



INFORMALIA

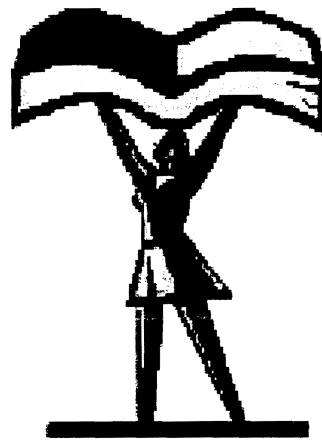
The Malta Library and Information Association Newsletter

1st Quarter 2003

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Your Profession Needs



You!

Dear Readers,

This year's AGM was marked by a cry for unity from all the members present. Information workers within the various institutions with differing levels of responsibilities suffer from a lack of recognition given to their profession. Speakers at the AGM emphasised the need and importance that MaLIA should act as a pressure group to enhance the profession's status. This issue is important and dear to us because we would like to witness better standards both in terms of service provision to our clients as well as recognition due to the professionals and other staff members working within our sphere of influence in the information industry. To achieve this, all the associations working within this sector, including MaLIA, must work in unison to build a common front. However, this still is not enough and my appeal goes to all workers that do not hold membership in any association whatsoever; strength lies in unity, if you want to enhance your professional status, then you should join us! Enrol with MaLIA and help us build this common front. In this newsletter, I am including a membership form for all of you who wish to strengthen our profession by joining us.

Your aims are also ours, we want our due recognition!!

INFORMALIA

INFORMALIA is the Newsletter of the Malta Library & Information Association.

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The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views expressed by the Editorial Board and/or MaLIA's council but they only represent the author's beliefs as forwarded to us.

The Malta Library & Information Association (MaLIA) is the association that gathers within its ranks all information workers such as librarians and archivists. MaLIA is the oldest established association within the local information scene enjoying a 40 year experience of the sector.

MaLIA is a member of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), and of the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA).

Visit our web site at:

www.malia-malta.org

Donations

The **Maltese National Commission for UNESCO**, presented two illustrated packs on restoration techniques to the Restoration Centre at Bighi. Each pack consists of a book lavishly illustrated with 843 colour pictures and 19 full A1 panels showing different stages of the restoration process carried out at the church of St. Nicholas of the Probota monastery in Romania.

The **American Centre** recently presented a collection of English language teaching books to the Faculty of Education. The collection includes a number of titles related to e-learning, the teaching of English using online technology, communicative teaching, and other multi-media resources.

The **British High Commissioner**, Vincent Fean, recently presented the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) with publications and videos provided by the UK's Health and Safety Executive.

The **Russian Cultural Centre** presented a collection of Russian books to Danny Cremona, School of Agriculture.

HSBC recently made a substantial donation to the Nadur Council, which will be used to buy books for the local public library.

The Talent Mosti philanthropic group is hoping to boost knowledge of the Maltese language among emigrants' children in Australia by sending a selection of books by local authors. It is asking authors to donate a copy of their books, which will then be sent to libraries in Australia. Those interested should contact Brandon Pisani on 79499506 or brandonpisani@hotmail.com.

LOCAL CALENDAR

Series of talks by experts on the various historical collections in Malta. Organised by The International Council of Museums ICOM Malta and Din l-Art Helwa. Venue: DLH offices, 133 Melita Street Valletta
Entrance is free.

Thursday 13 March, 6 pm

Archives in Malta: Documents and Images - Charles Farrugia
Mr Farrugia is Head Archivist in the National Archives of Malta in Rabat

Thursday 10 April, 6 pm

Flexible Bookbindings at the Notarial Archives - Joseph Schiro
Mr Schiro is the Director of the Malta Centre for Restoration in Bighi

Thursday 8 May, 6 pm

The Norman House collection - Claude Busuttill
Dott Busuttill is an Architect and Consultant in Conservation

Thursday 12 June, 6 pm

Old Master Drawings in the Museum of Fine Arts - Theresa Vella
Ms Vella is a Senior Principal Officer in the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta

Events

World Book Day at Guzè Damato School

To celebrate World Book Day and to further promote and encourage reading among students, various activities were held on March 6 at Guzè Damato Boys' Secondary School, Paola.

From days before, banners and posters were put up in prominent places to advertise the occasion. On the day itself, normal school activities were stopped between 10 and 10.30 a.m. and everybody, students and staff, were encouraged to do some reading. Students with learning difficulties were read to by their teachers.

A token bookmark was also given to all students and staff in the school.

