

THE SOCIETY'S FIRST SEMESTER 1982 ACTIVITIES

by Dr. J.H. Mercieca

AS it has been the policy during the sixteen years since its foundation, the Society has continued to hold its monthly meetings on the first Monday of the month, unless, of course, this happens to be a public holiday when the meeting is postponed to the following Monday.

Members have now become quite familiar with this arrangement and those of them, who belong to the class of keen members, interested in the Society's continued existence and in all that it stands for and has to offer them, regularly make it a point to be there at each and every one of these nine meetings which are held during the course of the year.

As in previous years the Annual General Meeting was held in January when the new committee for the year 1982 was elected. The great majority of officials who have now been serving on the committee for some years have been re-elected while two members — Mr. J. Muscat Manduca, the new treasurer and Mr. H. Wood, who was appointed liaison officer between the Society and the Malta Study Circle of London — were elected for the first time.

At the well-attended February Meeting, Father Anthony Galea S.J., displayed his fine and extensive collection of "*Censored Mail of the First World War*". As an introduc-

tion to the display Fr. Galea talked about some of the covers which were of special interest such as the one which was sent from Valletta to Notabile, which is believed to be a unique piece since local mail was not subject to censorship and it is indeed difficult to conjecture how this item came into being. The President thanked Fr. Galea for having given members the opportunity to view such a fine collection of postal history of this important period. Fr. Galea then offered to display his collection of "*Censored Mail of the Second World War*" at some later date.

For the March monthly meeting, at which Mr. George Mallia, the 83 year old veteran stamp enthusiast was present, an activity suggested by one of our active and go-ahead members, Cdr. S.N. Bush, was held for the first time ever. This consisted of a display by members of "*errors, varieties, curious on stamps of the world*". Several members displayed interesting flaws and varieties from their collections noteworthy amongst

which were those of Great Britain and Commonwealth countries by Cdr. Bush; a display of a block of 4 stamps of the 4d of the 1965 definitive issue with the black colour around the escutcheon heavily displaced to the left; a single copy of the same stamp with the words "Knights of Malta" in silver completely omitted; and a block of 6 of the 3d denomination plate 1B of the same series, with double perforation, by Lieut. Col. W.J. Attard; while Mr. Vincent Mercieca exhibited two well-known Malta varieties the 1935 Silver Jubilee "double flagstaff" variety and the 1938 K.G. VI "semaphore variety" on the 5/- denomination.

A display cum talk on the 1902 "one penny" overprint on the 1885 2½d Queen Victoria stamp was given at the April meeting by Mr. John Fitz-Gibbon of Perth, Western Australia, who has recently been elected as the Malta Study Circle of London representative for Australia. Mr. Fitz-Gibbon decided to make a long stay in Malta, on his way home to meet local philatelists and get firsthand information about Malta stamps and postal history material of which he is an interested and keen collector. At this meeting, which was held on the 5th April, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon displayed and talked about his extensive specialised collection of this one particular stamps — the first ever overprint on a

Malta stamps — which comprised complete panes and larger blocks and double overprints as well as interesting combinations of the well-known "one penny" error in all the listed colour shades.

The yearly *stamp auctions*, spread over two sessions, were held during the May and June meetings. No less than 167 lots came up for sale during the two meetings. While on the first day the material offered for sale, in addition to the 34 Malta lots included also a number of Great Britain, Australia, U.S.A., Vatican and Commonwealth lots that offered on the second day was almost exclusively Malta sets and stamps and items of postal history such as village postmarks, postmen's personal handstamps and a variety of covers. A rather *interesting and unusual item* which fetched £M18 towards the end of the second day sale was a part front of a registered cover (no address) bearing "Melita" opt. POSTAGE 1d pair, 2d x 2, 5s/-, x 2 all tied by very light "Birkirkara S.P.O. 8 AM OC. 16 41 cds (x 6) also "R. B'Kara No 1150 label, triangular Crown over No 67 "Passed by Censor" purple h/s. (one double, one part), also label "Malta is grateful to the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force for safe arrival of this letter." This was quite a rare to come by item of war-time historical interest and it is indeed a great pity that its owner ap-

parently did not want to disclose his identity and leave the cover untouched, as it would have otherwise been more or less unique with such two high value long obsolete stamps

affixed thereon.

Thus the Auction sessions brought to a close the Society's activities of the first six months of this year.

TEN YEARS BY PRINTEX

It was exactly ten years ago, on the 11th. November, 1972, that we saw the first commemorative issue produced by Printex. It was the second Europa issue, the first, in 1971, being produced by "Harrison And Sons". It was also in 1972 that the Europa issue was for the first time produced in small Panes of ten stamps each, and had Pane numbers from A1 x 4 up to and including A12 x 4.

If memory serves me right, it was also the issue, when we had a rush by foreigners on the 7c5 value stamp, in order to create an artificial

shortage of this stamp. Since then Printex have produced over fifty commemorative issues, two Definitive sets, various miniature sheets, two Airmail sets, a Postage Due set, two Maximum Cards as well as some S.M.O.M. issues.

We can say that during this time, flaws and varieties were very few, and the sets produced were of the highest quality. We would like to congratulate the management, workers and all those who contributed in the production of such fine issues, and wish Printex all success for the next ten years.