

Federation Internationale de Philatelie (F.I.P.)

by John A. Cardona

At the top left hand corner of our Society's letterhead, beneath the logo and year of foundation, there is the inscription "Member Federation Internationale de Philatelie". A similar inscription appears at the top of the first page of the Society's Journal below the medals awarded to that prestigious publication.

Going through the end of year accounts which are available, it transpires that the Society maintained continuously its membership of the F.I.P. since 1978. Membership may have been attained even before that year. In fact on the PSM Magazine of Spring 1975¹ it was stated that on the Agenda of the 44th International Philatelic Congress of the F.I.P. there was the Society's application to join the Federation. Further on it was stated that the Society had been invited to send a delegate to represent the Malta Philatelic Society and supply details of the Society's activities. The write-up ended by stating that it was unofficially believed that Malta's application had been accepted. Notwithstanding all this uninterrupted record, probably, very few members are aware of the functions of the F.I.P. Perusing the Cumulative Index of the MPS Journal², it seems surprising how no one has ever written about the functions of this very important philatelic organization.

The F.I.P. is a world governing body empowered to organize, on its own initiative, World or International stamps exhibitions, shows or competitions, with the agreement of the National Federation where the event is to be held.

The F.I.P. was founded in Paris on 18th June, 1926 and is a non-profit making organization. Both the registered office and the administrative headquarters are located in Zurich, Switzerland³. Its members retain their national autonomy and undertake not to discriminate for reasons of sex, age, race, religion or politics.

Eighty one years **ago** Mr. M. Bigwood, the first President of the F.I.P., laid down the main objectives of the newly founded federation. These were:⁴

1. To achieve a union of national federations into an influential international organization that would be recognized by UPU as well as by the postal ministries and administration of the different countries.
2. To fight the unnecessary and harmful stamps issues by all means.
3. To call on governments for effective legislation against forgeries.
4. To limit international exhibitions and develop uniform exhibition regulations and a fifth assignment was soon added, the philatelic development of youth.

Eightyone years **after** with Mr. Jos Wolff at the helm of the F.I.P. presidency the objectives of the F.I.P. are⁵

1. To promote philatelic and stamp collecting, in all its aspects, on the international level.
2. To create friendly relations and to maintain close co-operation among philatelists and stamp collectors throughout the world, with the aim of promoting peace and friendship among all people.
3. To promulgate regulations governing its various activities.
4. To establish and maintain close contacts with partners in the philatelic field and with the national and international organizations.
5. To support philatelic events of all kinds organized by its Members.

The majority of philatelic societies of the countries throughout the world belong to National Federations. These societies are accepted for admittance to the F.I.P. as Regular Members. The Malta Philatelic Society falls in this category. It should be noted that only one Member (Society) can be accepted from each country and therefore the Malta Philatelic Society is recognized as the representative Member from the Maltese Islands. Once a Member has been elected it shall represent its country until it resigns.

Participation in the events held under the auspices of the F.I.P. is open to all collectors who are members of a society which is affiliated to a member federation of the F.I.P. To elucidate all members of the Malta Philatelic Society are eligible to take part in the events held under the patronage of the F.I.P. provided that they meet certain qualifying philatelic requirements. The main ones are highlighted hereunder.⁶

Eligibility for participation in the Championship Class

- a) Participation in the F.I.P Championship Class is restricted to exhibits which have received 95 or more points in FIP World Exhibitions in any three separate years during the previous 10 years.
- b) A Grand Price counts as a qualifying medal, credit however may be taken for only one Large Golc Medal (min. 95 points) or one Grand Prize per year.

Qualification for participation in the Competitive Classes

- a) The exhibit must have received a minimum of 75 points or equivalent award at a national level exhibition within the preceding ten years calculated from date for submission of applications.
- b) If the qualification is attained in an Exhibition other than at the National Exhibition of his Member country, then the exhibitor must submit a certificate of recognition from his Member Federation.
- c) **Those Members, who have not organized a national exhibition in the previous five years, may certify the qualification of the exhibit. Such**

Certificate must be signed by the President or Secretary General of the Member.

The late Godwin Said, one of our initial members, writing⁷ on “*Awards at Exhibitions*” stated that the National Philatelic Exhibition held in Malta during 1971 helped pave the way of Maltese collectors to commence taking part in International Exhibition held under the patronage of the F.I.P. The level of success had been consistent throughout the following fifteen years as could be seen from the list of awards produced hereunder.

Mr. Said served as Commissioner for all the International Exhibitions held to 1985. He stated the entries of our members had always been met with interest and praise both by other overseas commissioners as well as by visitors and collectors. The list covers awards gained by our members in various International Classes which no doubt encouraged participation in such activities and contributed extensively towards the support of Maltese Philately.