However, the main activity was held in the library, during the midday break. With the help of language teachers, some students enacted short plays in the six languages taught at school - Maltese, English, Italian, French, German and Spanish. A Powerpoint presentation helped with the smooth running of the programme, giving information about the plays while the national anthem of the respective country was played before each performance by the school band.

The programme aroused great interest and the library was literally packed with students and teachers. The whole performance was greatly appreciated and this augurs well for similar activities to be organised in the near future.

Literary Award

Publications by Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti received four awards at a ceremony held at PBS Television House during March. *Histories of Malta* Volume I was awarded a prize in category H and this book also won a prize for the best presentation 2000. Volume II, won the prize for the books published in 2001.

New Council 2003

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Joseph R. Grima | Chairperson |
| Laurence V. Zerafa | Vice-Chair/Vice-Editor |
| Robert Mizzi | Secretary |
| Josephine Spiteri | Treasurer |
| Noel D'Anastas | Membership Secretary |
| Oliver Mamo | Newsletter Editor |
| Victor Abela | Member |

'Travelling Hopefully'

A volunteer from Britain recounts her experience

My offer to come to Malta as a volunteer librarian sparked at least two surprises: for the Malta library profession that I should want to work on that basis, and for me - that they should seem so reluctant to have me!

It was January 2002. I had handed in my notice at the library of the London law firm where I had worked for the past four years, and decided that now was the moment to realise my long-held dream of living and working in another culture. A memorable holiday half a lifetime ago determined it would be Malta so, riding in the wake of Dr. Mike Freeman's recent visit and with the backing of the International Relations department at the Library Association (now CILIP), I wrote optimistically to six Maltese libraries/organisations with an outline of my proposal: to work for 6-9 months as an unpaid volunteer on any task that could do with an extra pair of reasonably experienced hands.

I received two replies. Charles Farrugia at the National Archives, already fully committed to the need for, and value of, volunteers in archive work, accepted straightaway. A little later Tony Mangion at the University library wrote expressing his willingness to identify a project I could work. No one else replied. The Maltese Embassy, whom I had also contacted as a matter of courtesy, told me in no uncertain terms that 'employment in the public sector was strictly prohibited to non-Maltese nationals' but nevertheless referred me to the Ministry of Education at Floriana. It seemed that I was the one asking a favour!

While agonising over whether to go to the expense of a 'PR' trip to Malta to put my idea in person, I was heartened, in early April, to get a firm acceptance from Tony Mangion. I decided then and there to arrange a placement with both him and Charles but, in the absence of any other responses, for the shorter time of just three months. Hotel accommodation and flights to Malta were filling up: I had to start making bookings if I was to go at all, but there was still a major snag: the Ministry of Education had not yet approved my proposal.

After a few more nail-biting weeks, during which I temped for a library agency, the month of May brought almost all the confirmations I needed. The Permanent Secretary 'found no objection' to my proposal; the Director of Libraries and Archives approved my offer; and Robert Mizzi contacted me on behalf of MaLIA. All that remained was to ascertain whether or not a work permit was required, and if so who should apply for it. The Ministry of Education now referred me to the Department for Citizenship and Expatriate Affairs. Not until mid-July was I informed that a permit was, if not granted, at least being applied for. By then my travel - and house-minding - arrangements were of necessity in place and, armed with those official permissions I did possess, I took off from Gatwick airport on September 10th (just !) on a severely delayed flight. Even British Airways seemed reluctant to get me to Malta!

If I was disappointed before that Malta hadn't exactly been exactly queuing up for my

services, then I was more than adequately compensated by the events that followed my arrival. As I stumbled from the baggage carousel at Luqa in the early hours of what was, by then September 11th (!) I was met with the inexpressibly welcome sight of someone holding up my name: Robert had interrupted his night's sleep to come and meet me! Later on, members of the MaLIA Council welcomed me almost royally with a beautiful gift and delightful evening out - the first of many kindnesses I was to receive.

Charles and his team at Rabat, having clarified the slight difference in approach when recording archive as opposed to library materials, assigned to me some of the most fascinating historic records that I, as a 'Brit', could have been asked to catalogue, covering the administrations of the last four or five British Governors. Tony received me hospitably at the University, along with his many colleagues, of whom Josephine Spiteri guided me through the intricacies of formal cataloguing, and Mark Camilleri revived my library school recollections of LC classification, so I could help process some of the rare Anglo-Irish literature donated by David Elyan. Many stimulating discussions flowed from these collaborations!

