



MALTA
LIBRARIES



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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REPORT
2020

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Malta Libraries

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MISSION STATEMENT

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The mission of Malta Libraries is to ensure the collection and conservation of Malta's documentary heritage for present and future generations, to maintain and develop the libraries regulated under the Malta Libraries Act, and to encourage reading for study, research, self-development and lifelong-learning information and leisure purposes.

MALTA LIBRARIES ACT 2011

”

FUNCTIONS

As established by the Malta Libraries Act, the functions and responsibilities of Malta Libraries are:

- to continue to acquire, assemble, conserve for posterity, and make accessible to the public, the collection of the nation's documentary heritage and published current output, regardless of form or medium, to be found in the libraries;
- to continue to acquire, assemble, conserve for posterity, and make accessible to the public, the collection of the nation's documentary heritage and published current output, regardless of form or medium, to be found in the libraries;
- to assist Local Councils which run a public library to ensure that the library maintains high standards;
- to enhance the quality of life of the public by providing library reference and lending services and library material, in whatever form or medium, for education, self-development, lifelong learning and recreation purposes;
- to foster and strengthen reading habits and support literacy and other cultural activities and programmes for all age groups;
- to accept and acquire private records of significance by gift, purchase, bequest or deposit;
- explore innovative services, including information, communication and technology services, that can benefit patrons in accessing and using information;
- serve as the role model library system for other libraries in Malta;
- to perform such other functions as may from time to time be assigned to it by the Minister.

MALTA LIBRARIES ACT 2011

FOREWORD FROM THE CEO



Cheryl Falzon
National Librarian & CEO

2020 was quite literally an extraordinary year for Malta Libraries mainly due to the entity's move from the Ministry for Education and Employment to the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, but also due to the unprecedented COVID-19 situation. Apart from the expected teething problems which come with such an overwhelming change in Ministries, we are lucky to report that it was a relatively smooth transition for the entity. On the other hand, the pandemic drastically influenced Malta Libraries' day-to-day business. The entity saw a record number of its public

library users reverting to digital collections as they sought information and entertainment that could be enjoyed from the safety of their homes. Consequently, eBook circulation increased by 229% over the previous year while book circulation registered a sharp but understandable drop. This phenomenon also influenced the type and genre of material borrowed. Although fiction continued to be the most prevailing genre for all age groups, there was a marked increase in demand for DIY, cooking and self-help books.

The National Library had to limit visitor numbers and switched to accepting visitors strictly by appointment, although this did not stop researchers from seeking information electronically through email or social media. Social interaction with patrons moved almost entirely to online platforms and educational outreach activities such as the public lecture programmes had to be postponed or moved online. This allowed Malta Libraries to reach out to even more users, which prompted us to compose a hybrid marketing and outreach plan including a combination of both physical and digital educational sessions which can be kept up sustainably into the future.

The National Bibliographic Office also found a new method of acquiring legal deposits and bibliographic work continued undisrupted. Additionally, the NBO worked successfully on the budgetary measure related to DigiVault which was finalised prior to its target date.

This year Malta Libraries also managed to finalise all budgetary measures related to risk assessments, training and implementation in all the four main libraries falling under the entity's remit. Thus, overall, we are most proud to report that 2020 was, against all odds, a successful year and a learning curve for all of us at Malta Libraries. The entity rose to the task and addressed its challenges proactively by championing alternative ways in which to remain ever present and relevant for its patrons.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MALTA



Maroma Camilleri

Deputy Librarian - National Library of Malta

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MALTA

There is no doubt that 2020 was in every respect an anomalous year. Apart from the horrific health emergency that has resulted to date in over two million deaths globally, the COVID-19 pandemic caused untold economic upheaval, particularly affecting the cultural sector which ground to a halt, incurring the closure of libraries, museums and theatres the world over. The pandemic posed a global challenge to

libraries, many of which – like the National Library of Malta – rose to the challenge. This year, incidentally, marked the shift of Malta Libraries from the Ministry for Education and Employment to the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, for the first time in the history of the department, later entity of Libraries. The move was significant in that it brought about a change in perception,



whereby the National Library in particular began to be regarded as an asset of intrinsic cultural heritage value and not only as a centre of knowledge and education. The new approach was welcomed, especially given that a Curatorial Unit had been established at the National Library two years previously. However, no sooner had Malta Libraries begun to adjust to the workings of the new Ministry than the Coronavirus reached Malta and a partial lockdown was declared, decreeing the physical closure of non-essential services, including cultural venues.

The ensuing implementation of mitigation measures disrupted the normal routine in both home and work environments. While much of the staff worked remotely, the services to patrons inevitably were readjusted – though possibly not reduced - to adapt to the situation. Researchers continued to be assisted within the new parameters, that is, electronically. Between March and mid-June 2020, when the library was open to the public only for rare appointments, the Reading Room and Digitisation Studio staff continued to physically report to work regularly in order to carry out the orders arriving by e-mail or via social media. The situation did not daunt the library staff but inspired a new, more synergistic work ethic instead.

With the end of the partial lockdown in mid-June 2020, the National Library began to operate with some normality but with a number of restrictions. In order to reduce risks as much as possible, a limit was imposed on the number of users in the Reading Room at any one time, thus making it easier to maintain social distance. Researchers were required to book their appointments beforehand and to possibly pre-order the material they wished to consult in order to allow library staff to be ready when readers arrived, and so avoid waiting or last-minute searches. Persons accessing the library had their temperature taken and were required to use the hand sanitizer available at the entrance. The wearing of face masks or visors was imperative. Meanwhile, online services and resources continued to be promoted so as to limit numbers accessing the library. Perspex screens were installed on the librarians' desks for the protection of both users

and library staff and the use of the public PCs in the Reading Room was prohibited to limit contagion risks. Another policy which unfortunately had to be adopted in order to safeguard the well-being of staff and their families was the temporary halt to visitors, students and volunteers, in order to reduce the numbers of persons entering the premises.

In the light of all the above, the performance of the National Library in 2020 had to be gauged using different yardsticks than the usual ones. The emphasis is on the quality of the services rather than quantities and statistics. This paradigm shift brings a different perspective to the functioning of the National Library within this very particular period of time.



READERS' SERVICES

Whilst observing the necessary COVID-19 restrictions, the Reading Room staff continued to successfully provide an efficient service to the public. Even during the partial lockdown, the Reading Room continued to operate smoothly by receiving and processing hundreds of queries that accrued to the Customer Care mailbox. Most of these were dealt with immediately as clients had sent all the necessary data to enable the staff to trace the requested material. In the case of those mails requiring extensive research, customers were advised to come to the library personally by appointment. The staff frequently went beyond their call of duty and undertook research on behalf of clients.

