



corda fidelium sancti Spiritus Illustratione  
de eius semper consolatione gaudere  
Quid sit et regnat in unitate

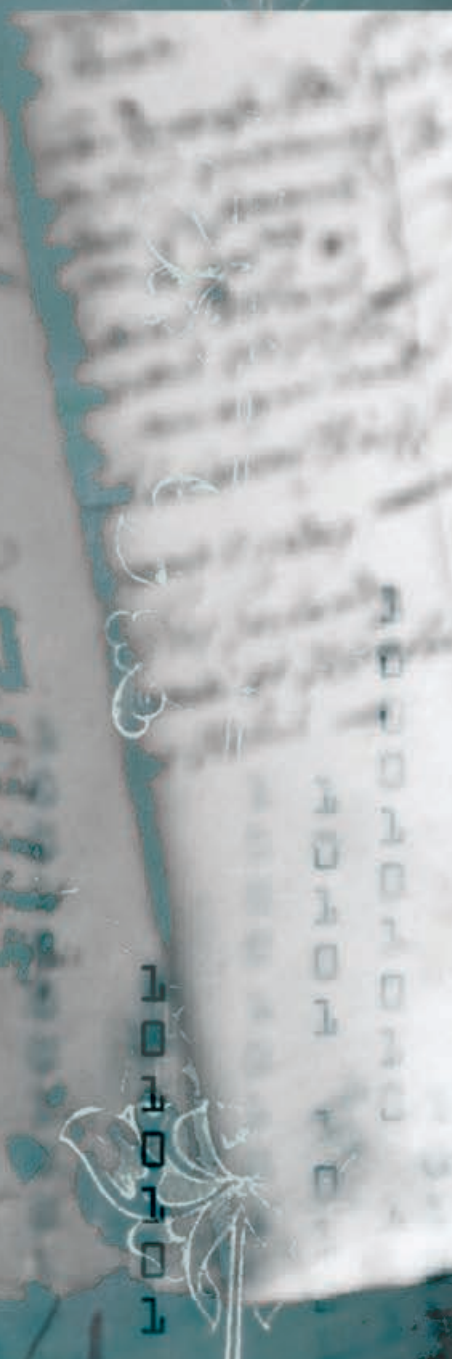


# N NOMINE

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Dni Millesimo sexcento  
Die vero Sabbathi Quarta  
Decima Quintae. Dominicae  
ALOFIO de Vigasco

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□ нчнхъ : неприятели .





# REPORT ON THE STATE OF MALTESE ARCHIVES

Compiled by the National Archives  
on behalf of the National Archives Council  
**February 2014**

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University of Malta; Mr Martin Hampton.

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## FOREWORD

BY THE HON **EVARIST BARTOLO** MP  
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

This is the third State of Archives Report since the requirement to publish such a document was included in the National Archives Act of 2005. Work is taking place to document the professional development of the sector, and also gradually build yardsticks against which to measure progress registered. This will make it possible to manage our rich archival heritage according to a well-planned strategy, rather than simply reacting in a piecemeal manner.

The report documents the valuable work done by our National Archives, which is gradually changing its focus. It's moving away from a repository mentality to concentrate on becoming the lead information specialist in records management, in both traditional formats and new media.

It is encouraging to see included in this report feedback from other archives, which, although not managed by the National Archives, are collaborating in making the national archival milieu healthier. I would like to thank the outgoing President and members of the previous National Archives Council for their endeavours in the past few years, which are reported in this document.

I am following the work of the current Council with great interest and anticipation. During its first meetings the Council has identified three main priorities for its three year term. These are:

- a. adequate buildings to house our public records;
- b. fulfilling legal obligations and appointing Records Officers in government entities and departments; and
- c. identifying the best ways to support non-government archives. I will be looking into the recommendations the Council makes in each of these three areas and I commit myself to support ideas that can be put into place.

We have started working to find long-term solutions to the problem of storage space and the provision of adequate buildings for the national archive collection. I am aware of the big challenge this poses, and the limitations we have in terms of finance and other resources, yet I am sure we can still find solutions to make us proud.

I believe that the whole archives sector in Malta has made great strides and the international events during the coming years will provide us with golden opportunities not only to showcase the richness of our heritage but also to put the archival science on a stronger footing in Malta.



## MESSAGE

FROM DR **WILLIAM ZAMMIT**

PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES COUNCIL

Going through the third State of Archives Report one cannot but feel a sense of elation at the remarkable progress that has been achieved where Maltese archives and records are concerned.

The notarial archives project is a major, though certainly not the only healthy example in this regard. Besides the obvious benefits of digitizing and uploading of digitized archival material to the professional researcher, exciting developments in this area also have the potential of making the non-specialist public gradually more aware of the richness of the Maltese archival patrimony which has so much to offer where family history is concerned. This aspect of more immediate connectivity between our ecclesiastical and national archival heritage and the general public is perhaps one area that should be further exploited to increase the general public's interest in and appreciation of our written heritage.

A number of issues need to be tackled and it is the intention of the present National Archives Council to do so with all means at its disposal. Foremost among these is that pertaining to more adequate premises for the National Archives. More space-but also better services, improved environmental conditions and greater accessibility-all demand that this pivotal matter be addressed with urgency. Intimately related is the appointment of records officers within the civil service with the specific task of liaising with the National Archives to ensure the preservation and eventual access of state-generated records. These are two central issues that demand our immediate attention.

A word of appreciation is certainly due to all those who have given their time and effort for the benefit of our archival heritage. Among these are the past and present members of the National Archives Council, the Friends of the National Archives and so many others who often offer their services to a variety of Maltese archives on a purely voluntary basis. Last but certainly not least a word of appreciation is due to Minister Evarist Bartolo for his commitment to further the archival scene in Malta, as evidenced by his visit to our National Archives soon after assuming ministerial responsibility for them.

This is particularly obvious to those who, like me, have been familiar with the local archival scene for quite a few decades and can thus compare the present situation with that prior to the setting up of our National Archives as a distinct institution and-subsequently-as an entity in its own right. Premises have been acquired and equipped as needed, records and archives which in the previous context risked destruction are now being transferred to the national institution while user services have improved dramatically. Professional training in archives and records management is now being offered at a regular basis by our university and international contacts and the availability of foreign experts are enhancing the content of such courses, particularly where the various aspects relating to electronic records are concerned.

Equally crucial, public awareness as to the cultural value of our nation's records has increased considerably. We are witnessing some very ambitious projects where both public and private archival collections are concerned.





## MESSAGE

FROM **CHARLES J. FARRUGIA**  
NATIONAL ARCHAVIST

Monitoring the health of the archives sector is not an easy task. Each archival repository has its own identity, developing both from its history, legal or traditional foundation as well as from the resources and management tools it possesses. The fonds which constitute an archive also have their particular colourful history which often dictates the methods of preservation employed and the type of access to be granted. These challenges are very much present in the Maltese archives domain too.

The Maltese legislator's decision in 2005, to commit the National Archives Council to monitor the state of the Maltese archives every two years, was a decision towards transparency, accountability, and consistency. It is a guarantee that the often-forgotten holdings are revisited on a regular basis. It is a remarkable effort to bring the records out of the basement and into the boardroom. The first report was published in 2008 and based its findings on a questionnaire covering various aspects of the operations of the main archival entities.

This is the third such exercise. It puts before us more data on certain aspects of the profession and focus on areas considered as a national priority at the moment. On the whole, the report registers consistent and extensive developments on various fronts. In fact, the last two years registered greater awareness on the value of archives for society, and greater support by the government and NGO's alike. We also witnessed the successful hosting of the CITRA conference in Malta, an event which placed the Maltese archives sector at the forefront of international archival activity.

These achievements make us all proud. Notwithstanding, there are areas which need to be focused upon. A top preoccupation is the lack of purpose-built archival repositories in the country.

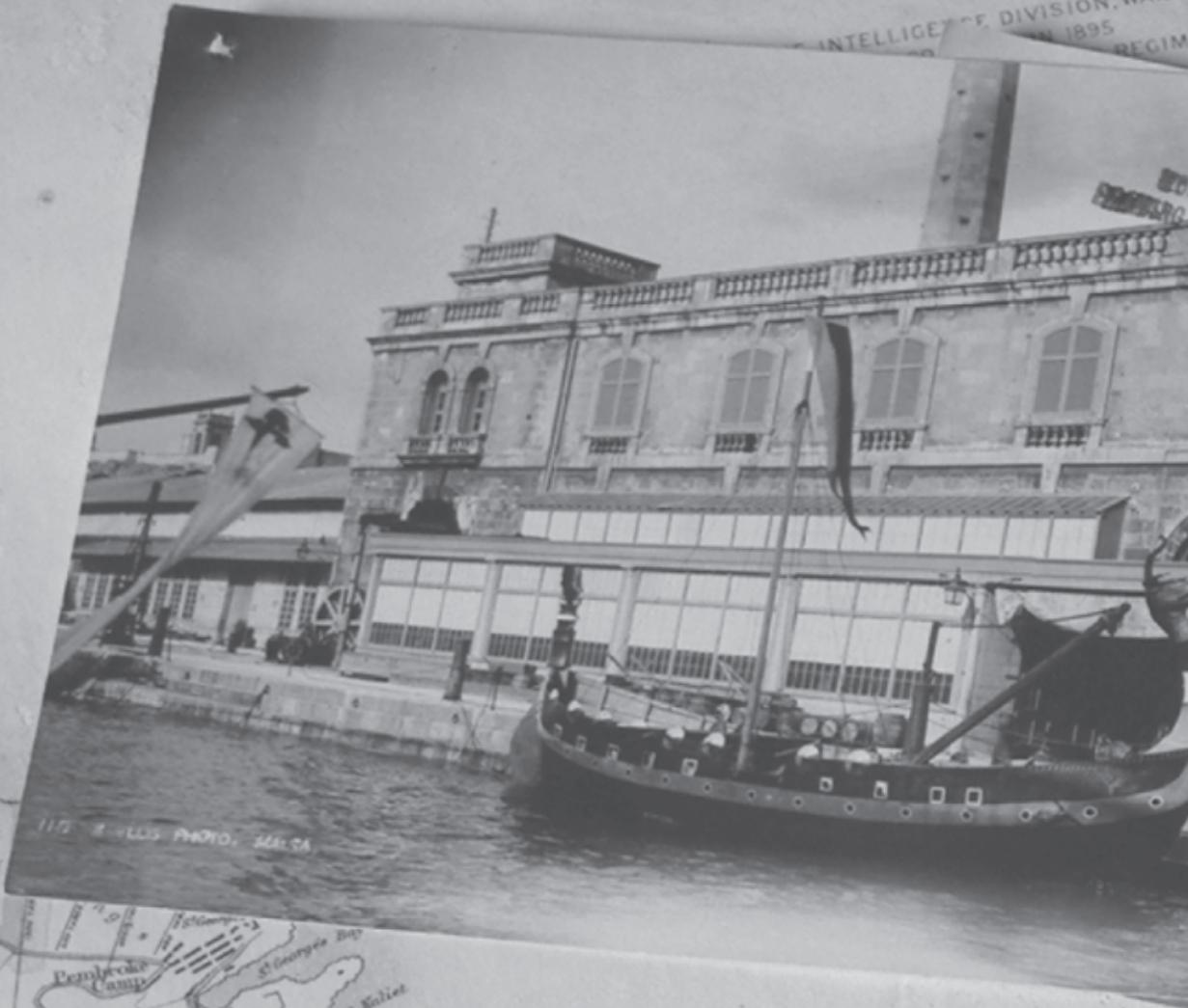
The second drawback is the lack of accessibility of most of our reading rooms. Now that the legal structure is an effective and modern one, that we are training archivists locally and employing professionally-trained staff, the issues of buildings and physical accessibility need to come to the focus of the authorities.

The last two years also saw the development of the National Archives web-site and the on-line infrastructure of the National Register of Archives. During the next two years we plan to refine this tool and promote it amongst archivists and other Maltese repositories whilst ensuring the widest participation possible. This is a very effective tool, through which even small, understaffed and underfinanced archives may have their basic finding aids available on-line for the public.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all persons and entities responsible for archives in Malta for their effort to preserve our holdings and make them as widely accessible as possible. I also invite everybody to send us views, criticism, and suggestions on how we may improve this periodic review.

# MAP OF THE ISLANDS OF MALTA

INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, WAR OFFICE  
1895  
REGIMENT



1172 - ILLUS PHOTO, MALTA



LAND



OFFICE.  
ENT DAAG.



NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES COUNCIL

## AIM OF THE REPORT

The Report on the State of Maltese Archives is a requirement under article 15 (2) of the National Archives, Act 2005 (Cap. 477 of the Laws of Malta), which states that the National Archives Council, set up by article 14 of the same law “shall biannually convene a National Forum about the archives, to discuss the state of the archives generally after receiving a relative report to be drawn up by the Council.” This report aims to collate as much data as possible about the current state of archives in Malta.