Other events - visits, outings, lunches, meetings - prompted by different people's thoughtfulness, generosity, and the recognition that the purpose of my visit was as much to learn as to contribute, made my three months both informative and enjoyable. Some visits I arranged myself: I managed to find the Sliema branch library on a day it was open, and also located the Central Public Library where I was received with enthusiasm by Joe Debattista and his staff. An (unscheduled) call at the National Library was less successful, and unfortunately I didn't get the opportunity, as hoped, for a guided tour or to meet the

Director during my stay - a perfect excuse, if needed, for a return visit!

As I talked, worked, ate and walked with my new-found colleagues and friends, I began to understand why it was that my genuine offer to help had not been met with more widespread enthusiasm and, to some extent, why the proposal had needed so much high-powered approval. I learned that it was unusual, if not unprecedented, for someone in the library field to want to work 'for free'; and appreciated how, for a group of already very hard-working people facing particular challenges of promoting their profession within their own country, the prospect of inducting and hosting a perfect stranger from abroad could appear more of a pressure than a pleasure!

I do hope that those of you who did, indeed, put yourselves out for me in so many ways consider the experiment worth the effort - and risk! - involved, and might perhaps have been encouraged to adopt a policy actively promoting the services of volunteers in the future. In an age in which we readily accept globally shared systems of communication and information technology it would seem to be logical to regard the skills of library and information professionals also as a common resource superseding geographical boundaries. Once the idea becomes accepted as normal practice, with agreed procedures - recognised and approved by the appropriate authorities - in place, the whole process would be so much simpler to manage, to the benefit of both host and volunteer. Properly organised within an atmosphere of mutual confidence and trust, I believe a voluntary exchange of expertise with all the refreshment and healthy 'unsettledness' it brings, can open up ways for both personal

(cont. on pg. 8)

International Calendar

30 Apr - 1 May

Library and Information Show 2003 - London, UK

The Library + information Show caters for all sectors of the library profession bringing the library and information world together to share the key industry developments, the latest technology, exchange ideas and opinions and debate current issues.

Email: lis@resourcex.co.uk

Website: <http://www.lishow.co.uk>

11-13 June

eLit2003: The 2nd International Conference on Information and IT Literacy - Glasgow, Scotland

Target audiences are:

- Educators at all levels; Specialists in IT-involved learning
- Librarians and information specialists; IT and information skills providers
- Educational policy and decision-makers; Educational researchers

Website: <http://eLit2003.com>

17-21 June

LIBER 32nd Annual General Conference 2003 - Rome, Italy

Extending the Network: Libraries and their Partners

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale

E-mail: liber2003-roma@bnc.roma.sbn.it

Website: <http://www.bnccrm.librari.beniculturali.it>

19-25 June

American Library Association (ALA) 2003 Annual Conference, jointly with the Canadian Library Association - Toronto, Ontario.

Theme: Looking North to New Horizons. The world's largest annual library event and exhibition. Drawing an estimated 25,000 librarians, educators, writers, publishers and special guests, includes more than 2,000 meetings, discussion groups and programs on topics affecting libraries.

(<http://www.cla.ca/conference/cla-ala2003/>).

1-9 August

World Library and Information Congress 69th IFLA General Conference - Berlin, Germany

Access Point Library: Media - Information - Culture. As from this year IFLA has adopted the new title

"World Library and Information Congress" which is designed to ensure that the event has a greater impact outside the profession and in the city in which it takes place.

IFLA 2003 Berlin Secretariat, c/o Berlin State Library - Prussian

Cultural Heritage, Potsdamer Str. 33, D-10785 Berlin, Germany

E-mail: ifla2003secr@sbb.spk-berlin.de

Website: www.ifla.org/TV/ifla69/index.htm

1 Aug-3 Sept

Conference: Digital Resources in the Humanities 2003

University of Gloucestershire, UK

A major forum bringing together scholars, librarians, archivists, curators, information scientists and computing professionals in a unique and positive way, to share ideas and information about the creation, exploitation, management and preservation of digital resources in the arts and humanities.

E-mail: drh2003@glos.ac.uk

Website: www.glos.ac.uk/humanities/drh2003/

8th September

International Literacy Day

UNESCO first observed and founded this day in 1967. Individuals, organizations, and countries throughout the world renew their efforts to promote literacy and demonstrate their commitment to providing education for all. It is estimated that 875 million of the world's adults do not know how to read or write (nearly two-thirds of this number are women), and that more than 110 million children lack access to education.