While 1,704 individuals physically came to the library during the opening months to conduct their research, a record total of 833 requests reached the National Library mainly by e-mail but also via social media throughout the year. This high number may be attributed to the fact that people who found themselves at home by force of circumstances took the opportunity to catch up on unfinished research which had had to be suspended for lack of time. Maltese researchers as usual claimed the lion's share of queries with 537 requests, while Italians came next with 155 queries, followed by French, British and Spanish requests at a considerable distance. The majority of queries concerned newspapers, government gazettes and electoral registers while others required data from the Archives of the Order of St John and other archival record groups conserved at the National Library. Other queries were of a general nature, mostly from overseas asking for information about ancestors or persons they wished to trace. The staff completed the service by editing and sending the ordered images via WeTransfer.

QUERIES 2020

537 MALTA	155 ITALY	43 FRANCE	16 UK	15 SPAIN	9 AUSTRALIA
9 GERMANY	8 PORTUGAL	6 RUSSIA	5 CANADA	5 GREECE	5 US
4 NETHERLANDS	4 SWITZERLAND	3 MEXICO	2 POLAND	2 TURKEY	1 BELGIUM
1 BRAZIL	1 BULGARIA	1 LITHUANIA	1 SLOVENIA	833 TOTAL	

Apart from the above, it must be added that the Reading Room staff continued to perform back-office duties in the library's stacks and off-limits areas. With the collaboration of the Conservation Unit staff, they re-designated storage areas, cleared up cluttered spots and relocated unused and unusable equipment and furniture. A new, functional newspaper rack was purposely designed and manufactured in keeping with the style and design of the stately 18th-century Reading Room.

The trend of conducting research remotely continued to persist even following the re-opening of the library in June, notwith-

standing the fact that researchers could freely access the library physically. They were accepted only by appointment and a maximum of six users could be present in the Reading Room at any one time. During the opening months, the total number of items requested by users on site amounted to 4,132. Newspapers remained the most requested items. There was also a considerable demand for AOM volumes especially by foreign scholars who came to Malta specifically to conduct their research. Melitensia items and Library Manuscripts were also quite popular, followed respectively by Treasury documents, Univ. volumes and items from the Adami collection.

An indispensable part of the Readers' Services is the production of the digital images which are provided to researchers. Indeed, neck and neck with the efforts of the Reading Room staff were also those of the Digitisation Studio staff who did their utmost to digitise entire archival and newspaper volumes in record time in order to provide as efficient a service as possible. The digital images produced throughout the year amounted substantially to a record 14,354. The positive feedback received from satisfied customers, especially foreign ones, is testament to the dedication and competence of our staff.

REQUESTED ITEMS 2020

	AOM	TREAS.	UNIV.	AD	LIBR. MSS	MELIT.	N/PAPERS	TOTAL
JAN	25	17	10	8	22	96	290	468
FEB	17	6	2	9	14	113	355	516
MARCH	9	1	7	3	4	43	154	221
APRIL	12	0	0	0	2	27	36	77
MAY	22	0	0	1	4	18	72	117
JUNE	27	1	1	1	3	21	84	138
JULY	28	4	9	3	14	90	306	454
AUG.	11	3	2	2	5	57	277	357
SEPT.	35	2	2	2	5	50	338	434
OCT.	73	11	4	2	31	63	250	434
NOV.	71	2	2	4	22	121	209	431
DEC.	110	2	2	2	36	90	243	485
TOTAL	440	49	41	37	162	789	2164	4132

DIGITIZED ITEMS 2020

JANUARY	671
FEBRUARY	1695
MARCH	634
APRIL	538
MAY	911
JUNE	1417
JULY	1686
AUGUST	920
SEPTEMBER	560
OCTOBER	1789
NOVEMBER	1849
DECEMBER	1684
TOTAL	14,354

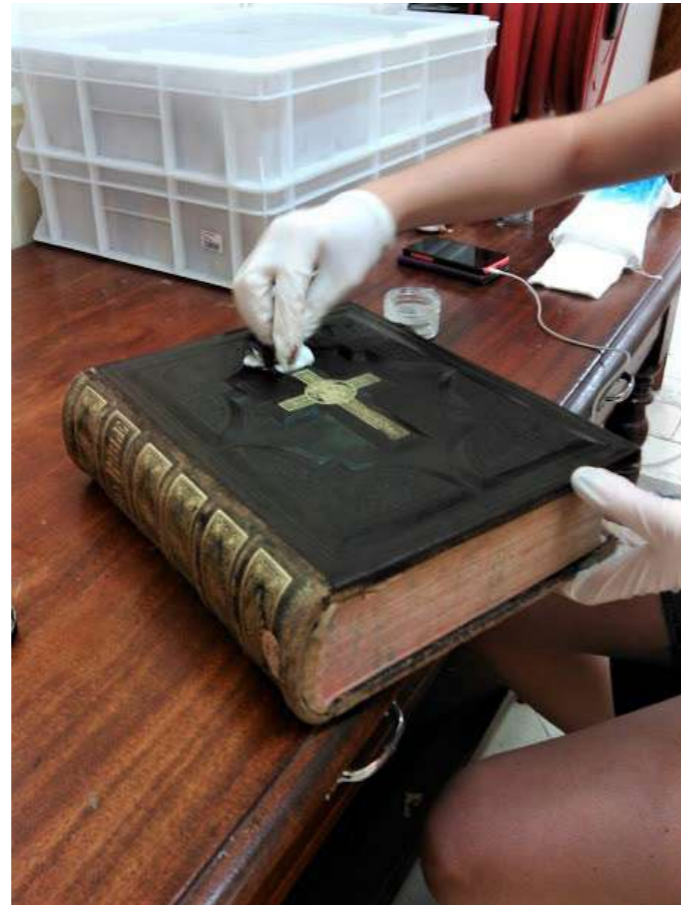


CONSERVATION UNIT

As of March of the year under review, the Conservation Unit had to adapt its modus operandi since the four-man staff could not report for work all together, for reasons of social distancing. Thus, a roster was drawn up whereby the staff worked on site in a staggered manner. Both on-site and off-site as part of the duties performed remotely, staff focused their attention mainly on book cleaning with an astounding number of almost 14,000 books going through the process. Meanwhile, they continued to perform the normal tasks of binding of books and newspapers and the cleaning and repair of manuscript volumes, as well as the manufacture of customised boxes to preserve the more precious single documents or volumes. The disinfestation process with anoxia treatment of almost 400 metres of books continued uninterrupted by SalvArti Co. Ltd as in previous years.

During the partial lockdown and over the following months, the Conservation staff also teamed up with the Reading Room staff in the absence of the public on site in order to accomplish long-overdue chores with respect to the relocation of furniture and decluttering of spaces. Thus, microfilm cabinets and stand-alone shelving were shifted to different areas of the library to improve

space usage. Some of the desks in the Reading Room were given a much-needed facelift, while the Location indicators adorning the upper tier of the Reading Room were repaired.



