

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MALTA CENL ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Introduction

The Department of Libraries consists of the National Library and the Central Public Library together with its Regional and Branch Libraries.

The National Library will continue to acquire, assemble and preserve for posterity the national collections of printed and audio-visual material, as well as material in electronic format.

The Public Library System will provide the public with well-selected and contemporary reading material for both educational and leisure purposes.

The National Library

Customer Care

The function of the Customer Care Unit is to register the entry and exit of every person into or from the National Library premises, the aim being to guarantee security as well as to keep records. During 2009 the Unit welcomed a total of 4692 visitors, a 23% drop from last year, with an average of 16 visitors per day of opening. The majority of visitors hailed from Germany but French and Belgian tourists visited the Library in considerable numbers as well.

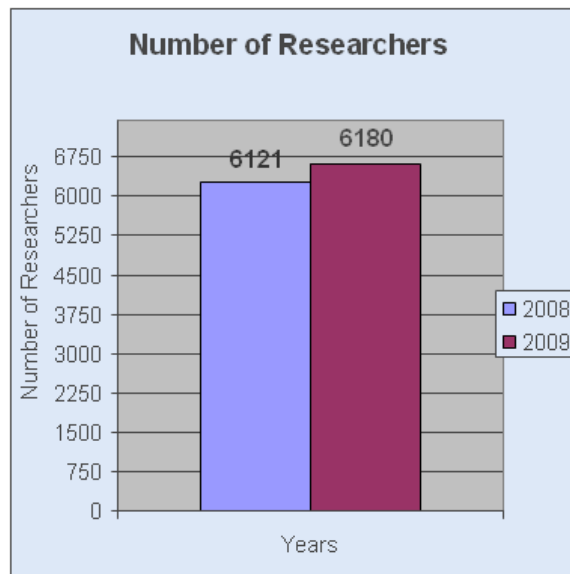


Reading Room

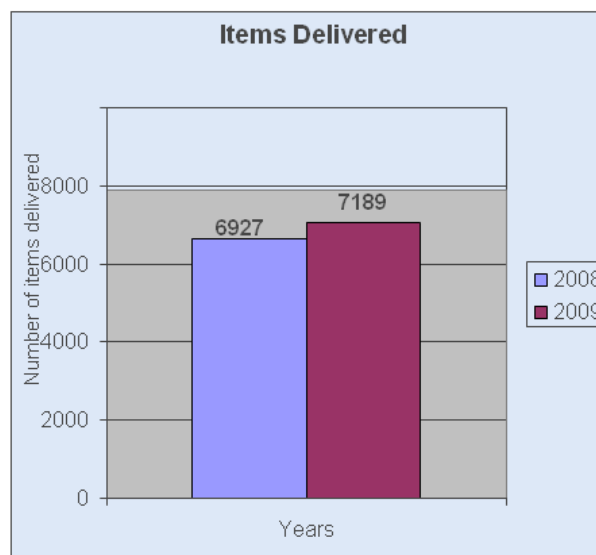
Several researchers patronised the Reading Room throughout the year 2009. The majority of them conducted research in the newspaper collections while others consulted documents from the archives of the Order of St John as well as those of the *Università*. Others still came to trace their relatives or made specific or general queries usually regarding family surnames,

genealogy and sports events. Most of these queries were dealt with on the spot by Reading Room staff.

A total of 6180 persons – an average of 21 per day - used the Library for research purposes, a 1% increase over last year. Reading Room staff fetched an average of 1 item daily per researcher.



This year the Library received 11 new local and foreign scholars who came over personally to conduct research, mainly into the archives of the Order of St John. Others came specifically to consult rare holdings of our library. They presented letters of recommendation from the academic bodies they represented or donated publications of their own in cases where they themselves were heads of University departments or historians in their own right. A total of 7189 items were delivered during the year, a 4% increase over last year and an average of 24 items per day of opening. Of these, there were 742 manuscripts from the Archives of the Central Administration and of the Treasury of the Order of St John, as well as 19 volumes from the Archives of the *Università* of Mdina and Valletta. A total of 447 volumes from the Library Manuscript collection and 232 from the Adami collection were fetched. As regards printed material, 1962 Melitensia and reference works were delivered in the Reading Room while 3787 newspapers were consulted.