19-23 September

Libraries Without Walls 5: The Distributed Delivery of Library and Information Services - Isle of Lesbos, Greece

Organisers: Centre for Research in Library & Information Management (CERLIM), Manchester

Email: LWW5@mmu.ac.uk

Friends of the National Archives embark on an ambitious Microfilming Project - Max Farrugia Secretary FNAM

As you are aware the national archives treasure the documents pertaining records that cover the British era in Malta (1800-1964). These records do not only manifest Anglo-Maltese matters but are also a primary source on socio-economical, historical, political, and commercial facets that conditioned daily life in the said period. Most of these documents are the only copies in existence.

The National Archives have recently embarked on a very ambitious project that involves the microfilming of Bills of Health and Passports' applications of Maltese nationals from 1815 onwards. This project involved the temporary importation of hired high-tech equipment, otherwise not available locally.

The Friends of the National Archives took the opportunity of the presence of this equipment in Malta and is making arrangements with the company to be able to microfilm at their own expenses some documents. We have identified a number of documents that need immediate microfilming due to their poor state caused by silverfish, radiation, brittleness and unwarranted wear and tear caused during wartime. These documents, which number 308 volumes, consist of correspondence issued by the Chief Secretary's Office and the Maltese public between 1880 and 1910, and Petitions from Maltese public to the British Authorities during

their first fifteen years of rule in Malta. Experts in this field indicate that the text shall be completely faded in a few years time. These can only be saved through the use of the current equipment available in Malta. We are therefore seeking collaboration with interested bodies to participate in this venture.

Estimates indicate that each volume shall cost thirty Maltese liri (Lm30) to be microfilmed and digitized. After thorough consideration we have deemed you apt to collaborate in this venture. The initial exposure of the particular volume shall publicize the collaborator, who is free to determine the number of volumes to be conserved. If you are not in a position to fund a whole volume a donation which serves for the same purpose is very much appreciated.

The preservation of these documents shall assist researchers and scholars in their respective fields. The fact that you are a member of the Friends for sure shows your interest in this field of preservation and conservation of documents. Due to logistical reasons, it is very much appreciated that your position towards our proposal concerning collaboration will be given by the 10th of March 2003. For further information kindly contact us on telephone numbers 21450078 or 21459863.

If your institution is planning an activity,
inform us by sending an email on informal@di-ve.com

and professional growth, as well as being a great way to clear a backlog or realise a project sidelined through shortage of staff or lack of funds.

Some of you were kind enough to refer to my visit as 'a breath of fresh air' so perhaps that particular window of opportunity could be opened with less difficulty another time?! My

experience in Malta has certainly made me keen to promote the idea of volunteering among my fellow professionals over here, and my heartfelt thanks go to all of you who helped to make it possible.

Heather L. Brown BSocSc, MCLIP
(Totteridge, N.London, U.K.)

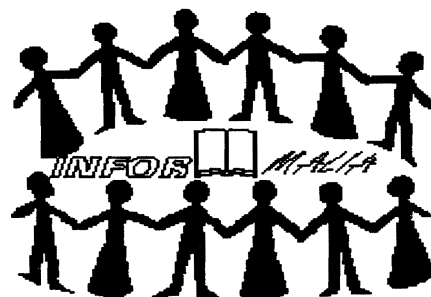
Exhibitions

Maltese Folklore

A very interesting exhibition covering miniature models of Maltese tools, agricultural implements and musical folklore instruments as well as cross-section of literature on the subject was inaugurated at the University Library on Thursday 6th March. The exhibition is being organised by the Department of Maltese on the initiative of folklore scholar Dr. Gorg Mifsud Chircop, with the collaboration of Mr. Frans Farrugia who has produced the painstakingly accurate miniature tools. A number of interactive sessions are being organised for secondary school students. Kindly phone on 23402316 to book a visit for your school.

Maritime History

A pictorial exhibition portraying Malta's 7000-year maritime history was inaugurated in January at Copenhagen's central library. The exhibition consists of 47 panels illustrating the four main periods of Malta's maritime history, from prehistory to the present day, and an interactive computerised presentation. After the 19th of January, this same exhibition will be set-up in Sweden, Finland, Greece and the Netherlands.