### 1.1 THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES COUNCIL

Article 14 of the National Archives Act (2005) stipulates that:

1. There shall be a National Archives Council, appointed by the Minister, which shall be composed as follows:
  - a. A Chairperson;
  - b. The Superintendent of Cultural Heritage ex officio or his representative;
  - c. The Chairperson of Heritage Malta ex officio or his representative;
  - d. The National Librarian ex officio or his representative;
  - e. The Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister ex officio or his representative;
  - f. A person to represent the non-governmental archives or records centres;
  - g. Three other persons chosen from amongst persons known to be users of and familiar with archives, records management and information professions, or working in non-governmental organizations dedicated to information and archives, one of whom shall be appointed by the Minister responsible for Gozo.
2. The National Archivist and the Assistant National Archivist for Gozo shall attend all the meetings of the Council but shall not vote at such meetings:

Provided that the Council may, if it deems so fit, require the National Archivist and the Assistant National Archivist for Gozo not to attend any of the meetings or any part of a meeting.
3. The members of the Council shall be appointed for a term of three years, but the members so appointed shall be eligible for reappointment on the expiration of their term of office.
4. The meetings of the Council shall be called by the Chairperson as often as may be necessary but at least once every two months either on his own initiative or at the request of any two of the other members.
5. Half the number of the members for the time being constituting the Council shall form a quorum. Decisions shall be adopted by a simple majority of the votes of the members present and voting. The Chairperson shall have an initial vote and in the event of an equality of votes, a casting vote.
6. Any member who has a direct or indirect interest in any contract or other action made or proposed to be made by the Council in connection with the National Archives, shall disclose the nature of his interest at the first meeting of the Council after the relevant facts have come to his knowledge. Such disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, and such member shall withdraw from any meeting while such matter is discussed or decided upon by the Council.
7. Subject to the provisions of this Act and to such procedures as may be prescribed, the Council shall regulate its own proceedings.

## 1.2 FUNCTIONS

Article 15 of the same legislation defines the functions of the Council:

Without prejudice to the provisions of this Act, the Council shall

- a. Promote the National Archives and other record keeping entities;
  - b. Ensure and facilitate the collaboration between the different stakeholders with direct or indirect responsibility for the protection and management of the archives sector;
  - c. Advise the Minister on the management of archives in Malta;
  - d. Draw the attention of the Minister or of any organisation or person responsible for archives to any urgent action that may be considered necessary for the better management of archives and records;
  - e. Advise the Minister on any matter arising from the provisions of this Act and on any other matter referred to it by the Minister.
2. The Council shall also biannually convene a National Forum about the archives to discuss the state of the archives generally after receiving a relative report to be drawn up by the Council. There shall be invited to attend at such Forum, among others, Departments and other Government entities, Mayors of Local Councils, owners of private archives and their archivists, non-governmental organisations having an interest in the maintenance and safeguarding of archives and public records, the University of Malta, other educational institutions, specialists, consultants, representatives of the commercial sector, persons who make use of the archives, and any such other party showing to the Council in writing that it has an interest therein. The Forum procedures shall be published and sent to the Minister.
3. The Council shall give public notice one month in advance of the meeting of the Forum which shall be chaired by the President who is to be appointed by the Council.

## 1.3 COUNCIL MEMBERS

In 2009, The former Hon. Dolores Cristina, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport appointed the following members to sit on the second National Archives Council for a period of three years, with effect from the 29 May 2009:

### **President**

Magistrate Dr Joseph Cassar

### **Members**

Dr Anthony Pace, Superintendent of Cultural Heritage

Ms Isabel Vella, on behalf of Heritage Malta

Ms Maroma Camilleri, on behalf of the Libraries Department

Mr Leonard Callus, on behalf of the Office of the Prime Minister

Mgr. Rev. Ġwann Azzopardi

Dr Lillian Sciberras

Mr Max Farrugia

Mr John Cremona

The National Archivist, Mr Charles J. Farrugia and the Assistant National Archivist, Rev. Dr J Bezzina are requested to attend all Council meetings. The Council was reconfirmed by Minister Dolores Cristina on 19 May 2012.



*From left to right:  
Dr. L. Sciberras, M. Camilleri, Mgr. G. Azzopardi,  
M. Farrugia, Mag. J. Cassar, C. Farrugia,  
A. Hili, Dr. J. Bezzina, J. Cremona,*

## 1.4 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

During the period covering this report the National Archives Council met on nine occasions. During these meetings, the Council discussed various matters that were referred to it by the National Archivist, raised by the members of the Council, or proposed by administrators of other archives or stakeholders.

The following is an account of the Council meetings and the main issues that were discussed:

### 28 April 2011

- The first meeting was held at the National Archives Head Office in Rabat.
- Mr C. Farrugia briefed the Council about the National Forum on the state of the Maltese archives that was held on 9 February 2011 at the Institute of Tourism Studies in St. Julian's. He was very pleased with the overall attendance (seventy participants) and remarked that there was a high level of participation during this forum. The minutes and transcripts of the event were to be forwarded to the Council members for their feedback, prior to their publication.
- Members expressed their disappointment at the level attendance of the local councils at the same Forum. Mr Charles Farrugia replied that the National Archives was planning a half-day seminar, targeted towards the local councils, to explain to them in greater detail the upkeep of records .
- The training opportunities for archivists in Malta, particularly the progress of the training courses organised by the University of Malta were discussed.
- The National Archivist informed the council that a considerable number of old passport applications, totalling three truck loads, were to be transferred to the National Archives. The lengthy sorting exercise of these records had already been carried out at the Public Registry.
- The Right of Preference legislation, whereby public documents that ended up illicitly in private possession may be reclaimed by the National Archives of Malta, was discussed. Currently two cases were being dealt with by the National Archives, namely a collection of letters pertaining to Charitable Institutions, going back to 1880, which were sold at an auction, and a Central Hospital Register.
- The issues of an extension to the National Archives building and the future of the Notarial Archives were also discussed at this meeting.
- On the occasion of the 22nd anniversary of the setting up of the Gozo section of the National Archives, Rev. Dr J. Bezzina spoke about his plans to organise a special exhibition during July 2011 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Gozo Civic Council. During this event, Dr Franco Masini was to donate the Giulana Masini to the National Archives.

## 21 July 2011

- The second meeting was held at the National Archives Head Office in Rabat.
- Further talks were held with the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Employment, Education and the Family, regarding proposals for alternative sites for the National Archives, such as the availability of the ex-Computer Centre in Swatar, Dingli. In the eventuality of no premises being vacant, another option was put forward to initiate a process through the Planning and Priorities Coordination Department within the OPM, for the proposal of a formal request to the E.U. for funding.
- Mr C. Farrugia informed the Council that the transfer of the remaining backlog of old passport applications to the Hal Far repository had been completed; in future this exercise was to be carried out on an annual basis.
- The Council agreed on a proposal for the initiation of talks regarding the possibility of strengthening the provisions regarding the Right of Preference in the archival sector.
- Dr William Zammit delivered a presentation on the introduction of a new three year full-time honours degree course in Archives and Library Studies at the University of Malta, taking the place of both the Diploma course and the B.A. in Archives. A discussion among the council members ensued.
- Rev. Dr J Bezzina spoke about an exhibition held in Gozo to mark the 50th anniversary of the Gozo Civic Council and distributed a commemorative catalogue issued on the occasion. During this event, which was inaugurated by the Hon. Prime Minister, the Archives received two significant donations: the Giuliana Masini, consisting of eighty volumes, from Dr Franco Masini, and a collection of documents of the Gozo Civic Council from the Vella Muskat family. Rev. Dr J Bezzina thanked both the archives staff in Malta and Gozo for their valid contribution in sorting these documents.
- Mr C. Farrugia updated members regarding the impending transfer of old patient records from the Ministry of Health to the National Archives. He also touched on the finalisation of a tender for the procurement of a van to alleviate the transport difficulties frequently encountered in the Archives repositories.

## 15 September 2011

- The third Council meeting was convened at the National Archives Section in Victoria, Gozo. Prior to this encounter, the Chairperson and members of the Council met the Minister for Gozo, the Hon. Giovanna Debono. The Minister thanked all those present for this initiative and commended the Chairperson, the National Archivist and the Assistant National Archivist for the continued collaboration between Maltese and Gozitan archive sectors. She also mentioned that the hard work that Rev. Dr J Bezzina had been carrying out in connection with the issue of human resources had finally resulted in the approval of two new posts. Minister Debono briefed the Council members about developments and progress with regards to the plans for new premises, suitable for the ever-increasing needs. She informed the Council that a meeting had already been held with the Hon. Prime Minister with a view to identifying a location that would meet archival requirements while at the same time keeping in line with the objectives of the Eco Gozo Programme. Mr C. Farrugia informed the Hon. Minister about the new full time course leading to a degree in Archive and Library Studies that is being offered by the University of Malta. Rev. Dr J Bezzina thanked the Minister and her staff for their continued support and collaboration.
- The Council then convened at the Archives Section in Triq il-Vajringa, Victoria.
- The Council was updated about the pending issues concerning the proposal for new premises, and the Right of Preference legislation. In

*Tourism exhibition - Director Julian Zarb together with ITS students*





*Exhibition commemorating the bestowal of the title of Città Victoria.*

the latter case, Magistrate Joseph Cassar stated that the proposed amendments are already included in the legislation, but unfortunately they are not being enforced.

- Rev. Dr J Bezzina gave an overview of the various functions of the National Archives Section in Gozo. He explained that the premises are made up of the main hall which also serves as a reading room, and a store. He added that the cataloguing is carried out by him; the book binding services are carried out by Mr Anthony Calleja, while Ms Mary Anne Curmi is responsible for the administrative and clerical division. The new posts envisaged were those of an Archives Assistant and a photographer. The former should replace Mr Calleja after his retirement later on in the year. The photographer should be responsible for the new digital laboratory following in-house training provided by the National Archives in Malta. Rev. Dr J Bezzina emphasised that the serious lack of space was preventing this archive from acquiring any further records. The recruitment of the new officers will further accentuate the need for adequate premises. Rev. Dr J Bezzina mentioned the prestigious Giuliana collection that had been recently donated to the Archives by the Masini family, and another collection of photographs dating back to 1840, which were digitised and are now available on DVD. Rev. Dr J Bezzina concluded by thanking the Council for holding the meeting in Gozo.
- Mr C. Farrugia briefed members about a television documentary series featuring the major archives in Malta and Gozo to be broadcast on Channel 22 over the coming weeks. The National Archives was a main supporter of the production of this series.

#### **24 November 2011**

- The fourth meeting was held at the National Archives in Rabat. Mr C. Farrugia informed the Council that the National Archives was engaged with the Housing Authority and Malta Enterprise to identify storage space that was badly needed for the archival holdings.
- The National Archivist briefed the Council about structural works being carried out at the National Archives. A call for tenders for carrying out the necessary works at Halls A and B, as well as the arches, had been issued.
- The budgetary allocation for the following year was increased to a total of 335,000 euro. Other projects were included in the projections for 2012, namely the installation of a lift to facilitate access for elderly and disabled visitors; restoration works to the columns in the main façade of the Banca Giuratale; and refurbishment works at the rear section of Santo Spirito under the supervision of the Restoration Unit.
- Mr C. Farrugia briefed the Council about the Archives Awareness Week, 30 November to 7 December, the main event being a public lecture by Architect Dr Conrad Thake, B.E&A (Hons), MA, PhD (Berkeley), A&C.E entitled "An International Competition for the Reconstruction of the Royal Opera House in Valletta". During the weekend of the 2-3 December, the Friends of the National Archives were planning to organise a book fair as a fund raising event towards the digitisation of the Ordinance Department plans held at the Archives. During the week in question there will also be organised visits from schools taking place at regular intervals. Another event during this period was the inauguration of the Tourism Exhibition at the Auberge d'Italie on 2 December.
- The National Archivist informed the members about discussions held to preserve the burial records at the Addolorata Cemetery.
- The National Archives was holding talks with Dr Chris Said, Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Local Government, with a view to organise a seminar for Local Councils. During this seminar, Mr Michael Bonnici was to present the National Archives with a donation of books related to the Kunsill Ċiviku.
- Mr Mario V. Gauci, the resident conservator at the National Archives, was concluding a comprehensive report on the current state of all the collections within the archives. The restoration laboratory was nearing completion and should be fully functioning by March 2012, when the leaf casting machine is commissioned; new recruits were being trained in book binding techniques. In the meantime, the procedures for the recruitment of an assistant conservator were being concluded.



## 1 March 2012

- The National Archives Head Office was once again the venue for the fifth meeting held in March.
- The lack of storage space was becoming precarious. Storage was close to full capacity following the recent handing over by MEPA of a series of records. The possibility of storage space at the vacant Rabat Primary School was discussed and the National Archivist was asked to explore the issue with the Ministry of Education.
- Mr C. Farrugia informed the Council that all the structural works within the National Archives in Rabat have been completed and the next project was the restoration of the façade of the Banca Giuratale, already approved by the Restoration Unit.
- Following a downward review of their budgetary provisions, the National Archives' allocation for 2012 was decreased by 17,000 euro.
- Mr C. Farrugia briefed the Council about the Archives Awareness Week held in November-December 2011. The overall feedback from various participants was very positive. The public lecture was well-attended and the audience showed a keen interest in Dr Thake's presentation. Attendance at the fund-raising book fair was also satisfactory, and 1,000 euro were raised towards the digitisation of the Ordinance Department plans.
- Talks with the Hon. Dr Chris Said with respect to the planned seminar for Local Councils had to be called off due to the change in ministerial duties and the matter was to be dealt with the Hon. Minister Dr Carm Mifsud Bonnici.
- Works on the new Restoration Laboratory have been completed, thanks to the refurbishment carried out by Mr Michael Bonnici and the conservator Mr Mario V. Gauci. All the equipment has been delivered and commissioned. The official launch of the laboratory was being planned for June.
- The recruitment of new staff within the National Archives was approved and a call for applications for the post of an assistant conservator was issued. An officer within the Gozo Section has also commenced duties, while a number of applications for prospective archives assistants were being processed.
- Mr C. Farrugia spoke about the publication of the Annual Report for 2011, and informed the Council that this should be finalised soon. This year the report will have some slight changes from previous editions due to the introduction of records management assessments within the departments.
- The third State of the Archives Report, according to the Archives Act, was to be included in the agenda in order to be discussed at length during the next Council meeting.
- Mr C. Farrugia referred to the press release, circulated among the Council members, regarding the possibility that the premises of the Banca Giuratale may be taken over by the Mdina Local Council. Following a meeting with Minister Dr Chris Said and the Mdina mayor, Mr C. Farrugia made it clear that he finds no objection to this move, as long as the archives are given a suitable alternative that is larger, more accessible to researchers. The Council agreed to discuss this matter with Minister Dr Carm Mifsud Bonnici.

