

Annual Report
2015




Malta Libraries

*Granadilla Indica, scandens, et semper virens.
Ital. Fiori della Passione. Gall. Fleur de la Passion*

One of the 800 engraved plates from the *Hortus Romanus* of which eight volumes were published in between 1772 and 1793.

National Library of Malta

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Malta Libraries

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Foreword

It was a remarkable year for Malta Libraries. The National Library held a good number of prestigious exhibitions and public talks. In November 2015, the National Library was chosen to exhibit the original Magna Carta and the only remaining copy of King's Writ from Runnymede in 1215, during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). This exhibition attracted over 800 local and foreign visitors. The National Library also collaborated with Heritage Malta in the organisation of the exhibition '1565: The Great Siege of Malta' held at the President's Palace in Valletta to commemorate its 450th anniversary and published a two-volume publication *Besieged* for the occasion.

At the end of the year, the National Library also launched DigiVault; the portal from which digitised material can be accessed by the public 24/7. The digitised assets, after undergoing an editing process, are attached to their respective metadata and uploaded on this portal. The database is compatible with international platforms and in fact, the *incunabula* collection was made available on the cultural European platforms, TEL (The European Library) and Europeana.

The Public Libraries also witnessed considerable growth in many areas such as in newly acquired library material, outreach activities, educational programmes and certainly not least, in increased loans and new member statistics. Such positive developments would not have been possible without the cooperation and collaboration between Malta Libraries and other organisations. The number of acquired books was greatly supplemented by donations from Local Councils and the National Book Council. Malta Libraries also extended Storytelling Sessions in more public libraries through the National Literacy Agency. All these factors contributed to the rise in statistics.

In 2015, Malta Libraries established a new National Bibliographic Office (NBO) which aims to act as a local authoritative source for cataloguing standards. This office will be responsible for creating bibliographic records of all the publications submitted under legal deposit at the National Library of Malta and for compiling the National Bibliography. Additionally, the

NBO is responsible for providing access to the National Library's digitised work by creating records attached to the digital images of files on Malta Libraries' portal – DigiVault.

Overall 2015 was a successful year, which motivates the new management of Malta Libraries to accomplish its goals and consequently further improve library services.

Functions

The functions of Malta Libraries are defined in Article 5 of the Malta Libraries Act (2011).

The functions are to:

- i. continue to acquire, assemble, conserve for posterity, and make accessible to the public, the collection of the nation's documentary heritage and published current output, regardless of form or medium, to be found in libraries
- ii. manage, administer and develop the libraries under its control, and to provide leadership to other libraries in Malta in such areas as management and conservation of library materials, and to promote national cooperation schemes and the professional training of librarians and information professionals
- iii. assist Local Councils which run a public library to ensure that the library maintains high standards
- iv. enhance the quality of life of the public by providing library reference and lending services and library material, in whatever form or medium, for education, self-development, lifelong learning and recreation purposes
- v. foster and strengthen reading habits and support literacy and other cultural activities and programmes for all age groups
- vi. accept and acquire private records of significance by gift, purchase, bequest or deposit
- vii. explore innovative services, including information, communication and technology services, that can benefit patrons in accessing and using information
- viii. serve as the role model library system for other libraries in Malta

National Library of Malta

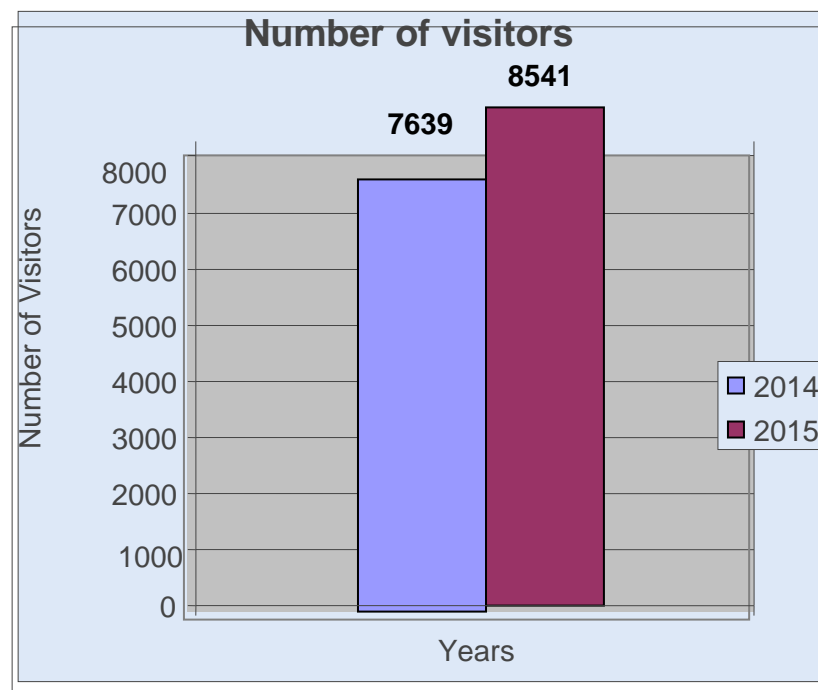
Mission Statement

The National Library's mission is to continue to acquire, assemble, conserve for posterity, and make accessible to the public, the collection of the nation's documentary heritage and published current output, regardless of form or medium, to be found in the libraries.

Reader Services

The Reader Services Department welcomes visitors and researchers to the National Library and keeps a record of their identification data both for statistical and security purposes.

The National Library is open to visitors during opening hours. On presentation of their passports or ID cards, they are granted access to the Reading Room where they may view the exhibitions regularly mounted there. Records of visitors' identification data are kept not only for statistical purposes but also and principally for security reasons. This year a total of 8,541 persons, an average of 29 per day, called to visit the Library, a 12% increase over last year. Apart from Maltese, the majority of them hailed from the U.K., Italy, France, Spain and Germany.



During the year under review, the National Library received some noteworthy visits, as follows:

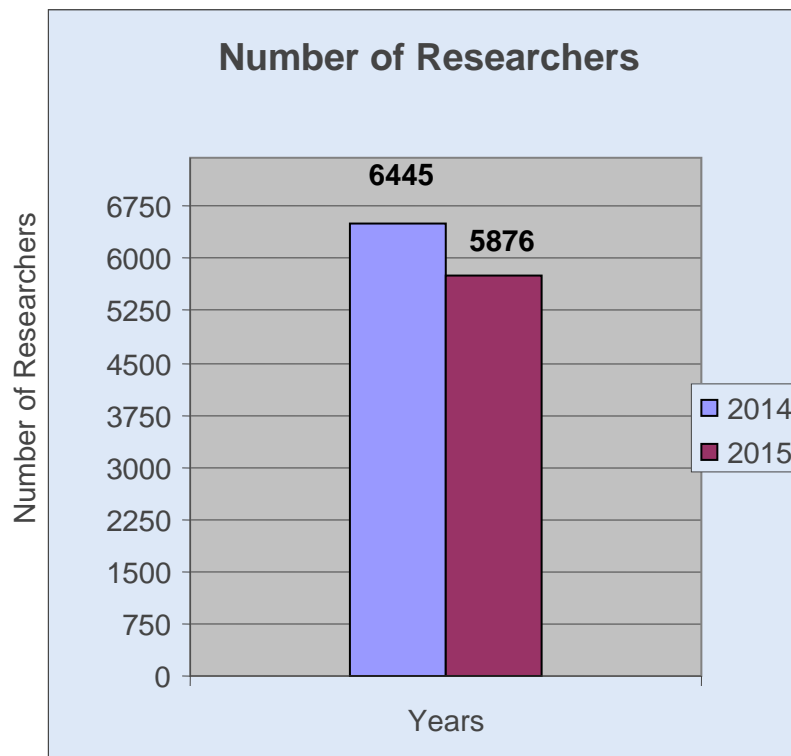
- 12 January** A 20-strong cultural group from the U.K. who were in Malta to attend the Baroque Music Festival;
- 24 February** Dr Elena Zimina from the Russian State Library, Moscow;
- 10th and 13th March** Two groups consisting of 24 Italian students from the Liceo Classico di Grottaglie, Italy. They were in Malta to attend the LINK School of English;
- 25 March** The Ambassador of Italy, H.E. Giovanni Umberto De Vito;
- 7 April** Dr Andris Vilks, Director of the National Library of Latvia;
- 12 May** Australian High Commissioner H.E. Ms Jane Lambert and crew from Australian ships, namely:
- Rear Admiral Allan du Toit AM RAN – Australian Military Representative to NATO & EU
 - Captain Simon Ottaviano RAN – Assistant Defence Attaché
 - Commander Belinda Wood RAN – Commanding Officer, HMAS *Anzac*
 - Lt Commander Gavin Dawe RAN – Commanding Officer, STS *Young Endeavour*
- At the end of the visit, the group presented the National Librarian with a medal commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli during World War I.
- 27 May** Dott. Salvatore Schirmo, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute;
- 3 June** Bulgarian group attending the one-day seminar ‘Modern Dimensions of the European Education & Research Area’, organised by the State

University of Library Studies & Info Technologies of Sofia (SULSIT) and held at the National Library of Malta;

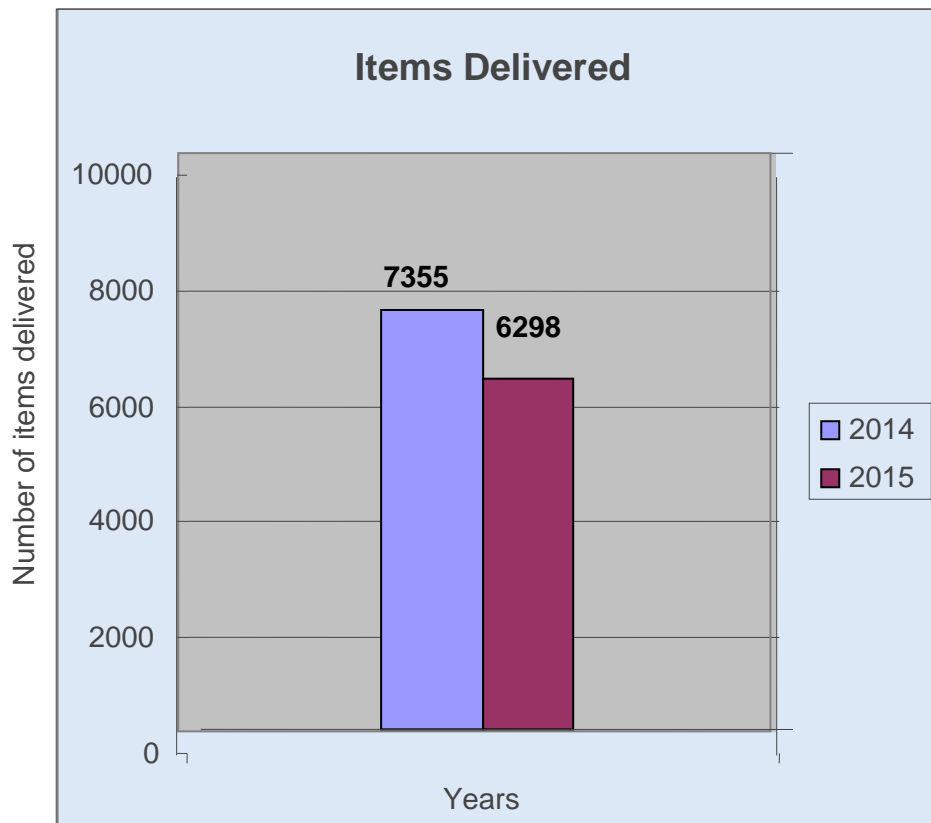
- 23 June** Prof. Dorothea Tabacova, an academic from the Department of Classics of the University of Sofia;
- 26 June** A group of three American authors;
- 27 August** A group of German Scouts undertaking a project entitled 'The Order of Malta from 1530-1798 and its impact on Malta';
- 24 October** University students under the guidance of Dr Simon Mercieca;
- 27 October** Students of the Department of Library, Information & Archive Sciences, Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences (MaKS) under the guidance of Dr William Zammit;
- 13 November** A German cultural group brought over by Dr Thomas Freller;
- 24 November** A group of Law students under the guidance of Dr Joan Abela;
- 26 November** Ms Lucy Turnbull, wife of the Australian Prime Minister, who was in Malta on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

This year a total of 5,876 persons – an average of 20 per day - used the Library for research purposes, a significant 9% drop from last year. Reading Room staff fetched an average of 1 item per researcher. Apart from the delivery of requested material and its re-shelving on a daily basis, the staff in this Section also handled researchers' queries and directed readers to the various resources at the Library. In cases where the requested material was not available, the public was directed to other sources outside the Library. This occurred especially in the case of genealogy-oriented requests. The majority of researchers conducted research in the Library's newspaper collections, which amounted to 3,322 requests. Others came to trace their relatives or made specific or general queries usually regarding family surnames,

genealogy and sports events. Many consulted documents from the Archives of the Order of St John.



Most of the material at the Library is in closed-access areas and the main task of the Reader Services Department is to deliver books and manuscripts from these rooms to the researchers. This year the Reading Room staff fetched a total of 6,298 items comprising manuscripts, newspapers and printed material, a 14% decrease from last year. The breakdown of this total is as follows: 943 Archives manuscript volumes both from the Archives of St John and the Università, 311 Library manuscript volumes, 253 volumes from the Adami Collection, 3,324 volumes of newspapers and periodicals, as well as 1,403 printed books, both Melitensia and reference material. These items averaged 21 per day of opening.