Conservation Unit 2020

Book cleaning and disinfestation of 393m of shelving and 13,450 books

Cleaning and fumigation of 114m of manuscript volumes

Repair of 47 manuscript volumes

Repair of 279 books

Binding of 256 books

Binding of 95 daily newspapers

Repair of 10 damaged newspapers

Manufacturing of 57 customised preservation boxes for fine bookbindings

Manufacturing of 109 customised acid-free mounts for artefacts

Repair of Folder 78A kept at Restoration Division

Restoration of wooden Classification letters in Reading Room

2 hands-on activities with school children in January 2020

ACQUISITIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic inevitably impacted the issue of new publications both locally and abroad, but the National Library focused on the purchase of rare antiquarian items including books and manuscripts, engravings and maps, from auctions and private sources, thus continuing to enrich the National Library of Malta's collection. Still, copies of the latest local publications continued to be acquired to be placed at the disposal of clients for consultation.

A total of €2,085.70 was spent on the purchase of extra copies of 80 new local publications while 27 publications were purchased from overseas for the total price of €1,055.48. The amount of €11,160 was spent on the purchase of 259 rare and Melitensia items from private sources. Besides, the National Library also received 13 foreign publications by way of donation, mainly books based on research conducted at the National Library. In September, Prof. Charles Briffa, professor of Maltese and Translation at the University of Malta, kindly donated a copy of all his publications to the National Library.

The most significant acquisition made by the National Library in 2020 was that of a rare collection of lace designs dating back to the 18th century. The 3000-piece collection was purchased from a private source for the price of €40,000 with the financial assistance of the Ministry of Finance. The individual pieces are currently being studied and catalogued by a professional lace expert. There were two important manuscript acquisitions from local private sources during the year under review, one of them being the copy of a letter dated 1775 sent by Grand Master Ximenes to Don Gaetano Mannarino during the Priests' Revolt. The item, which cost €1,000, was added to the Library Manuscript collection as Libr. MS 1610. The other, entitled 'Carnet

del affitto della Botega[sic] posta sotto la Conservatoria' is a small-format manuscript dated 1793, consisting of a notebook listing the payments of the rent of a shop rented out to Pietro Azzopardi situated beneath the Conservatoria in Valletta. The item was purchased at the price of €1,125 and joined the Library Manuscripts collection as Libr. MS 1611. A lithograph by Michele Bellanti showing a Market Boy was acquired from a local antiquarian for the price of €90.

During the year under review, two important items were acquired from antiquarians overseas. In July, the National Library bought a rare map of Valletta from the Librairie Le Bail in Paris. The map, entitled 'Valletta città nova di Malta' was engraved by Henri Raigniauld in about 1629 and was published in Jean Baudouin's French translation of Bosio's History of the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem. This plan, which is very finely executed, is accompanied by a numbered legend referring to important places in Valletta. In a lower left inset are the islands of Malta, Gozo and Comino. Another important item acquired in November from another French antiquarian, Librairie des Colporteurs, consisted of Frédéric Lacroix's *Malte et Le Goze* published in Paris in 1848. This was another precious addition to accompany the copy already existent in the library collection.

A rare Ortelius map showing St Paul's travels was purchased from eBay in April 2020, thanks to the initiative of Ms Michelle Buhagiar who manages the Curatorial Affairs unit. This rare item, designed by Abraham Ortelius in 1579, is entitled 'Peregrinationis Divi Pauli Typus Chorographicus' and is based on the Acts of the Apostles. The map includes the island of Malta where St Paul was shipwrecked traditionally in AD 60. The medallion in the upper left shows Saul's conversion on his way to Damascus while the

medallion in the top right shows the shipwreck on the coast of Malta. The map was acquired for the price of €974.06.

A number of items were purchased from eBay through the

good offices of Ms Buhagiar. These included two 19th-century engravings showing the shipwreck of St Paul on Malta, views of Valletta and of Malta and postcards depicting the National Library building during different periods of its history.

ACQUISITIONS 2020

ITEM	NUMBER	COST
2020 local publications	80	€2,085.70
Melitensia and rare books from local sources	259	€12,160
Foreign publications	27	€1,055.48
From local antiquarians	2	€1,215
From antiquarians overseas	2	€1,610.9
Via eBay	22	€1,223.32



'Market Boy' lithograph by Michele Bellanti.



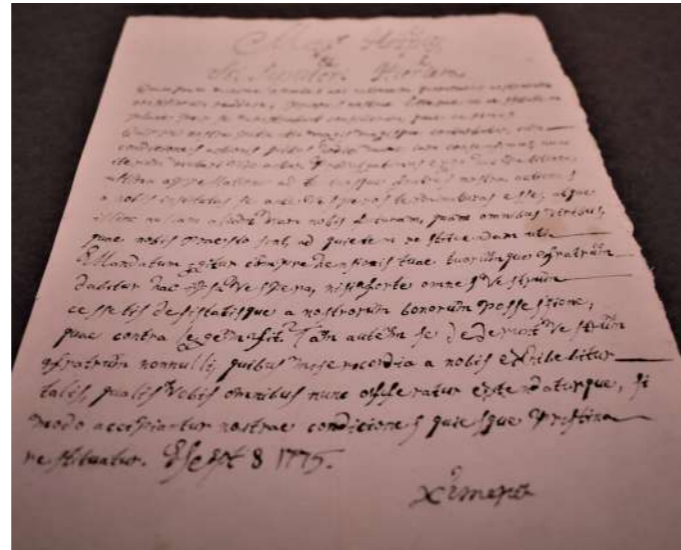
One example from a 3000-piece rare collection of lace designs dating back to the 18th century.



Map entitled 'Valletta città nova di Malta' engraved by Henri Raigniauld in c.1629.



19th-century engraving showing the shipwreck of St Paul on Malta.



Copy of a letter dated 1775 sent by Grand Master Ximenes to Don Gaetano Mannarino during the Priests' Revolt.



Abraham Ortelius 1579 map showing St Paul's travels based on the Acts of the Apostles.

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY (GOZO)

The National Library (Gozo) proved its resilience by remaining open by appointment and observing the mitigation measures even during the partial lockdown, although no activities could be organised. Until the onset of the pandemic in the Maltese Islands in the first week of March 2020, the persons who used the internet service amounted to 29 while 15 students visited the library. Throughout the year, 1,267 photocopies were made in accordance with 189 requests that reached the library. The photocopy service yielded a revenue of €451.29.

During the year under review, 526 users conducted research on a total of 1,714 works at the National Library (Gozo). The majority of researchers viewed newspapers (431) while others consulted Melitensia books (701) and periodicals (154). Ten manuscripts and 418 miscellanea items were also requested.

Tasks performed by staff members who opted for remote working included the inputting of the library catalogue in Excel format and the painting of the portraits of the NLG librarians throughout its history.