*The Mdina Festival on 16 April 2012  
and the Book Bazaar during the Archives Awareness week 2011*



- Rev. Dr J Bezzina briefed the Council about the current situation in the Gozo Archives. A hall within the Gharb Primary School premises has been allocated to the archives for the temporary storage of certain records, including court documents, fines and ledgers that up to now had to be kept in the main office of the Gozo Section. Once these are moved, the freed space should be utilised for records that are in constant demand by researchers.

## 5 May 2012

- The sixth meeting was held at the Head Office of the National Archives in Rabat. The first item to be discussed was the pressing need for additional storage space at the National Archives. Following the discussion held during the last meeting concerning the Rabat Primary School option, Mr C. Farrugia informed the members of the Council that he had received a positive reply from the Education Ministry. It was agreed that the school will put two rooms at the Archivist's disposal to be used for storage purposes. This agreement was to be officially endorsed during a meeting to be held with the Director General at the Directorate for Educational Services and the Head of School on 9th May. However, focus will remain on the long-term storage space solution. In fact the National Archives of Malta was preparing a formal proposal to look into the possibility of building modern purposely built premises.
- Mr C. Farrugia informed the Council that permits for the works on the façade of the Banca Giuratale in Mdina, to be overseen by the Restoration Unit, had been issued.
- Mr C. Farrugia informed the Council members that the National Archives Annual Report for 2011 had just been published. Whilst circulating a copy to all those present, Mr Farrugia explained that such a document has to be presented in Parliament by the eighth week of the year. Certain features worth highlighting included:
  - Research patterns revealed some interesting trends. The archival statistics show a decrease in the number of researchers that visited the archives. However this downward shift was compensated by a steady increase in research requests that were received online. Ms M Camilleri confirmed that such a shift was also noted at the National Library.
  - The report lists all entities that were supported by the Records Management Unit. The demand for this service is on the increase and is sought by Government as well as private entities.
  - The inauguration of the new Conservation Laboratory, due to take place in June.
  - The digitisation projects that are being carried out at the Banca Giuratale and details of the open weekend held in April in connection with the Mdina Medieval Festival.
- Another item raised by Mr C. Farrugia referred to the Diploma/Degree Course which has been available at the University of Malta since 2005. He said that last year the Centre for Communication Technology was upgraded and renamed the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences. Since then, the course is being offered on a full time basis only. Mr C. Farrugia added that this issue was discussed in the Board of Studies where he underlined the importance of keeping both courses (Archives and Libraries) on the same level. It was agreed to discuss this matter in more detail and it was suggested to hold a meeting with the Faculty Dean.
- According to the Archives Act, a State of Archives Report has to be published every two years. The main themes that were listed in the 2010 report were Digitisation projects and Local Councils' records. The development of the previous report by focusing in more depth on the Local Councils and the examination of the Register of Archives were suggested. It was agreed to carry out a pilot study in connection with the Register of Archives, with the participation of different archives, including the Wignacourt Museum Archives, the Monastery Archives and the National Library.



*Accessions made by the Gozo archives section, from the Gozo Local Councils.*



*Invitation for the inauguration of the Laboratory*

## 26 July 2012

The seventh meeting of the National Archives Council was once again held at the office of the National Archivist in Rabat. Following the approval of the previous meetings' minutes, there were some matters arising which were discussed.

- The first one concerned the structural works being carried out in connection with the restoration of the Banca Giuratale in Mdina. Mr Charles Farrugia informed the Council that he had prepared a report illustrating the importance of retaining these premises. This document was forwarded to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Home and Parliamentary Affairs.
- A discussion was held with the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences in connection with the course content of the archives-related courses offered at the University of Malta.
- Mr Charles Farrugia informed the Council that the inauguration of the Conservation Laboratory was held on 19 June. It is now functioning with the assistance of two new full time conservators. Mr Farrugia also touched on the survey of the holdings being carried out at the National Archives, taking stock of the current situation. Another undertaking is the preservation of Law Court records, that go back to 1799, previously stored at St Elmo. 400 boxes of documents are being catalogued with the view of opening them for public access.
- As regards the storage space at the Government school in Rabat, the National Archivist informed the Council that the four rooms allocated to the Archives have already been put to good use through the transfer of several Department of Contract documents. Such measures are of a temporary nature and the National Archives will keep on working for purpose-built premises.
- The newly set up Records Management Unit, equipped by a new van, is being run by a full-time Inspector of Records, carrying out onsite inspections.
- The following entities have transferred records to the National Archives in recent months:
- Government Property Division (490 rent rolls), several Embassies of Malta, Police Academy files transferred from St. Elmo, MEPA building permits, including 2 volumes of indexes from Gozo, Transport Malta, Audit Office and the Attorney General Office. An extensive music collection of Maestro Charles Camilleri, was donated by his family.
- Mr Farrugia gave a brief presentation about the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM), an international body that links archival institutions, archivists and record managers within the Commonwealth. This association, currently presided by Mr Farrugia, is actively seeking to revamp its organisation and a strategy group was set up to discuss the current situation and propose a way forward to rejuvenate the association. The strategy group is to meet in Malta in August.
- The Freedom of Information legislation comes into effect on 1 September 2012. Mr Farrugia highlighted that the holdings at the National Archives are legally exempt from this legislation, while administration documents are not.

## 20 September 2012

The eighth meeting of the National Archives Council was held at the office of the National Archivist in Rabat.

- It was envisaged that the restoration of the Banca Giuratale façade in Mdina be completed in October. Discussions were under way with the architect responsible for the whole project to assess the damages caused by the recent storms.
- Following a number of meetings and discussions with the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences, an agreement was reached whereby the Archives Courses at the University of Malta will be reintroduced in October 2013.
- The drawing up of State of the Archives Report for 2012 was in course and the draft was to be circulated to the Council members for feedback.
- The National Archivist informed the Council that the storage space allocated to the archives at the school in Rabat was being rapidly used up. The Contracts' Department records, transferred from the Central Supplies Offices in Qormi, were being selected and catalogued to be deposited in this facility together with the Rent Rolls (Government Property Division). In order to alleviate this problem of space shortage Mr Charles Farrugia put forward a proposal for the issue of a tender for shelving, ideally the mobile type. An architect had been appointed to

carry out load-bearing tests. Negotiations were also being carried out with a view to acquiring more storage space.

- Mr Charles Farrugia referred to a recent speech delivered by the Hon Prime Minister wherein he expressed the intention of the Government to consider ways of acquiring funds to be able to invest in a new building that would be able to house all the state archives under one roof. Following these comments a formal letter was sent by the Friends of the National Archives to the Prime Minister, supporting his statement and offering their assistance. The National Archives on their part drafted a report and forwarded it to the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment. Further studies were carried out to identify two possible sites for such a project, and also to quantify the extent of available records. A meeting was held with the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance to discuss the possibility of including a vote allocation in the forthcoming budget for the funding of a preliminary study and costing of a new building.
- Several initiatives to ascertain that archival studies will continue being held were undertaken by the Chairperson of the Board of Studies within the Department of Library, Archives and Information Studies. Since it is now held on a full-time basis, the course will have a new structure.
- Mr Charles Farrugia informed the Council of the new collective agreement for Archives personnel being negotiated and other engagements at the National Archives, including the recruitment of a Digital Preservation Officer responsible for the management of the archives server and related software and the detailing of a maintenance officer.

## 6 December 2012

The Council's ninth meeting was held at the National Archives Head Office in Rabat.

- The structural works on the columns of the Banca Giuratale were completed and the next step will now be the restoration works on the whole façade.
- A new course description and relevant regulations for archives courses are being drafted for the next course intake starting October 2013.
- Mr Farrugia had a meeting with the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance regarding the new archives premises. Although a detailed proposal has been submitted, the Budget proposed for 2013 did not include allocations for the new building or for preliminary studies.
- The rooms allocated to the National Archives at the Rabat school have been fitted with shelving obtained from the former Air Malta Head Office. 3000 boxes were transferred from the airline offices and the space is now fully occupied. Following a meeting with the Education Minister a further 9 rooms have been earmarked as storage space, but these are awaiting clearance from the Director General pending the conclusions of a load-bearing exercise.
- A new collective agreement covering the personnel employed at the three archive branches was signed in the beginning of December.

Mr Farrugia informed the Council members about the budget allocations for 2013. Whereas previous years had witnessed gradual increases from 285,000 to 335,000 euro, this year the sum voted is back to 285,000 euro and thus capital expenditure will have to be put on hold.

Discussions are under way with MITA regarding technical issues concerning the electronic ID facility and the impact on accessibility of the National Archives' services.

A meeting with the Local Councils' Association Secretary Mr Jimmy Magro was held to present and explain the draft Classification Scheme for local councils developed by Rev. Dr J Bezzina. Following Mr Magro's review and feedback, the revised document will then be forwarded to the Ministry responsible for local government before being circulated to all the Local Councils for eventual implementation.

The main events during the Archives Awareness Week held in November included:

- the lecture by Mr Andy O'Dwyer, Research Development Officer at the BBC, and
- the exhibition of 24 architectural drawings, forming part of the bequest donated by Architect Carm Falzon, related to the building of Television House in 1962.

Mr Farrugia informed the Council of the agreement reached with the widow of Maestro Charles Camilleri for the acquisition of over 240 original compositions. These are now being catalogued and shall be open for research once the exercise has been concluded.



*Annual Public lecture by  
Mr Andy O'Dwyer - Challenges for Archives in an  
Olympic Year -  
27 November 2012*

*Exhibition of the music and memorabilia of composer  
Charles Camilleri followed by a concert in his honour  
and the signing of the bequest agreement - 29  
November 2012*



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NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES OPERATIONS

As in previous years, the personnel at the National Archives were very busy during the period under review. The following is a detailed breakdown of the various activities carried out within the specific units in each of the three repositories, as well as information regarding the several events reserved for the general public.

### 2.1 RECORDS MANAGEMENT UNIT

The principal role of the Records Management Unit is to focus on the inspection of all records present within Government entities and the subsequent evaluation of those documents that are earmarked for accessioning by the National Archives. In 2010 the RMU continued receiving requests from different Government departments for assistance regarding the assessment of retention schedules. Among these were various queries from the Passports Office, the Telecare Office, the Commerce Division, and the Office of the Prime Minister. In order to set off the process leading to the creation of an Inspectorate Unit, the National Archives recruited an Inspector of Records in November 2010, and during the same period initiated work on the refurbishment of the offices which will house the Records Management Unit. Throughout the same year, the National Archives organised a nationwide training seminar with the theme: "Records Management on the advent of Freedom of Information legislation". The main speaker at these events was the Secretary of the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers, Dr Teresa Bastow. The seminar was organised in cooperation between the National Archives and ACARM, and was well attended by a number of officers from various public departments and entities.

Works on the refurbishment of the RMU office were completed by March 2011 and the Unit was formally set up within the National Archives structure. The Inspector of Records continued receiving further training and was also provided with a commercial vehicle in order to facilitate onsite inspections and the transfer of records.

In 2011 the Records Management Unit was involved in the drawing up of a retention schedule for all records within the Public Service that are associated with human resources. This was done in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister and the Commissioner for Data Protection. Throughout the year the RMU inspected various Government entities, amongst which the Enemalta Corporation, the Malta Offshore Bunkering Limited and the Public Registry. The Unit also assisted them in the proper selection and assessment of records in their possession. Throughout the year, the RMU also received several queries directly related to records management from different departments and responded accordingly. By collaborating with these entities the Records Management Unit managed to identify records which were no longer required for the running of the organisations in question. Through a careful appraisal the Unit then selected all those records that were to be transferred to the National Archives. Such an exercise is in line with the principal scope of the National Archives Act, which is to ensure the preservation of historical records, while at the same time saving entities precious storage space and additional costs.

### 2.2 ARCHIVES PROCESSING UNIT

The Archives Processing Unit has a threefold function within the overall operation of the National Archives. The unit first receives those records that have been previously assessed and found eligible for archiving purposes. They are subsequently sorted and catalogued, and finally some are digitised to protect them for posterity.



## ACCESSIONS

The most ambitious project during 2010 was the accession of a vast collection of records belonging to the previous tourism authorities. These documents, dating from 1958 to the 1980s, had been kept in unbecoming storage conditions in a basement at St Christopher Street in Valletta. All the records were transferred to the Head Office of the National Archives, where they were cleaned, re-boxed and catalogued. This exercise was a joint effort between the National Archives of Malta, the Ministry for the Environment, Tourism and Culture and the Department of Tourism in the University of Malta.

