

# SECRETARY'S REPORT - 1976

Mr. President, Fellow-Members.

Last year's activities were dominated by the celebrations commemorating the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Society.

## COMMITTEE

The Committee for 1976 was elected at the Annual General Meeting held on the 5th January, 1976 and the officials, except for those chosen at the General Meeting, were appointed at the Committee meeting of the 22nd January. There were no changes during the Committee's term of office.

The Committee met nine times during 1976. Two other meetings were called but could not be held as the members present did not form a quorum.

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

These were held regularly on the first Monday of each month and the programme of activities was as follows:

- February — Talk by Dr. E. Aquilina on "How to prepare a collection for exhibition".
- March — Flight Lieutenant Nichols attended at the invitation of the committee to illustrate the project of Flight Covers.
- April — Stamp auction.
- May — Discussion on the celebrations to commemorate the Xth Anniversary.
- June — The entries for the "Vote-a-Stamp" competition were opened and the result was announced.
- October — Exchange and Discussions.
- November — Talk by Commander Bush on "De La Rue key-plates for the British Colonies".
- December — Stamp Auction.

It is worth recording that during the first year, that is, in 1966 the Committee had decided to hold auction sales of philatelic material for the benefit of members. After two attempts which were not really successful, this activity was suspended until in 1976 it was decided to give it another try.

Thanks to the valid efforts of Mr. Barnet Jacob and Commander S.N. Bush the two auctions held last year found a very positive response. They were quite an encouraging sign for the future, and there is every reason to hope that stamp auctions will become a regular half-yearly activity of the Society. We must however keep in mind that the work put in by the organisers will come to nought if members do not actively participate by submitting lots for sale or bidding for what is offered.

## ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Society was founded on the 7th March, 1966. One of the first tasks of the Committee was to organise a proper commemoration of the Xth Anniversary. A sub-committee had already been formed the previous year and Mr. George Pace, as Treasurer, was appointed to join the sub-committee. Dr. A. Bonnici kindly offered to attend the meetings of the sub-committee although officially he was not a member.

The possibility of holding an exhibition and organising a stamp week was explored but both had to be ruled out because of the manifold difficulties involved.

Eventually it was decided to hold an anniversary dinner. The venue was the Green Lounge of the Hotel Phoenicia. The date: 26th June 1976. Over 100 members and guests took part and the chief guest was the Postmaster General, Mr. G. Borg.

At the Committee's request, the Post Master General, accepted to allow the use of a special cancellation which read: "Tenth Anniversary -- 25 June 1976 -- Valletta -- Malta 1966-1976: Philatelic Society of Malta 1966". The design was made by Mr. George Pace and it incorporated the Malta ½d yellow. Special covers were prepared by the Society signed by the President and the designer. As the number was limited in advance, it was decided to present one cover to the Post Master General and to donate a second one to the Postal History Museum. One cover was reserved to each effective member of the Society and the first numbers were reserved for Committee members. The cancellation was also postally used on a special edition of the Society's magazine which was distributed to members.

I find recorded in the minutes of the Committee meeting held on the 17th April, 1975 that the President of the Society, Dr. J.H. Mercieca, had proposed that in 1976 the Society should fittingly celebrate the Xth Anniversary of its foundation. I remember him emphasising that in the past he had formed part of other philatelic societies that had died out after a few years of existence. The fact that our Society was entering its tenth year was a record to be proud of.

It was a record that the Society did indeed celebrate. What was organised for the occasion went off quite well and we look forward to the future with renewed vigour.

## MEMBERSHIP

One of the salutary effects of the celebrations was to bring the Society ever more to the attention of philatelists.

In May 1976 the Committee decided that those members who had defaulted in paying their subscription for a number of years must be struck off the member's list, and the Treasurer carried out the necessary exercise.

This notwithstanding, with a good number of new members joining the Society throughout 1976, we ended the year on a top note and the effective members of the Society are now 118.

## MAGAZINE

As members can see for themselves, with the appointment of Nick A. Cutajar as Editor of the Magazine, our headaches are over.

In order to commemorate the Xth Anniversary the Editor produced a special number of the magazine which was of high standard indeed. I feel sure you will all join me in telling the Editor: Give us more like it.

Naturally, it isn't so simple as it looks. Hard work and material for publication is not enough. Printing costs have gone up so much in recent years that it is impossible to produce a magazine if the Society does not have the available steady flow of funds.

That is one of the reasons why the Committee has decided to place before this meeting a motion to increase subscriptions of members. Because of lack of funds, the Committee could not endorse a suggestion made by one of its members that two other numbers of the magazine should be issued during 1976.

## **VOTE-A-STAMP**

As part of the celebrations to mark the Xth Anniversary, the Society decided to launch a world-wide competition to select the most beautiful Malta stamp issued in 1975. Participants were asked to vote for the stamp they liked best and to give reasons for their choice. The competition was open for two months, throughout April and May. Philatelists from far and wide took part and the majority, namely about 25% voted in favour of the 5c. of the Europa set.

The first prize went to Malta, the second to U.K., the third to Liechtenstein.

The winners of the competition were each given a complete mint series of the 1975 Malta issues kindly donated for the purpose by the Postal Authorities. Five other participants were given gratis a copy of the 1976 Said catalogue kindly donated to the Society by Mr. Godwin Said. On your behalf I wish to express the Society's thanks for these gifts. All the Committee members agreed not to take part in the competition. The holding of this competition was suggested by Mr. Nick Cutajar who wished to make it an annual feature. This was approved by the Committee.

## **INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION**

Through its association in the F.I.P. the members of the Society were invited during 1976 to take part in the following international competitions: "Juphilex 78", "Capex 78".

## **NEW REGISTRATION ENVELOPES**

Last February the Committee was informed that new registration envelopes had been put on sale at the Post Office with the embossed stamp defaced by hand with ink. This was being done without proper authorisation and no notice had appeared in the Government Gazette, announcing the sale of these envelopes.

The Committee agreed that this procedure which had been adopted by the postal authorities was highly irregular and I was instructed to send a stiff letter of protest to the Postmaster General.

This letter had the desired effect and proper steps were immediately taken by the Postmaster to remedy the situation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Throughout 1976, as in the previous years, the Catholic Institute was placed at the disposal of the Society for all its activities. On the retirement of Fr. James Orr as Director of the Institute, I wish to place on record the unstinted help and co-operation the Society found in him at all times during these years. I wish therefore to thank Fr. Orr and the management of the Institute for giving us the use of the premises without charging us any rent.

My thanks also go to all those members of the Committee or of the Society who have in one way or another contributed during 1976 towards the success the Society has achieved.