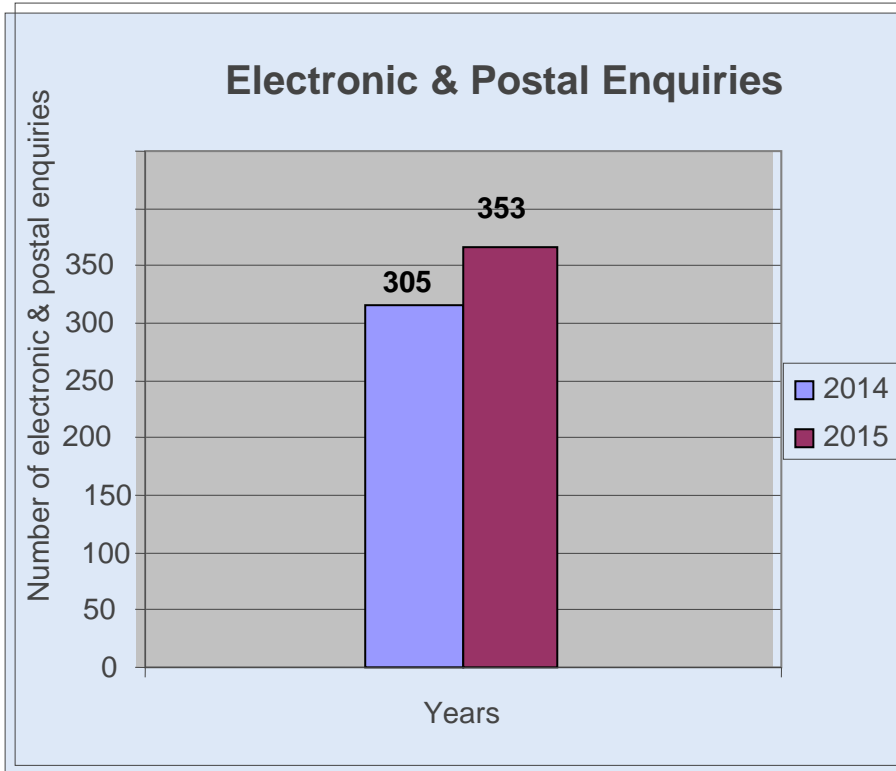


ITEMS REQUESTED DURING 2015								
	AOM	TREAS	UNIV	AD	LIBR. MSS	MELIT	NEWS	TOTAL
Jan.	100	12	12	25	17	153	328	647
Feb.	36	5	19	52	21	92	355	580
March	66	4	8	20	26	103	223	450
April	85	3	4	28	29	122	271	542
May	109	7	2	18	14	88	222	460
June	88	2	3	12	27	67	218	417
July	104	5	12	6	6	116	271	530
August	33	4	2	13	53	133	356	594
Sept.	39	2	5	31	33	67	245	422
Oct.	74	2	2	13	16	167	264	538

Nov.	72	3	3	22	36	136	356	628
Dec.	63	15	2	13	23	159	215	490
Total								6298

The Library welcomed six new Maltese and foreign scholars this year. As is the procedure, these brought along letters of presentation from academic institutions or presented publications of their own. Most of them came with the specific purpose of consulting the Archives of the Order of St John while others studied the library manuscripts or newspaper collection.

Whereas notably fewer than usual researchers actually visited the library, technological advances enabled many to conduct their research from the comfort of their homes. During the year under review, a record number of 353 requests from many parts of the world reached the Library mostly by electronic mail, a 16% increase over last year. Queries requested information mostly about the Knights of St John and National Library holdings. Others required copies of newspapers reporting events that occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries. The vast majority of requests came from Malta from where 211 queries were received, followed by Italy and the U.K. with 33 each, and France with 24 requests. Other countries like Germany, the U.S. and Australia followed at a discreet distance. Queries arrived from as far away as Argentina, Japan and India.



ELECTRONIC AND POSTAL QUERIES: COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN	
ARGENTINA	1
AUSTRALIA	7
AUSTRIA	3
BULGARIA	2
CANADA	2
CYPRUS	3
FRANCE	24
GERMANY	8
GREECE	6
INDIA	3

ISRAEL	1
ITALY	33
JAPAN	1
MALTA	211
NETHERLANDS	1
PORTUGAL	2
SPAIN	1
SWEDEN	4
UK	33
US	7
TOTAL	353

Collections Management

Digitisation Unit

During 2015, the ERDF Digitisation Project progressed significantly with the capture of over 300,000 images. The selection of material to be digitised was based on the rarity of the item, its state of conservation and public demand for it. Thus a large number of newspapers as well as Melitensia items were included. Once the images were captured, the ensuing processes of editing, grouping, downsizing, saving as PDFs and indexing were carried out by teleworkers. The input of foreign volunteers, usually Erasmus students, was vital for the progress of the project. There was a constant flow of students throughout the year, especially during the summer. They assisted in the scanning process under the supervision of the Digitisation Studio staff. All images which are indexed are joined to their respective metadata and uploaded on the portal DigiVault. On 2 December, DigiVault was officially launched by the Hon. Minister of Education, Mr Evarist Bartolo.



Preservation and Conservation

Restoration Unit and Bindery

The work carried out by this section includes the collating and binding of newspapers and journals, as well as other loose material. The specially-trained staff in this section also rebinds and restores damaged books or manuscripts belonging to the Library. This year, major attention was given to the restoration of 23 volumes of the *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, a general encyclopaedia published in France between 1751 and 1772 and edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert. The National Library of Malta holds a first edition of the work which is composed of 28 volumes out of which 11 volumes are plates. As usual, the staff also dealt with the binding of newspapers and periodicals. Over 800 volumes from the Reading Room and the Old Melitensia were cleaned.

The staff also helped in the mounting of exhibitions at the National Library. These included the “*Obsidio Melitae*” exhibition, the Dante Alighieri exhibition as well as the exhibition set up on the occasion of *Notte Bianca*.

The Restoration staff also performed duties outside the premises, mainly at the Central Public Library, Floriana, as well as in Branch Libraries and the Ħal Far repository.

BOOKS

Restoration of 39 manuscripts

Cleaning of 71 maps and their mounting on acid-free boards

Restoration of 118 Melitensia books

23 volumes of *Encyclopédie*

Binding of 145 newspapers

Binding of 305 periodicals

Binding of 160 Miscellanea

BOOK CLEANING

195 books from Reading Room

655 books from Old Melitensia Section

EXHIBITIONS

Dante Alighieri

Notte Bianca

Great Siege

DUTIES OUTSIDE PREMISES

2 weeks at Gharghur library

1 week at Central Public Library

2 weeks at Birkirkara Regional Library

2 weeks at Hal Far Stores

Set up office at the Custodian's House at the National Library

National Bibliographic Office

The National Bibliographic Office (NBO) was set up in September as a Directorate within Malta Libraries. The aim of the NBO is to ensure the application of standards in cataloguing work leading to an establishment of a local authoritative source. To this end, the NBO creates bibliographic records of all the publications submitted under legal deposit at the National Library of Malta. These records are then published annually as Malta's National Bibliography.

The National Library of Malta has a digitisation programme intended to preserve material in its holdings which is too fragile or valuable to be handed out to the public. Additionally, through its daily operations, the library collects and collates curatorial data on its holdings. The NBO makes such work accessible to the public by creating records attached to the digital images of files on Malta Libraries' portal. The service is called DigiVault and is accessible via <http://digivault.maltalibraries.gov.mt>. The metadata contained within this portal is re-used by the NBO in collaborative projects beyond the entity, such as Europeana.

The NBO has been entrusted with the management of the off-site storage repositories of the National Library. This reflects one of the greatest challenges that the NBO faces, namely the retrospective cataloguing of all the National Library's collections.

