

THE MALTESE TAILOR

William Hall

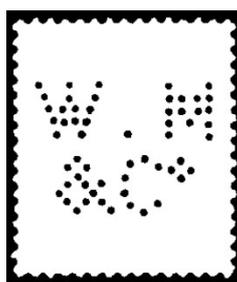
I have experienced some lovely holidays on the islands of Malta and Gozo, but their place in the world of perfin usage has always been in my peripheral vision.

However, I recently acquired my first Maltese perfin, CG/M on a Queen Victoria one penny post card dated 4th May 1892 with the identifying cachet and embossed imprint of Carmelo Griscti, Malta.



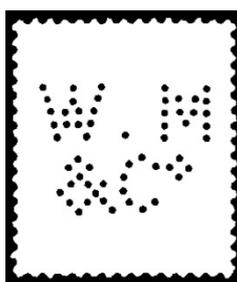
It was sent to Welch, Margetson & Co Ltd, London who were menswear manufacturers, the message on the post card is a request for shirt collar samples. According to the Gault GB catalogue they used three perfins.

1885 - 1910



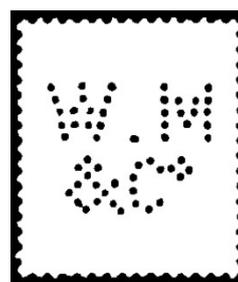
W5280.01aM

1910 - 1939



W5280.01M

1920 - 1932

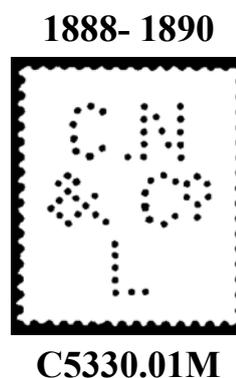


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Then within days, rather like the proverbial bus, sadly not the old colourful 1950s & 1960s buses that up until a few years ago plied their trade around the islands of Malta & Gozo, another post card with a CG/M perfin came my way.



This one was sent on 29th August 1890 to Clements Newling & Co Ltd, London, they were printers & lithographers, the message on the card is a request for a re-supply of 200 business cards. They are identified as using 12 different GB perfin over the period 1880-1958. Illustrated is the one used contemporaneously with the date of the post card.

