

SOCIETY MEMBERS' SUCCESS AT "ESPANA '75"

Three entries submitted by Society members at "Espana '75", the World Philatelic Exposition, all gained awards. Mr. Anthony Fenech participating with a "Specialised Collection of Great Britain Stamps Used in Malta" has been awarded a Silver Medal, while Mr. Godwin Said, was awarded a Bronze Medal for his entry "A Collection of Postal History of Malta", both in the Competition Class. In the Literature Class, the local firm "Emmanuel Said — Stamp & Coin Dealers" has added another major award for its "Said Malta Stamp & Coin Catalogue 1975" (reviewed in Vol. 5.N.1), with a Silver Medal Diploma.

"Espana '75" was held in Madrid, Spain, under the auspices of the International Federation of Philately, from the 4th to the 13th April, 1975. The Exposition was housed within the Crystal Pavilion complex at the Fiera del Campo. The exhibition covered 131 countries and 23 Postal Administrations. In the Court of Honours, beside collections of prestige from Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Ranier III, 14 of the most notable international collectors were represented. The Special Class included forty Jurors' and Commission Members' collections as well as nine other invited guests' collections. All these exhibits were contained in approximately 6,000 frames of a 'new' design with a capacity of 15 sheets (5x3) as opposed to the conventional frames holding twelve or sixteen sheets.

The Crystal Pavilion is a monumental glass structure, which created its own particular problems. A special study was carried out of the atmospheric conditions within the glass pavilion. Solar radiation, heat exchanges, humidity and temperature fluctuations were studied and appropriate measures taken to safeguard the material on display.

"Espana '75" coincided with the 125th Anniversary of the first Spanish stamp. The method of pre-payment of the carriage charge of mail by using postage stamps was created in Spain by a Royal Order of the 24th October, 1849. The first stamp began circulation in the early part of the following year, and it was engraved on lithographic stone by Bartholome Coromina, who represented the image of Queen Isabella II, apparently inspired by the medal created by the Belgian artist J.A. Pringret. The stamps were printed by the National Mint and Stamp Factory, a firm closely related to the Spanish printing and minting works, dating back to the XVII century when "tax on stamped papers" was first introduced on the 15th December, 1630.

In 1950 the first Spanish stamp was 100 years old and to celebrate the centenary, an International Exhibition was held in Madrid. Ten years later, the First International Congress of Philately was held in Barcelona.

Today's International Federation of Philately (F.I.P.), the world body in the care of hobby, held its 44th International Philatelic Congress, on the 14th and 15th April, immediately after the closing of the Exposition. The Congress witnessed the most advanced dissertations by some of the best known philatelic personalities who spoke about all aspects of stamp collecting, postal and mail services history, and the technical elaboration as well as the conservation process of the postage stamp.

One important item on the F.I.P. 44th Congress Agenda was our Society's application for association with the Federation. The society had been invited to send a delegate to represent and forward the Philatelic Society of Malta, and supply details of the Society's activities. It is unofficially believed that Malta's application has been accepted.

In closing, we congratulate our two members, Anthony Fenech and Godwin Said, who through their enterprise, continue to sustain a high level among Maltese philatelists.

R.A.F.'s Souvenir Flown Covers

On 10 January the RAF, Luqa commemorated the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of No. 13 Squadron, at present stationed in Malta, with a specially flown souvenir cover, which forms part of the RAF Museum Squadron series.

The cover shows aircraft used by the squadron during its 60 years of operation, namely the BE2c (1915-1917); the Hawker Hector (1937-1939); and Canberra PR7 (1956 to date). The cover also carried descriptive details of the special flight and the squadron badge, and it bore a 1c3 Malta stamp of the then current Universal Postal Union issue, which appropriately depicts transport through the ages. The stamp was handstamped with the normal "VALLETTA" double-ring date-stamp.

The covers were flown by a Canberra WJ821 aircraft of No 13 (PR) Squadron from Luqa to RAF Eastleigh, Kenya, via Cairo, piloted by Wg. Cdr. J.B. Parkinson, and crewed by Flt. Lt. J.A. Ball and Flt. Lt. S.J. White. In Kenya, the covers were handed over to the Nairobi postal authorities who applied the philatelic Bureau handstamp on a 10c Kenya "shell" stamp, affixed to the lower-right corner on the back of the cover. The Covers were subsequently flown back to Malta via Khartoum, Sana'a, Yemen Arab Republic and Cairo.

Three types of covers were available, a normal cover, another autographed by the pilot and navigator, while a limited number of covers were personally autographed by Field Marshal Lord Harding, who presented the squadron with its standard. The proceeds from these covers will go to the RAF Museum at Hendon where are preserved historical aircraft used by the RAF since its formation in 1918.

No. 13 Squadron was formed at Gosport on the 10th January 1915, and moved to France in October of 1915, playing a distinguished part in the Battle of Arras. The squadron returned to England in March 1918, to be disbanded in December of the same year. On 1st April it was reformed and in October 1939 returned to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. In May 1942, No. 13 took part in the first thousand bomber attack on Germany. When the German forces surrendered, in May 1943, the squadron undertook anti-submarine patrols. In January 1956 the squadron moved to Cyprus, after survey work of the Middle East and Africa. It took part in the Suez Campaign, and in September 1965 it moved to Malta, returning to Cyprus in January 1972. The squadron returned to Luqa, Malta, its present base in October 1972.