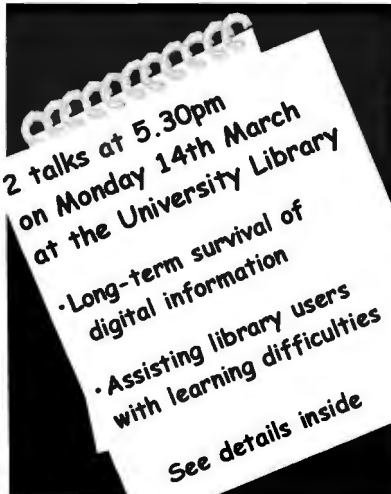




INFORMALIA
*Newsletter of the
Malta Library and
Information Association (MaLIA)*
Issues 110-111
Oct-Dec 2004; Jan-March 2005



EDITORIAL

It seems that libraries in Malta are:

- constantly omitted from the educational system;
- not relevant enough to merit funds which sustain them;
- not linked with the promotion of lifelong learning;
- do not play a role in addressing illiteracy and societal exclusion;
- places that may be run by clerks and what-have-you;
- excluded from government's drive towards creating automated information networks;
- repetitively bottom of the list of any government administration's budget allocations.

Of course some libraries do manage to make the mark but there is a background history that only a seasoned librarian will be able to relate. Indeed a good number of us may claim that our libraries are the Cinderella of our educational and economic development. Unless this opinion sounds too bold or cold to declare, it would be interesting to hear or read anything to the contrary.

This issue of the newsletter, like several others, gives only a partial picture of what exactly constitutes news in the Maltese library world. Complaints, limitations, recurrent difficulties have been shelved possibly under several classmarks related to fear, inadequacy, pessimism, etc. Each page tells its story. In spite of all that has been written above, some individuals do continue their postgraduate training, awards are presented, literacy projects are kept alive, donations still take place, the National Archives plough on despite inadequate support and the odd library activity here and there keeps some interest alive.

However what is the proportion of libraries that have to make do with limited means? We hope a realistic picture of libraries in Malta will emerge through the data collection exercise which the Association's Council is presently working on. It is hoped that a report will be written by the middle of the year.

The new Council for this year has recently been elected and is still to meet up to discuss this year's activities. Keep a look out for these in the press or through our communications. We invite you to attend the two talks organised by the University's Division of Library and Information Studies which should be relevant to many of us.

We hope future issues of the newsletter will be shorter and more frequent. We invite you to contribute your news.

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INFORMALIA

INFORMALIA is the newsletter of the Malta Library and Information Association (MaLIA), published quarterly. The first issue of **INFORMALIA** appeared in May 2003. It was formerly called "Newsletter" until the last issue Number 103 published in December 2002.

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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 only represent the author's views as forwarded to us.

The Malta Library and Information Association (MaLIA), formerly known as the *Ghaqda Bibljotekarji*, is the association that gathers within its ranks all information workers such as librarians and includes archivists. MaLIA is the oldest established association (1969) on the local information scene enjoying wide experience in this sector. Individuals interested in joining as members should write to the Secretary at the above address.

MaLIA is a full member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA) and the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA).

This Newsletter is available on-line. Visit our web-site at:

www.malia-malta.org

PEOPLE NEWS

Joanna Felice, Senior Librarian at the Reference Department of the University of Malta Library, obtained an M.Sc. Econ. in 2004 in the Management of Libraries and Information Services from the University of Wales, Aberysthwyth. Her dissertation was called: *Building better relationships. A case study for the University of Malta Library.*

Catherine Vella, who works in the Library and Information Unit of the National Statistics Office, graduated Master of Arts in Mass Communications from the University of Leicester, UK. Her dissertation was called *Matters of Fact? A critical discourse analysis of statistical news coverage in the Maltese print media.* It was an inquiry into the combined uses of language and numbers as a reporting strategy in Maltese newspapers spanning from October 2003 to August 2004.

Tania Sultana, Librarian at St. Edward's College, won the Best Secondary School Librarian award for 2004 for her outstanding work. (See p. 6)

Patrick Decelis and **Saviour Ciantar**, teacher-librarians at Guzè Damato Boys' Secondary School, Paola, won this year's Best Library of the Year award. (See p. 6)

Pierre J. Mejlak, a young Gozitan author, won the second prize at the Malta National Literary Awards for his adaptation of Pat Alexander's *The Lion's First Bible*, published by Merlin Library in Maltese as *Stejjer mill-Bibbja*. It includes 64 stories interwoven with hundreds of intricately detailed pictures.

