

SECOND PHILATELIC EXHIBITION AT VICTORIA, GOZO

by Paul Zarb



Almost exactly seven years to the day after the holding of the First Philatelic Exhibition ever to be held in Gozo, the Philatelic Society of Malta held its Second Philatelic Exhibition at the Exhibitions Hall, at Victoria, Gozo on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th October, 1993.

The official inauguration of the Exhibition took place on Saturday 9th October, at 11.30am which was followed by a reception.

In his introductory speech, Dr John H. Mercieca, the Society's President, thanked the Minister to Gozo, Mr. Anton Tabone, for agreeing to inaugurate the Exhibition as well as for placing the Exhibitions Hall at the disposal of the Society for the holding of the exhibition.

After giving a brief account of the origin, aims and activities of his Society, Dr Mercieca made a strong and earnest appeal to those who come in daily contact with schoolchildren to promote the highly educative and instructive hobby of stamp-collecting, as this would greatly enhance their general knowledge and culture besides being also a very relaxing and interesting pastime.

In reply, the Minister said that his Ministry was always pleased to encourage cultural activities and exhibitions in Gozo, amongst which Philately surely ranked amongst the most important ones. Thereupon he wished the Exhibition success and declared it open.

Dr Mercieca then showed the Minister around the exhibits in which he was manifestly keenly interested, particularly in a one hundred year old photograph of St Francis Square, where the Exhibition was being held, which was markedly different from what it is today.

Amongst the many and varied exhibits belonging to members of the Society, truly outstanding and superb was the collection of Zeppelin Covers, representing all the nine Zeppelin Flights to South America in 1933 as also two 1934 Flights and the rare Christmas Flight, the property of Mr Anthony Camilleri. Mail from Malta was accepted on these flights — the covers were sent to Bodensee in Germany and thence carried to South America by Zeppelin. Mr Anthony Fenech exhibited Balloon Post Covers and a superb collection of rare old Gozo postmarks, in fine condition, the majority used on cover, which were also very much admired by viewers.

On the foreign side Dr John H Mercieca had on show a colourful collection of French Art stamps as well as a collection of Airmails from various countries, while Mr Albert Dimech exhibited a lovely collection of Queen Elizabeth Silver Wedding stamps in complete sets. Highly admired too were the entries of Fr Louis Camilleri and Miss Helen Camilleri who exhibited a Mulready envelope, rare blocks of Malta stamps, covers franked with early Malta high values, including the £1 Melita stamp, as also a block of four of the Melita 3d stamps with the overprint "POSTAGE" inverted with a certificate of genuineness and Mr Joseph Caruana Grech showed a fine collection of covers with postmen's personal handstamps. Very colourful and eye-catching was the complete United Nation Flags of the World collection in sheetlet form of Mr Joe Bugeja. Stamps depicting a historical event in Maltese history or telling a story were presented by Mr Hadrian Wood, who as a side-line also exhibited old postcards and photographs of localities and sites in Gozo, which attracted high interest.

After carefully viewing the exhibits, the Minister expressed his interest in all the items on show and congratulated the exhibitors. The Minister expressed his wish that other philatelic exhibitions would be organised in future in Gozo, hopefully with a still longer duration.

The Malta Postal Administration issued a handstamp to be used on the first day of the exhibition, exclusively at the Victoria Branch Post Office in Gozo, to commemorate the holding of the 2nd Philatelic Exhibition at Victoria.