Requested Items NLG 2020

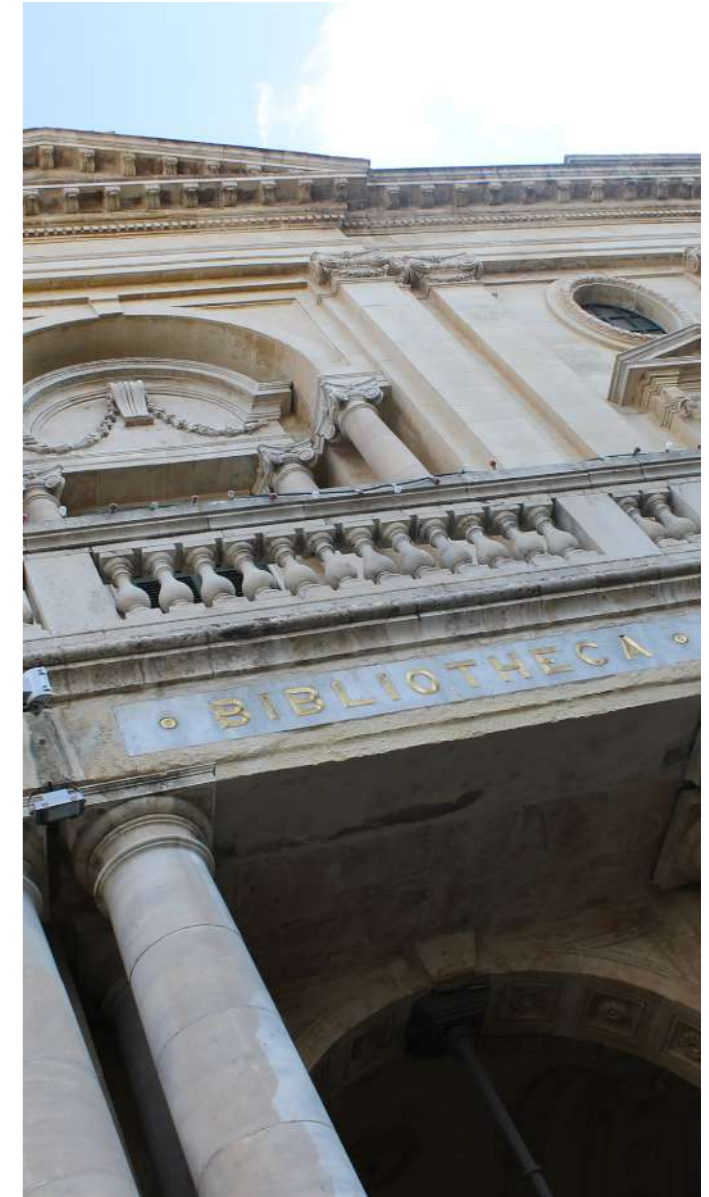
431	701	154
N/PAPERS	MELITENSIA	PERIODICALS
10	418	1714
MSS	MISC.	TOTAL



PRE-COVID VISITS

The first two and a half months of the year 2020 had seemed quite promising as far as visitors were concerned. Until mid-March, the National Library had received a total of 3,011 visitors who viewed the Reading Room and the displays in the showcases. While a good number of them were Maltese, the majority of foreign visitors hailed from France, Germany, Spain, Italy and the UK. Fewer numbers came from non-European countries.

Apart from these, there were three visits organised by Exclusively Malta in February and March, while Prof. Sheila Ffolliott from the Medici Archive Project visited the library on 23rd January. The National Library closed its doors to visitors on 14th March 2020 and all other visits scheduled for the rest of the year were, regrettably, eventually cancelled.



PUBLIC LIBRARIES NETWORK



Margaret Zammit
Deputy Librarian – Public Libraries' Network

'PUBLIC
LIBRARIES'
NETWORK'

The Malta Public Libraries network is made up of 57 libraries comprising the Central Public Library (CPL), the Gozo Central Public Library (GCPL), seven Regional Libraries, 37 Branch Libraries in Malta and another 11 Branch Libraries in Gozo.

The mission of the public libraries is to promote reading habits and support

literacy by providing open and equal access to resources and library services to meet the educational, informational and recreational needs of our community. The Central Public Library continues to outreach its services through the regional and branch libraries around Malta and Gozo.



The main purpose of the public libraries is:

- To foster and strengthen reading habits for informational and recreational purposes;
- To offer support and information assistance to individuals, local enterprises and associations;
- To participate in formal and non-formal education and literacy initiatives;
- To promote Malta Libraries' collections and services;
- To act as a community centre.

The Deputy Librarian Public Libraries is responsible for the day-to-day running of the CPL, GCPL and the Regional Libraries. The departments at the CPL include the Adult and Junior Counters, the Reference Section, the Talking Books Service, the Acquisitions and Collection Management Section as well as the Cataloguing and Classification Section.

Furthermore, the network of public libraries including the branch libraries is continuously maintained and updated, with Regional and Local Councils being involved and advised in the administration of regional and branch libraries according to the standards of best practice regulating such libraries.

READER SERVICES

The public libraries' operations were duly affected by the COVID-19 situation. Both Central Public Libraries as well as the Regional and Branch Libraries across Malta and Gozo closed to the general public in March and re-opened as from end of June onwards. This ensued from the official obligatory conditions and guidelines for libraries issued by the Ministry for Health.

During the second quarter of 2020, while libraries were closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, discussions were held with the Local Government Department to ensure that libraries would be equipped with the necessities and follow safety measures when re-opening to the public. A financial scheme was introduced and all branch libraries falling within the Malta Libraries network, under the instructions of Malta Libraries, were provided with the required safety kit to ensure that every library is safe for both librarians and patrons. The Superintendence of Public Health was also contacted to provide specific guidelines and safety measures for libraries. Once these measures were

published, Malta Libraries, together with each respective Local Council, ensured that every local library would be adhering to these measures. Furthermore, with the re-opening of schools and in order to adhere to the safety measures and guidelines issued for schools, discussions were also held with the Ministry for Education. Malta Libraries acted as coordinator, liaising with the Local Councils to ensure that all public libraries located in schools and sharing a common entrance would not operate during school opening hours.

Throughout the pandemic, patrons were encouraged to make use of our online services by downloading Libby - the Free Reading App and log in using their membership card details. Patrons could also log in directly from maltalibraries.overdrive.com to browse and borrow from our selection of eBooks, audiobooks and magazines.