There were other accessions worthy of note during 2010. A most extensive private donation was received from the tenor Mr Paul Ascjak, who presented to the National Archives the entire contents of an exhibition concerning his career's achievements. A further accomplishment was the collection of the Teachers' Documentation and Resources Centre. Following an official decision to allocate their premises in Floriana to the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, the Centre's records were transferred to the National Archives and merged into the repository's holdings. A similar exercise was carried out with some records of the former Malta Drydocks. Since the running of the shipyards was to be privatised, there was mutual agreement to retrieve a selection of documents created prior to privatisation. A number of these records were eventually received at the National Archives, while some others are temporarily kept in the custody of Heritage Malta. One other interesting accession came from Gozo in the form of a multimedia DVD containing hundreds of historical photographic images depicting life as it was recorded in Gozo during the past century or so. This was the result of a project carried out exclusively by Gozitan participants at the University of the Third Age, following a series of lectures conducted by National Archivist Mr Charles Farrugia entitled "Mill-Awtur sa l-Arkivji". Mr Anthony Bonello, a regular volunteer at the National Archives, was instrumental in the production of this DVD.

In 2011, the Archives Processing Unit was responsible for the accession of 183 volumes from the Ministry of Health the Elderly and Community Care. These documents contain patients' records created in various Maltese hospitals during the 19th and 20th century. Following another appraisal exercise carried out on records belonging to the now defunct Wireless and Telegraphy Department, over 5,000

files were selected and earmarked for subsequent accession by the National Archives. Other substantial records came from the Passports Department in the form of 263,000 passport applications dated between 1974 and 1998, which were merged with the existing collection kept at the Head Office. This invaluable fond now contains records that are readily available for public research, ranging from 1815 up to 1979. Together with these applications there were also 130 volumes of passport indexes dating from the 1950s to the 1970s.

During this same year the Attorney General's Office handed over to the National Archives a collection of records ranging from 1963 to 1980. These documents were all carefully listed and organised in appropriate boxes and folders at the AG's office, prior to their transfer. This procedure is in line with the new archives policy, whereby all departments and other government entities are empowered and trained to prepare material that is to be sent to the National Archives in the appropriate manner.

In 2011, there were several other donations arriving from the general public, which together combine a noteworthy contribution towards the enrichment of the overall archival holdings. Two significant collections were made to the National Archives in Gozo. The first was the Ġuljana Masini kindly donated by the Masini family, which consists of 88 manuscript volumes - ranging from the mid-16th century right up to the 1930s - in which are recorded nearly four centuries of baptisms, marriages, deaths, family trees and Notarial Acts. The second was an interesting collection of historical documents and memorabilia dealing with the former Gozo Civic Council. These records were meticulously compiled over the years by its first and only treasurer, Mr Victor Vella-Muskat. These donations are a clear indication that local citizens are steadily becoming more aware of our national heritage, and that the National Archives is turning out to be a trusted stakeholder in this evolving process.



*A student carrying out data input on some of the new accessions*

## SORTING AND CATALOGUING

The accession process is however only the first step in a series of time-consuming tasks that are gradually carried out by the Archives Processing Unit. Once new records have been received at the archives, they are sorted, re-organised and inputted in various databases in accordance with established international archival practices. Such an exercise could not be carried out without the valuable input of several local and foreign students. During 2010, these students carried out 3,374 hours of work, sorted 97 metres of records, inputted 950 entries in various databases, captured 3 metres of metadata from digitised documents, and performed other vital administrative work.

A subsequent procedure is the cataloguing of all holdings present in the archives, whereby the records are more accessible to the public. Through the continued assistance of volunteers, personnel at the archives are able to refer to the various lists and catalogues that were created or upgraded, and so retrieve more easily the records requested by researchers. During these two years, the cataloguing of the Governors' despatches was one of the main such projects, a task ably carried out by Mr Michael Ellul, a regular volunteer for over twenty years. Other work was carried out on the listing of the extensive Hansard collection, as well as on the records belonging to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism, the Aide-de-Camp, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Armed Forces of Malta. Due to obligations emanating from the international APEnet project, the Cataloguing Unit was also involved in discussions to explore how the various currently-available databases could be merged together to provide a centralised access via the archival website. Such development will also make possible the use of the same content in other EU projects, such as EUROPEANA.

## DIGITISATION

The final stage in the chain of activities carried out by the Archives Processing Unit is digitisation. This procedure plays a central role in the preservation efforts of the National Archives. Thanks to this practice, the lifespan of records in frequent demand is considerably prolonged as they do not suffer ulterior damage through constant wear and tear. The principal aim of digitisation is to allow researchers easy access of records without the need of physically handling the original documents. If the material is available online these records can also be viewed remotely any time, all over the world.

Throughout the years under review, the National Archives carried out several digitisation projects. Works continued on the two joint ventures initiated earlier on with the Hill Museum and Monastic Library and the Genealogical Society of Utah. So far, almost 220,000 images pertaining to the Magna Curia Castellania, and more than 570,000 pages from Shipping Registers of the Customs Department, have been digitised. Other similar tasks covered the photographic collection belonging to Mr Tony Terribile, the site maps and drawings from the Ordinance Department, the Cabrei drawings from the Works Record Room in Floriana and a sizeable donation of photographs from the Agius family that will be added to the already substantial Agius bequests.

In order to be in a position to produce all these results it is worth noting that the Archives Processing Unit has to keep investing in specialised digitisation equipment. In 2010 the Gozo Section inaugurated a new laboratory to allow it to continue preserving the records available, while at the same time making them more widely available to the general public. In 2011 the Map Room in Rabat was equipped with a new large format scanner. This apparatus will greatly facilitate digitisation services to the public as it allows the scanning of maps and plans while at the same time respecting their original scaling.

## 2.3 NEW CONSERVATION FACILITIES

The Conservation Laboratory was inaugurated on Tuesday 19 June by the Hon Dolores Cristina, Minister of Education and Mr Charles Farrugia, the National Archivist.

The process for the new setup took approximately twelve months to finalise. A conservator and an assistant conservator are employed, bringing together their expertise on several conservation projects. The work carried out by this section includes:

Magna Curia Castellania - various bundles (17-18th cent.) amounting to c. 2000 folios. Work consisting of mechanical cleaning, repairs by leaf casting and resewing in sections or bookform.

Civil defence vol. 14 - Zurrieq shelter drawings, (44 plans). Items were fragile and damp due to exposure to humidity. Drying between blotting paper and consolidation of fragile areas by backing with Japanese paper.

House of Representatives - Papers laid on the Table 1933. Work on consolidating the book block to the spine and repairs on a large plan attached to the book.

NAM Gozo Section - Descrizione di Gozo 1746, De Soldanis. Repairs on the first three sections and consolidation of the book block to the spine.

Also the team is involved in carrying out other work related to conservation namely; pest control, holdings condition surveys, exhibition set up, inspection and consultation visits.

Pest control includes two different treatments. Anoxia treatment of records involves the setting up an airtight tent (kill box), removing the oxygen and introducing carbon dioxide whilst keeping the internal temperature at a constant 25 °C. This guarantees the extermination of any insects present in the volumes. The other treatment is disinfestation by microwave; this involves exposing the documents to a high temperature for a few seconds under controlled conditions. This method ensures the elimination of any insect life.



*Cleaning of documents.  
Inauguration of the conservation lab  
using the leaf casting machine*



The Archival Holdings Condition Survey continued throughout the year bringing the total percentage of items surveyed to c. 80% of the whole collection. This survey aims to indicate and to bring to our attention the sections that require urgent interventions and also gives a clear picture of the various kinds and the relative amount of damage present.

The work related to exhibitions varied from the general layout of exhibitions, the mounting of the exhibits and the preparation of exhibition boards.

Inspection and consultation visits involve inspection of documents before transfer to the National Archives, consultation visit to other archives where practical advice is tendered on archival conservation practices.

New initiatives involved the creation of an electronic notification form for the reporting of damage in archival holdings. An electronic form was created for internal use among the archives staff so that any type of damage encountered in materials produced for researchers could easily be identified and reported to the Conservators for future intervention.

Informative tours about the Conservation laboratory and its workings are organised periodically.

## 2.4 PUBLIC SERVICES UNIT

The Public Services Unit is responsible for all dealings with the researchers and visitors in the three reading rooms, with the general public via the telephone system, fax, website, customer care e-mail, and other exposure through the media.

During 2010 the National Archives registered an increase in the demand for reading room services in Rabat, while there was a slight decrease for the same facility in Mdina. There was a considerable rise in the number of basic research requests reaching the archives over the phone or by e-mail. The same could be said for bookings by schools and cultural visits. Compared to the previous year, this year also saw an increase in the number of visits. Notwithstanding this increase, the visits were dealt with effectively without the use of additional human resources or further expenses by the National Archives. Another facility that was introduced this year made it possible for members of the general public to interact with the archives customer care section via the archives website. Payments could also be effected online by patrons who are registered via the electronic ID, available through the government portal. Customers living overseas, on the other hand, could still utilise the alternative log-in option.

In 2011 there was a marked growth in specialised requests reaching the Archives. There were significant demands from migrant communities abroad as well as submissions from foreign universities. Another interesting trend developed in the form of requests from local specialised companies eager to embark on particular research projects. The general assessment is that enquiries are moving away from the traditional fact-finding endeavour to a more proactive quest for knowledge inspired by the country's emphasis on research and innovation.

## 2.5 OUTREACH

This sector includes all those measures undertaken in order to reach out to the public, to explain the archives' mission to the society at large and focus on the underrepresented areas in our current patrons' profile. Organised visits to the archives include students from all levels in the educational system, University students from various faculties, students from the University of the Third Age, Local Councils, and also visits by professional bodies.

In 2010 the main outreach events consisted in the participation for the launch of a specialised publication "Malta's Lost Voices", and the Annual Public Lecture on the same theme, both of which were held in main reading room in Rabat during the last week of November. The book, which included also a double CD album, was a project covering long-forgotten overseas recordings of Maltese music from the 1930s. This publication was initiated, developed and researched by Mr Andrew Alamango. The National Archives co-sponsored this venture together with the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family. A public lecture was delivered by the author himself, who focused on the early 78rpm recordings registering Maltese music and singing in the early 20th century. The talk was followed by a presentation from sound engineer Mr Daniel Talma, who explained the painstaking work involved in the cleaning and restoration of the recordings chosen for the publication. The database concerning this publication is available for public research at the reading room of the National Archives.

Another source of outreach is the archives website which was further refined to keep the public informed about events happening at the National Archives. During this year, a volunteer offered to create and manage an archives account on Facebook, in an attempt to try and reach out to a wider audience. The result was very encouraging; in 2010, over 600 users logged in to this page, where they were able to view 17 photo albums containing 84 images, 13 notes and 3 events.

During 2010 the organisation of exhibitions at the Head Office had to be temporarily suspended due to the fact that the area usually allocated for such events was fully taken by truck loads of documents that had been accessioned in earlier months. Notwithstanding this the National Archives still managed to put up an exhibition at the Mdina repository and another two in the Gozo Section.

For a second consecutive year the Legal Documentation Centre and the Malta National Memory Project were both open for the Mdina Medieval Festival. This event was organised in April 2010 by the Mdina Local Council and the Secretariat for Local Government. Thousands of visitors had the opportunity to watch a wartime photographic/film presentation by Stanley Fraser. There were also other mid-20th century film documentaries which had been archived and digitised by the Department of Information. During this open weekend two particular lectures were open to the public: "Maltese Achievers in Australia", delivered by Mr Mark Caruana, and "Malta fi Żmien il-Gwerra", a talk about wartime Malta presented by Professor Henry Frendo. The first exhibition in Gozo was held in May 2010 during the "Lejlet Lapsi - Notte Gozitana" activities. The theme chosen was "Dettalji Arkitettoniċi fid-djar antiki ta' Ghawdex" and dealt with salient architectural features that are to be found in houses of character around Gozo. On display were forty first-class photographs emphasising the disappearing architectural features in particular period houses. The second event, held in October of the same year, was a continuation of the first exhibition and was entitled "L-Arkitettura domestika f'Ghawdex - Wirt dejjem jonqos", an eye-opening reminder to Gozo's dwindling architectural heritage. The display was divided into two sections: the first consisted of documents related to building permits that go back as far as 1575. The second was made up of photographs, old and new, demonstrating the declining domestic architecture of days gone by.

The year 2010 marked a noticeable increase in educational and cultural visits to the various repositories. This was in line with the National Archives' policy of open access, which aims to intensify events by schools and other organisations such as local councils. Students from different schools, ranging from secondary up to university levels, had the opportunity to visit the archives on planned educational tours. In each tour a concerted effort was made to try and present to the students not only the historical aspect of the holdings but also the archival principles underlying the work at the archives. These visits are planned well in advance, in collaboration with the teachers involved, in order to make sure that the presentation as well as the type of records on display, is in line with the educational level of the students.

Another significant aspect is the ever-growing interest for internships by students, both local and foreign. The National Archives signed agreements with three local companies - Across Limits, Future Focus and Paragon Europe - to direct students to the opportunities existing at the National Archives. During 2010 the archives hosted no less than 28 students from Malta, Italy, Germany, France, England and Romania. The following year the number went up to 41, and during the same period the National Archives signed an agreement with the University of Parma that guarantees the exchange of future interns reading for a degree in Digital Data Management.