Guido Saliba, MaLIA member, passed away on 7th December 2004 aged 81. He is best remembered for his deep love of drama and his great ability as an organiser. A lawyer by profession, Dr Saliba obtained a diploma in public administration in 1966 and in library and information studies from the University of Malta in 1995. Dr Saliba served on several government boards including the Board of Film Censors and the Board of Education. For the last 12 years he was the columnist of 'Once Upon a Dream' in *The Sunday Times*.

Joe Boffa, Officer-in-Charge of the Schools Library Service since 1976 and previously head of the Central Public Library in 1973, retired in February. He has been retained at the Schools Library Service on a part-time basis.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE?

Unpaid members are kindly reminded to settle their annual membership fee of LM5 at their earliest.

DATABASE UPDATE

Have you got an email address or a new phone number? Help us update our membership records by sending the update form attached in the last newsletter. We count on your cooperation.

MALIA NEWS

Data collection exercise on Maltese libraries

As announced in our last newsletter, the Association is involved in gathering information on the current state of our libraries. This is still in progress because of a number of unforeseen delays. Despite several attempts, our request to the Department of Education for a list of school libraries was never granted. The Department of Libraries and Archives also delayed in providing a go-ahead to interview its staff in public libraries.

The report will focus on the following areas of concern: premises, collection development, human resources, budget provisions, automation and the availability of statistical indicators.

New legislation on libraries

Following MaLIA Council's insistence with the Ministry of Education that it be consulted in the preparation of a new bill on libraries, a draft was provided for feedback and comments. To date a meeting with the Minister of Education has not been granted to discuss MaLIA's position.

This is an extract from a press release on the 2005 budget sent to all newspapers on the 3rd December but reproduced by none. The figures speak for themselves.

Government does not consider the National and Public Libraries as contributors to the educational process

MaLIA is deeply concerned that the 2005 budget has confirmed once again that government is of the opinion that libraries do not form an integral part of the Maltese educational system. The budget for 2005 has focused on education, employment and the environment. MaLIA cannot therefore understand how the allocation for the Department of Libraries and Archives has been reduced once again. MaLIA has commented several times that without the adequate financial support from government, our libraries are running the risk of being marginalized.

The further reductions in the allocation of funds for operations and expenses make it practically impossible for our public libraries to maintain any

Meeting with EU MEP

On the 29th November Robert Mizzi, MaLIA Chairperson and Martes Paris, International Relations Officer met with Dr. Simon Busuttl to discuss how the local library scene may benefit from Malta's accession to the EU. It was agreed to maintain contact on the issue. Though MaLIA's Council contacted the other MEPs, no reply has yet been received.

MaLIA Council 2005

At MaLIA's Annual General Meeting held on 1st March the following members were elected to this year's Council. Posts will be designated at the first Council meeting later in March.

Robert Mizzi, Joseph Grima, Josephine Spiteri, Anita Ragonesi, Heather Brown, Veronica Calleja, Frederick Cauchi Inglott, Rev. Eugene Theuma OFM.

serious collection development. It is estimated that with the 2005 budget allocations, our public libraries will have an average of less than Lm180 per library allocated for the development of collections. The 50% reduction in the allocation for equipment and the 40% decrease in the allocation for capital expenditure will make it practically impossible to enhance the services offered by our libraries. The table below indicates part of the reductions in the allocation for libraries.

As MaLIA has already pointed out to the relevant authorities, the devolution process started a few years back lacks cohesion as local councils are not legally bound to sustain the public libraries. There are cases where the public libraries still have to rely exclusively on the budget allocated by the central government for their survival despite forming part of the devolution process. In this scenario, an amendment to the original agreement, binding local councils to contribute a percentage of their budget to their public libraries has become a necessity.

	Approved estimate 2004 Lm	Estimate 2005 Lm	% change
Capital Expenditure			
Improvements to buildings and security	50,000	30,000	-40%
Recurrent Expenditure			
Personal Emoluments	568,000	512,000	-10%
Staff salaries and wages	469,000	415,000	-12%
Operational and maintenance expenses	115,000	82,000	-29%
Materials and supplies	35,000	22,000*	-37%
Equipment	8,000	4,000	-50%

*Only Lm 10,270 of this figure was allocated to the Public Library system that comprises the Central Public Library, 7 regional libraries and 49 branch libraries.
Source: Financial Estimates 2005

PUBLICATIONS

ARTICLES ON LIBRARIANSHIP IN MALTA

Muscat, Ruth. Malta Library and Information Association. In: Drake, Miriam (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, 2nd ed. Marcel Dekker, 2003, pp. 1741-1747.

Muscat, Ruth. (2004) Libraries and librarianship in Malta. *Bibliothek - Forschung und Praxis* 28: (2), pp. 193-196.