Despite the unforeseen circumstances caused by the pandemic,

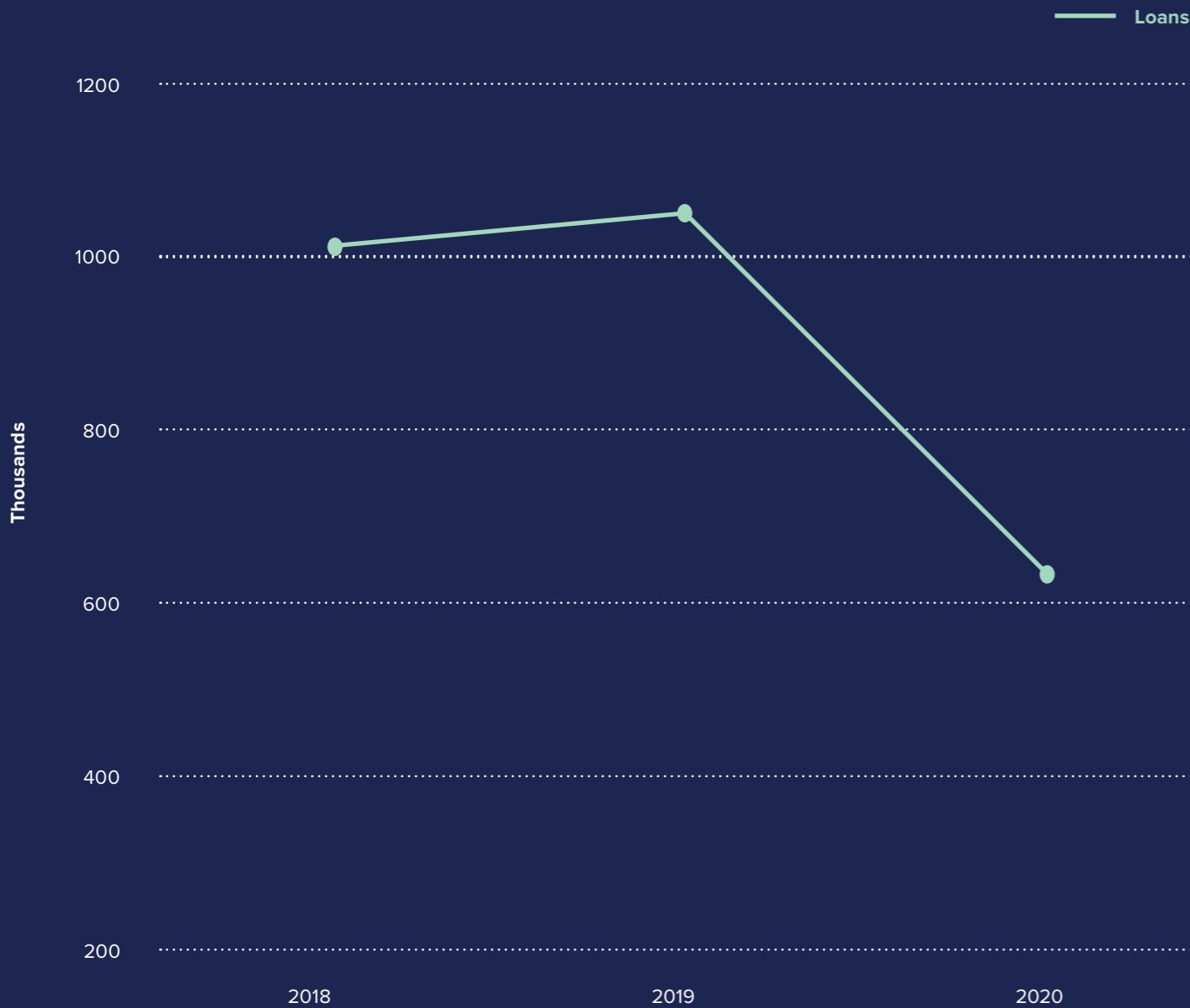


following the libraries' re-opening, a number of patrons still preferred to visit the public libraries personally. Throughout the year, total book loans amounted to 617,820, from 1,045,869 in the preceding year. Of these, 46,042 were eBooks, resulting in a sharp increase of 229% over 2019. Since their launch in 2016, eBooks have proved increasingly popular with Malta Libraries' patrons and registered a total increase of 1,431%.

The top five libraries with the greatest number of physical book loans registered were the CPL followed by the regional libraries in Birkirkara and Luqa respectively, Marsaxlokk and the Nadur Branch Library. Conversely, the libraries with the least number of loans registered were the branch libraries in Isla, Valletta, Kerċem, Xghajra and Bormla respectively.



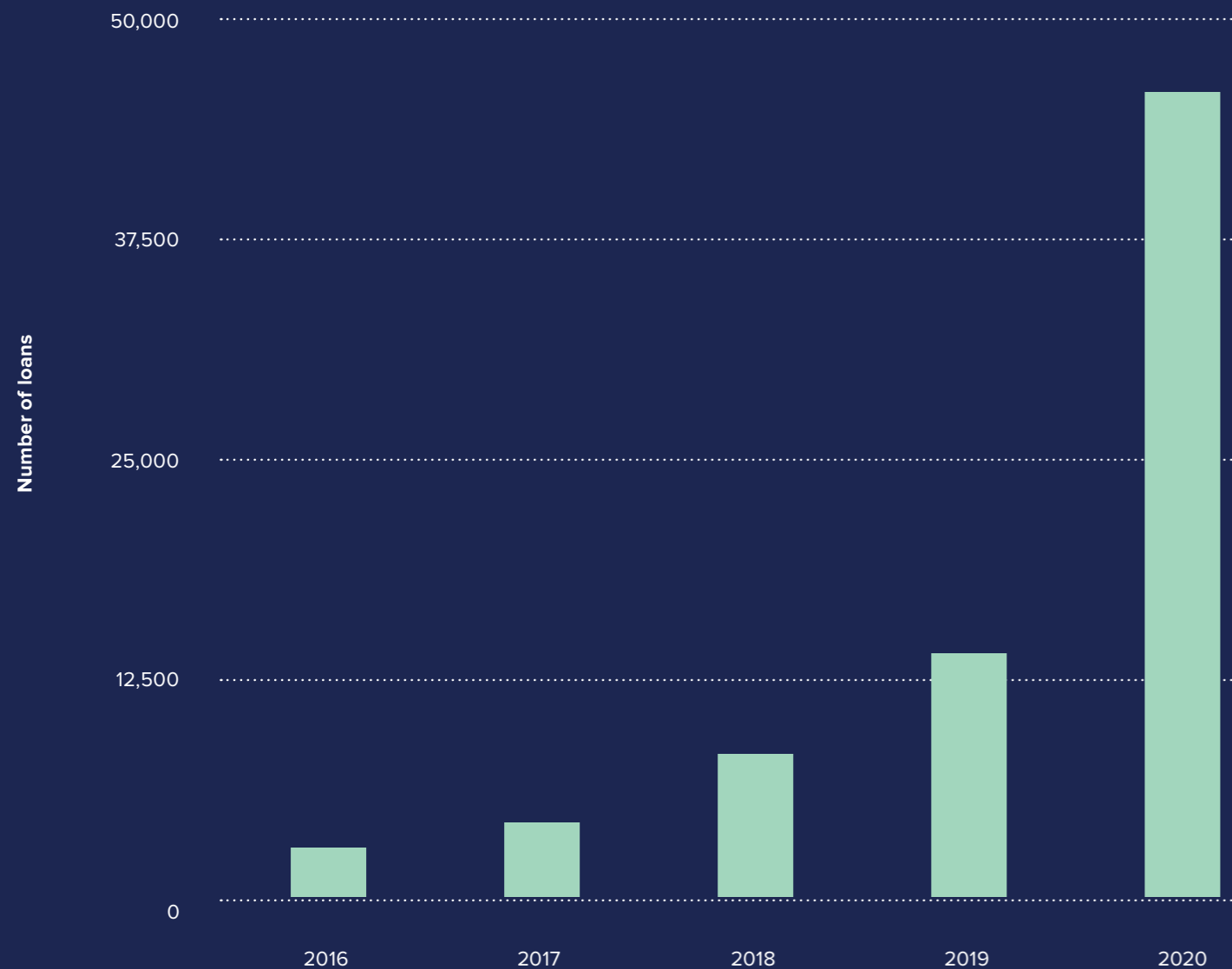
BOOK LOANS



LIBRARY BOOK LOANS 2020



E-BOOK LOANS



In 2020, new members registered with the Public Libraries Network reached 5,641. Members under the age of 18 made up 66.9% of the new members of the public libraries, with the majority falling

between the age group of 0-12 years. The total count of Malta Libraries members as at the end of December 2020 increased by 4.6% reaching 151,285 from 144,695 at the end of 2019.