Throughout 2011, the National Archives organised several public events. In May, the Legal Documentation Section in Mdina hosted visitors attending the annual Mdina Medieval Festival, where one could view the new additions to the National Portrait Gallery and purchase publications and other related material. During this open weekend the repository was manned by staff from the National Archives, assisted by a number of volunteers from the Friends of the National Archives. In July the Gozo Section put up an exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of the first Gozo Council. The records on display included

40 documents related to its foundation and the workings of both the Committee and the Council. There were also over a hundred photographs of the main protagonists, as well as old and new emblems of all the fourteen electoral districts in which Gozo was divided. In October the National Archives set up an exhibition entitled "Witness to War", which consisted of a selection of photographs taken by Stan Fraser, a British soldier, during World War II. This exhibition was held in the chapel at Santo Spirito, in connection with the Rabat Arts Festival and was very well-attended.

During November and December an exhibition, pertaining to the same theme chosen for the annual public lecture, was put up in Rabat throughout the Archive Awareness Week. The exhibits included a series of unique plans, drawings and small scale models of some of the proposed entries submitted by various participants who took part in an international competition organised in 1953 with the aim of rebuilding the Royal Opera House. A novel participation by the National Archives came in the form of a joint exhibition entitled "50 years of Tourism Development in Malta and Gozo", held in December, together with the Ministry of Tourism and the Institute of Tourism, Travel and Culture from the University of Malta. This event marked the end of the first phase in the archiving of three truck loads of documents that had been previously received from the Ministry of Tourism. During the month of December the National Archives allowed the use of the chapel for the holding of a book bazaar over three days, which was organised by the Friends of the National Archives as a fund-raising event. The proceeds of this fair went towards the digitisation of the archival plans from the Ordinance Department.

*Meeting of the participants of the European Bureau of National Archivists and the European Archives Expert Group 11-12 October 2012 Cyprus*



## 2.6 INTERNATIONAL FORA

During the two years under review the National Archives kept up its momentum of active participation in international conventions. Thanks to these meetings a number of archival staff had the opportunity to extend the Maltese presence internationally, meet fellow archivists and enable the exchange of ideas with their foreign counterparts:

### EUROPEANA

Europeana is the common access point to the collections of libraries, archives and museums from all over Europe. The National Archives of Malta is presently a major coordinating entity for Europeana at a local level. In November 2010, Mr Joseph Amodio represented the National Archives during a workshop entitled "Your metadata on the web". This was held at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek - the National Library of the Netherlands - in Den Haag. The workshop focused on the Europeana Data Provider Agreement which endeavours to see all metadata in the context levels published by the providers as Open Data.

### ARCHIVES PORTAL EUROPE - APENET

The National Archives is one of the leading partners in this project, which seeks to develop an internet gateway for all the National Archives within the European Union. The ultimate aim of this project is the launching of the pilot Archives Portal Europe, in January 2011. In June 2010 Rev. Dr Joseph Bezzina and Mr Noel D'Anastas attended the Second General Assembly meeting in Leon. This conference reviewed the progress of the project, the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) profile and validation, the architecture and functionalities of the portal, and the expansion of the network. In November 2010, Mr D'Anastas was also present for the WP4 workshop, which was held in Paris for those European Archives that are content providers. This meeting focused mainly on problems encountered by the APENet partners, such as the export of databases, and data which is non ISAD/G compliant.

In 2011, there were two APENet meetings that were held in March and June. The first one was organised in Brussels and was attended by Mr Etienne Ferrito and Mr Joseph Amodio. During this meeting various progress reports were reviewed, the way forward was discussed and a general strategy was devised. Mr Noel D'Anastas and Mr Ivan Ellul participated in the second conference in Stockholm which consisted of a presentation on Europeana and intensive workshops regarding EAD (Encoded Archival Description) and EAC-CPF (Encoded Archival Context - Corporate Bodies, Person, Families).

## INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES - ICA

The International Council on Archives (ICA) seeks to promote the management and use of records and archives and the preservation of the archival heritage of humanity around the world, through the sharing of experiences, research and ideas on professional archival and records management matters and on the management and organisation of archival institutions. The National Archives kept up its active participation in ICA, particularly through its European Branch - EURBI- CA, and in the Bureau of the International Conference of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA). Discussions were also held with ICA with the objective of adopting the newly developed open source archival description software (ICA-AtoM) by the National Archives. In September Rev. Dr J Bezzina represented Malta at the CITRA 2010 which was held in Oslo.

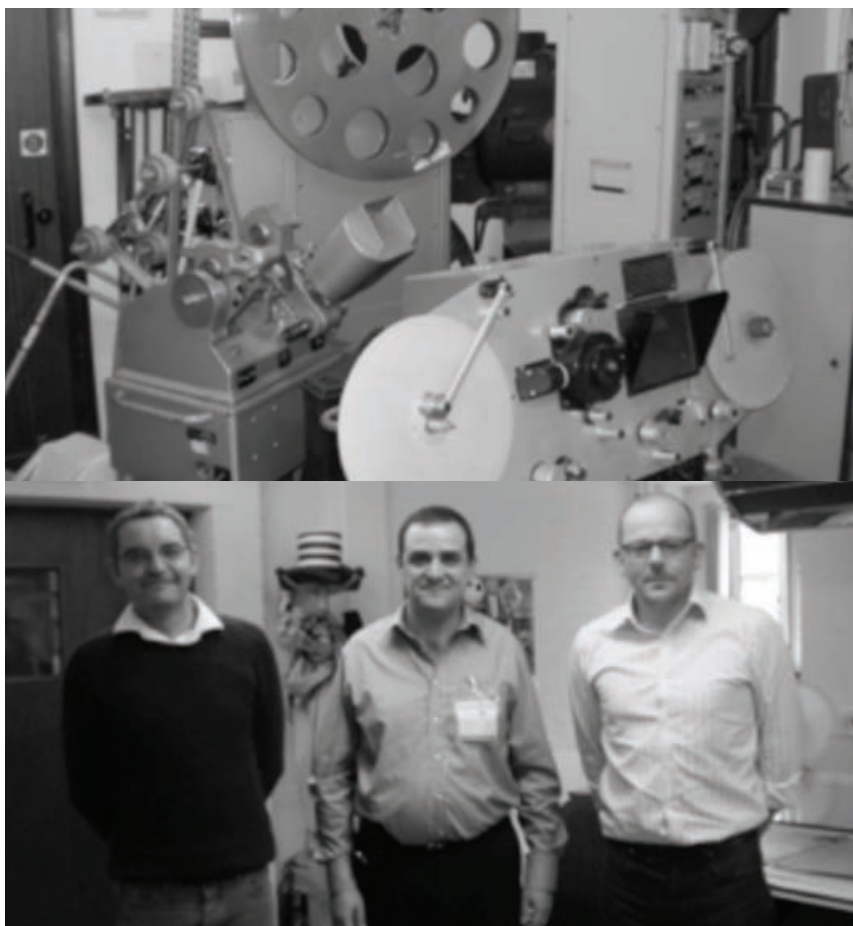
The main theme was "Trust and Access - Challenges to managing Records and Archives in the digital age". The main issues raised were the preservation of digital archives, workable solutions already in operation in state and private institutions, and the role that digital archives could play in providing citizens with access to information.

In February 2011, Rev. Dr J Bezzina attended the CITRA Bureau meeting held at the National Archives of Simancas, in Spain. During this session this bureau evaluated the outcome of the Oslo conference and prepared the programme for the CITRA 2011 to be held in Toledo in October. The convention in Spain was attended by Mr Charles Farrugia, who, apart from the conference itself, took the opportunity to participate also in the CITRA Bureau, the International Centre for Archival Research (ICARUS) seminar - which centre the National Archives also joined as a new member, the ICA Annual General Meeting, and the Executive Bureau of the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM).

## CINEMA EXPERTS GROUP: AUDIO-VISUAL HERITAGE

This group was created with these main objectives: discuss digitisation of film and audio-visual heritage in framework of current European context (including Europeana); emphasise importance of preservation and disclosure of European film and audio-visual heritage; ensure role of digitisation in cultural diversity; generate support for sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation; contribute to policy recommendations and exchange of good practices.

In October 2010 this group organised a conference "Audio-visual Archives in the 21st Century" in Ghent. This meeting consisted of a wide discussion on the digitisation of film and audio-visual heritage in the framework of the current European context, with a focus on the challenges related to funding, business models and access, copyright and the interoperability of collections. This conference was attended by a member of the National Archives Council, Dr Lillian Sciberras, on behalf of the National Archivist.



*Visit at the National Sound Archives of Wales 23 August 2013*



### EUROPEAN COMMISSION ARCHIVES' EXPERT GROUP (EAG)

The EAG is composed of experts from all EU Member States. The aim of the group is to try and increase cooperation in the field of archives. The National Archivist Mr Charles Farrugia represented Malta during the meeting that was held in Madrid in May 2010. This meeting was organised in conjunction with another conference - the European Board of National Archivists' biannual meeting. The themes discussed covered preservation and disaster prevention, the Document Lifecycle Management (DLM) Forum on MoReq 2, Euronomos and APEnet. In 2011 the National Archives became affiliated to the DLM Forum, in the hope that this closer association will help strengthen further the expertise on document life cycle management strategies and professional networking.

During this same year Mr Farrugia attended the EAG/EBNA (European Board of National Archivists) meeting held in Budapest in May. The main highlights of this conference consisted in several presentations about the situation of digitisation in Hungarian archives and attempts to upload their collections online. In October 2011, Mr Charles Farrugia attended the EBNA/EAG meeting in Krakow. During this conference it was agreed to set up a working group with the task of refining the report on archives that will be eventually presented to the European Commission.

### MEMBER STATES EXPERT GROUPS (MSEG)

The aim of this group is primarily to monitor progress on the implementation of the European Commission's recommendations on digitisation and digital preservation. It also aims to exchange information and good practices of Member States' policies and strategies on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation. The first meeting of this working group was held in June 2011 in Luxembourg and the theme was Digitisation Statistics. Rev. Dr J Bezzina participated in this conference which was chaired by Mr Javier Hernández-Ros, the Head of Unit INFSO E3 within the European Commission. Rev. Dr J Bezzina also represented Malta at the 8th Meeting of Europeana MSEG - specifically the Europeana Finance and Governance Working Group, which was organised the day after.

### APEX - THE ARCHIVES PORTAL EUROPE NETWORK OF EXCELLENCE

APEX is the framework for European archives to collaborate for wider and enhanced accessibility of their content on the web. It continues the work of the Apenet project (2009-2012) in which 19 European national archives and Europeana established and released the Archives Portal Europe (<http://www.archivesportaleurope.eu/>).

With the continued expansion and enhancement of the Archives Portal Europe - in terms of participating countries and institutions, plus available content and services - APEX will contribute to the development of a coherent digital infrastructure which opens up the portal to our common cultural heritage of archives, equally accessible for citizens, researchers, businesses and governments alike. Funded and supported by the European Commission within the framework of the Information and Technology Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP), APEX runs from March 2012 until February 2015.



APEX is divided into eight Work Packages (WP)

Project Management (WP1)  
Europeana Interoperability (WP2)  
Infrastructure Development & Hosting (WP3)  
Standards & Guidelines (WP4)  
Tools & Support (WP5)  
Usability & Web 2.0 (WP6)  
Dissemination & Training (WP7)  
Sustainability (WP8)

The National Archives of Malta is one of the project's partners and is participating in four of the eight work packages: WP1, WP4, WP5, WP7.

Apart from the active participation in the running of the project, the National Archives of Malta is also a content provider whereby by the end of the project we shall have provided a further 85,000 Archival Descriptions (in addition to the 58,500 already provided in the previous project) and 190,000 digital images. Amongst the collections that shall be made available through APEX are the Despatches and the Consolato Del Mare.