Paris, Martes. (2004) Library and Information Studies in Malta : challenges and opportunities. *Library Review*, 53: (2), pp. 104-111.

Sciberras, Lillian. (2004) National Memory in Malta : the extended role of libraries. *IFLA Journal* 30: (3), pp. 208-215.

MALTA NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY 1999-2000

The National Library has just published the Malta National Bibliography which covers the period 1999-2000. This is available for sale at the Administration Section of the

MEDIA GUIDE BOOK

National Library for LM4.

Malta's Authors & Publishers Alliance (MAPA), in conjunction with publishers JPS Books, have published their second edition of *Malta's Publishing & Media Guide Book*. This will help inform people of who is who and who does what in the publishing industry in Malta and an effective tool for marketing campaigns. Entries include: advertising agencies, associations and organisations, billboards and signs, consultants and marketing, distributors, libraries, pre-presses, printing presses, publishing houses and radio and TV stations.

BOOK PORTAL

NMS Design has developed www.Ktieb.com, an online book portal. The initiative arose from the lack of an online resource where people could browse, buy and sell books online. Ktieb.com has embarked on a project to partner up with entities such as schools, non-government organisations and non-profit organisations, local councils, bookshops and publishers. The aim is to create a system where all parties can mutually contribute to offer a better service to the Maltese internet and reading community. Email ktieb@ktieb.com

MALTA ONLINE BOOKSHOP

An online bookshop for Maltese books is offering a service to both publishers and authors who wish to sell their books online. It offers free delivery by post to local addresses as well as a personally delivered service for a nominal fee. Orders are processed online through a secure server. Every effort is made to present Maltese publications online on their launching. Members receive free bi-monthly newsletters with information about newly published books.

Email: info@maltaonlinebookshop.com

LIBRARY SCIENCE ACQUISITIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

compiled by Josephine Spiteri

Education and research for marketing and quality management in libraries : satellite meeting, Quebec, August 14-16, 2001 / edited by Rejean Savard = La formation et la recherche sur le marketing et la gestion de la qualite en bibliotheque : colloque satellite, Quebec, 14-16 aout, 2001 / edite par Rejean Savard. - Saur, 2002. - x, 326 p. - (IFLA publications)

Financial and cost management for libraries and information services / Stephen A. Roberts. - 2nd ed. - Bowker-Saur, 1998. - xxv, 406 p. Rev. ed. of: Cost management for library and information services.

The ethics of librarianship : an international survey / edited by Robert W. Vaagan. - Saur, 2002. - 344 p. - (IFLA publications) (In short loan collection)

The basics of information systems / Jennifer Rowley. - 2nd ed. - Library Association Publishing, 1996. - xii, 268 p.

Digital futures : strategies for the information age / Marilyn Deegan and Simon Tanner. - Library Association Publishing, 2002. - xii, 276 p. - (Digital futures series) (In short loan collection)

LIBRARY DEVELOPMENTS

E-journals at University Library

The University of Malta Library has launched an electronic retrieval service to an exhaustive range of full-text online academic titles across all disciplines. Following negotiations with EBSCO the Library is now not only offering a wider range of parallel electronic titles to its traditional 1,043 print journal subscriptions, but it is also extending access to EBSCO's Academic Search Premier, a very powerful e-journals package covering over 8,000 academic titles of which 4,000 are in full-text. Info: <http://www.lib.um.edu.mt>

New MCAST Library to open soon

After fifteen months of construction and finishing works, the new MCAST Main Library and Learning Resource Centre building on Corradino Hill was handed over to Laurence Zerafa, the Librarian and his staff. In February furniture, equipment and the library collection was moved into the building. Shelving has been assembled and equipment is presently being installed. New resources purchased over the past two years, besides other stock inherited from the precursor Technical Institute library is being processed and shelved.

No official opening date has been set so far but this should happen during the coming two months or so. Then the Librarian would be pleased to host a visit by MaLIA members. The Main Library at Paola is the headquarters library which coordinates the work of six other MCAST libraries in Malta and an eventual library in Gozo. At this stage these libraries are only open to the MCAST community of students, lecturers and staff. In the future it is hoped to also provide access to the general public on a subscription basis. Since last May a catalogue for all libraries has been available online at: www.mcast.edu.mt/llrc/

John XXIII Library's website

John XXIII Library has a new website. Browsers will find information about the library, latest news and can also browse the library catalogue online. At present about 800 books or so have been inputted in the database. Mr Keith Vassallo is the man behind it.