NEW MEMBERS 2020

Type of Membership	Number of members
Adults - 18 and over	
Adults ¹	1488
Adults residing in Malta without Maltese citizenship ^{1&3}	19
Adult foreign visitors ^{1&3}	1
Total	1508
Juniors - under 18	
0-12 years	2070
13-17 years	1680
17 years & under with additional adult lending rights ²	2
0-12 years residing in Malta without Maltese citizenship ³	19
13-17 years residing in Malta without Maltese citizenship ³	1
Junior foreign visitors ³	0
Total	3772
Others	
Guests ⁴	135
Staff members	1
Teachers	225
Total	361
Total	5641

¹From 2014 all adults have additional junior lending rights

²Require a written permit from a parent or guardian

³Require a Maltese citizen guarantee

⁴Temporary borrower category for new members who enrol themselves online

TRAINING

The third and fourth sets of migration of school libraries to Malta Libraries' enterprise application were held during the year under review. In collaboration with the Information and Communications Technology Support Unit (ICTSU), training courses for teacher-librarians were provided during February and March for the third set and October and November for the fourth set. The schools involved included 13 state schools and four church schools. The February-March sessions were held at the CPL whereas the October-November sessions were held online. Furthermore, during December, training on the Library System was also provided to the Institute for Education and the Sacred Heart College. Their material had to be catalogued from scratch by the Cataloguing Unit since they did not previously form part of the OLIVER management system.

Training for new Malta Libraries recruits and branch librarians were also held throughout the year. Besides training on the Library Management System, the course outline includes information on services provided by Malta Libraries, the public libraries' network, customer care and dealing with patrons, eBook usage, acquisitions and collection development and information literacy among other topics. Each course was normally spread out over four days.

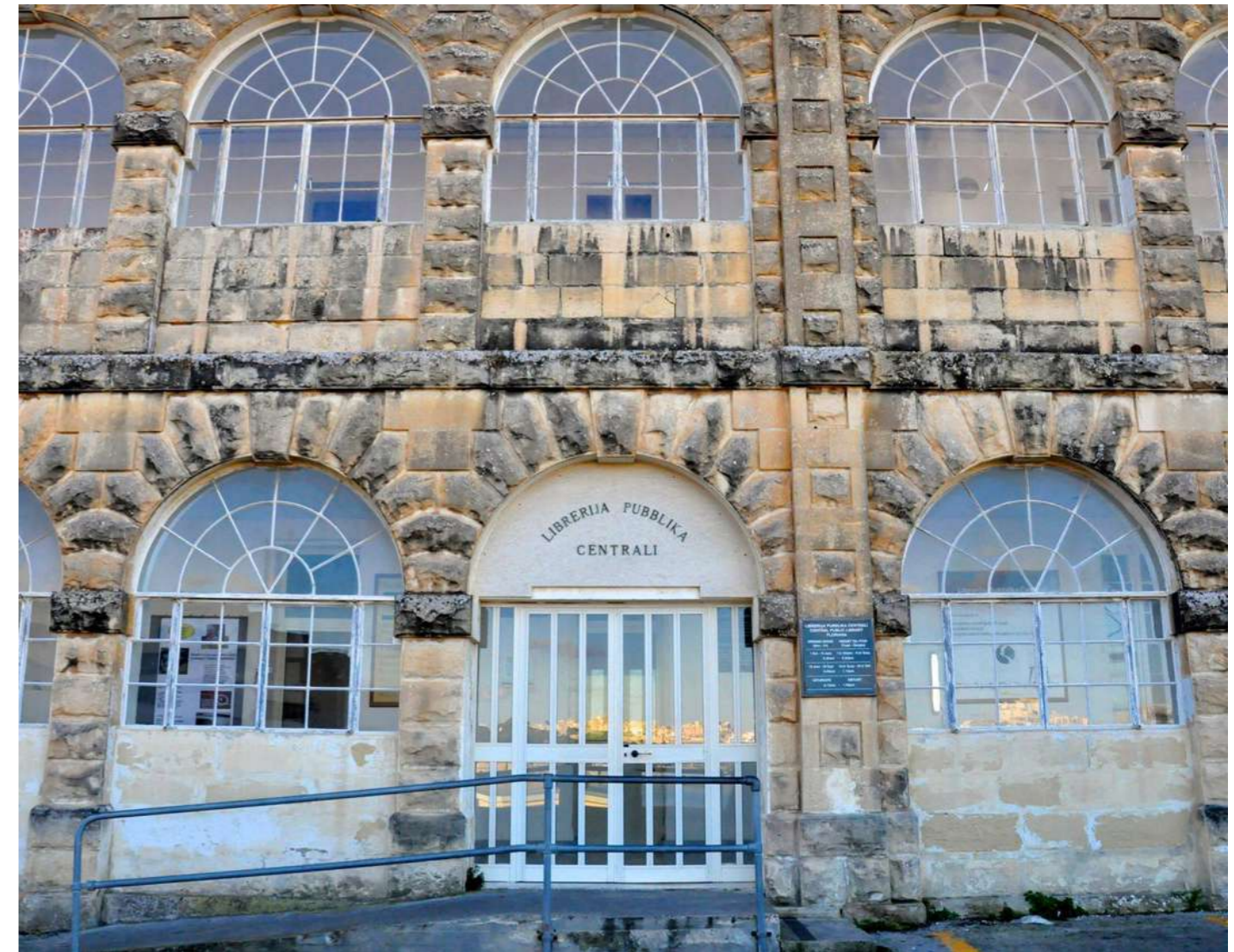
Training of Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) staff on the new project of providing library services at MDH was postponed due to the COVID-19 situation.

CPL RENOVATION

Budgetary Measure 203/2020 - Investing in the CPL to create an interactive space to support inclusion and serve as a resource tool to increase literacy was fully achieved. The project was initiated by the compilation and issuing of a tender for stage one of the construction works at the Adult Section. The tender document was sent to the Department of Contracts (DOC), though due to a change of plan this was halted until further direction from the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government (MHAL) regarding the CPL holistic renovation. Finally, the way

forward was finalised in December 2020 and the first stage of this project is to be carried out in 2021.