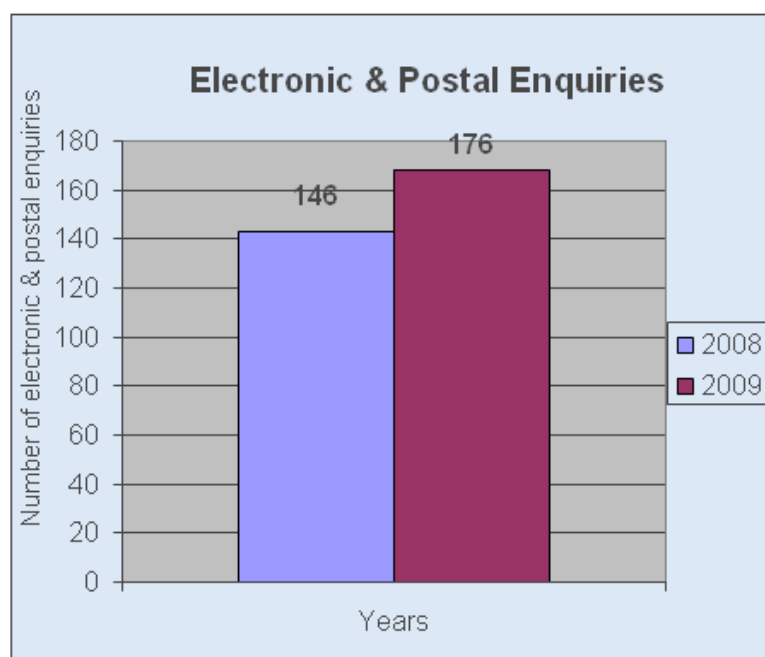
	AOM/Treas.	Univ.	Library	Adami Coll.	Melitensia/	Periodicals/
	Mss	Mss	Mss	Mss	Reference	Newspapers
January	23	1	15	8	180	303
February	63	2	21	16	226	400
March	55	1	52	54	214	408
April	78	1	65	17	169	297
May	77	1	43	4	124	337
June	37	2	52	13	140	208
July	32	1	29	6	138	219
August	93	3	32	30	112	303
September	63	2	18	5	116	262
October	99	2	37	22	186	376
November	66	1	44	8	204	360
December	56	2	39	49	153	314
TOTAL	742	19	447	232	1962	3787

GRAND TOTAL:

7189

Archives, Manuscripts and Rare Books

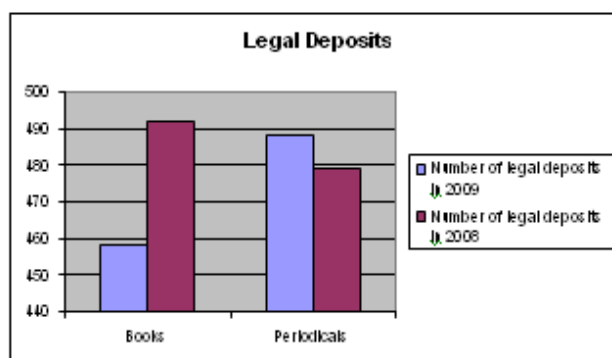
The Archives section received 176 electronic and postal enquiries from Europe, the US, Canada and Australia, a 21% increase over last year. As usual the majority concerned the Archives of the Order of St John or genealogical matters. The bulk of the requests came from Italy and Malta, followed by the UK and France.