Website: <http://www.john23library.com>
email: librarian@john23library.com

Zejtun branch library enlarged

Last November, as part of the celebrations for World Children's Day, the Zejtun local council signed an agreement with the Department of Libraries and Archives to administer the local library. The agreement was signed at the Zejtun Primary B school where students gave performances to illustrate the importance of reading. The library has been enlarged and with refurbishment works under way, it is expected to open this year with a wider selection of books. The education section of the local council launched a campaign called *Ktieb mill-Kommunitá għall-Kommunitá* - a book from the community to the community to encourage NGOs, retail outlets and the public to donate new and second-hand books to the library.

Hospital library service

As from January 2005 the Peace Laboratory of Hal Far has extended its hospital library service with another lending library at St Luke's Hospital's orthopaedic ward. The Peace Lab. has been running the library at the hospital's children's Fairyland ward for the past 30 years. It is presently in the care of volunteers Antoinette Farrugia and Marthese Mifsud and opens every Tuesday from 4-6 pm. The Peace Lab. is on the lookout for volunteers to man the library for a few hours once a week.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES

International School Library Day Seminar

On October 25th, International School Library Day, the Schools Library Service and the Malta School Library Association held a seminar aimed at heads of schools. The seminar, held at St Edward's College, Cottonera, was addressed by the Minister of Education who handed out prizes for the Best School Librarian and Best Library 2004.

Best School Librarian award

Ms Tania Sultana, Librarian at St. Edward's College, won the Best Secondary School Librarian award for 2004 for her outstanding work. A circular is issued by the Department of Students Services in January of each year and the Committee assesses requests on four main areas: Cooperation with teachers, knowledge and use of available technology, activities that engage the attention of students and improvements to the library. *Congratulations!*

Best Library award

The Guzè Damato Boys' Secondary School, Paola, has won this year's Best Library of the Year award. The school librarians, Patrick Decelis and Savious Ciantar were awarded a certificate and Lm100 worth of books. Six libraries from state and non-state schools contested this award. Last year, the library at Guzè Damato was refurbished and enlarged so as to welcome a bigger number of students that go there to read, borrow and do research work. In addition, the library was donated books and equipment by mayor Raymond Attard on behalf of Paola council. *Congratulations!*

Talk for teacher-librarians

On December 20th, the Malta School Library Association organised a talk by Mr Gerald Brown, roving ambassador of the International Association of School Librarians on how teacher-librarians could be more effective in school libraries. This was held at the Schools Library Service premises in Iklin.

Software demonstration

The following day Mr Peter Barr, a representative from Softlink Europe, gave a demonstration on new library management software called *Oliver* to teacher-librarians. Softlink has designed *Oliver* to be extremely attractive to librarians and to IT managers. It is

installed with all the system administration facilities present. The software allows one to search any of the 1800 libraries in the world which are z39.50 compliant. It also includes a catalogue database of 8 million titles, updated on a weekly basis, for use in retrospective and ongoing cataloguing.

Mosta Primary School launches book

Last October, the pupils attending the Carmela Sammut Primary School, Mosta, and their teachers, ushered in the new scholastic year by launching a publication of the children's own making, aptly entitled *Ghiqli Storja, Nann*.

The idea was conceived while preparing for the previous year's Library Week. The pupils, then attending Year 3, were asked to invite their grandparents to recall an anecdote from the past. The children presented these recollections in the form of a short story. Through the school authorities and the local council's financial assistance, among others, a 70-page publication which includes some 80 reminiscences was produced. Two children took the stage to read their own stories and a copy of the book was presented to all schoolchildren.

Literacy Evening at St Francis School

On January 31st, St Francis School, Sliema, was a hive of activity at a Literacy Evening. Students read and acted works by various authors in English, Maltese, Italian and French. This school, whose motto is "Aim High", is continuously encouraging its students to read, not only as a means of information, but also to create awareness that the book is a good friend.

Trevor Zahra at Mtarfa Secondary School

On January 31st, the well-known author Trevor Zahra was greeted at Sir Temi Zammit Boys' Secondary School, Mtarfa where he spoke about the inspiration for his stories and answered all students' questions related to the books studied at school and other readers published during the years. The author signed more than 100 readers brought by students and teachers for this occasion. The pen he used was later presented to a Form 1 student. Teachers of Maltese worked hand-in-hand with students to prepare for this special occasion and took the opportunity to donate Lm30 worth of books for the school library.

LITERACY PROJECTS

HSBC sponsors family learning initiatives

Last November *The Times* announced that the HSBC Cares for Children Fund is sponsoring two major family learning initiatives run by the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) of the Education Ministry and presented a Lm30,000 donation, following a grant of Lm12,000 in 2001.