Bookshelf



Josephine Spiteri

Select Acquisition on Library Science at the University Library

Z679.L5

Library builders / [contributors, Michael Brawne ... [et al.]]. – Academy, 1997. – 224 p.
ISBN 0-471-97735-7

Z789.E97

Euro-Librarianship : shared resources, shared responsibilities / Assunta Pisani, editor. – Haworth Press, 1992. – 605 p.
Papers presented at the Second Western European Specialists International Conference, held in Florence, Italy, April 1988. – Previously published as: Collection management, 15:1/2 & 3/4 (1992) ISBN 1-56024-266-3

Ref: ZCQ

The Cambridge guide to children's books in English / [edited by] Victor Watson ; advisory editors, Elisabeth L. Keyser, Juliet Partridge, Morag Styles. – Cambridge U.P., 2001. – xi, 814 p.
ISBN 0-521-55064-5

Ref: ZCY

First editions : a guide to identification : statements of selected North American, British Commonwealth, and Irish publishers on their methods of designating first editions / edited by Edward N. Zempel and Linda A. Verkler. – 3rd ed. – Spoon River P., 1995. – viii, 515 p.
ISBN 0-930358-13-9

HD7105.2.S47

Servizzi u beneficji għall-persuni b'dizabilità / editor, Fred Bezzina. – 3rd ed. – Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilità, 1999. – 56 p.
ISBN 99909-71-07-2

Z668.I32

IFLA CPERT International Conference on Continuing Professional Education for the Library and Information Science Profession
Delivering lifelong continuing professional education across space and time: the Fourth World Conference on Continuing Professional Education for the Library and Information Science Professions / edited by Blanche Woolls and Brooke E. Sheldon. – Saur, 2001. – xii, 283p. – (IFLA publications)

ISBN 3-598-21828-1

Z675.P87I32

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Section of Public Libraries
The public library service: IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for development / prepared by a working group chaired by Philip Gill on behalf of the Section of Public Libraries. – Saur, 2001. – xv, 116 p. – (IFLA publications)
ISBN 3-598-21827-3

Z675.U5I58

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Linee guida per la valutazione delle biblioteche universitarie / a cura della Commissione nazionale Università ricerca (Mariella Fazio ... [et al.]. – Associazione italiana biblioteche, 1999. – 142 p.
At head of title: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Associazione Italiana Biblioteche
ISBN 88-7812-047-2

Z338.R365

Rapporto sulla distribuzione del libro in Italia / a cura della editrice bibliografica. – Ministero beni culturali e ambientali, 1997. – 201 p. – (Quaderni di libri e riviste d'Italia)
ISBN 88-240-3797-6

Z665.N359

Nankivell, Clare
Presenting information / Clare Nankivell and Michael Shoolbred. – Library Association Publishing, 1995. – viii, 69 p. – (Library training guides)
ISBN 1-85604-138-7

Z679.5.P359

Pantry, Sheila
Developing a successful service plan / Sheila Pantry and Peter Griffiths. – Library Association Publishing, 2000. – x, 98 p. – (The successful LIS professional)
ISBN 1-85604-392-4

Ref: ZJK

CD-ROMs in print: an international guide to CD-ROM, CD-I, 3DO, MMCD, CD32, multimedia, laserdisc, and electronic products / Amy Darga, project editor. – Gale, 1993. – v.

Deb@te

Deb@te is your space to express your views. It is an interactive exercise where fellow readers can contribute to a debate and share their views and ideas to the benefit of the information workers' community. To participate in Deb@te, all you need to do is to send an email to informal@di-ve.com (bearing the subject header deb@te). The debate will then be published on the following *INFORMALIA* issue.

MaLIA's principle aim is to enhance the standard of service provision of archives, libraries and other information units as well as to enhance the recognition of the information professions and the members of this community.

In your opinion what can be done by MaLIA to further our rightful claim?

Professional Sins

One of the shortcomings about human nature is that we tend to hide mistakes. However, mistakes offer a lesson and sometimes, also a laugh. Well, in the following situation I was the main actor.

An adolescent checked in some books dealing about general health and then commenced to make the following statement:

Adolescent: I have an essay and I would like a book about mummies.

I: No problem, about which phase are we speaking?

Adolescent: I don't know, the lecturer never mentioned phases. However, I know something about the *process*.

I: Ok.

And I handed her a book on pregnancy. After a long laugh she told me that she wanted a book on Egyptian mummies.

After this episode I referred to my library school notes on 'Reference Interview' and I found '*NEVER ASSUME*' boldly staring at me written in my handwriting.

This coming story happened to a friend of mine working in a Dublin public library.

An old woman entered the library and asked the librarian for a book on a specific subject. After browsing the OPAC the librarian reserved a book for the lady. Days later this same lady came to the library to pick the book. As soon as the librarian handed her the book, to the librarian's surprise, this gracious looking old lady started complaining that the librarian was playing a joke on her. The library manager stepped in and solved the situation by giving the old lady a book on 'Glove Making', whilst setting aside the book on 'Love Making'.