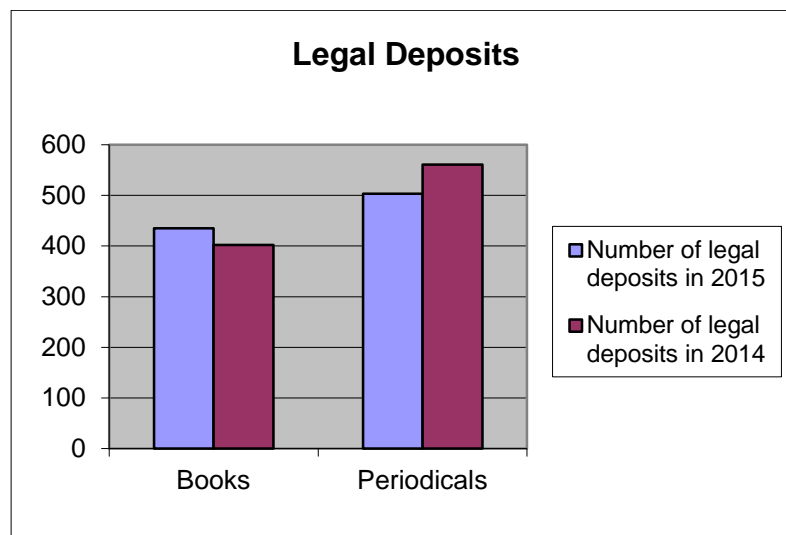
For the year in review, the NBO projected the main target of making accessible to the public 60,000 pages of text via DigiVault, prior to the launch of the service. This was achieved and the service was launched by the Hon. Minister for Education and Employment in December. DigiVault was used over 300 times during its first month of service.

The last edition of the National Bibliography published was that pertaining to 2008. Since a more timely publication is required and currently the NBO has no human resources dedicated to this task, the immediate priority was to work on and strengthen the methodology. To this end, a series of meetings were held with the stakeholders concerned, namely the Legal Deposit Unit and the Reader Services Department, so as to construct a more proactive workflow. Additionally, the NBO handed the I.T. Section a list of specifications required for the creation of the National Bibliography Module within the Library Management Software.

Despite the fact that the resources available are oceans apart from the aims of the NBO, the establishment of the latter constitutes a good start to a road map which will ensure that the founding pillar of librarianship – cataloguing – is given its rightful place within the local scene.

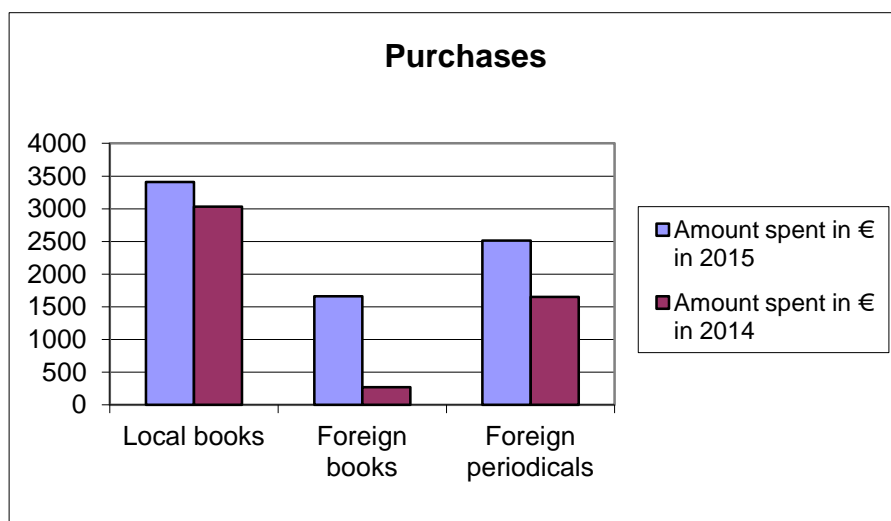
Legal Deposit

The preservation of the national imprint is one of the main functions of the National Library and this is achieved according to Article 10 of the Malta Libraries Act which stipulates that authors or publishers are legally bound to deliver to the National Library two copies free of charge, of any work printed and published in the Maltese Islands. Throughout 2015, 435 distinct books were deposited in total, together with approximately 503 local periodical titles that include journals, newspapers and magazines.



Acquisitions

Supplementing the works received by legal deposit, the Acquisitions Section purchased an extra copy of most titles published locally. With regard to books published abroad, as always, priority was given to acquiring works published overseas by Maltese nationals as well as works whose subject matter was directly relevant to the Maltese Islands. Several reference works and foreign periodical subscriptions of interest to the general public were also purchased. In 2015, the sum spent on books published locally amounted to a total of €3,409.71, while a total of €1664.20 was spent on books published abroad. In all, €2,514 was spent on subscriptions and memberships to foreign periodicals.



Outreach Programmes

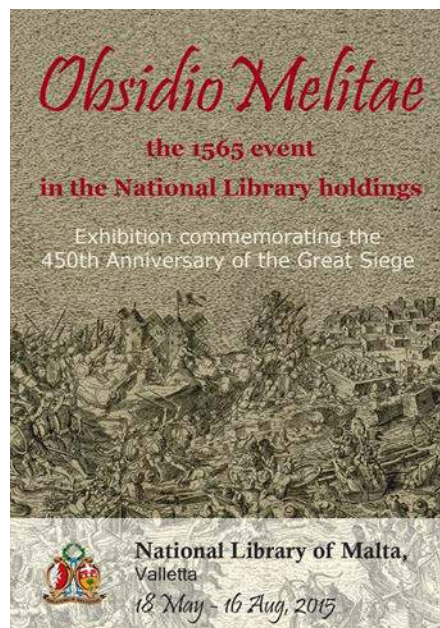
The setting up of an Outreach and Public Relations Unit has definitely generated more awareness of what Malta Libraries stands for. The Unit has been coordinating and promoting events and activities organised by Malta Libraries and other institutions in the sector, providing customer care service, running Malta Libraries' website, managing Facebook pages, as well as administering a YouTube account for Malta Libraries.

Our aim is to extend Malta Libraries' present audience by providing more information about the entity itself, the libraries under its management and the services they offer, activities and events organised and hosted by the entity, with the ultimate objective of encouraging the use of libraries and reading for study, research, self-development and lifelong-learning and leisure purposes.

Exhibitions

The highlight of this year's activities in Malta was the commemoration of the Great Siege which took place 450 years ago. The National Library contributed to the celebrations by organising an exhibition entitled "*Obsidio Melitae: the 1565 Event in National Library Holdings*". The exhibition, which was open between 18th May and 16th August 2015,

explored the theme of the Great Siege by means of the holdings conserved in the National Library collections. The main focus of the display consisted of the original prints by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio depicting the highlights of the siege. Other interesting documents included original letters of congratulations from European sovereigns sent to Grand Master Jean de Valette after the lifting of the siege. On view were also published contemporary accounts of the siege, including the 1567 and 1568 editions of Francesco Balbi da Correggio's day-to-day diary. Modern scholarly studies of the 1565 event also featured in the display.



Most of the above items were transferred to the Grand Master's Palace, Valletta, in September as part of the exhibition "1565: The Great Siege of Malta" which was organised by Heritage Malta in collaboration with Malta Libraries. The exhibition, which was accompanied by the publication of a lavishly illustrated catalogue, was open until 6th December. A total of 40 items were loaned by the National Library while an impressive number of artefacts featuring in the display were flown over from museums abroad. The exhibition attracted a huge number of visitors during the three months of opening.