A *Nwar Programme*, running twice weekly, provides learning support within a family literacy context to 8 to 13-year-olds who grapple with literacy skills, and their parents. Intensively trained and mentored teachers tutor two children in the presence of their parents, resulting in capacity-building of all the family members present. These sessions help parents to learn new skills they may not have mastered in their school days. The programme is currently catering for 50 families in Birkirkara and Hamrun, while a Hilti Club is also running at these two sites.

The programme involved the deployment of volunteer tutor assistants; the development and dissemination of two bilingual reading packs for promotion of vernacular literature through the development of much needed new children's books; and the translation and publication of the first Big Book in Maltese into other European languages. Minister Louis Galea said around 140 state schoolteachers have been intensively trained in family literacy.

Bilingual picture books

Last November *The Times* carried a feature on Ms Rita Antoinette Borg, an author of two bilingual picture books in Maltese and English for early readers. Ms. Borg reads stories during sessions for children aged 5-8 organised at the Mosta public library on alternate Wednesdays, an initiative of councillor Josephine Camilleri. Ms. Borg won the *Children's Book of the Year Award* by the Malta Book Council last year. She insists storytellers have a responsibility to choose good books and to read in both national languages to children in order to make them feel comfortable with both.

Storytelling sessions in Gozo

The Gozo public libraries, for the seventh consecutive year, are holding storytelling sessions for primary school pupils every Wednesday up to May. Pupils in Grades 1-3 attend sessions at the Gozo Lending Library on St Francis Square while sessions for Grade 4-6 will be held at the Gozo Public Library in Vajringa Street. Audio-visual material, particularly videos, are shown to help children acquire more language skills while familiarising themselves with books and other services offered by the libraries. Miller Distributors Ltd are again offering books to be drawn as prizes at the end of each session. Around 20 children participate in each session. More info: tel: 2156-1510 or 2155-3729 or by visiting one of the two libraries in Victoria.

Reading on Campus FM 103.7

The B.Ed (Hons) third year group is currently presenting a series of radio programmes called 'Ghidli storja...' on Campus FM 103.7. Each programme discusses current issues on reading and presents the latest research in the field. The second part of the programme will present a story taken from Maltese literature, falling under one of the following themes - the individual, the community, or the world at large, with complimentary language activities and tips for classroom practice for the junior years. The series caters for a professional audience.

Medical students teach refugees

The Malta Medical Students' Association is appealing to people to donate writing instruments and books, magazines and other reading matter that can be used to teach English to refugees living in Malta. A group of 20 refugees have been attending English language lessons given by a number of medical students who believe in promoting equality and improving the life of refugees. With the assistance of Fr. Jimmy Bartolo SJ, University chaplain and many university students, the association also threw two Christmas parties for 170 refugees who are in detention and presented gifts to both children and adults.

70TH IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE, BUENOS AIRES, 22-27 August 2004

Dr Lillian Sciberras

*Head, Division of Library & Information Studies,
Centre for Communication Technology*

This first International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) conference in South America focused on developmental aspects which are vital to large parts of an increasingly globalised world. The central theme was "Libraries: tools for education and development". IFLA consists of eight divisions which correspond to professional activity in general research, in special, and in public libraries. Each of the divisions was represented by papers embodying the activities of bibliographic control; collections and services; management and technology; education and research; and regional activities.

It is normal in IFLA conferences for the organisation's core activities to also be represented. These consist of important and highly pertinent foci such as: 'Advancement of Librarianship', 'Copyright and other Legal Matters', 'Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression', and 'Preservation and Conservation'. Plenary sessions, poster sessions, and a wide-ranging exhibition of products and services were also provided as part of the general conference programme.

Among the numerous sessions attended there was much food for thought, inter alia, in the exposition by Lynne Brindley (Chief Executive, British Library) on 'The British Library and e-Learning' when she pointed out that it is the

coming together of original sources plus facilities for learning that create the e-learning environment. Emphasis was placed on the necessity for having interpretation and guidance elements alongside the digitised resources. In the session on National Libraries, the teaching element of these rich national resources was highlighted by the possibilities opened up by digital technologies in combination with the Web.

Regarding the evolving and complex scenario of attempts at documenting the myriad electronic documents born daily, Lynne C. Howarth (LIS Dept., University of Toronto) explained that because of the prevailing volatile and dynamic environment no permanent guidelines are possible at this point, but that metadata records and bibliographic records should be perceived as a continuum and not as a dichotomy. A framework, independent of any existing schema, incorporating a set of ten elements, was possible, however, as a common core of data points. This can be further developed as a framework to be the basis for a common set in all metadata standards (possibly as a minimum standard). Much discussion followed this paper and numerous other suggestions were put forward in the numerous sessions of what was a highly rewarding opportunity for professional and academic improvement.

