

Annual General Meeting

President's Address



Abridged version of the Presidential Address delivered by Dr. J. H. Mercieca at the Annual General Meeting of the Philatelic Society of Malta on Monday 3rd January 1983.

Yet another year has passed since I addressed you at last year's Annual General Meeting, and once again, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this 17th Annual General Meeting of the Philatelic Society in Malta, an Annual event of major importance in the Society's calendar.

Monthly meetings were held regularly throughout last year. Father Anthony Galea S.J. displayed and gave a running commentary on "Censored Mail of the First World War", other displays by various members, of interesting philatelic material were, a Display of Malta Air Mails by Dr. A. Bonnici, a display by Mr. Fitzgibbon of Australia on the penny overprint, and Mr. Doug Ward's Talk/Display on "Malta Airmails, pre-adhesive postage due markings". We also held an Auction which as usual was in the capable hands of Commander Bush.

During the year under review the Committee met eight times. The spirit of collaboration amongst members was high and it was a pleasure to work together in the best interests of the Society and of Philately in Malta, and for this I thank them all.

Last year when I told you that the unfortunate situation regarding our Magazine had been happily solved, I must now admit I was too optimistic, for during the first nine months of the year, in spite of my repeated and sustained efforts to stimulate the editor to bring back to normality the publication of the Society's Magazine these proved to be unsuccessful and this problem was for the second year running, the biggest thorn in the Society's side, to the great embarrassment of all concerned, and particularly to our overseas members who had their sole connection with us severed, for long months on end. However Dr. Bonnici has been appointed Editor, and has been able, in spite of difficulties, to help with the publication of the 1st Number, and has issued two others since. I am grateful to Dr. Bonnici, and I am sure you do join me in thanking him for the good work he has put in.

A bright page in the Society's achievements was the all-round success, obtained in the VII Annual "Vote a Stamp Referendum", organised by the Society. For the first time, ever since it was first launched, this year's participation was the biggest so far. In my opinion, apart from other considerations, a factor which contributed in no small way to this year's success was the beautifully, neatly illustrated and inviting voting brochure which was absolutely first-class, in all respects. In this connection I would certainly be failing in my duty, if I did not thank Mr. Godwin Said, and Mr. Vincent Mercieca for the excellent work they have put in, in the all-round organization of the competition.

All Committee members should be prepared to carry out willingly the duties assigned to each of them in his particular office, and not let the load of work weigh on the shoulders of two or three members, for obviously even a heavy load will be felt much lighter if and when borne by many shoulders.

It gives me much pleasure to state that recently I had an unofficial meeting with the Postmaster General and other high postal officials and I availed myself of the opportunity to point out to them and even produce specimens of some "sins" committed against Philately! Such as badly smudged and illegible postmarks and backstamping of letters, the frequent use of the Registration Cachet in lieu of the label on First Day Covers and the local defacing of stamps on foreign letters, and F.D.C. when passed through the cancellation machine for Back-Stamping. It gives me much pleasure to state that the P.M.G. as well as the other officials present, lent a very sympathetic ear to my expositions and promised to look into the matter so that such shortcomings would in future be remedied and prevented from happening.

Dr. Mercieca concluded his address by thanking the Director of the Catholic Institute for allowing us to make use of the premises and the Editor of the Times of Malta for helping us with free advertising.