In April, an exhibition about the Gallipoli campaign in World War I was organised to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the event. The display consisted mostly of newspapers issued during April 1915.

On the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the birth of the Italian *Sommo Poeta*, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), the Italian Cultural Institute and Malta Libraries organised an exhibition of Dante's works in the National Library collection. The National Library of Malta possesses several editions of his works, some dating back to the 16th century. The exhibition also included some 19th century editions of the *Divina Commedia* with fine bindings and illustrations by the famous French engraver Gustave Doré. Editions of Dante's works in English and Maltese also featured in the exhibition. The inauguration took place on 24 September and was presided over by the Hon. Minister Evarist Bartolo. The Italian Ambassador H.E. Giovanni Umberto De Vito and Prof. Tullio de Mauro, a Dante scholar, made brief presentations. The exhibition ran from 24th September until 17th October.

On the 28th and 29th November, the National Library hosted the Magna Carta which came to Malta as part of a global tour organised in a partnership between Hereford Cathedral and the GREAT Britain Campaign. An original version of the document and the only surviving King's Writ from Runnymede in 1215, passed through seven countries, across four continents, travelling a total of approximately 65,000 miles. It was brought to Malta to coincide with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held at the end of November at the Mediterranean Conference Centre.

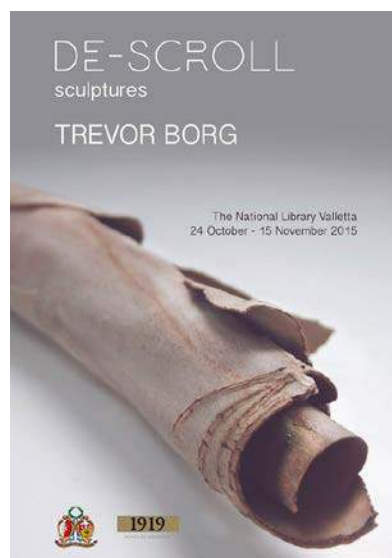


During this Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), one of the highlights on the cultural programme of the forum was an exhibition entitled 'Diasporas, Identities, Memories', mounted at the House of Representatives, Valletta, between 24th November and

9th December. The exhibition explored the topics of Departure, Memory/Nostalgia, Identity, and Return as personal and community experiences. For the occasion, the National Library lent out the first edition of Juann Mamo's book *Ulied in-Nanna Venut* (1931) as well as an early printed book recounting the story of Ulysses and originally written by Dictys Cretensis, eyewitness of the siege of Troy (*Historia Trioiana*, Venice, Christophorus de Pensis, 1499).



Scrolls created from the back of a tree over a number of years featured in the exhibition by Trevor Borg 'De-Scroll', hosted by the National Library from 23rd October to 31st October.



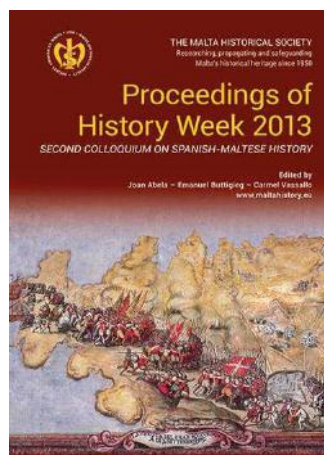
After having been shown the bookbinding process at the Restoration Laboratory, a group of students from St Edward's College exhibited their own bookbinding skills at the National Library from 28th March to 12th April.

Publications and Book Launches

The 450th anniversary of the Great Siege was also commemorated by the publication of a two-volume collection of essays entitled *Besieged: Malta 1565*. The volumes, edited by Maroma Camilleri and published by Malta Libraries and Heritage Malta, contain 41 essays written by Maltese and international academics, examining the most diverse aspects of the siege. Many of the scholars who contributed to the publications were invited to present their papers during a two-day conference on the Great Siege organised by Heritage Malta and held at Fort St Angelo, Birgu, on 29th and 30th October.

October and December saw a number of book launches held at the National Library followed by a talk about how the idea of the book originated. These included the launch of Daniel Cilia's book *The 100th Daniel Cilia* on 1st October and Notary Paul G. Pisani's *Battle of Lepanto* on 8th October.

On 12th October there was a book launch by the Malta Historical Society and a literary musical evening in collaboration with the University of Malta's Dept. Of Spanish and Latin American Studies, the University of Salamanca and the Spanish Embassy.



The 22nd October saw the launch of Charlie Cauchi's Maltese edition of the publication *World Film Locations* and on the 27th Trevor Żahra's book of short stories – *Vespri* – was launched.



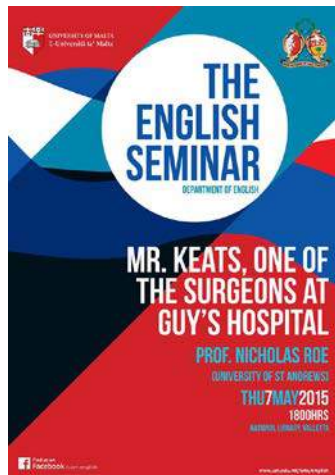
Finally, on the 10th December there was the launch of Malta Law Review publication by Law students.

Public Lectures

To commemorate ANZAC Day, to complement the exhibition about the Gallipoli campaign in World War I – mentioned above – Malta Libraries in collaboration with the Australian High Commission held a public lecture by Dr Antonio Espinosa Rodriguez on 17th April on the Maltese role at the Gallipoli campaign.



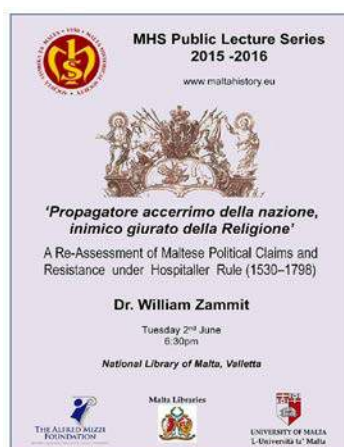
On 7th May, Prof. Nicholas Roe from the University of St Andrews, Scotland, in collaboration with the Dept. Of English at the University of Malta, gave a public lecture on Keats as one of the surgeons at Guy’s Hospital and on how this experience influenced his poetry.



“*Dar għall-Parlament: L-istorja mill-1921 sal-lum*” on 29th May was a very engaging lecture by Prof. Godfrey Pirotta



On 2nd June the Malta Historical Society invited Dr William Zammit to deliver a public talk about the “Re-assessment of Maltese Political Claims and Resistance under Hospitaller Rule (1530–1798)”.



Participation in other exhibitions

During the year under review, the National Library lent out a number of items to be displayed in various exhibitions held in other venues. Between 21st and 30th April, an exhibition was organised to mark the 400th anniversary of the Wignacourt Aqueduct at the HSBC premises in Valletta, as part of the HSBC Water Programme and its 'Catch the drop' campaign. Among the volumes loaned by HSBC from the National Library were manuscripts from the Archives of the Order concerning the building of the aqueduct, most notably the renowned Poncet album (AOM 1034), as well as volumes from the Library Manuscript collection.