LIBRARIES' DEVASTATION IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

On Sunday 26 December 2004, the tsunami tidal waves which swept across the Indian Ocean, spawned by a major earthquake, caused loss of life and havoc in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, Sumatra, Jakarta and India and so many islands.

Remember the daily news reportage? Now there seems to be a lull in news from this part of the world. Yet people are still reconstructing their lives with whatever assistance is at hand. In Sri Lanka alone 52 public libraries, around 177 school libraries and 68 libraries attached to religious institutions were damaged.

Last January, Kay Raseroka, IFLA'S President stated: "IFLA will be reminding international organisations of the importance of rapidly re-establishing library services in order build community confidence and provide the necessary information to assist reconstruction, health services and education."

For more information check:

<http://www.ifla.org/V/presstsunami04.htm>
<http://www.cilip.org.ukprofessionalguidance/internationalwork/premila.htm>

SALZBURG SEMINAR - SESSION 422
"LIBRARIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY"
SCHLOSS LEOPOLDSKRON, SALZBURG
23-30 October 2004

Dr Lillian Sciberras

The Salzburg Seminar is a prestigious organization that regularly convenes sessions on varied topics relevant to professionals and academics from around the world for a week of intensive study and discussion.

This particular session grouped 54 fellows from 29 countries. The faculty was represented by seven outstanding professionals from four different countries. Fellows were also engaged daily in concurrent working sessions discussing four main areas of concern: A. Librarianship in the 21st century; B. Libraries and their communities; C. Reaching new users and understanding users' needs; D. Generating income and support – making your case. The undersigned participated in all working sessions of Group B, and was responsible for co-writing the script of a dramatized presentation conveying the group's findings to the plenary session.

William Simpson, Director of the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, introduced the topic of "The management of change", and spoke about the current scenario of 'more users, more choice, less money'. At Manchester, resource sharing and developments such as the 'open archives initiative' are quickly becoming a way of life. His experience has been one of 'selling' the library and effectively marketing it to the rest of the university.

Chris Rusbridge, Director of Library Services at the University of Glasgow, utilised innovative software that represents mind-mapping with which the speaker interacts during his presentation. His topic was "ICT and its implications for libraries in the 21st century". Rusbridge went through a mind tour of all the different areas (such as digital expectations, collections, copyright, preservation, services, etc.) in which libraries are being affected by ICT and potential implications during this century.

Sohair Wastawy, Chief Librarian of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt, spoke of "The flow and delivery of information across cultures", a subject which appeared deceptively simple before her talk. Other speakers were Paul LeClerc, Director of the New York Public Library, who spoke of "The role of the librarian in the 21st century", and also about his fund-raising role in his own context; Ingrid Bussman, director of the Stuttgart Public Library, who gave a detailed overview of the new library being built there for a 21st century community; Kay Raseroka, President of IFLA who highlighted advocacy and partnerships as an essential ingredient for sustainable libraries in the 21st century; and Martin Gomez who explained community-based library services, basing his presentation on his vast experience in Brooklyn, New York.

Vision of the Communal Roles of Libraries

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The library is a place where knowledge and information freely dwell to define, empower, preserve, challenge, connect, entertain, and transform individuals, cultures and communities. The dwelling place, whether physical or virtual, is the product of collective reflection, aspiration, commitment, expertise and organization. It is both a byproduct of civil communities and a catalyst for cultural progress, inspiration, expression and exchange. Its absence in this new century would not only deprive many individuals of important resources, but also more significantly, such loss would deny humanity an essential portion of its shared identity and entitled liberties. The library can never be fully replaced by information technologies. For the essence of its communal role is not the technological mastery over knowledge and information, but rather the provision of sanctuary for human thought and expression in any medium.



DONATIONS

University of Malta Library

Four presidents of the Mdina, Sliema, St. Paul's Bay, and La Vallette Lions Clubs, presented the University of Malta Library with a cheque of Lm800 in support of a digitization venture which is also being jointly financed by Malta's National Commission for UNESCO. The digitization project will cover the scanning of four historically priceless manuscript registers of the Acta Academiae Melitensis from the University Library's archival collections, and their reproduction on CD-ROM. These volumes cover the workings, Council deliberations and earliest lists of graduants from the refoundation of the University under Sir Alexander Ball in 1800, to Malta's attainment of self-government in 1921.