A general risk assessment of the whole building together with a Fire Risk Assessment were carried out. Staff were sent for training related to health and safety at the place of work and a Health and Safety Officer was also appointed. An evacuation and fire drill plan was drawn up and recommendations from the assessments started being implemented.



COLLABORATION WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIRECTORATE AND LOCAL COUNCILS

Several meetings and discussions were held throughout the year with the Local Government Directorate to set up standards and upgrade public libraries in order to meet today's community needs. The first draft of a new cooperation agreement which would state clearly the required standards of facilities in public libraries was sent for review to the Local Government Department. Malta Libraries also assisted the Local Government Department in issuing a grant to ensure that the branch libraries adhere to the COVID-19 measures.

In the first quarter of the year, talks were held with the Rabat Local Council regarding the possibility of installing a lift and making the Rabat Regional Library accessible to the public. The Rabat Local Council is working on this project.

Other major projects in libraries involving the Local Councils included the initiation of the full refurbishment of the Qormi Regional Library and the Kalkara Library. The latter is currently closed to the public since it will be operating from new premises which are currently being restored, whereas the Qormi Regional Library moved to the Local Council until the refurbishment works were finalised.

The Valletta Branch Library is currently closed to the public as from before the COVID-19 outbreak.

REFERENCE SERVICES

The Reference Section at the CPL welcomes all researchers, students and visitors. The collection comprises reference material for research purposes and a vast collection of Melitensia including reference material published in Malta or by Maltese authors. The

Reference Library offers photocopying services in colour both in A4 and A3 formats. Moreover, the Library also sends scans of library material to borrowers' mailboxes upon request. In the first two months of the year under review, the Unit welcomed

114 patrons, six of whom visited the library to work in groups, 32 carried out research and five patrons used the library to study. Forty-six patrons used the Audiovisual Section and a further 25 consulted newspapers and periodicals. Between March and June 2020 the library was closed to the general public due to the current pandemic and only online access was available. In July, certain restrictions were relaxed and one could book/reserve a place at the Reference Section strictly by appointment. Fourteen clients booked an appointment, while 10 other clients preferred to communicate by email and have material sent to them through a scanned copy. In total, during 2020, the Reference and Melitensia sections were physically frequented by only 128 clients. This is very unusual when compared to previous years since normally clients prefer to come personally and carry out research themselves.



Despite the disruption, requests for new books were still sent to the Acquisitions and Collection Management Section to ensure that the resources at the Reference and Melitensia sections remain relevant to library users' needs. New books were added to the collection and daily newspapers were still reviewed daily with any relevant material selected, copied, classified and filed. These are then made available for public research. Through this initiative, aspects of the collection are highlighted and organised. As a silver lining, there was the opportunity to devote more time to sort, file and classify existing material.

Due to the pandemic, the Reference Section was sadly unable to provide guided tours as in previous years, to ensure the safety of employees as well as the general public.



TALKING BOOKS SECTION

The Talking Books Service (TBS) aims to reach out not only to visually-impaired library members and the housebound but also members with reading difficulties or those who require or prefer the audio format of a book. The Talking Books provided by Malta Libraries are audiobooks recorded on pen drives in MP3 format. They can be played on a computer or a memory stick player.

The number of patrons registered in 2020 with the Talking Books Section were 139. These included: 108 persons with visual impairments; one with dyslexia; five people who were housebound, 23 people with other needs and two people from elderly homes. Talking book loans amounted to 1,953, a reduction of 19.6% loaned over the year 2019. This decrease was attributed due to the implementation of COVID-19 safety measures which resulted in postage delays.

As another unfortunate consequence of the pandemic, the recordings of books by volunteers had to be temporarily halted and safety measures are being taken into consideration so that the recordings can resume again in the near future.

Following the agreement concluded in 2019 with the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) with the aim of promoting inclusive publishing and increasing the number of books in English and foreign languages, the Unit continued downloading more audiobooks to be added to the catalogue. A number of meetings were held online with ABC representatives to help facilitate the eBook selection and downloading. Training of library staff on the selection and acquisition of such material with the aim of adding more titles to the collection will be carried out in 2021.



ACQUISITIONS AND COLLECTION MANAGEMENT SECTION

The Acquisitions and Collection Management Section is responsible for purchasing books and eBooks, and its core goal is to develop the library collection in a manner that balances the fulfilment of users' requirements as well as their requests. The primary objective is to consistently inject new life and variety into the collection through the addition of the newest, most topical and sought-after publications on the market – both local and international – while making every effort to acquire the specific library material that readers request to see on library shelves. At the start of the year, once again public libraries were allocated a book budget that reflected their performance as to the number of loans issued during the previous year. This measure provides an incentive to motivate librarians to work harder to achieve better results.

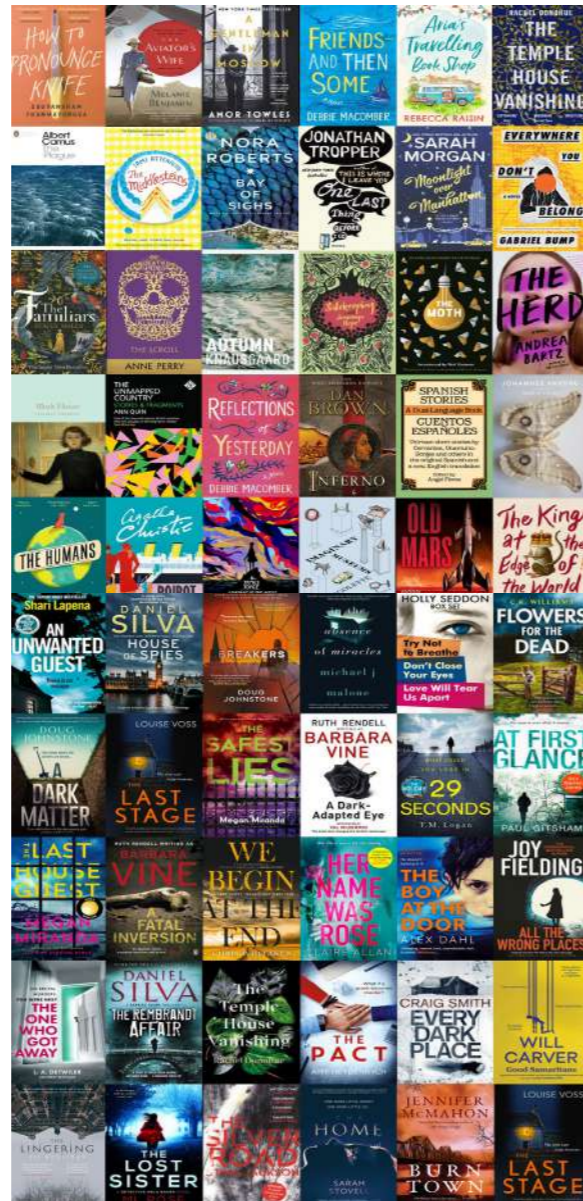
Due to the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent closing of public libraries from mid-March to late June, the acquisition of physical books necessarily ceased during this period. Operations and purchases shifted completely to Malta Libraries' eBook collection and this led to an upsurge in public awareness resulting in the tripling of eBook loans and a substantially bigger investment in eBook purchases. In total, €27,731.01 was spent on the 1,207 titles comprising eBooks, audiobooks and videos for all ages purchased throughout 2020. When libraries re-opened in summer, the acquisition of physical books resumed and in total €55,651 was spent on 10,031 books purchased throughout the year. This brought the total number of

library material purchased by Malta Libraries to 11,238 books and eBooks, on which €83,382.01 was spent.