AUSTRALIA	11
AUSTRIA	1
CANADA	4
CYPRUS	2
DENMARK	1
FRANCE	20
GERMANY	9
ITALY	40
JAPAN	1
LIBYA	1
MALTA	39
PORTUGAL	2
RUMANIA	1
SLOVENIA	1
SPAIN	3
SWEDEN	1
UK	29
US	9
VATICAN CITY STATE	1
TOTAL	176

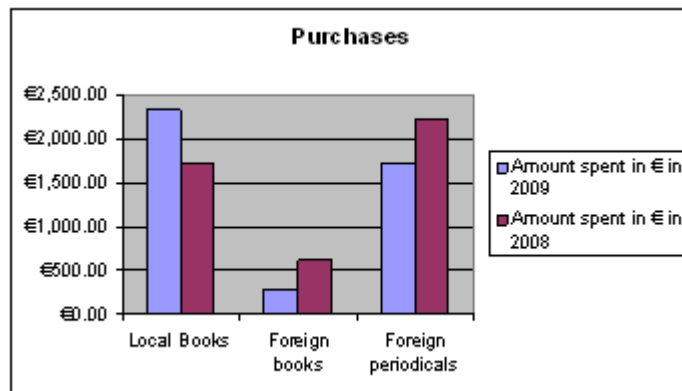
Bibliographic Services Unit

The Legal Deposit Act plays a vital role in the conservation of our national memory, contributing, as it does, to the steady expansion of the Melitensia collection at the National Library. This Act stipulates that authors or publishers are bound by law to deliver to the National Library two copies free of charge, of any work printed and published in the Maltese Islands. Throughout 2009, 458 distinct books were deposited in total, together with approximately 488 local periodical titles that include journals, newspapers and magazines.



As a supplement to the works received by legal deposit, the Acquisitions Section purchased an extra copy of each title. As always, when it comes to the acquisition of books published abroad, special priority is given to those works published overseas by Maltese nationals, as well to works manifesting a direct relevance to the Maltese Islands. Several reference works beneficial to the general public were also purchased.

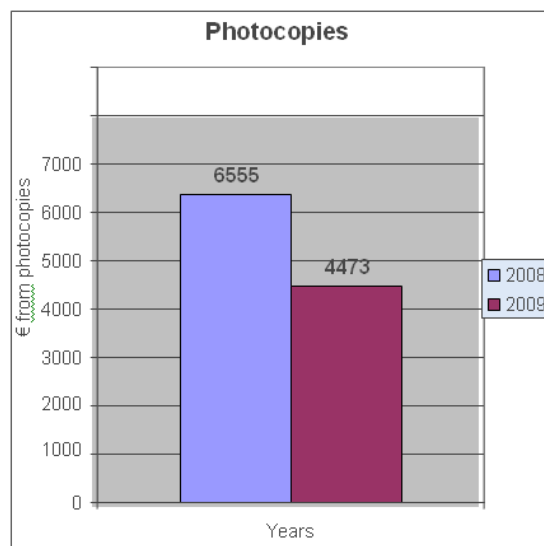
In 2009, the sum spent on books published locally amounted to a total of € 2,322.69, while a total of € 271.27 was spent on books published abroad. In all, € 1,717.81 was spent on subscriptions and memberships to foreign periodicals. In 2009, 9 new serial titles were entered into the computer database.