MCAST Library

Last October Bank of Valletta donated a collection of books to the MCAST's Institute of Art and Design Library in Targa Gap, Mosta. Mario Cilia, manager of Bank of Valletta's Mosta branch, presented books focusing on local art to Laurence Zerafa, MCAST library and Learning Resource Centre manager in the presence of Veronica Calleja, assistant librarian.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

In November Prof. Salvino Busuttil, then Ambassador of Malta to France, donated some books to the Malta Section of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France to Jean-Noël Jeanneney, president of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

National Council for the Maltese Language

Pamela Cremona, widow of the late Joseph Cremona, a distinguished Romance linguist and a Fellow at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, has donated a collection of her late husband's books to the National Council for the Maltese Language. Mrs Cremona's decision to donate the books followed a suggestion by Manwel Mifsud, head of the Department of Maltese at the University of Malta.

Salesian school library

In December Edward Grech, manager of Bank of Valletta's Preluna Towers branch in Sliema donated a number of books to Fr Charles Cini for the Salesian school library in Sliema.

Talking Books Service

The HSBC Cares For Children Fund has donated four computers and interactive materials worth some Lm7,000 to upgrade the Talking Books Library at the main public library in Floriana. The new facilities are intended primarily for dyslexic children. The interactive materials donated include a significant number of children's books on CD-Rom. Over the past few years the Talking Books Library has provided a service to the blind, elderly and others with reading difficulties. In 2004, the library's 600 members borrowed 24,963 cassettes which featured a vast range of books.

Malta Centre for Restoration

Bookbinding equipment, tools, materials which Jacqueline Ostrovidov had collected during her long career as an amateur bookbinder were presented by her husband to the Malta Centre for Restoration in Bighi and rare books on bookbinding donated to its library. The Frenchwoman and her husband, who is of Russian origin, became acquainted with Joseph Schirò, director of the Malta Centre for Restoration in 1990 when he was still working as chief conservator at the book restoration laboratory of the National Library of Malta.

Mrs Ostrovidov was the only graduate specialised in bookbinding techniques. She studied under the famous French bookbinder Michel Mondage. The large collection of gilding tools is unique to Malta and would be a great aid to students studying book conservation during their degree course at the institute.

NEWS ON ARCHIVES

The National Archives digitalising documents

A big project to digitalise hundreds of old documents is underway at the National Archives in Rabat and the Banca Giuratale in Mdina. Digitisation will allow greater access to the documents, some of which are very fragile and cannot be handled. Future plans include putting the digital images online so that people can do research from home.

The massive amount of documents first have to be catalogued and then microfilmed in a laborious and expensive process. It costs about Lm40 to microfilm every volume. Head of archives Charles Farrugia noted that microfilming was internationally approved and guaranteed to preserve the image for 500 years.

Documents include all the correspondence between the Maltese and British governments since 1800, health-related documents and ones about air raid precautions and hundreds of passport applications. Many people referred to these applications when tracing their family tree.

The process to digitalise the documents is being sponsored by the Vodafone Foundation and will span three years. Speaking during a press conference last October, foundation chairman Gemma Mifsud Bonnici said there was a possibility that the sponsorship would be extended after the three-year period was over.

Priority is being given to documents that are either the most fragile or the most important. The head of archives said there are "12 kilometres of volumes", which exclude government documents of the past 30 years, and not everything will be microfilmed. Particular importance is being given to the Magna Curia Castellania and Consolato del Mare

documents from the Mdina repository, the despatches and the photographic holdings from the Santo Spirito repository.

New CD and set of postcards

On 15 October the National Archives launched an audiovisual CD sponsored by Global Microfilm Digital SRL. This includes photos of Governors and civil commissioners and photos and biographies of Presidents and Prime Ministers who served in Malta between 1800-2004. Includes some voice clips. The CD sells at LM 5. Email: customer-care.archives@gov.mt

A limited edition set of eight postcards depicting Malta's most important political events from 1919 to 2004 has been published and sells at LM0.75.

MP calls for incentives to private collectors

On October 18th Labour MP Jose Herrera urged the government to introduce incentives to encourage private collectors to make available to the authorities copies of historical documents they may hold in their possession. He also insisted that should a private collector decide to sell items of his collection, he should first inform the government, giving it the opportunity to buy those items itself, with safeguards to benefit the seller for tax purposes. Much of Malta's cultural heritage was in private collections, and the government should tap into this heritage while protecting everybody's right to ownership, Dr Herrera said.

He argued that the appointment of a national archivist and the National Archives Council would eventually enable researchers to be able to access a central body for guidance on sources of historical material.

Earlier in the debate, Labour MP Justyne Caruana said that the opposition agreed with the principle of the bill, but felt the minister was being given too many powers. Dr Caruana praised the Friends of the National Archives for their work. She urged the government to allocate more resources to the preservation of the national archives as well as for personnel training. Dr Caruana observed there was no mention of Gozo in the bill.