Three items from the National Library collection were lent to Heritage Malta to be displayed in an exhibition entitled "*Il-Qarçilla 2015*" which was hosted at The Inquisitor's Palace, Birgu, on 16th February 2015, and the Museum of National History, Mdina, on 17th February 2015. Two of the items came from the Miscellanea volumes in the Melitensia collection while the other was a Library Manuscript.

On the occasion of the European leaders' summit held at the Auberge de Castille in Valletta, a small exhibition was mounted there between 10th and 13th November.

The display featured five important documents from the National Library holdings, namely:

The Magna Carta Libertatis, 1428

The *Liber Conciliorum* of 1530

A letter from Tsar Paul I of Russia to Grand Master Hompesch, 1797

The *Journal de Malte*, 1798

The George Cross Citation, 1942

Letters Patent relating to Independence, 1964

Educational and Cultural Events

Other events and features organised at the National Library of Malta in 2015 include:

International Conferences/Seminars

A number of international conferences and seminars were held at the National Library during 2015. On 11th April, the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government launched the Creative Arts project.

On 3rd June, post-graduate students from the State University of Library Studies of Sofia held their annual overseas research seminar at the National Library. Among the various topics discussed, a paper entitled *Past meets Future – Challenges of the National Library* was presented by Deputy Librarian, Ms Joanne Sciberras, who gave an overview of the Library's history and holdings and how the latter can be preserved and presented to future generations.

On 9th October, a seminar organised by the International Institute of Baroque Studies relating to "The Visual Power of Military Architecture in the Baroque Age" was held at the National Library.



Tours and Visits

Power of the Book Tour

While requests for guided tours of the National Library and its holdings are a constant feature in our calendar, this year the idea of a different tour was conceived. “The Power of the Book” entailed three rotating tours whereby on 24th May the general public received the opportunity to learn about the development of printing through some of the National Library’s holdings, the restoration process of documents, books at the Restoration Laboratory and Bindery, as well as an exposition on the Great Siege exhibition that was currently running at the time.

School Visits

Form Four students from St Thomas More College had the opportunity to view publications of Maltese authors and poets relating to their Maltese SEC project on World Book Day. This activity received such positive feedback that the Maltese Department within the National Curriculum Centre has already requested similar activities for the following year, extending the audience to Junior College students.



Skolasajf: Malta Libraries is always at the forefront in boosting literacy skills. To this end, Malta Libraries teamed up with the National Literacy Agency, the Foundation for Educational Services, and the Directorates of Education of the Ministry for Education and Employment, in the Reading for Pleasure Campaign, ‘Aqra fis-Sajf’, officially launched by the Hon. Minister for Education and Employment, Mr Evarist Bartolo, on 22nd July. A number of new strands were incorporated into the Skolasajf programme to include visits to the National Library for hands-on paper crafts workshops suitable for various ages and abilities. Sessions also included orientation visits to the public libraries to encourage children who may never have been exposed to a library before. To meet the demand this project entailed, the summer opening hours of public libraries in 22 localities were extended.



Notte Bianca 2015

As a cultural institution the National Library was once again open for viewing by the public during *Notte Bianca*.



Photo shoots & Civil Wedding Ceremony

Throughout 2015, the National Library also served as a backdrop for fashion and pre-wedding photo shoots. In September the National Library was the venue for a civil wedding ceremony of an Italian and Turkish couple.

Film and Television Appearances

The media exposure given to the National Library and the Public Libraries since the Outreach and Public Relations Unit was set up, has brought forward stakeholders who have shown interest in collaborating with us.

'Mill-Bibljoteka' features on PBS from January to June continued showcasing highlights of the National Library's holdings.



Services offered by Public Libraries went on air on 9th January during TVAM. The National Library also featured in a documentary called ‘After the Footsteps of the Turks’ aired on Turkish TV (TRT Public Broadcaster) on 23rd and 24th January. TBS TV (Tokyo, Japan) filmed documents relating to the subterranean structure of Valletta as part of their long-run TV series ‘The World Heritages’ on 4th March.

A feature on the ‘Book of Hours’ was filmed at the National Library in March for the cultural programme ‘Kultema’ on PBS.



The National Library featured on NET TV relating to ‘Id-Damma ta’ De Soldanis’ in August. On 29th August, Sharp Shoot Media filmed a piece to camera for the local TV series ‘Strada Stretta’. On-location filming and interviews with historians and experts relating to the Great Siege, took place at the National Library for the PBS production of the historical documentary ‘L-Assedju’ which was broadcast in September. On 5th October, filming took place at the National Library for a film by Falkun Film Productions set in Constantinople of 1914 during the Armenian/Turkish War. Also in October, the Great Siege exhibition attracted yet another production for PBS in ‘Valletta – Ilwien ta’ Belt’ and PBS also filmed footage of some of the National Library’s collections for the cultural programme on PBS entitled ‘Maltarti’. On 21st November filming at the National Library took place for Intercontinental Hotel promotional purposes and finally, the National Library also served as a backdrop for the National Book Council’s programme ‘Xi qrajt dan l-aħħar?’

Radio Interviews

An interview took place on SBS Radio Australia relating to the ANZAC exhibition mounted by the National Library to commemorate ANZAC Day on 23rd March. On 1st June an interview on Radio Malta's Arts Council programme promoting the 'Obsidio Melitae' exhibition aired after the 6pm news. Interviews on Radio RTK entitled 'Libreriji u Arkivji' aired on 1st April and 24th June and an interview on the topic of Public Library services was aired on the Radio Malta programme 'Fili' on 17th August.

Public Library Services

With regard to Public Library services, the Outreach and Public Relations Unit also embarked on a further strategy to reach out to reluctant readers by going to primary schools to inform parents and carers alike about the services being offered by Public Libraries and enrolling them and their children as members of their local library. Heads of schools have been very cooperative and requests have been forthcoming for further talks next year.

The Public Library Network

The Malta Public Libraries' network constitutes the Central Public Library (CPL), the Gozo Central Public Library, seven Regional Libraries, 36 Branch Libraries in Malta and another 11 Branch Libraries in Gozo. In 2015, a new Branch Library was launched at Mtarfa. The latter was fully designed and equipped to cater for today's needs.

Mission Statement

The Malta Public Libraries' main aim is to foster and strengthen the reading habits of people of all age groups and educational levels for informational, educational and recreational purposes. They offer support and information assistance to individuals, local enterprises and associations, as well as participate in formal and non-formal education and literacy initiatives.

Outreach Services for Public Libraries

The newly set up Outreach and Public Relations Unit continued to generate more awareness of what the public libraries stand for. The Unit, with the help of the National Literacy Agency, extended educational activities throughout a good number of public libraries. It was also responsible for managing the Malta Libraries website and the CPL Facebook page to update the public and provide information on upcoming public libraries' events.

During 2015, the CPL also continued to host a good number of ad hoc educational activities for all age groups such as Orientation Visits, 'Meet the Author' events, and 'Christmas at the Library'. Additionally, there were a number of events hosted in Regional and Branch Libraries such as in Gzira, Mtarfa, Mqabba, and Qormi following their extensive collection refurbishment.



