

SOCIETY NEWS.

The May 1967 meeting was held as usual at the Catholic Institute at 6.30 p.m. Mr. John Hamilton and Mr. Joseph Hamilton gave a fine display of First Day Covers from all over the World. Unfortunately the display was marred by the fact that we could not have our usual room as our meeting clashed with a lecture for engaged couples. Consequently much time was wasted in finding another room and setting up tables.

Many of the First Day Covers Mr. Hamilton displayed of Malta, were not only designed by him but also painted by him. These were of a very high standard. Mr. Hamilton is to be congratulated not only on his skill as an artist but also on the originality of his designs.

JUNE 1967.

At the final meeting of the Malta Philatelic Club's 1966/67 season, held at the Catholic Institute, Floriana, Mr. Arthur Jagger gave a talk on the Philatelic History of Rhodesia. This was accompanied by a display of stamps of that country from the first issue up to the present date.

Mr. Jagger pointed out that the first Rhodesian stamps were issued in 1890, thirty years after Malta's first issue. These, however, bore the name of the British South Africa Company, and it was not until 1909 that the name Rhodesia was first included in the form of an overprint.

In the following year when King George 5th acceded to the throne the first set printed in the joint names of Rhodesia and the British South Africa Company was printed. These were rather large stamps for that period being about the size of recent U.K. commemoratives. Most of the values were printed in two colours and all bore the portraits of the King and of Queen Mary.

Rhodesia's first territorial change came in 1924 when it was divided into two parts, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia, each of which issued its own stamps for the next thirty years, when, in 1954 the two territories were again merged and with the addition of Nyasaland were formed into the Central African Federation. The stamps then bore the names of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

In 1964 the greatest change of all took place when the Federation was dissolved and the territories of Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia resumed their individual identities and again issued stamps in their own names. These however had a very short life, as later in the same year Northern Rhodesia was granted Independence and changed its name to Zambia and Nyasaland became the independant state of Malawi. Southern Rhodesia then resumed its earlier name of Rhodesia.

It had, of course, been intended to change the constitution of Rhodesia with a view to giving increased representation in Parliament to the native Rhodesians, leading to the granting of complete Independence, but the exist-

ing cabinet felt that they were being rushed at too fast a pace, and long negotiations failed to produce a satisfactory agreement and finally deadlock was reached. Then, towards the end on 1965 the Rhodesian Cabinet took the unprecedented step of declaring unilateral Independence.

Mr. Jagger had on view a coloured facsimile of the Deed of Declaration, bearing the signatures of the Prime Minister and the members of his cabinet, and also a photograph of the actual signing of this very important document by Mr. Ian Smith with his cabinet grouped around him.

There were also on display copies of the 2/6 Independence stamp issued to commemorate this event, mint, used and on covers. This stamp had been promptly declared illegal by the United Kingdom Government and invalid for use on any mail entering Britain. Mr. Jagger had several covers on which surcharge had been made or which had escaped invalidation.

Until a new definitive set could be prepared the Ministry of Posts caused all the remaining stocks of the Southern Rhodesia stamps to be overprinted with the words "Independence 11th November 1965". Reasonable quantities of most values were available with the exception of the 5/- value which was sold out almost on the first day. For this reason 20,000 of the Winston Churchill 1/3 stamp were also overprinted with the Independence wording whilst the value was increased from 1/3 to 5/-. These were snapped up even more eagerly than had the normal 5/- overprint and quickly became so scarce that dealers were offering to buy mint or used copies at £12 each. However, prices gradually settled down and these stamps can now be bought for about half this price. Mr. Jagger was fortunate in being able to get a complete mint set of the overprints, as well as a First Day Cover, and with the help of his friend — Mr. Joe Buttigieg — to secure mint and used copies of the Churchill overprint.

On the 9th February, 1966 the new Rhodesian definitive set was issued, and since then several commemorative sets have also been produced. All of these stamps, including the one to mark their Independence have carried the portrait of the Queen, because, say the Rhodesians, they still maintain loyalty to Her Majesty, if not to the U.K. Government.

Mr. Jagger closed with the hope that the future philatelic history of this insecure and unhappy country would continue to reflect alliance with the British Monarchy and people.

NEW STAMPS

November 13th: To Commemorate the Queen's Visit.
Christmas Issue: Date as yet unknown.