See full reports in The Times, 19, 21 October 2004

Archival practicum concluded

Considering Malta's outstanding archival heritage and relatively vast collections, courses in archival management in Malta are hard to come by. A much needed practice-based course in Archives conducted by Fulbright Professor Theresa Vann, with the presentation of certificates by Professor Saviour Chircop, Director of the University's Centre for Communication Technology, was concluded last January.

The course was the first run by the Centre's Division of Library and Information Studies in conjunction with the National Archives of Malta, on whose premises the sessions were held. The participating students learnt the current best practices for processing archives and for providing access by working with the original materials.

They experienced the types of decisions archivists make regarding questions of conservation and privacy issues. They also had the opportunity to discuss the creation and dissemination of microfilm and digital surrogates in an informal combination of lectures and workshops. Last January Dr Vann also concluded a short theoretical evening course on the university campus entitled "Modern Issues Affecting Historical Archives".



Local Calendar

Overseas Calendar

18 Feb-10 March

The Magic Pencil exhibition

a touring exhibition of children's illustrations.
60 facsimile prints of artworks by 13 of Britain's most accomplished and celebrated illustrators
St James Cavalier, Valletta
Tel: 2122 3200 or 2122 3216.

14 March

Two talks in succession starting at 5.30 pm at the University of Malta Library

•Long-term Survival of Digital Information

Prof. Gordon B. Neavill, Wayne State University, Michigan

•Assisting Library Users with

Learning Difficulties

Prof. Mary Ann Sheble, Director, Oakland Community College Library, Michigan
organised by the Division of Library & Information Studies, University of Malta in conjunction with the University of Malta Library and with support of the US Embassy

21 March - end of April

Exhibition on Dr. Paul Cassar

Medical historian
University of Malta Library

27-30 June

E-Society 2005 - IADIS International Conference
International Association for the Development of the Information Society

Theme: *How is the use of ICT in all its forms changing practices and behaviours in the digital age?*

Qawra, Malta

Info: www.iadis.org/es2005/topics.asp

INTERNATIONALLY CELEBRATED DATES

23 April - World Book and Copyright Day

8 September - International Literacy Day

24 October - International School Library Day

13-15 March

London Book Fair

London, Olympia, UK
<http://www.lbf-virtual.com/>

30 June-2 July

Umbrella 2005

Theme '*Tackling the key issues together*'

The University of Manchester

Suppliers of products, services and systems meet and influence the community of library and information professionals.

<http://www.umbrella2005.org.uk/>

14-18 August

71st IFLA General Conference and Council

Theme: *Libraries - A voyage of discovery*

Oslo, Norway

<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla71/index.htm>

11-13 September

3rd International Conference on the Book

organised by Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies, Oxford, UK

<http://book-conference.com/>

18-23 September

9th European Conference on Digital Libraries

Vienna, Austria

<http://www.ecdl2005.org/>

16-18 November

Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society

Tunis (Tunisia)

<http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/about.htm>

Check CILIP's traomomg workshops

<http://www.cilip.org.uk/training/>

GOOGLE IS ADDING MAJOR LIBRARIES TO ITS DATABASE

One of the barriers to the dream of digitizing the world's knowledge may be falling, as Google announces agreements with several of the world's largest libraries to digitize the contents of major portions their collections. This will allow Google to publish the full text of only those library books old enough to no longer be under copyright. For copyrighted works, Google would scan in the entire text, but make only short excerpts available online.

Estimating the costs of the initiative at \$10 for each of the more than 15 million books and other documents covered in the agreements, librarians involved predict the project could take at least a decade. The libraries involved include Harvard, the University of Michigan, Stanford and the New York Public Library in the United States, as well as the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Couple this with the announcement by the Library of Congress that it is working with a

group of international libraries from the United States, Canada, Egypt, China and the Netherlands to create a publicly available digital archive of one million books on the Internet (with some 70,000 volumes planned to be available online by next April) and the dream of a major part of the world's knowledge being freely, instantly available might be drawing much closer to reality.

Source: *New York Times*, Dec 14, 2004

<http://www.nytimes.com>

**The University of Malta's
Division of Library & Information Studies
at the Centre for Communication Technology
in conjunction with
the University of Malta Library
and with the support of the United States Embassy**

cordially invite you to Two Talks

Long-term Survival of Digital Information

by

Gordon B. Neavill

Associate Professor
Library and Information Science Program
Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

and

Assisting Library Users with Learning Difficulties

by

Mary Ann Sheble

Director of Library Systems at Oakland Community College,
Oakland County, Michigan

on

**Monday 14th March 2005 at the University of Malta
Library. Both talks will be held in succession, starting
5.30pm.**