### 3.1 THE NOTARIAL ARCHIVES

Report submitted by the Notarial Archives Resources Council

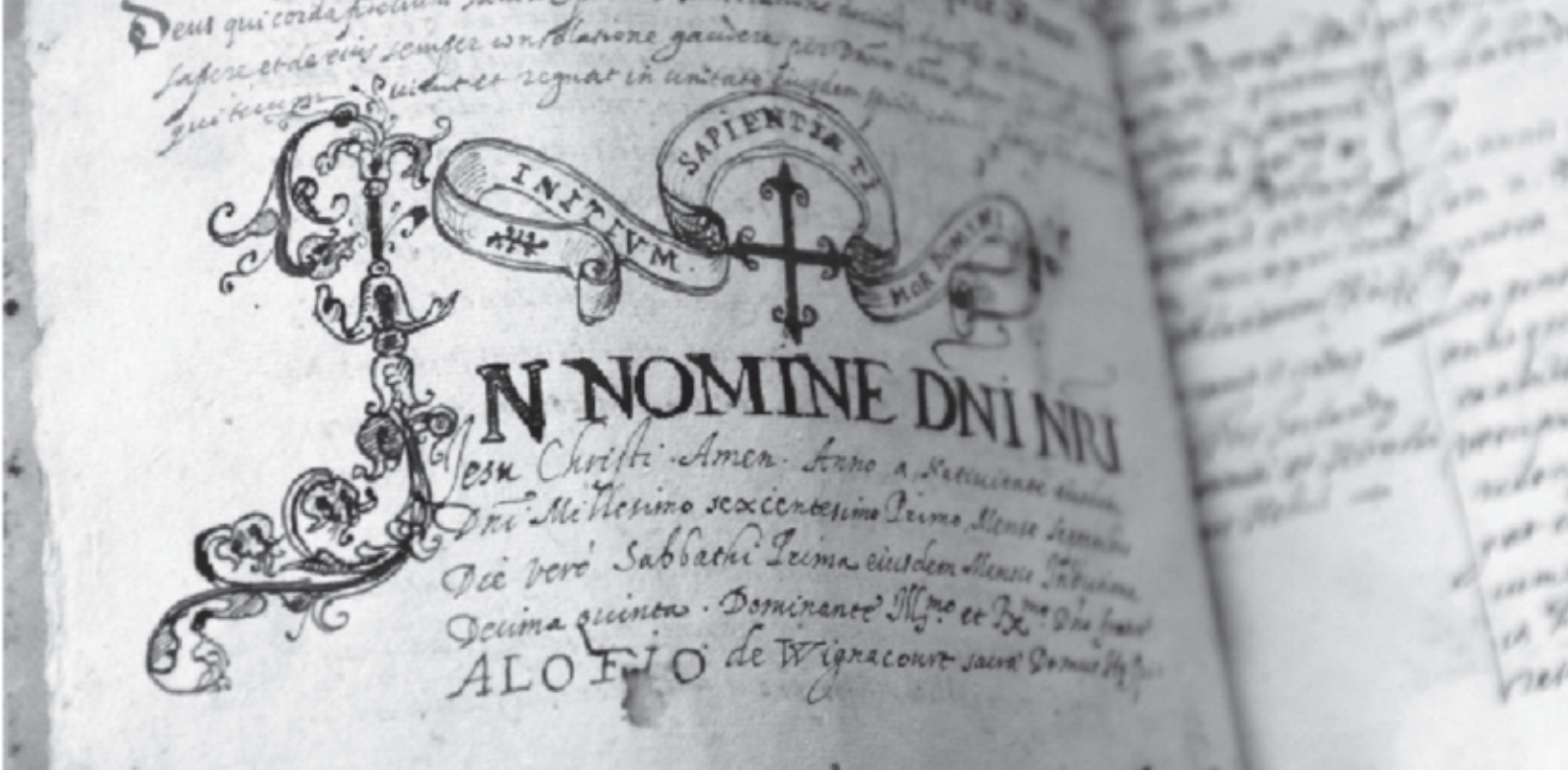
The Notarial Archives Resources Council is a non-profit, voluntary, non-government organization bringing together researchers, academics and other interested citizens with the aim of supporting the Chief Notary to Government and Keeper of the Notarial Archives, and all the staff, in their brief to preserve for posterity the rich collection of notarial deeds kept in the Notarial Archives of Malta.

In order to ensure that the rich collection of notarial documents is preserved and protected in a professional, efficient and accessible manner for future generations of researchers, NARC has undertaken various projects during the two-year period January 2011-December 2012. These included:

- The ceilings and rooms at roof level were in a poor state of preservation. Through collaboration between NARC and the Restoration Unit and under the supervision of Arch. Hermann Bonnici, several structural works have been completed and the building made safe for the better conservation of the documents. Works also included repair and maintenance of wooden beams and internal apertures.
- During the summer of 2011, under the supervision of Paper Conservator and Restorer Ms Lisa Camilleri, an exercise to identify and isolate infested volumes was carried out. Linked to this project was another one wherein all volumes handled were registered in a data sheet, brushed and any string tied round parchment covers was substituted by cotton tape to avoid further damage being done to the covers. This project took place between July and September, with volunteers, including Ms Camilleri, working from Monday to Friday and inspecting more than 12,000 volumes. This project was partly funded by Computime Limited who sponsored four students to carry out summer work at the archives in relation to this project.
- Infested volumes were treated using the latest technology available in the field of preservation which would also be the least invasive. This involved subjecting the volumes to a microwave treatment which addressed problems related to active insect activity and mould. Other general pest control measures were taken by the Office of the Chief Notary.
- The process of replacing wooden shelving with new metal shelving was continued and all wooden shelving has now been eliminated, although the problem of insufficient shelving space still persists.
- Advice on problems related to environmental conditions at the archives was sought from the Department of the Built Heritage, University of Malta. For this purpose a student from the Department of Architecture has undertaken a study on environmental conditions at the archives as the subject of her thesis and shall be providing results and presenting possible solutions.

*Visit at the National Sound  
Archives of  
Wales 23 August 2013*





- In conjunction with the above-mentioned study, NARC has been awarded a €26,000 sponsorship, spread over three years, by HSBC Malta Foundation. This will cover all or part of the expenses needed to provide the archives with more stable environmental conditions.
- Digitisation of sixteenth-century volumes continued through the work of various volunteers and that of a number of students who opted to do their Systems of Knowledge project at the Notarial Archives. Starting from 2011 and continuing in 2012, HSBC have sponsored a day's work of over 150 members of their staff who also worked on the digitisation project under the supervision of Ms Nadine Genovese from the office of the Notary to Government. To date around 130 volumes have been digitised.
- During the summer of 2012 Computime Limited once again sponsored a group of five students who carried out housekeeping activities. These consisted of dusting of volumes and lining of metal shelves with acid free boards. During this exercise most of the plywood boards which were used as bookends in shelves were also substituted by acid free boards thus reducing the risk of active insect activity.
- In September 2011, the agreement signed in 2010 between the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library (HMML) of St John's University, Minnesota USA

and the Chief Notary to Government for the digitization of some of the oldest volumes was extended and HMML pledged the sum of €150 per month for the duration of this extension to aid the Archives in preserving this collection.

This money has mainly been used to cover expenses in relation to the disinfection of volumes.

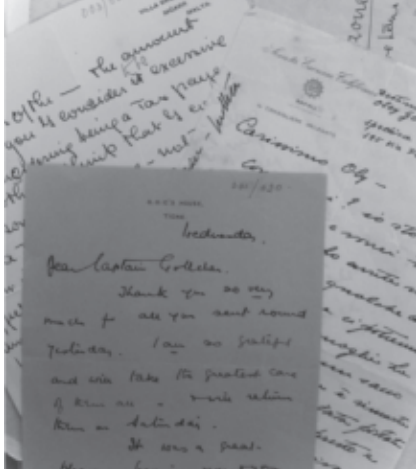
- Chronological sorting of bastardelli volumes and other loose documents was carried out during the summer of 2012 under the supervision of Dr Joan Abela. Thus these volumes could now be included in the bastardelli database.
- Farsons Foundation were also supportive of NARC's cause and both in 2011 and in 2012 they sponsored a total of €1,200 for the "binders project". This project sought to place illuminated parchment bindings in protective acid free boxes. It also funded the supply of acid free board and blotters which were used to provide a cover for bastardelli volumes during the sorting process.

### 3.2 OLOF GOLLCHER ARCHIVES REPORT

Report submitted by Ms Francesca Balzan

The collection of Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum, Mdina includes a sizeable archive. The archive consists of Olof Frederick Gollcher's personal papers, his diary, a collection of photographs and a collection of newspaper cuttings. Captain Olof Frederick Gollcher (1889-1962) was the last owner and resident of Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum. Gollcher was a distinguished man who received several honours. He was also an artist and a passionate collector of objets d'art and historical items with which he filled his house. Following his death the house and its contents eventually passed on to the Captain O.F. Gollcher OBE Art and Archaeological Foundation. In 2001, Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti was entrusted with the conservation and management of the house, which it has transformed into a Historic House Museum.

A basic catalogue of the papers had been compiled some years ago and the personal papers were divided into boxes. In 2010 it was decided that the papers were to be catalogued in far more detail and, following consultation with the National Archivist who visited the archives to examine first-hand the collection, an excel sheet was designed to capture all the relevant data.



Invitation for the inauguration of the Laboratory

The papers are each being numbered in pencil and a corresponding entry on excel which gives a summary of the contents of the paper is being logged. It is calculated that half the documents have been done so far. These include Gollcher's personal letters from his friends, as well as official letters from Government departments and various persons with whom he happened to be dealing on some particular project at some time. They also include his research notes, drafts - sometimes multiple drafts - of his writings, copies of newspaper articles and letters that he had published in the Sunday Times of Malta, as well as notes he made for himself during his travels or on buildings and sites of architectural/ archaeological interest all over Malta. There are also some drafts of his own letters. The provenance of many letters sent by his friends and acquaintances is often impossible to trace since these are signed by just the Christian name. Some signatures are also undecipherable. Dates are also often absent so that the date of creation of the document is often impossible to establish. An interesting batch is a collection of applications by persons wanting to join the Home Guard during the war, which includes the names, addresses, nicknames and professions of the applicants.

These papers also include the research notes of Henry Balbi who was a historian and researcher on the Order of St John of Jerusalem. A lot of the preparation work for the publication of his bibliography of the Order is preserved among these papers.

On his mother's side Olof Gollcher's family came from Corfu and the archives include many old documents belonging to the Pavia family when they were in Corfu dating back to 1762.

Over the decades the order of these documents had been disturbed so there is no real chronological or subject sequence and a lot of the arrangement is random. It is intended that once the cataloguing exercise is completed, the documents may be rearranged in a better order according to the accepted norms of archiving.

The diaries have been set aside in two boxes and they are listed. Some of the diaries have also been transcribed and it is expected that in due course the entire collection will be transcribed.

The photographs are currently being examined and their subject, many of which are of sites of historical and archaeological relevance in Malta and overseas, is being identified while a list is being drawn up of each photograph. The archive may be consulted, on written request, by bona fide researchers.

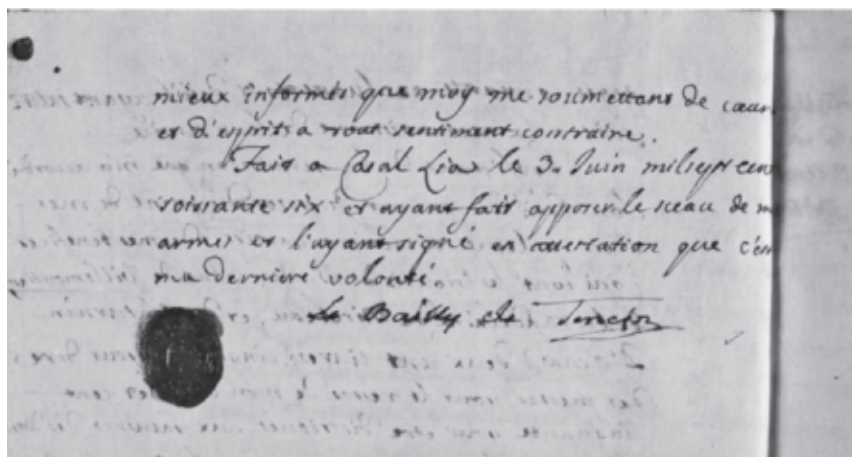
### 3.3 THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

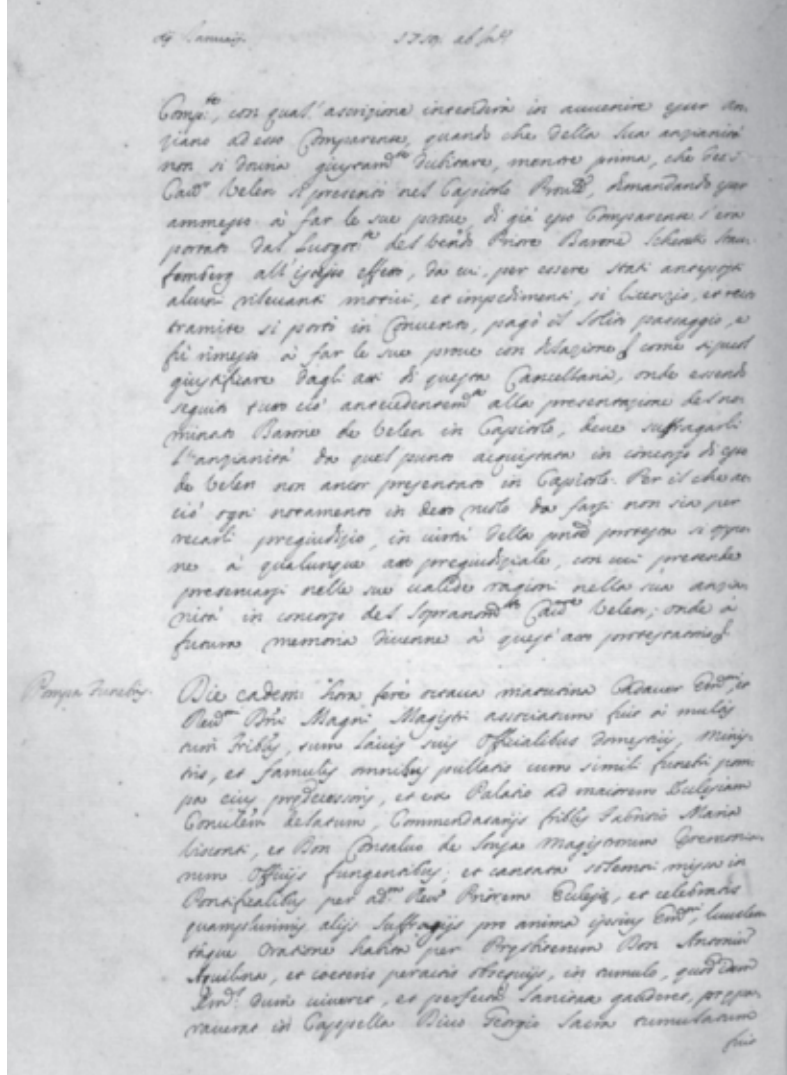
Report submitted by  
Ms Maroma Camilleri

The National Library of Malta has in its possession three different record groups: the Archives of the Order of Malta, the Archives of the Treasury of the Order and the Archives of the Universitas of Mdina.

The Archives of the Order of Malta (AOM) consist of the documents produced and received by the Chancery of the Order since its origins until the end of its rule in Malta. These archives contain the title-deeds, privileges, correspondence and other documents concerning the central authority of the Order.

