dear old daddy needed.
 It also chanced, this wondrous stamp,
 That Mary did discover a
 Rare Patriotic Cover
 Now, Mary knowing that her dad
 Liked stamps found in a garret,
 Made haste to yank from envelope
 Said stamp, as well as tear it.
 And thus she brought it to her dad
 In ecstasy to show him,
 But, from his look of seething rage,
 She found she didn't know him.
 A fortune he had won and lost
 Through his beloved daughter,
 Because to leave old stamp intact
 He ne'er before had taught her.
 And thou, O stamps - collecting sire,
 Take this advice from me:
 While in their youth, and ere too late,
 Teach kids Philately.

- G. M. McCracken
 Originally appeared in the
 Washington Post 1933





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