

21st CENL MEETING – HELSINKI

ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07 - MALTA

NATIONAL LIBRARY

The National Library serves as a research and reference library and collects every item of Melitensia by way of the Legal Deposit Act 1925. It also houses the Library and Archives of the Knights of St. John, the Archives of the Università' and an almost complete collection of Maltese newspapers and periodicals.

The National Library conscious of the sensitivity of the place and the important holdings which are found in this building had installed in 2000 a Fire Detection and Suppression System and a Close Circuit Television.

Exhibition between the National Library of Malta and the Fundació Jaume II el Just, Valencia Spain

On 20th January a Spanish delegation consisting of Ricardo Sicluna Lletget and José Manuel Gironés Guillem, President and Vice President of the Asociación Amigos de Malta together with Vicente Burgos Antón, director of Fundació Jaume II el Just visited our National Library and discussed the possibility of holding an exhibition between Malta and Spain regarding exhibiting manuscripts and books of interest to both countries. The proposal was accepted and discussions through correspondence continued in the following months.

During the period 16th to 20th March 2006 an official visit to Valencia, Spain was performed. The Director, National Library was invited as host of the Asociación Amigos de Malta and the Fundació Jaume II el Just. The aim of the visit was to conclude the outstanding arrangements of the mounting of the exhibition which was scheduled for May 2006.

This exhibition entitled '*Carol Vs Rex Imperator*'- *Anima et Vida (1506-2006)* is centred on CHARLES V –King and Emperor – and his coming to power (he was born in Gante in 1500, but it was not until 1506 that he was proclaimed Duke of Burgundy, count of Flanders and successor to the Crowns of Castille and of Aragón, because of the unexpected death of his father).

The exhibition was inaugurated on Saturday 27th May by the Hon. Minister of Education in the presence of distinguished guests. It centred on the influence that books had on the young boy's – the future emperor's early life, and on the transition which matured him from a child into a man and a from a man into a Caesar. This exhibition lasted till the 8th September 2006. It has achieved its goals of promoting the historical connections between Malta and Spain and can be considered a huge success since it attracted thousands of locals and foreigners

Commemorating our National Poet, Mons Carmelo Psaila

During November 2006 the National Library commemorated Mons Carmelo Psaila, Malta's National Poet and an ex employee of the Library. On Friday, November 3rd a Literary and Musical Evening was organised at the Library under the patronage of the Hon. Dr. Louis Galea, Minister of Education, Youth and Employment. This Literary evening included the reading of a wide selection from Dun Karm's poetry amongst which some of his most important verses.

On the same day an exhibition relating Mons Psaila's life and works was inaugurated at the National Library. Patrons of the Library participated with Library staff in mounting a most interesting exhibition by which one could view a number of documents, manuscripts, photos and memorabilia, all connected with our National Poet.

Notte Bianca – Lejl Imdawwal Valletta 2006

On Saturday, 14th October the National Library participated in the first edition of Notte Bianca which was organised by the Ministry for Culture and Tourism. Hundreds of people visited the Library which remained open until the early hours of Sunday morning. During this activity visitors had the opportunity to learn more about the Library's history and collections and admire the architecture of this last building in Malta by the Knights.

Re-Construction of Store at Hal Far

Upgrading of Hal Far Road and Re-Construction of Store – The Department of Libraries was informed by the Malta Transport Authority that part of the building used to store Book Fair furniture had to be demolished because of the road widening and to eliminate the nearby curve which had an unsafe alignment. The Transport Authority accepted our proposal to build at their own expense a Garage instead. The tender for the works in question had been prepared and published in the Government Gazette.

Theatine Order visited National Library

On Thursday, 22nd June, the General Secretary of the Theatine Order, Rev. Fr. Gaetano Rossell, and the learned scholar and author from the same Theatine Order, Rev. Fr. Pasquale di Pietro, visited the National Library accompanied by committee members of the St. Gaetan Band Club of Hamrun. This visit was part of the centenary celebrations of the said club. During this visit both Fr. Rossell and Fr. Di Pietro enquired about rare books and a new relationship between the National Library of Malta and the Library of the Theatine Order in Rome was established.

Brocktorff watercolour collections

In January 2006 the National Library enquired about the possibility that UNESCO provides funds for the publication of the 71 Brocktorff watercolour collections to be published by the National Library in three volumes in the next three years. We were informed by the UNESCO Committee Chairman that we could apply for such funds by filling in an application and compile a report on this project. In April we were pleased to be informed that our project was accepted and placed first on the list of eligible projects. This is a golden opportunity for the National Library of Malta because a dream which had always been put aside due to lack of funds could now be made a reality. This project coincides perfectly with the restoration of the façade of the National Library which has been started and is expected to take three years to complete.