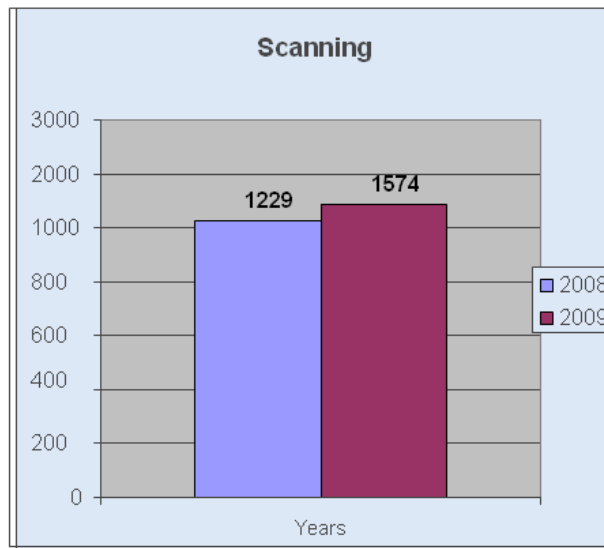
At the beginning of May, the Malta National Bibliography for the years 2005 and 2006, which is compiled by the Bibliographic Services Unit, was published. Predominantly based upon the items received at the National Library by way of legal deposit, the Malta National Bibliography lists new works published in the Maltese Islands during a specific period and describes each one in detail. Each item is catalogued according to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules and classified by subject according to the rules of the Dewey Decimal Classification System. It is edited, indexed and formatted with the aid of Infor (formerly GEAC) software. By the end of 2009, the cataloguing and classification of bibliographical entries for inclusion in the 2007-2008 edition of the Malta National Bibliography was well underway.

Photocopying/Scanning/Duplication of microfilms

While the photocopying of manuscripts is strictly forbidden, the photocopying of books is generally discouraged as the process inevitably damages them. Since the Library has most manuscripts and newspapers on microfilm, reproduction of these items is done from the microfilms. With regard to copying both from originals and from microfilms, this year registered a 32% decrease from last year with the intake amounting to the sum of €4473.



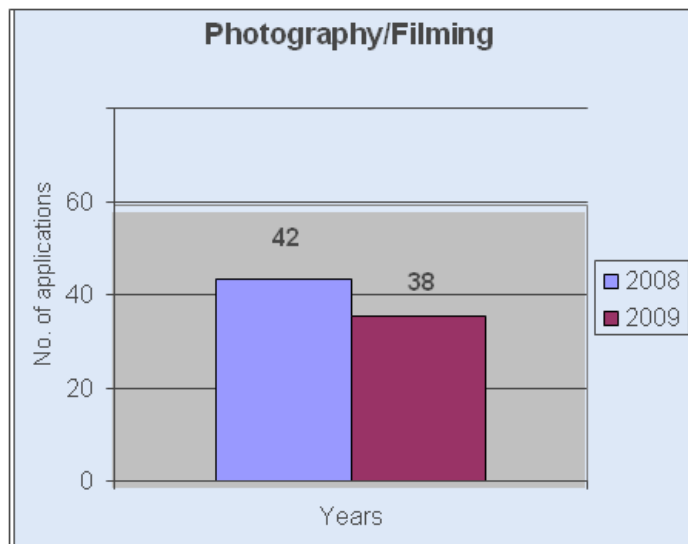
As an alternative to photocopying where no microfilm is available, scanning is advised, even though the fee is higher due to the high cost of maintaining the overhead scanning machine. This year €1574 were spent on scanning, a 28% increase over last year's €1229.



During 2009, the Library also received two orders for the duplication of microfilms from negative to positive. Such requests are rare and always come from foreign clients who require entire volumes and who have access to a microfilm reader and/or printer. The sum netted from these orders was €70.

Photography

Requests for photography or filming of National Library material were also received from local or foreign journalists who wished to collect information about Malta and its history. Several applied to have photos taken in order to illustrate their publications or because large pages of text could not be photocopied or scanned. This year 36 applications for photography and two for filming were filed, a 14% decrease from last year's 42 requests. The income from photography of National Library items amounted to €277.



Restoration/Bindery

The section collates and binds loose material of any nature, mainly newspapers and journals and also rebinds and sometimes restores damaged books or manuscripts which belong to the Library. As usual, the work of bindery staff this year concerned mainly the binding of newspapers and periodicals as well as the restoration of a number of manuscripts and books. They also made portfolios, paperback covers and stickers for the Brocktorff volume published this year.

