

SOCIETY AND OTHER NEWS

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

NOVEMBER 10, 1952

The eleventh general meeting of the Society was held at the Royal University Library at 5.15 p.m. Fr. Bonaventura Fiorini, O.M.C., read a paper on "Professori Francescani di Teologia all'Università di Malta".

The Society adjourned *sine die*.

JANUARY 9, 1953

The twelfth general meeting of the Society took place at the Royal University Library at 5.15 p.m. The following papers were read:

The Lynedoch (Graham) Papers 1799-1802, by Rev. R. Cirillo, D.D., M.Sc. (Econ.), B.Sc. (Pol.).

Reasons for the delay in the Appointment of Bishop F. S. Caruana, by Prof. Can. A. Bonnici, D.D., B.A., B.L.Can., H.E.L.

JANUARY 29, 1953

The thirteenth general meeting of the Society was held at the Royal University Library at 5 p.m., the President, Mgr. A. Bonnici, in the Chair.

The minutes of the previous four meetings having been read and confirmed, the Chairman read his Presidential Address "Towards a National Bibliography".

The Secretary read his report on the work of the Society during 1952 and the Treasurer also gave his report.

The election of the Committee for 1953 was then held. Mgr. A. Bonnici was confirmed as President by acclamation. The following members were then elected: Prof. Can. E. Coleiro, Dr. A. Ganado, Chev. Vzo. Bonello, Mr. J. Cassar Pullicino, Mr. E. R. Leopardi, Dr. J. Baldacchino, Dr. J. Galea, Dr. P. Cassar.

The meeting adjourned until February 23rd.

FEBRUARY 23, 1953

The fourteenth general meeting of the Society took place at the Royal University Library at 5.15 p.m., the President, Mgr. A. Bonnici in the Chair.

Mr. J. Cassar Pullicino read a paper on "Social Aspects of Mgr. Duzina's Report".

The following amendment to Section IX of the Statute was approved by the meeting:

“Provided that, if the required number of members, i.e. one third of the ordinary members, fails to attend two general meetings specially convened for the purpose of considering any proposed ammendment to the Statute, such amendment may, nevertheless, be approved by a majority of the members present at the second meeting so convened, after the lapse of fifteen minutes from the time fixed for the opening of the meeting”.

The addition of the following sub-section was also approved by the meeting:

“In the event of the Society ceasing to function, all its effects, excluding money, shall be deposited at the Royal Malta Library, and any money in possession of the Society shall, in such case, be passed to the Librarian of the Royal Malta Library, who shall utilise it as he considers best in the interest of the study of Maltese History.

“The Society shall be deemed to have ceased to function after the lapse of two years from the last general or Committee meeting, whichever is the later.”

The meeting adjourned *sine die*.

APRIL 17, 1953

The fifteenth general meeting of the Society took place at the Royal University Library, at 5.30 p.m., the President, Mgr. A. Bonnici, in the Chair.

Professor Dame Lillian Penson, Ph.D., D.Litt, Ll.D., gave a lecture on “Problems facing the Modern Historian”.

The Society adjourned *sine die*.

MAY 5, 1953

The sixteenth general meeting of the Society was held at the Royal University Library at 5.30 p.m., the Vice-President, Dr. J. Galea, in the Chair.

Professor W. Ganado, M.D., M.R.C.P., read a paper entitled “New light on the Conspiracy of 1799”.

The Society adjourned *sine die*.

HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1952

(Read at the Annual General Meeting held on the 29th January, 1953)

Mr. Chairman,
Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the following report on the work of the *Malta Historical Society* during 1952:—

General Meetings: Four general meetings were held during the year. At three of these, papers were read, and at the other, held on the 17th January, 1952, the following members were elected to form the Committee for 1952:

President: Mgr. Prof. A. Bonnici
Members: Dr. J. Baldacchino
Dr. J. Galea
Chev. Vincenzo Bonello
Dr. Albert Ganado
Mr. E. R. Leopardi
Dr. E. Sammut
Mr. J. Cassar Pullicino
Prof. Canon E. Coleiro

Committee Meetings: The Committee met seven times to discuss business on various items, of which the following is a selection:

Publication of a historical journal
National Register of Archives
Records of District Committees set up during the War
Registers preserved at the Victoria Church, Valletta
Records at H.M. Superior Courts, at the Notarial Archives and at the Public Registry.
Publication of minutes of the National Assembly, 1945
Erection of a monument to La Vallette
Card-index of *Melitensia*
Excavations near the Roman Villa Museum at Rabat
Exchange of publications with foreign societies
The correct spelling of "Valletta"
Holding of a Summer School in 1953
Request for a Government grant
Teaching of Maltese History in private schools

I am glad to be able to record progress on several of the above items. The major achievement has been the publication of *Melita Historica*, which has been

well-received both locally and abroad. Members will be pleased to hear the following extract from a most encouraging letter received from Professor R. F. Treharne, of Aberystwyth: "May I, on behalf of the Historical Association of England and Wales, and of the Editorial Board of *History*, offer you my very hearty congratulations on the publication of your first number, which seems to me admirably designed to fulfil your ambitions. We wish you the fullest success in every way, and trust that both your Society and your journal will grow from strength to strength".