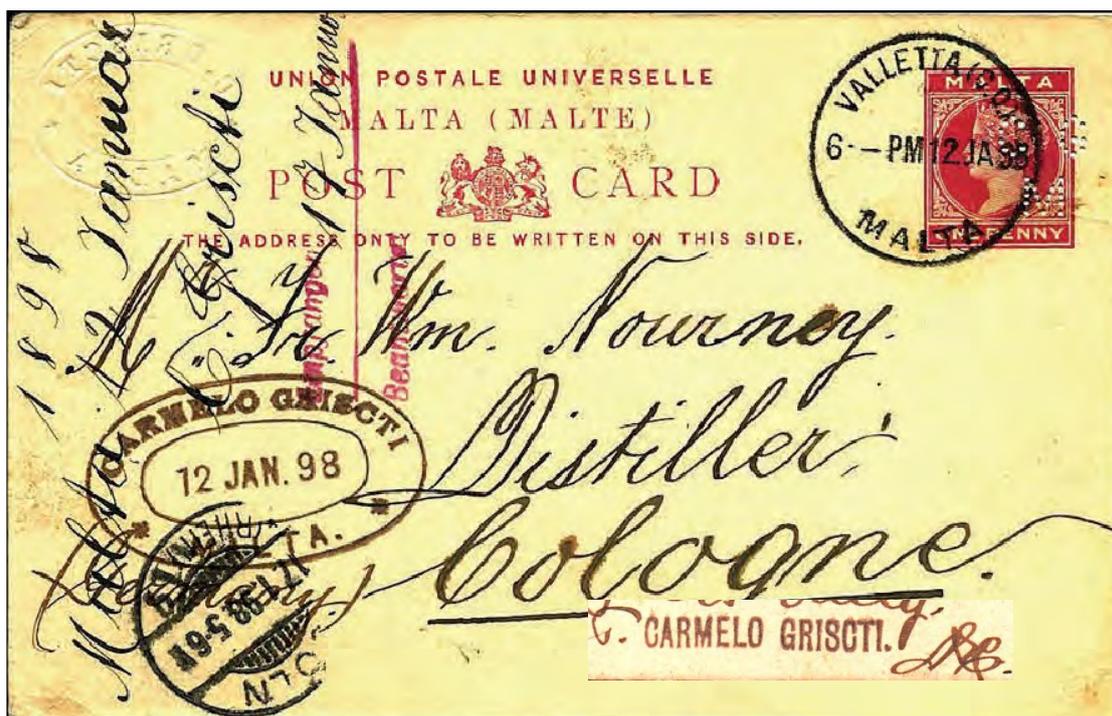


This post card has travelled around quite a lot since it was written in 1890. I found reference to it in a copy of the Malta Study Circle newsletter of May 1961. It was amongst a batch of post cards a Mr Arthur Guess of Ontario acquired from a dealer in Philadelphia, so at some time in the last 57 years it arrived back in the country it was originally sent to!

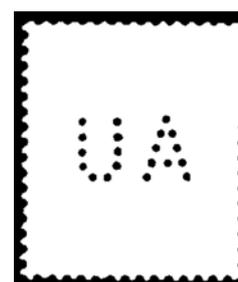
I began some research and discovered three, or possibly four more copies of these post cards exist, so they are relatively rare items.

Two were illustrated in recent copies of the Gozo Philatelic Society newsletter. The first is from Mr Peter Hansen's impressive Maltese

perfin collection and was sent to Hr Fr. Wm. Nourney (?) distiller in Cologne on 12th January 1898, asking for cheap brandies!



The second copy is from Mr Hadrian Wood's collection and is the earliest dated copy sent to Gaskell, Deacon & Co alkali manufacturers Widnes, Cheshire on 25th June 1888 ordering a batch of soda crystals. They became part of United Alkali Co Ltd which was formed in 1891 and used two GB perfins.



U0060.02



I found that a fifth copy dated 31 July 1890 addressed to London was sold in Bob Szymanski's auction in April 2018. There is a possible sixth copy sold in the Perfin Society auction No.3 2006, which was described as being dated 1892 and having pin holes and minor creasing. My 1892 copy has one tiny pin hole and no creasing, so it may or may not be the same card. If any member possesses either of these cards I would be grateful to see a copy. For completeness sake a cut-out CG/M perfin from a post card was sold in the Perfin Society auction No.4 1997.

Carmelo Griscti also used perfin stamps, but they seem to be quite scarce, I have only seen reference to three copies.



I could unearth very little information about Carmelo Griscti, only that they were specialists in tailoring military uniforms and according to the 1888 card, traded from 292D Strada Reale, Valletta (now named Triq ir-Repubblika/Republic Street).

I found reference to them in two documents on the internet. The first suggests that a Paolo Griscti entered into a partnership with Carmela widow of Carmelo Misfud. The other suggests a Mr Carmelo Griscti made uniforms for those playing the part of the "Bodyguards of the Viceroy of India" in the 1906 Malta Carnival Pageant.

The three earliest dated of the post cards illustrated are written and signed by the same hand as Carmelo Griscti. Intriguingly the 1898 card is written in another hand and has an inked handstamp Carmelo Griscti, with what looks like a P for Paolo added by hand in front of it.

References:

- The Gozo Philatelic Society newsletters No. 66 – 2016 & No. 67 – 2017
- Commercial Partnerships in Late Nineteenth and early twentieth century Malta, - Michael Refalo Ph.D.
- Carnival and Power: Play and Politics in a Crown Colony, Vicki Ann Cremona
- The Gault Catalogue of Great Britain Perfins, compiled by Roy Gault