A separate archival group made up of the records of the Treasury of the Order of Malta (Treas.) consists of 513 volumes divided into two series. These constitute the financial records formerly preserved in the Government Treasury. The 'Treasury A' section is a miscellanea of documents produced both by the Order of Malta and by the Università dei Giurati of Mdina. 'Treasury B' documents consist of registers, journals of income and expenditure, libri esigenziali, and cabrei of several foundations.





Another archival group which is of particular interest to Maltese social historians consists of 658 volumes of documents pertaining to the medieval Università dei Giurati of Mdina and Valletta. These are referred to as “Univ”. documents. The rich documentation found in these archives sheds light on the powers and activities of the Consiglio Popolare and of the Maltese Giurati as from the time of the Aragonese rule in Malta until 1818, when the Consiglio Popolare was suppressed by the British. The earliest records date from the fourteenth century.

The archival documents are a constant source of research for both local and foreign scholars. In 2011, a total of 6086 persons used the Library for research purposes. Although the majority of researchers conducted research in the Library’s newspaper collections, a good number came with the specific purpose of consulting documents from the archives. Among the researchers, the Library received eleven new foreign scholars during that year. These came over personally to conduct research into the Archives of the Order of Malta. Among them was the Keeper of Manuscripts

and University Archives in Cambridge University Library. A total of 1405 archival manuscript volumes both from the Archives of St John and the Università were delivered to patrons in the Reading Room. Besides, some 250 electronic and postal enquiries reached the Library, almost all requesting information about the Order of Malta.

In 2012, a total of 5610 persons frequented the Library’s Reading Room with a view to carrying out research. Again this was mainly conducted in the newspaper and Melitensia collections, but many researchers, especially foreign scholars, consulted the archival sources. The Archives of the Order of St John, including the Treasury archives, as well as the Università attracted a total of 1000 requests. The Library welcomed nine new Maltese and foreign scholars, most of whom came with the specific purpose of consulting the Archives of the Order of St John. 181 requests from many parts of the world reached the Library mostly by electronic mail. Queries requested information mostly about Knights of Malta and National Library holdings.

In 2012, the National Library of Malta celebrated the 200th anniversary of its inauguration in the present building. To commemorate this occasion, a major exhibition was mounted in the Reading Room of the Library. The exhibition illustrated the history of the library and its collections since the issue of the resolution taken by Grand Master Claude de la Sengle in 1555 decreeing that all books in the legacy of deceased knights were to pass to the Common Treasury of the Order. On display were many of its finest treasures, including illuminated manuscripts, fine bindings and rare books from its rich collection, as well as volumes from the archives documenting its history.

On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the birth of the Gozitan scholar Gian Pietro Francesco Agius de Soldanis (1712-1770), the Ministry for Gozo, together with Malta Libraries, Heritage Malta and the Department of Maltese at the University of Malta, organized an exhibition entitled “G.P.F. Agius de Soldanis: an eighteenth-century Gozitan, Ecclesiastic and Academic”. The display consisted of manuscripts and books

by de Soldanis from the National Library's collections as well as items from Heritage Malta and private collections.

Between 5 July and 9 September 2012, a lavish exhibition entitled "Treasures of the Order of Malta" was held at the Kremlin, Moscow, Russia. Exhibits were borrowed from libraries, archives and museums all over Europe. The National Library of Malta contributed by lending three important documents from the Archives of the Order of St John, including the letter written by Tsar Peter I (the Great) to Grand Master Perellos in 1698 and a letter sent by Tsarina Catherine II (the Great) to Grand Master Pinto in 1743.

Last year the National Library embarked on an ambitious digitization project of most library holdings, including its archival records, with the support of EU funding. This project aims at providing digital access to the Library's archives and collections to researchers and the public alike. Thus, the National Library will enable users, regardless of location, to gain direct access and use a range of digitized materials relating to Malta and its history, thus promoting an understanding of Malta through its written heritage.

### 3.4 THE ARCHDIOCESE ARCHIVES

Report submitted by Fr VicGeorge Vassallo

The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library began microfilming the archival collections of the Cathedral of Mdina, Malta, in 1973 under the direction of Mons John Azzopardi.

Filming concluded in 1989 after 8,229 books and manuscripts had been filmed. The microfilming project at the Cathedral also included books, music manuscripts, and archival materials from other ecclesiastical institutions and private collections in Malta and Gozo.

The contents of the materials filmed date from the eleventh to the twentieth century. Among the various manuscripts microfilmed in Malta we find the Archives of the Archbishop's Curia in Floriana. The Microfilms of the Archives of the Archbishop of Malta contain the diocesan records from 1531 to 1898, along with some miscellaneous items dating from 1450 to 1928.

The Archdiocese of Malta has transferred all its microfilms into digital media to make them available over the internet. This will enable the manuscripts to be more available for researchers and the casual visitor alike.

We started planning the digitization project in September 2010. In January 2011 we applied for EU funding but our application was unsuccessful. The Archdiocese decided to keep going with the project just the same. A call for tenders was issued. Exigy won the tender.

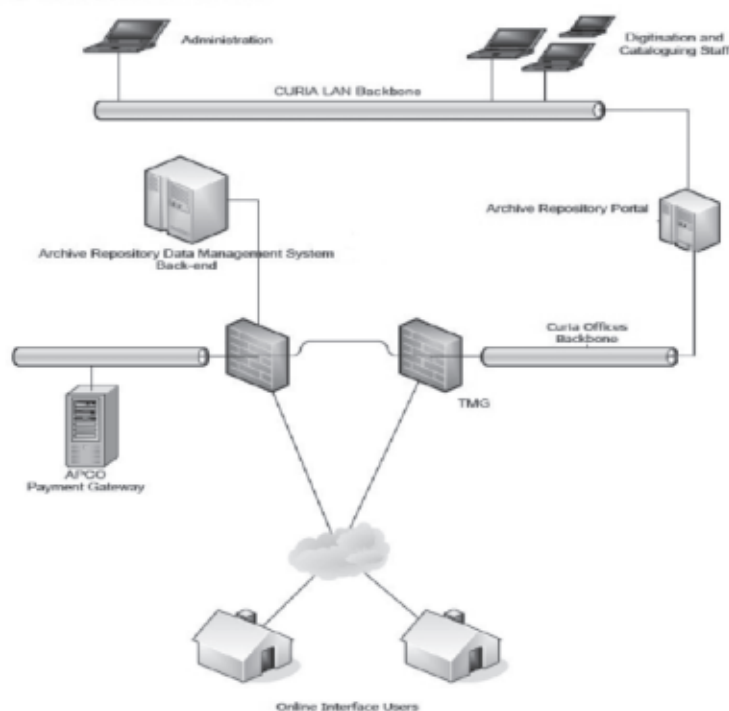
In December 2011 we installed the necessary hardware infrastructure and we started digitizing on 9th January 2012.

The diagram on the previous page shows the setup needed for the digitisation of the manuscripts and the eventual publishing on the Archives Website.

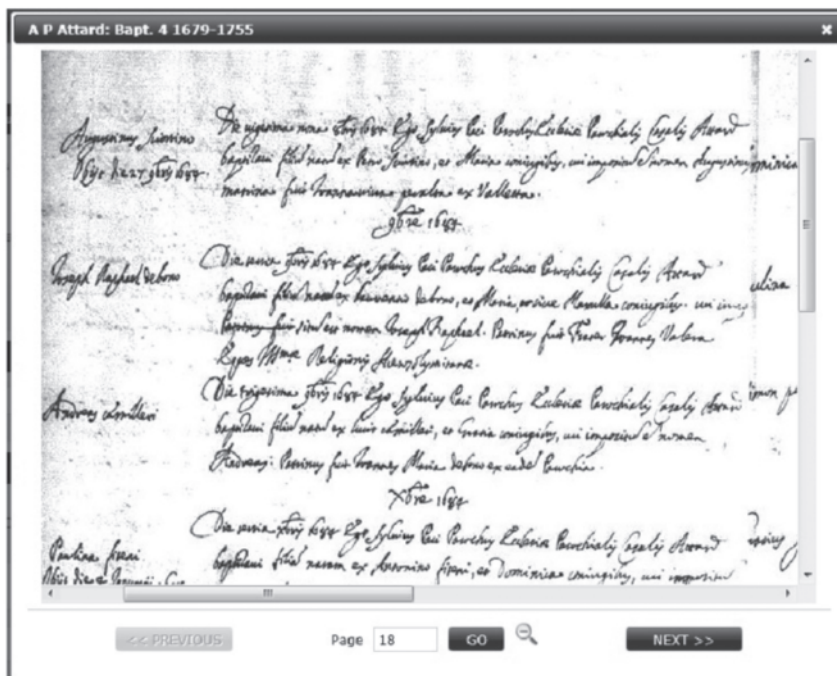
To minimize on running costs it was decided that the website will be hosted on our servers and kept under the "maltadiocese" domain. Hence the website address was decided to be <http://archives.maltadiocese.org>. On 27th September 2012 we had a soft launching of the Archives Website which was officially launched by the Archbishop on 7th November 2012.

The Archives of the Archbishop of Malta hold more than what has been published in the Archives Website. Researchers and visitors are more than welcome to visit and do research at the Archives of the Archbishop at the Archbishop's Curia in Floriana Malta.

#### Physical Architecture







This is an on going project and the Archdiocese of Malta is still digitizing manuscripts. Presently we are digitising the manuscripts found at the Cathedral Museum Archive. This phase is calculated to take three years. After that we plan to continue digitizing manuscripts from the various parish archives.

Presently we have the following manuscripts available online:

The Archives of the Archbishop of Malta (A.A.M.)

The Archives of the Archbishop of Malta contain the diocesan records from 1531 - 1898, along with some miscellaneous items dating from 1450 - 1928. These documents are housed in Floriana.

Index of the Archives of the Archbishop of Malta:

- Acta civilia (208 mss in 200 volumes) 1579-1854
- Benefici (43 mss) 1531-1767
- Brevia et constitutiones apostolicae -- acta et epistulae (144 mss in 140 volumes) 1541-1899
- Cabrei (16 mss) 1450-1928
- Collazioni (1 mss) 1642-1700 Inventari (7 mss) 1607-1725
- Melevitana (30 mss) 1666-1741
- Pubblicazioni matrimoniali (later Schedule matrimoniali) (29 mss) 1715-1898
- Registrum edictorum (27 mss) 1635-1887
- Registrum ordinandorum ac privilegiorum clericalium (8 mss) 1665-1884
- Registrum ordinationum (1 ms) 1638-1648
- Registrum supplicationum (144 mss) 1668-1833, 1836-1899
- Status animarum (33 mss in 24 volumes) 1667-1805
- Visitationes pastorales (54 mss in 56 volumes) 1570-1897

The Archives of the Parishes of Malta. (A.P.)

The Archives of the Parishes of Malta, located in their respective

parish, contain the baptism, confirmation, marriage and funeral records from 1555-1908. Original manuscripts are housed in the parishes.

Index of the Archives of the Parishes of Malta:

- A.P. Ascjack (15 mss, 1626-1908)
- A.P. Attard (11 mss, 1581-1917)
- A.P. Birkirkara (51 mss, 1557-1869)
- A.P. Cospicua (205 mss, 1587-19th century)
- A.P. Casalis Gargur (11 mss, 1599-1914)
- A.P. Ecclesia Cathedralis S. Pauli (42 mss, 1539-1974)
- A.P. Ecclesia Collegialis S. Laurenti Civitatis Victoriosae (20 mss, 1558-1876)
- A.P. Gudja (1 ms, 1555-1675)
- A.P. Lija (1 ms)
- A.P. Mqabba (2 mss, 1599-1675)
- A.P. Naxxar (22 mss, 1545-1895)
- A.P. Qormi (Curmi) (3 mss, 1563-1634)
- A.P. Rabat (173 mss, 1588-1966)
- A.P. Senglea (23 mss, 1585-1912)
- A.P. Siggiewi (3 mss, 1555-1671)
- A.P. Valletta (Our Lady of Damascus, Greek Catholic Church) (1 ms, 1584-1977)
- A.P. Valletta (St. George, Orthodox Church) (1 ms, 1815-1920)
- A.P. Valletta (Porto Salvo) (46 mss, 1573-1830)
- A.P. Valletta (Ecclesia Collegialis S. Pauli Civitatis Vallettae) (105 mss, 1595-1873)
- A.P. Zabbar (5 mss, 1616-1811)
- A.P. Zebbug (Rohan) (6 mss, 1550-1720)
- A.P. Zejtun (Sanctae Catharinae) (43 mss, 1580-1866)

### 3.5 THE ARCHIVES & RARE BOOK COLLECTIONS, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT - THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA LIBRARY

Report submitted by Ms Mary Samut-Tagliaferro

#### INTRODUCTION

Like most academic and research libraries the University of Malta (UoM) Library holds “legacy” collections of rare and special materials. The Archives and Rare Book Collections, together with its sister collection - the Melitensia Collection - form part of the UoM Library’s Special Collections Department. The collections found here have a strong Maltese content but not exclusively as is the case with the Melitensia Collection. In common with other academic and research libraries, the UoM Library is committed to collect, preserve and provide access to its special collections on behalf of its parent institution and the needs of learning and scholarship everywhere.

#### THE ARCHIVES COLLECTION

##### A Description

The archives collection, used in teaching, research and in library displays, is housed in its own department, which it shares with the Rare Book Collection. Though modest in size, (ca. 900 items), the archives collection provides a depth and richness to the Library’s holdings that belies its small size. The Archives, which has at its nucleus the UoM’s own legacy collections, houses amongst its holdings a number of prestigious collections including some of importance to Malta’s ‘collective memory’ - foremost amongst these are the poems and papers of Malta’s national poet, Dun Karm Psaila (1871-1961).