The issue of this journal has also enabled the Society to exchange publications with various university and cultural societies in England and Italy. A suggestion which would enable members to peruse these periodicals at the University Library is still awaiting a decision by the University authorities. Material for the publication of the second number is available and its printing will be taken in hand in February this year. The Committee has decided that in future members will be entitled to receive free copies of *Melita Historica*.

Approval has been obtained for members to consult the archives at H.M. Superior Courts free of charge, but a similar request in respect of the Notarial Archives and of the Public Registry is still under consideration. A sub-committee has been appointed to report on the correct spelling of the name of the capital "Valletta", and it is intended to publish the report as soon as it is approved by the Committee. Details of the proposed Summer School have been worked out and the choice of lecturers, etc. will be finalised by the new committee. New members have been enrolled as detailed elsewhere in this report. On other points the Society is still awaiting a reply to its communications.

Lectures: The following papers were read during the year:

- On Friday, 25th January, 1952: *L'Antica Fondazione della Scuola dell'Arabo a Malta*, by Mr. Anthony Cremona
- On Friday, 18th April, 1952: *The Church and the Freedom of the Press in Malta*, by Prof. Mgr. A. Bonnici
- On Monday, 10th November, 1952: *Professori Francescani di Teologia all'Università di Malta*, by Fr. Bonaventura Fiorini, O.F.M.

Membership: 16 ordinary members were enrolled during the year. The total membership of the Society now stands at 70. In addition there are 50 student members who are not entitled to vote or to stand for election. It is essential for the Society to increase its membership as it is impossible to carry out its many important undertakings with such a low membership. Besides, more funds are needed for the work it desires to accomplish and it would have to reduce its activities if it did not obtain an increase in income.

Monument to La Vallette: Members will recall that this matter was first taken up with Government in January of last year, before the Committee for 1952 was elected. Further correspondence was forwarded to Government in the course of the year and an interview with the Hon. Prime Minister took place at the Ministry of Works and Reconstruction in May, 1952. The Society, represented by Chev. Vincenzo Bonello and the Secretary, was informed by the Prime Minister that he would discuss the matter further with its representatives before giving a final

decision. In view of the publication of the notice in the Government Gazette of the 30th December, 1952 inviting designs for the construction of a water fountain outside Kingsgate, the Committee took immediate steps to recall to the Prime Minister his assurance given in May 1952. A Press Notice was also issued informing the public of its proposal, which has since been strongly supported editorially by *Lehen is-Sewwa*, while various articles and letters for and against have appeared in other sections of the Press. The Press Notice was followed up with a circular addressed to all band and allied clubs, inviting them to support our proposal. Before leaving this subject I would like to mention that the Prime Minister granted a second interview to the Society's representatives on the 13th January of this year.

Acknowledgments: It will be seen from the above review of activities that the existence of our Society is more than justified. The Society has been fortunate in obtaining help and encouragement from various quarters. The Press and the Rediffusion authorities have been helpful in publicising the Society's activities, and the Director of the Museum, as in previous years, was good enough to invite the Committee to hold its meetings within the Museum premises. To the Vice-Chancellor and Rector Magnificus our thanks are also due for allowing the use of the Royal University Library for holding lectures throughout the year.

Conclusion: Before I conclude I must warn members not to be lulled into a sense of false security. We are doing our best to provide a means by which those interested in the investigation of historical problems may obtain encouragement and help. But above all it is necessary to educate public opinion and to create a mental climate favourable for the encouragement and support of the claims of History as an essential element in the education and culture of all. We need hardly stress that the Maltese public has yet to realise the significance of the study of national history as an integral part of the social, traditional and cultural life of the people. A greater show of public spirit is still a desideratum, as is shown by the fact that the Society's appeal for cooperation in the compilation of a National Register of Archives met with very poor support. Of 30 circulars addressed to gentlemen of standing who are known to possess historical documents of some importance only five replied and submitted the First Stage Report required for the compilation of the Register. The majority of these gentlemen were non-members, but a few of our own members likewise failed to send in this Report. In the bibliographical field, which represents the main line of activity stressed in the Society's statute, there is also a crying need for more voluntary helpers so that the long-neglected tools of research may be provided to scholars and research workers with the least possible delay.

With so much to achieve, I am confident that the Malta Historical Society can look forward to many more years of activity and progress in Maltese historical studies.

J. CASSAR PULLICINO
Hon. Secretary.