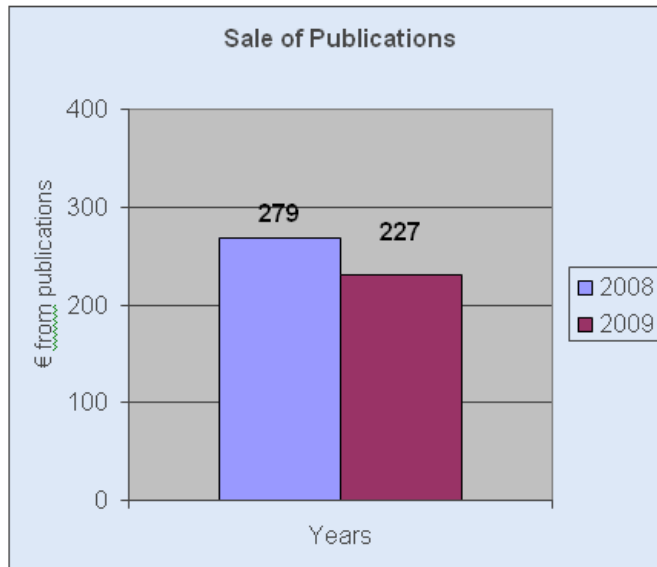
The bindery staff were also actively involved in the preparation and setting up of the three major exhibitions mounted at the National Library this year. Besides, they helped at the Malta Book Fair by mounting an exhibition at the Mediterranean Conference Centre where the Fair was held this year. They also mounted an important exhibition in Gozo, one at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and two at the Office of the Prime Minister, Auberge de Castille. As of October, book cleaning began to be systematically undertaken on a regular basis at the National Library where the collections are in dire need of cleaning. The work, which is being carried out by bindery staff, has so far included cleaning of books in the Old Melitensia as well as volumes pertaining to the Archives of the Order of Malta.

Besides, the stores at Hal Far where old National Library items are kept were also cleaned out and put in order.

Bindery/Restoration Section - 2009	
Binding of: newspapers and periodicals	94
books	399
Repairs and restoration of: manuscripts	38
Works on Brocktorff publication:	
Portfolios	1200
Stickers	1200
Paperbacks	1200
Presentation boxes	25
Captions for and mounting of exhibitions	8
Book cleaning which started in October	1769 books
Cleaning of stores at Hal Far	4 days

Sale of Publications

The sale of National Library Exhibitions Catalogues this year yielded an intake of €227, 18% less than 2008. Other income included €21 from the sale of Charles V's Deed of Donation, €37 from the National Library CD-Rom and €288 from the *Giuoco d'Arme dei Sovrani e degli Stati d'Europa*. €2367 were generated by the sale of copies of the *Malta National Bibliography*, while the income from the sale of postcards amounted to €168. The sale of Brocktorff prints amounted to €290 while the sale of Valletta/Valencia maps yielded an intake of €40.



Exhibitions

During the year 2009, the National Library organized or contributed to no less than eight exhibitions on the premises or in other venues.

In February the Rabat Local Council together with the Wignacourt Museum set up an exhibition to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Mro. **Francesco Azopardi** (1748-1809). The exhibition, which was mounted at the Wignacourt Museum, Rabat, ran from February till March 2009 and included books, manuscripts and artifacts relating to this outstanding Maltese composer. The Library lent three manuscripts, three volumes related to music and a historical dictionary of musicians dated 1810 from its Melitensia collection.

In March another exhibition was organized, this time by Heritage Malta, entitled **Reflections on Pauline Theology** to commemorate the Pauline Year. For this exhibition which was held at the National Museum of Archaeology, Auberge de Provence, Valletta, between 17th March and 30th April, the National Library loaned to Heritage Malta two library manuscripts and four books from its Melitensia collection.

The same premises hosted another important exhibition inaugurated in June 2009. The display was mounted on the occasion of the launch of the new plans for the entrance to Valletta designed by Arch. Renzo Piano. The National Library contributed by loaning three historical **plans of Valletta**. The exhibition ran until the end of September 2009.