Year	Exhibition	Exhibitor	Award
1970	Stampex 70	Messrs. E. Said	Bronze Silver
1971	Int. Exhibition “RSA 10”	Messrs. E. Said	Bronze Silver
1972	Stampex 72	Messrs. E. Said	Bronze Silver
1973	Stampex 73	Messrs. E. Said	Bronze Silver
	Indipex 73	Godwin Said	Silver
	Polska 73	Godwin Said	Silver
1974	Stampex 74	Godwin Said	Bronze Silver
	Stockholmia 74	Messrs. E. Said	Silver
1975	Stampex 75	Godwin Said	Bronze
	Arphila 75	Godwin Said	Bronze Silver
	Stampex 75	Messrs. E. Said	Bronze Silver
	Espana 75	Godwin Said	Bronze
	Wien 75	Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Large Vermeil
1976	Aerophilia 76 Frankfurt	Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Silver
	Hafnia 76	Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Vermeil
		Messrs. E Said	Bronze
	Italia 76	Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Gold
1977		Messrs. E. Said	Bronze Silver
	Amphilex 77	Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Large Vermeil
		Godwin Said	Silver
1978		Messrs. E. Said	Bronze
	Praga 78	Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Large Vermeil
		Messrs. E. Said	Bronze
1979	Italia 78	Godwin Said	Silver
	Vebileph	Messrs. E. Said	Silver

1980	Norwex 80	Dr. Alfred Bonnici	Large Vermeil+ Special Price
		Godwin Said	Vermeil
		A. C. Eastgate (UK)	Silver
		Messrs. E. Said	Silver
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	
		Magazine	Bronze
	London 80	Milex (UK)	Gold + Special Price
		Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Large Vermeil+ Special Prize
		Mrs. I Hand (UK)	Silver
		J. W. Turnbull (Australia)	Silver Bronze
		L. S. Wheeler (UK)	Bronze
		Godwin Said	Vermeil
		G. A. Coates (UK)	Silver
		A. C. Eastgate (UK)	Silver
		P. Lazzarini (Italy)	Silver
		Messrs. E. Said	Bronze
		Messrs. E. Said	Diplomas (2)
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	
		Magazine	Diploma
1981	Philatokyo 81	Dr. Alfred Bonnici	Gold
		Godwin Said	Silver Bronze
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	
		Magazine	Diploma
		Messrs. E. Said	Diploma
	WIPA	Godwin Said	Vermeil
		Messrs. E. Said	Silver Bronze
1982	Philexfrance 82	Godwin Said	Vermeil
		Messrs. E. Said	Silver Bronze
	Philterna 82	Messrs. E. Said	2 Certificates + 2 Souvenir Medals
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	1 Certificate +
		Magazine	1 Souvenir Medal
	Milano 82	Dr. Alfred Bonnici	Gold
		Messrs. E. Said	Silver
		Messrs. E. Said	Certificate
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	
		Magazine	Certificate
	Canada 82	Joseph Fenech	Certificate
		George Said	Certificate

	Belgica 82	Godwin Said	Vermeil
		Messrs. E. Said	2 Certificates
1983	Tembal 83	Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Silver Bronze
1984	Espana 84	Messrs. E. Said	Diploma
		Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Gold
		Godwin Said	Vermeil
		Messrs. E. Said	Silver Bronze
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	
		Magazine	Silver Bronze
	Ausipex 84	Godwin Said	Large Vermeil
		Messrs. E. Said	Silver Bronze
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	
		Magazine	Silver Bronze
1985	Philterna 85	Messrs. E. Said	Silver
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	
		Magazine	Silver Bronze
	Israphil 85	Godwin Said	Vermeil
		Philatelic Society (Malta)	
		Magazine	Silver Bronze
	Roma 85	Dr. Alfred Bonnici MD	Vermeil
		Godwin Said	Vermeil

The Web site of F.I.P. is www.f.i.p.ch.

Subsequent to the demise of Mr. Godwin Said in 1985, Dr. Alfred Bonnici continued taking part in international competitive exhibitions held under the auspices of the F.I.P. in the literature class through the PSM Journal winning silver medals at Stockholmia 1986, Chicagopex 2002, 2004 and 2005 and Portland U.S.A. 2007.

It is worth noting that the silver medal won this year in Portland U.S.A. was for exhibiting the colourful Journal Volume 35/1 issued in April 2006 on the subject of “*Malta Zeppelin Mail*”.

As recent as last month Dr. Alfred Bonnici won a Vermeil at Croydon U.K. with the deeply researched exhibit “*Messageries Imperiales and Malta*.”

References

- ¹ The PSM Magazine, Vol 5 No 2, page 12 – Spring 1975.
- ² The PSM Journal Cumulative Index (1967–2004), Vol 33 No 3 – December 2004.
- ³ Statute of the Federation Internationale de Philatelie.
- ⁴ “Flash” publication of the Federation Internationale de Philatelie No 100 – 2007
- ⁵ Statute of the Federation Internationale de Philatelie.
- ⁶ Excerpts from the General Regulations of the F.I.P. for Exhibitions (G R E X)
- ⁷ The PSM Magazine, Vol 15, No 1, page 6 – March 1986.