Meet the Author Dr Selkirk – 9th April 2015



Promoting the Public Libraries during the President's Garden World Book Day event – 18th April 2015



Meet the Author Rita Grech during an orientation visit by Secondary School Students on World Book Day event at CPL – 23rd April 2015



Meet the Author Guy Bass on World Book Day event at CPL – 23rd April 2015



Newark School visit at the Central Public Library. Newark School's (Malta) mission is to nurture a multicultural environment where all children will be able to succeed academically, physically and emotionally to the best of their abilities and skills. - 17th June



Launch of the Big Book: *Rokku r-Robot* which was published by the National Literacy Agency in collaboration with BOV and Malta Libraries – during the Christmas at the Library event held on 12th December 2015



Christmas at the Library Event – 12th December 2015



‘Seher I-Istejjer’ Storytelling for Children aged from 4 to 7 years through the National Literacy Agency



‘Aqra Mieghi’ Storytelling for Children aged from 0 to 3 years through the National Literacy Agency



Activity for young adults by Leanne Ellul - Author of *Gramma*, who was also the winner of Konkors ta' Kitba: Letteratura għaż-Żgħażaġh 2014, organised by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and the National Book Council

Internships and Voluntary Work

During the period under review, the CPL accommodated 34 foreign interns mostly through the Erasmus Programme, foreign universities, NSTS, Future Focus and English Language Schools. These interns were given training on general library tasks as well as given cultural tours at the National Library and around places of interest in Malta and Gozo.



Visit to Ġgantija Temples with French Interns

Additionally, there were voluntary students from Youth. Inc, Pathway, and Wardija Resource Centre who were given the opportunity to carry out hands-on work experience at the CPL. During their work experience they were all given training on general library tasks and exposure to a team environment.



Students from Youth.Inc supporting the CPL during the World Book Day event – 23rd April 2015

Reader Services

During 2015, the public libraries registered 6,251 new members and circulated 777,804 book materials. The circulation data registered a substantial increase of 142,796 when compared with figures from the previous year. This may be attributed to the fact that during this year, Branch Librarians were also trained to process their own newly-acquired material and to input the respective copies in the library system where bibliographic records were already available. This facilitated the process from the moment a book is acquired to when it is made readily available for the public. Other factors that contributed to this increase include the several tasks undertaken to update the collections in most libraries; the increase in marketing activities in schools, and the extended storytelling activities in most regional and branch libraries through the National Literacy Agency.

Malta Public Libraries - New Members: 2015	
Type of member	Number of members
Total	2,473
Adults	2,391
Adults without Maltese citizenship*	55
Adult Foreign visitors*	27
Total	3,775
Junior - 13 years & under	3,535
Intermediate - 14 years to 17 years	127
Intermediate - 14 years to 17 years with additional Adult lending rights**	16
Junior - 13 years & under without Maltese citizenship*	67
Intermediate - 14 years to 17 years without Maltese citizenship*	10
Junior Foreign visitors*	20
Total	3
Staff members	3
Total	6,251
<i>*Require a Maltese citizen guarantee</i>	
<i>**Require a written permit from guardians</i>	

Malta Public Libraries - Book Loans: 2015	
Location	Annual Loans
ATTARD	1,4138
BIRŻEBBUĠA	5,665
BIRGU	2,473
BIRKIRKARA	110,605
BORMLA	2,416
CPL	114,659
DINGLI	6,056
FGURA	16,138
GHARGHUR	2,800
GHAXAQ	8,623
GUDJA	11,834

GŻIRA	8,054
HAMRUN	6,699
ISLA	1,189
KALKARA	3,601
KIRKOP	6,191
LUQA	19,120
MELLIEHA	11,607
MĠARR Malta	6,875
MOSTA	28,259
MQABBA	6,914
MARSASKALA	19,737
MSIDA	16,066
MARSAXLOKK	21,088
MTARFA	2,372
NAXXAR	11,470
PAOLA	18,710
PEMBROKE	6,075
QORMI	28,076
QORMI San Ġorġ	2,024
QRENDI	8,641
RABAT Malta	11,285
SAFI	6,425
SAN ĠWANN	8,659
SAN PAWL	9,776
SIGĠIEWI	8,004
SLIEMA	7,883
STA LUĆIJA	7,072
TARXIEN	2,068
VALLETTA	1,636
ŻABBAR	12,878
ŻEBBUĠ Malta	12,088
ŻEJTUN	14,949
ŻURRIEQ	12,361

Gozo Public Libraries - Book Loans: 2015	
Location	Annual Loans
GHAJNSIELEM	5,325
GHARB	3,444
GHASRI	2,690
GOZO Lending Library	31,760
KERĊEM	1,270
NADUR	57,633
QALA	5,734
SAN LAWRENZ	2,943
SANNAT	1,353
XAGHRA	10,805
XEWKIJA	6,187
ŻEBBUĠ Gozo	5,401

During the period under review, Malta Libraries finalised procedures for the procurement of e-books so as to be able to provide an e-book service in the first quarter of 2016. Malta Libraries identified OverDrive as the sole supplier of e-books for Maltese public libraries. OverDrive met the specific criteria set: namely that of a hosted e-book service from which the public libraries can purchase or subscribe to individual titles which can be easily integrated within the library automated system – VSmart, and which includes e-books in formats which can easily be downloaded and read through popular e-reading devices. It is also pertinent that the e-book collection includes recent titles and bestsellers.

Audiovisual Library

During 2015 the Audiovisual Library collection continued to be augmented with talking books, DVDs and CDs. In 2015 it circulated 735 items, which were mainly talking books, video cassettes, DVDs and CDs. Therefore, it registered an increase of 493 loans over the previous year.

The Audiovisual Library was heavily used during 2015 with a total number of 1,704 sessions registered. Subsequently, a one hour limit was implemented on busy days. Since this section is supplied with free Wi-Fi access as well, a number of customers also utilised the service through their own laptop and/or tablet.

Reference Services

The Reference Library was frequented on a daily basis by students as well as adults doing research or just seeking to connect to the free Wi-Fi in the area. Customers could use their own laptops, tablets and/or smartphones at the research stations which are also equipped with electrical outlets for public use. The collection was enhanced by a good number of new reference publications especially in the Melitensia section. The Melitensia section aims to include most of the reference material published in Malta or by Maltese authors. Furthermore, gaps in specific subject areas were identified and book stock was acquired accordingly to meet customers' needs.

Talking Books Section

During 2015, the Special Needs Unit started to be converted to the Talking Books Section so as to give it a more inclusive outlook. The cassette collection started to be converted to MP3 format to meet today's changing needs and also to provide a better service to our clients. Moreover, a number of user-friendly MP3-playing devices were reviewed in order to be eventually introduced to our housebound clientele in 2016.

Internal meetings were held regularly to discuss how the service should be provided and to compile a survey with our existing clients in order to explore their needs through the feedback provided.

Nevertheless, the current cassette collection was still in circulation during 2015, and there was a total of 16,112 cassettes amounting to a total of 2,818 titles circulated during this period.

Other Public Libraries' Developments

Acquisitions

Acquisitions were mainly carried out centrally through the CPL and each library was allocated a book budget according to performance which was mainly ascribed to the number of loans issued during the previous year. The aim was to motivate librarians to strive harder to achieve satisfactory results.

The Public Libraries acquired €83,350.77 worth of library material which included €5,825.75 worth of e-books intended to be utilised in 2016. This amounted to 12,064 library materials such as printed books, talking books, DVDs and CDs and 465 e-books respectively. Moreover, another 27,273 books were acquired through donations from Local Councils, the National Book Council, book suppliers and the general public.