On the occasion of World Book Day, 23rd April 2009, the Ministry for Gozo, together with the National Library of Malta, organized an exhibition entitled **Treasures of Gozo at the National Library of Malta**. The display consisted of over fifty items relating to Gozo from the National Library's various collections, ranging from the watercolour reproduction of Majmuna's tombstone to the four manuscript volumes of poems by Anton Buttigieg. The exhibition ran till the Notte Gozitana on 24th May and was then mounted at the National Library to be enjoyed by the many visitors and researchers who call at the Library. On the

occasion of the Notte Bianca on 3rd October, a good sample of the display was mounted at the Auberge de Castille.

Another contribution was given to an exhibition entitled *La Puglia dei Cavalieri* mounted in Bari, Italy, in September 2009. Photos taken from seven *Cabrei* from the Archives of the Order of St John were blown up and displayed during such exhibition. An article by Ms Maroma Camilleri was included in the exhibition catalogue.

In October another exhibition entitled *Arts, Crafts and Melitensia* was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For this exhibition the National Library loaned seven books written by Maltese ex-Ambassadors or members of the Diplomatic Corps.

The 21st of November saw the inauguration of a major exhibition entitled '*Ad Perpetuam Memoriam: The Archives of the Order of St John 1107-1798*' at the National Library on the occasion of the International CITRA Conference for Archivists organized by the National Archives of Malta between 17th and 20th November. This exhibition provided a general overview of the almost millennial history of the Order displaying charters documenting its origins as a hospital in the Latin East and its growth as a military Order to combat the rise of Islam culminating in the Great Siege of Malta in 1565. Later documents on display highlighted events that occurred during the 268-year tenure of the Order in Malta, as well as important works carried out by the more prominent Grand Masters in Malta. On display were not only documents from the Archives but also books, manuscripts, maps and plans from the Library collections which served to complement and illustrate persons and events that figure in the interesting but dry, administrative archival documents. The exhibition, which was accompanied by a detailed catalogue, was visited by many locals and foreigners.

On 26th November 2009, His Majesty King Juan Carlos of Spain, visited Malta. For the occasion, an exhibition was mounted at the Auberge de Castille, consisting of a selection of eight important **Spanish documents** and four books from the National Library collections.

Malta Book Fair 2009

In November, the Department of Libraries together with the National Book Council, organised the 25th edition of the Malta Book Fair. This was held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. There was a slight increase in exhibitors participating in this year's Book Fair. Public attendance was very encouraging, having thousands of book lovers browsing through all the books on exhibit, which covered a wide variety of subjects.

Activities such as book launching, discussions and reading sessions were organised during the five days the Fair was on. Three main exhibitions were mounted, namely "Poetry and Monuments", "Foreign Literature translated into Maltese", and "Drama in Books".

The Department also set up its own stand during the Fair, divided between the National Library and the Central Public Library. Visitors were given the opportunity to learn more about the National Library's treasures and also about services offered by the Central Public Library.

All logistical organisation was made by National Library personnel.

Participation in Conferences Abroad

2nd LIBER-EBLIDA Workshop on the Digitization of Library Material in Europe, The Hague, The Netherlands, 19-21 October 2009

Ms. Maroma Camilleri, Senior Assistant Librarian, attended a three-day conference organized by LIBER-EBLIDA in the Dutch capital. The event brought together representatives from 27 national and university libraries and commercial entities across and outside Europe to discuss the way forward for the digitization of library material in Europe. The themes of relevant metadata standards, public-private partnerships, user needs and aggregation and cross-domain aspects were brought to the attention of all participants. The reasons for digitization as well as the delicate Google vs Europeana issue also frequently came to the fore. Delegates were given plenty of material for thought and action. It was also stressed that national governments should encourage and support digitization initiatives on the part of libraries and provide funds for the necessary infrastructure to be put in place in order to create a common national database of cultural heritage items from libraries, archives and museums. Once this is done, European libraries could be better equipped to face the major challenge of creating an integrated information environment by facilitating the access to digitized materials across Europe.

