

Malta Visit by the Malta Study Circle (UK)

John Debattista and Hadrian Wood

The year 2006 was a memorable one for the Malta Philatelic Society and the Malta Study Circle (UK), as they both happened to be celebrating important anniversaries, the MPS its 40th year of existence and the MSC its Golden Jubilee.



Dr. Roger Evans, Mrs. E. Bonnici, Mr John Lander, Dr. A. Bonnici, Mrs. Evans, Mr Graham Pound

Because of the close ties that exist between the two Societies, it was felt that the event merited a joint celebration. This took the shape of a week-long visit to Malta by about 20 members of the MSC, accompanied by some of their wives, to coincide with Maltex VII Stamp Exhibition last October. The last time the MSC had paid an “official” visit was back in 1998.

A full schedule of activities was organised for the visitors, starting off with an interesting talk and display of the Knights of Malta given by the President of the Malta Philatelic Society, Dr. Alfred Bonnici, at Casa Lanfredis, which is the Knights’ official headquarters in Malta. Trips to places of historical interest followed during the next few days which also included a day’s visit to Gozo. The official programme was obviously replete with activities of a philatelic nature, such as the opening of Maltex Philatelic Exhibition, the exhibition put on by the Gozo Philatelic Society and a visit to the Central Mail Room. Another two of the highlights were a lavish buffet dinner laid by Dr. Alfred and Mrs. Elda Bonnici in the gardens of their residence in Ta’ Xbiex, and of course the joint celebration dinner held at the Victoria Hotel.

Apart from the official programme, some members of the MSC took the opportunity to pursue their particular interests, seeking out information from primary sources and visiting places connected with Malta’s postal history such as the old village police stations which at one time were the homes of the handstamps that produced the popular village postmarks. Some MSC members were also given private viewings of collections of rare material in the possession of members of the MPS.

The visit allowed members from the two organisations to exchange views, make new acquaintances and get to know each other. The activities and ensuing exchanges will surely be viewed as a positive and enjoyable experience by all. Last but not least, they underlined the fact that the two bodies share the same goal - the study and preservation of Malta’s postal heritage.

The visit augurs well for a continuation in the years to come of the spirit and dedication that has inspired the two organisation over the last few decades. It is hoped that not too many years will pass before another joint event is organised. Congratulations and a big well done to both Philatelic Societies.