Public Libraries' Acquisitions: 2015	
Book acquisitions	39,802
of which:	
Book purchases	12,064
Book donations	27,273
E-books	465

Cataloguing and Classification Section

During the last quarter of 2015, the Cataloguing team was increased by another four members of staff thus resulting in a significant increase in the number of catalogued items when compared with the previous year. The cataloguing team added 72,122 new items to the Public Libraries' collections resulting in an increase of 25,415 items over the previous year. This increase was also reflected in the number of loans circulated during 2015, since libraries were receiving new books on a regular basis.

Collections Development

In 2015, 14 public libraries were inspected and continued to be refurbished with new stock. These were namely Birkirkara Regional, Gżira, Safi, Marsaskala, Żabbar, Mtarfa, Mgarr Malta, Mqabba, Qormi Regional, and Dingli. Meanwhile works started at Żabbar, Żurrieq, Żebbuġ Malta, and Rabat Regional. All these libraries were supplemented with extra funds to replace their old collection and fill in gaps in their collection to suit their localities' needs.

Information and Communication Technology Support Unit (ICTSU)

Upgrading of V-smart from Vers. 2.5 to Vers. 3.0

The ICTSU's main attention during 2015 was focused on two major system upgrades required for both Malta Libraries' and the School Libraries' Information Systems. V-Smart, Malta Libraries' Information System, was upgraded from Vers. 2.5 to 3.0. This involved a substantial amount of testing to ensure that current business procedures were left unchanged after the upgrade, apart from the testing of new convenient features. 65 issues were raised that included both alerts regarding new enhancements that had to be understood and documented and a number of incidents that had to be raised with Infor, the supplier of V-Smart.

Training

Network Infrastructure Upgrade

All network hardware at the Central Public Library and at the National Library were upgraded from 100Mb to 1Gb network-switching equipment in a total of 5 network cabinets. New CAT6 backbones have been laid down at the Central Public Library and a new topology implemented to complement the faster LAN installed.

PABXs

The analogue PABX at the Central Public Library is proving very difficult to maintain due to lack of spares whilst the one at the National Library does not support additional telephone extensions. Since newer digital PABXs piggyback on computer network infrastructures, the responsibility of the project and its consequent maintenance has now been shifted onto the ICTSU. In 2015, the ICTSU concentrated more on planning and part implementation of any additional network requirements needed to support the extra load of IP telephony both at the

Central Public Library and at the National Library. The required network hardware has already been purchased and put in place while a number of network extension works have already been started at the Central Public Library. Works will continue in 2016.

Public Lending Rights

In 2015, the Public Lending Rights report was issued on a quarterly basis by the ICTSU. This further assisted the National Book Council in issuing monetary compensation to authors whose books were most in circulation at the public libraries.

SMS Notices

Notices from Malta Libraries Information System to its customers started being sent primarily via SMS. The ICTSU handled the entire configuration necessary and the coordination of MITA and Infor for the successful completion of this task.

New Malta Libraries Portal

IGUANA is a complementary product to V-Smart which fully integrates the Online Catalogue with the normal functionality of a website and brings in a more user-friendly approach to the Libraries' services. This new portal will eventually replace the current web pages currently hosted as part of the MEDE website and the current online catalogue – the WebOpac. In itself, IGUANA is a complete new system that incorporates in-depth configuration and very detailed setups. The ICTSU is physically coordinating the whole project with regard to the creation of all the text required and is directly configuring the portal. Moreover, Malta Libraries will finally have a portal that is transmitted with both English and Maltese text and all online functionality will also be bilingual.

E-books

The ICTSU was also involved in incorporating yet another portal that will have similar functionality to V-Smart but will be solely for e-books. In 2015 the Unit started coordinating with the e-books supplier, OverDrive, so that the whole project will be finalised as planned in 2016.

DigiVault

In 2015, the ICTSU implemented a new backup server that automatically backs up the portal and the digital assets owned by the National Library.

Daily services provided by the ICTSU for the Malta Libraries

The ICTSU was responsible for the management of third-party suppliers, including MITA, in order to supervise all hardware and software-related faults reported daily, as well as requests for password changes and the configuration of access to new employees and students and the revocation of same for transferred/retired employees. Moreover, the ICTSU handled a good number of daily requests for information on the use of the library system and other matters through telephone calls and emails. The ICTSU also directly supported Malta Libraries Information System products being V-Smart, WebOpac, V-Insight and IGUANA and consequently coordinated all related support from third parties in this regard. Additionally, ICTSU handled all purchasing relating to ICT hardware for the Malta Libraries.

Support to School Library Services

ICTSU provided ongoing support to the School Libraries Information System - OLIVER, by coordinating MITA and Softlink support in this regard. A total number of 66 incidents were raised, followed up, tested and concluded with Softlink apart from the issues raised during the same system's migration.

Upgrading of OLIVER from Build 6.006 to 7.020

The School Libraries Information System has undergone a major upgrade with 22 patches that were installed simultaneously. This required a substantial amount of testing to ensure that current business procedures remained unaltered. 128 issues were raised between enhancements that were discussed with the School Libraries Unit and a considerable number of incidents were raised with Softlink, the supplier of OLIVER.

School Libraries' Student Imports

As an annual practice the ICTSU also performs several import procedures to include the yearly intake of new students in state, Church and private schools using OLIVER, the School Libraries Information System. The task was performed in November 2015 due to data being sent rather late to the ICTSU.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The following are Malta Libraries Expenditure Account for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2015.

Income & Expenditure Account for the period 1/1/15 – 31-12/15 (Cash basis)

	Actual in €	Estimates in €	% of Est
Subvention	2,100,000.00	2,100,000.00	100.00%
Income generated from own operations	23,315.00		
Other operating income	11,032.00		
	2,134,347.00	2,100,000.00	
Direct operating expenses - recurrent			
Salaries and wages	1,326,790.01	1,300,000.00	102.06%
Bonus and income supplement	38,573.79	39,000.00	98.91%
Social Security Contributions	123,550.60	120,000.00	102.96%
Allowances	85,527.13	105,000.00	81.45%
Overtime	6,008.07	1,000.00	600.81%
Utilities	102,685.06	85,000.00	120.81%
Material and Supplies	86,831.58	127,000.00	68.37%
Repair and Upkeep	19,007.89	12,000.00	158.40%
Rent	16,500.00	50,000.00	33.00%
International memberships	-		
Office Services	4,354.90	19,000.00	22.92%
Transport	26,622.61	20,000.00	133.11%
Travel	-	8,850.00	0.00%
Information services	7,392.00		
Contractual services	273,104.74	128,000.00	213.36%
Professional services	-	60,000.00	0.00%
Training	8,052.00	20,000.00	40.26%
Hospitality	-	5,000.00	0.00%
Incidental expenses	-	150.00	0.00%
Bank interest payable			
Bad debts written off			
Increase in provision for bad debts			
Decrease in provision for bad debts			
Other Provisions			
Depreciation charge			
Other recurrent expenditure funded through EU Grants			
Other Expenditure	9,344.51		
	2,134,344.89	2,100,000.00	101.64%



Granadilla Indica, scandens, et semper virens.
Ital. Fiori della Passione. Gall. Fleur de la Passion