Publications

Publication of Charles Frederick de Brocktorff: Watercolours of Malta at the National Library', Volume II

The second and final volume of the Brocktorff watercolours was launched on 27th February 2009. The book, authored by Theresa Vella, treated Brocktorff's 42 watercolours showing the buildings of Valletta, mainly St John's Co-Cathedral, the Palace, the Library as well as a number of open-air views of Valletta and the Grand Harbour. The author gives a stylistic analysis of the paintings, while placing them in their art historical context. Their documentary value is also discussed, as a historic viewpoint of the most significant historic buildings in Malta. This volume, of which 1,200 copies were printed, proved just as successful as its predecessor. The photography and printing of the book were once more entrusted to the Department of Information and to the Government Printing Press.

Seminar for National Library Employees

On 29th October, the National Library organised a one-day seminar for its employees. All members of staff coming from different sections attended the seminar which was held at the Carmelite Convent, Mdina. For the day the National Library was closed for the Public. Present for the seminar and taking active part was the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education. The seminar centred on the situation of the National Library, its work, systems and methods, new initiatives, grievances, betterment and embellishment of the place, etc., all aiming at consolidating and enhancing the services offered by this institution.

Notte Bianca – Lejl Imdawwal Valletta 2009

The 4th edition of Notte Bianca was organised on 3rd October 2009. The National Library once again participated in the event and the Library opened to the public from 7.00 pm till midnight. Information regarding the history, scope and services of the National Library were given throughout the whole evening to the thousands that visited the place.

Digitization Strategy and Framework for the National Library of Malta

The National Library of Malta succeeded in procuring European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) in order to establish a framework to digitize part of its collections, ensuring preservation of the original material. The main activities comprise: planning of the project down to the least detail, issuing of tender for the purchase of the equipment, the actual purchase and installation of the equipment and the training of staff regarding the digitization process. As an integral part of this project, on 30th March 2009, the National Library issued a call for the services of an IT/Digitization Specialist in order to ensure the successful implementation of the project within the stipulated timeframes and costs. The main activities of the Specialist include the planning and coordination of the project from the preparation and issuing of tenders to the adjudication and successful implementation of the various tenders including the certification and commissioning of the installed equipment as per terms of reference, within the parameters of the approved implementation and disbursement schedules. When the tender for the engagement of the post of IT/Digitization Specialist was first issued on 30th March 2009, no application was submitted. The Tender was revised and issued a second time on 22nd May 2009 but once again no one tendered. During a meeting held at the National Library on 25th June 2009 between officials from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport and from PPCD, it was agreed that the only solution was to contact potential experts once again and engage the person/s who would be interested in the job through a direct order. Mr Noel Zammit, who works as IT manager with Heritage Malta, was identified and appointed for the job. He has since designed the tender for the purchase and installation of digitizing equipment which will be launched in January 2010. He has also drafted the tender for the purchase of the relative software. Meanwhile the former Microfilming Room at the National Library is being cleared and refurbished to house the new Digitization Studio.

Donation of Records of the Għaqda Letterarja Maltija

When the Għaqda Letterarja Maltija was dissolved in 2009, it was decided by the Council of the said Għaqda that the records be donated to the National Library as a donation. The material consisted of the minutes of the organisation's various general meetings, agendas, correspondence, circulars, membership details dated back to 1956. Other documentation included various competitions organised within the primary and secondary school children by the organisation such as *Konkors Novelli* from 1965-1999, *Pinna Żagħżugħa* dated back to 1955 and *Konkors Poeżiji*. One can also find various manuscripts like *Merġat* and *Ġebbla fuq Ġebbla* and various newspapers cuttings, copies of periodicals like *Forum* and *Antoloġija*. These items were catalogued and placed in acid-free boxes.

Joanne Sciberras
Senior Principal