Over the years, the collection has grown through purchase, donations and bequests to one that is today particularly rich in the works of Maltese literary authors of note such as Rużar Briffa, Ninu Cremona, Laurent Ropa, P.P. Saydon, Francis Ebejer and Gużè Aquilina to name but a few. The archives also house an interesting miscellany of other works besides which cover a range of subjects and a diversity of material types such as: the travelling journals of the well- known

19th century educationalist Canon Paolo Pullicino; 18th century anonymous church sermons and panegyrics written in Maltese; papers, field-notes and photographs relating to Maltese archaeology; a collection of glass slides which cover a kaleidoscope of topics, peoples and places including Malta (some signed and described by Sir Themistocles Zammit and probably used to illustrate his lectures); a collection of maps of Malta; early photograph albums of Maltese topographical interest; the music library of composer Charles Camilleri; a collection of papers covering Malta’s pioneering efforts in tourism known as the John C. Polacco Papers, and the complete archive, including legal documents, of an old, distinguished Maltese family - The Bonavita Papers.

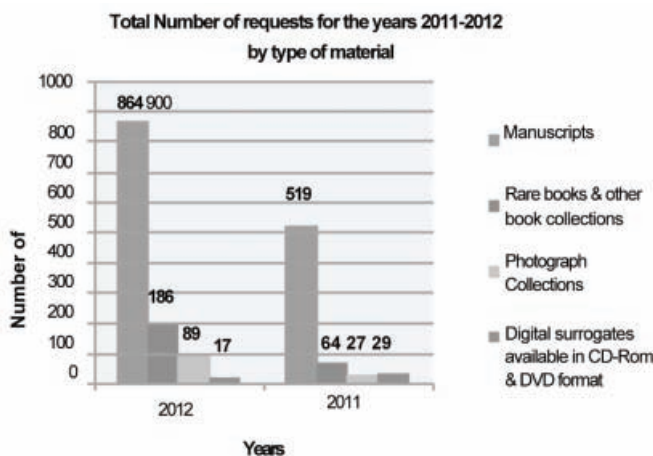
##### Recent Accessions

In 2011-2012 the Archives were further enriched with donations of papers and books from a number of generous benefactors including: maritime historian Joseph Muscat, natural history and folklore writer Guido Lanfranco and from poet and author Eng. Maurice Mifsud Bonnici. An interesting collection of audio tape recordings of interviews with well- known Maltese authors, (many of whom are already represented in the collections thereby serving to complement the holdings), was kindly donated by Maltese-Australian Roderick “Rigu” Bovingdon, who is himself no stranger to Maltese literary circles. Also, during this period, the archives of the Malta Library & Information Association (MaLIA), founded in 1969 were permanently transferred to the UoM Library.

#### READER SERVICES

##### Reading-Room Patrons

The Department welcomes visitors including outside researchers and keeps a record of their identification data for statistical purposes but, more importantly, to enhance security within the reading-room area. The Department is frequented mostly by students and members of academic staff, who together make up the Library’s target audience, but outside researchers including groups of schoolchildren, (accompanied by their teachers), foreign researchers and the general public at large also regularly call on the service. Statistical data shows that most reading-room patrons are Faculty of Arts students.



### **Reading-Room Requests**

In 2012 a total of 1,156 items (639 in 2011) were delivered to the reading-room. As shown in Fig. 1.0 below archival materials continue to register the most requests. The spike in demand registered in 2012 compared to that of the previous year can possibly be attributed to a combination of factors including: the quick processing of new material, the drive to place the Department's hidden 'treasures' on the Library's catalogue and persistent marketing of the Library's strengths. While the use data collected is helpful for comparative purposes and in confirming the section's popularity, (possibly due in part to holding material unavailable elsewhere), it offers only a limited insight into patrons' needs since these are greater than demand and use.

### **Handling of research questions**

In 2012 the service handled 192 questions (212 in 2011) relating to the service and its holdings, 20 of which were received from researchers residing abroad namely from Italy, France, United Kingdom and the United States. Questions range from quick ready reference to more complicated research questions, which required the librarian to carry out research on behalf of the patron. Most requests for information are either made onsite or reach the service remotely via electronic mail but telephone requests remain popular among the more mature patrons.

## **ENHANCING 'VISIBILITY'**

The section recognises the need to continue to strengthen its online presence. The webpages are currently being updated and time is dedicated throughout the year to the processing of material. Although cataloguing priority is given to recent accessions so that they can be made quickly available for consultation, attention is also given to backlogs of under- described material. The manuscript collection, formerly on card-catalogue, was retro-converted in 2008 and is available on the Web OPAC (<http://www.um.edu.mt/library/>). The Web OPAC provides global access and serves to enhance the visibility of otherwise little known resources. To aid patrons navigate the collections, a number of hard-copy retrieval tools also exist, mostly in the form of indexes and bibliographies.

## **MARKETING HOLDINGS**

### **Group Visits**

During the period under review, the Irish Ambassador to Malta H.E. Mr. Jim Hennessy paid two visits to the Department. On both occasions the purpose of his visit was to view the collection of Anglo-Irish literary works, (made up of primary source documents and ca. 1,000 prized editions), known as the David Elyan Collection - named after the bibliophile and scholar who collected and later donated the collection to the Library.

Members from The Emerald Society of Malta and from The Irish-Maltese Circle led by their President Mr. Michael Higgins also visited the section specifically to view the collection. On both occasions, a display showcasing choice items from the David Elyan Collection was organised to welcome the visitors.

The Department also hosted a group of ca. 25 schoolchildren from the Boy's Secondary School, Kulleġġ Sant' Injazju, Tal- Handaq, who visited the Department, accompanied by their teachers, primarily to view the Dun Karm and Rużar Briffa Collections. Also, throughout 2011-2012, specialised tours were given on request to groups of UoM students highlighting material of interest to their area of study.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

The Department is responsible for organising the Library's busy exhibition programme and curates as well as hosts a number of exhibitions throughout the year. In 2012 a total of 6 exhibitions were held in the Library (5 in 2011).

Some of the exhibitions sought to showcase and bring to the attention of users hidden or little known resources held in the special collections such as the exhibition mounted in 2012 dedicated to the Library's photographic collections. (An increased interest in these collections was registered for that year (Fig. 1.0) but this may have been coincidental). Exhibitions were also organised to commemorate important anniversaries such as the one held to celebrate the literary contribution of author and politician Ġużè Ellul Mercer on the fiftieth anniversary of his death entitled, "Il-kontribut letterarju ta' Ġużè Ellul Mercer, 1898-1961" (2011).



In 2011 and in 2012 the Department as in previous years mounted exhibitions to coincide with important events in the Library's calendar e.g. Freshers' Week, Discover University Open Week and Libraries Day. On such occasions the Library is en fête and prepares to welcome an influx of visitors with events and activities organised for the occasion, including exhibitions intended to showcase the Library's "treasures" and heighten interest in the University and in its Library's holdings e.g. "Treasures of the UoM Library."

Following the success of the art exhibition organised in 2011 by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and hosted in the Library's Foyer, the Department curated an art exhibition of its own in 2012 with works on loan from the headquarters of the International Ocean Institute (IOI) Malta entitled "Children & the Sea," which was well received and evoked much interest.

It is also gratifying to note that increasingly academic staff and students are approaching the Department either with ideas for exhibitions which they would like the Library to curate or because they wish to curate a library exhibition of their choice e.g. The exhibition "Anastasju Cuschieri: 50 sena wara mewtu" (2012) was organised by the UoM students of Maltese together with the Għaqda tal-Malti and the exhibition "400th Anniversary of the Crusca 'Vocabolario', 1612-2012" was curated by Prof. Joseph Brincat from the Department of Italian who is himself a member of the Accademia della Crusca.

Although the Department continues to curate various exhibitions each year, the hosting of exhibitions is encouraged since they add variety to the exhibition programme not only in the subjects covered but also in the material displayed and serve to heighten the Library's profile and enhance the library-patron relationship. The Library plans to revive the digitisation of exhibitions last undertaken in 2007.

## DIGITISATION

In contrast to previous years no new digitisation projects were undertaken over the two years under survey but the Department hopes to renew its digitisation programme in the near future. To date the Department has created three digitised facsimiles of important collections from its manuscript holdings. These are: i) Dun Karm Psaila (1871-1961) Malta's national poet: digitized facsimile of the Dun Karm Papers held by the University of Malta Library (2003); ii) The Acta Academiæ Melitensis Registers, 1800-1945 (2005), (which form part of the institutional archives), and iii) Il-poeżiji u kitbiet oħra: kopja digitali tal-manuskritti ta' Rużar Briffa (2008).

## PRESERVATION

In 2012, the Library, ever-mindful of its responsibilities towards the preservation of the material under its care, installed a unit in the stacks to stabilise temperature as well as humidity. The project to re-house and box the collections is ongoing.

## CONCLUSION

As borne out by this report, the Archives & Rare Book Collection of the University of Malta Library is no longer a hidden resource known to a few cognoscenti but is slowly emerging in readers' consciousness as an important collection of works in its own right with its own individual character, as defined by its holdings.

#### 4. HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DISCUSSION DURING THE FORUM ABOUT THE STATE OF MALTESE ARCHIVES HELD IN 2011

The Forum was well-attended and most of the public and private archives were represented. A one hour discussion took place following the presentation of the findings of the State of Archives Report 2010. What follows are some of the points discussed.

The setting up of the 'Faculty of Media and Knowledge Studies' at the University of Malta in January 2011 leading to an Honours Degree in Library and Archival Studies.

The technical problems encountered when uploading data online since the infrastructure being offered by MITA is not catered for the needs of a number of archival repositories.

The fact that only the last two national censuses were archived while all previous ones were destroyed. Due to this the census law is to be amended to include a specific clause that states when a census is to be passed on to the National Archives.

Public Registry - The digitisation of Birth certificates from 1863 to the present day has been finished but Marriage and Death certificates are still waiting to be done except from 1993 onwards when computerisation came into effect. All original files are either in Evans Building or at the Camerata storage facility. The need of appointing Records Officers was also brought up.

Data Protection Act - Relation between documents being archived and Data Protection and when these records are to be made available to the public. Lengthy discussions ensued about the following three topics:

The Data held at the Lands about the owners, farmers, etc., still alive today, working all the registered agricultural land.

Patients files from the hospitals especially those of St Lukes and Mater Dei.

Public Works and the use of the Cabrei

Discussions being carried out between the National Archives, various Ministries and other entities for the creation of the posts of Ministry Records Officer in each ministry to consolidate the aspect of Records Management.

Collaboration between the National Archives and the Malta Memory Music Project with the backing of the University of Hull.

Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Legislation.

Electronic Records in Record Management - correct system of filing and data organisation.

## REFERENCES

### Publications

National Archives of Malta Annual Report 2010, February 2011

National Archives of Malta Annual Report 2011, February 2012

National Archives of Malta Annual Report 2012, February 2013

State of Archives Report 2010, December 2010

The National Archives Newsletter, Issue No 14 - November 2010

The National Archives Newsletter, Issue No 15 - November 2011

The National Archives Newsletter, Issue No 16 - November 2012

### Local Links

Heritage Malta:

<http://www.heritagemalta.org/home.html>

Libraries Department:

<http://www.libraries.gov.mt/>

Ministry of Education & Employment:

<https://www.education.gov.mt/>

National Archives of Malta:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.mt/>

National Archives of Malta (Gozo Section):

<http://www.gozo.gov.mt/GozoPortal/education/nationalarchives.aspx>

Superintendence of Cultural Heritage:

<http://www.culturalheritage.gov.mt/>

### International Links

ACARM - Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Record Managers:

<http://acarm.org/>

APEnet - Archives Portal Europe:

<http://www.apenet.eu/>

Cinema Expert Group - Audio-visual Heritage:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/docs/reg/cinema/oct10/speakers.pdf>

CITRA Oslo 2010:

<http://www.citra2010oslo.no/>

CITRA Toledo 2011:

<http://en.citratoledo2011.mcu.es/>

DLM - Document Lifecycle Management Forum:

<http://www.dlmforum.eu/index.php>

EAC-CPF - Encoded Archival Context - Corporate Bodies, Person, Families:

<http://eac.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/>

EAD - Encoded Archival Description:

<http://www.loc.gov/ead/>

EAG - European Archives Group:

[http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/archival\\_policy/eur\\_arch\\_group/](http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/archival_policy/eur_arch_group/)

EBNA - European Board of National Archives:

<http://ebna.eu/>

EURBICA - European Branch of the International Council of Archives:

<http://www.eurbica.org/>

EURONOMOS - European Archival Legislation Online:

<http://euronomos.ica.org/>

EUROPEANA:

<http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>

HMML - Hill Museum & Manuscript Library:

<http://www.hmml.org/>

ICA - International Council on Archives:

<http://www.ica.org/>

ICA-AtoM - Open Source Archival Description Software:

<https://www.ica-atom.org/>

ICARUS - International Centre for Archival Research:

<http://icar-us.eu/>

ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description:

[http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/ISAD\(G\).pdf](http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/ISAD(G).pdf)

MSEG - Member States Expert Group:

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/digital\\_libraries/other\\_groups/mseg/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/other_groups/mseg/index_en.htm)

The Genealogical Society of Utah:

<https://familysearch.org/archives>





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