It should be noted here that from March onwards it was decided that, as a health and safety measure, the acceptance of donations from the general public would be put on hold for the rest of the year. Hence the reason why only 9,947 books were donated by



the public in 2020 although this was balanced out by an increase in book purchases given by institutions, authors, Local Councils, various Ministries and others, which amounted to 14,378 books. By far the most generous donor of these was the National Book Council, which, at the beginning of the pandemic – between March and May – gave an emergency stimulus to the local book industry, presenting an unprecedented 6,099 books amounting to €50,000 to Malta Libraries, to be distributed to all public libraries in Malta and Gozo, as well as other libraries including libraries in elderly homes. Another extraordinary purchase of books totalling €100,000 was received from the NBC at the very end of 2020, which, for statistical purposes will be incorporated into the report for 2021. The ever-generous National Literacy Agency also contributed to the purchase of new library material in different formats: 1,143 eBooks on which €14,234.10 was spent, as well as 2,120 physical books. Another very welcome boost to regional and branch libraries' collections was achieved thanks to the expenditure of €15,084.91 on 3,694 new books by 25 Local Councils.



CATALOGUING AND CLASSIFICATION SECTION

The Cataloguing and Classification Section is one of the major units of the Central Public Library. Its primary objective is to provide access to the volume of material at the respective public libraries in Malta and Gozo. The main task is to create and maintain a database of bibliographic records for reading material – be it educational, informational or recreational – in a variety of reading formats. These records enable members to conduct searches for relevant material via the library's online catalogue. The preparation of bibliographic records consists of descriptive cataloguing and subject classification. Malta Libraries employs the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (23rd ed.) system, the Dewey Decimal Classification Subject Headings and the MARC 21 format standards of cataloguing.

Cataloguing tasks are carried out by the central Cataloguing Section at the Central Public Library in Floriana as well as by individual members of staff operating from various libraries. The cataloguing team is made up of 35 staff members. In 2020, the cataloguing team catalogued 6,973 items and added 41,284 items to the Public Libraries' collections. Out of these, 6,099 items were donated by The National Book Council and 2,102 items by the National Literacy Agency. Additionally, 1,228 items

were catalogued for the Institute for Education and 5,293 for the Sacred Heart College. It also helped with inputting and classifying 1,371 books that were purchased and used for the library at the Institute for Public Services. Furthermore, other items donated by various Local Councils and authors were catalogued, added and distributed to different libraries and elderly homes.

The cataloguing team also merged multiple ISBNs and updated bibliographic records to be in line with the standard cataloguing format in view of the management of the Public Lending Rights (PLR) scheme. During 2020, 13 state and four church school libraries migrated onto Malta Libraries' V-smart system. The Unit ensured that duplicate bibliographic records from the school libraries' information system (OLIVER) were merged with the existing bibliographic records in V-smart.

Continuous training is provided so all cataloguers are familiar with the latest developments in cataloguing and classification. The Section strives to ensure that all acquired material passed on from the Acquisitions Section, is available to users within the shortest possible time.

INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTARY WORK

During 2020, the Central Public Library accommodated two foreign students, both through the Erasmus+ Programme. One of the interns came from Lithuania for a duration of one week, while the other intern arrived from Germany for one month. Both interns were given a general tour and orientation of the entity, training on general library tasks and familiarisation with the main library services.

They carried out tasks at the Junior and Adult counters, the

Reference Library and the Talking Books Section. Other tasks included book processing, shelving, basic circulation as well as assisting the Outreach team with preparation for school visits and other library events.

At the beginning of the year, the CPL had planned to accommodate another four interns and a Maltese volunteer. However, these placements had to be cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

GOZO CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Gozo Central Public Library (GCPL) serves the same mission as the CPL, that of promoting reading habits and supporting literacy by providing open and equal access to resources and library services to meet the educational, informational and recreational needs of the community. Situated in St Francis Square in Victoria it houses the biggest collection of library material in Gozo, operating a lending library as well as housing reference material and PC stations.

At the beginning of the year, Malta Libraries launched its third book club. This new book club - Klabb Kotba Għaċ-Ċkejknin – focuses on discussing children's books written in Maltese.

Two sessions were held. Group One brought together children attending school years 2 and 3, while Group Two assembled children attending school years 4, 5 and 6. Furthermore, Gozo Book Club 2020 and Kids' Book Club Gozo 2020 resumed their meetings. For the first time, both kids' book clubs were held in collaboration with the National Literacy Agency. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, all book clubs had to shut down during the libraries' closure in spring. Gozo Book Club 2020 resumed its gatherings after the libraries re-opened in summer and transferred its meetings to open public places while respecting health regulations, as well as online through Facebook.

During the first quarter of the year, GCPL welcomed pupils from St Francis School. Two different classes were brought daily to the library during different times. The children were welcomed, introduced to the library and learned about the purpose and functions of a library and the work carried out by librarians. Afterwards the students were shown around the library. At the end of each session, the school's assistant head had the schoolchildren present animate the story she herself read to them.

Between March and June, when public health measures meant that libraries were forced to close to the public, staff continued to work behind closed doors while adhering to precautionary measures. Staff members assisted borrowers who were in contact through telephone calls and emails. The library resumed its working schedule with limited services, due to COVID-19 mitigation measures, from July.

For another consecutive year, the Minister for Gozo, the Hon. Clint Camilleri, donated 122 books, for the sum of €3,201.85, sponsored by EcoGozo. The collection donated replaced the old

collection of large print books with new editions.

The last quarter of the year was dedicated to refurbishment of the premises. New modern tables replaced the existing ones to give the library a fresher and more updated look. Fire detectors were also installed following a risk assessment report.



BOOK CLUB GOZO 2020
Free Club
Everyone Welcome

January 29 <i>Shadow of the Wind</i> by Carlos Ruiz Zafón	<i>SHADOW OF THE WIND</i>
February 26 <i>The Rosie Project</i> by Graeme Simsion	<i>THE ROSIE PROJECT</i>
March 25 <i>The Beekeeper of Aleppo</i> by Christy Lefteri	<i>THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO</i>
April 29 <i>A Gentleman in Moscow</i> by Amor Towles	<i>A GENTLEMAN IN MOSCOW</i>
May 27 <i>Where My Heart Used to Beat</i> by Sebastian Faulks	<i>WHERE MY HEART USED TO BEAT</i>
June 24 <i>Old Baggage</i> by Lissa Evans	<i>OLD BAGGAGE</i>
July 29 <i>Warlight</i> by Michael Ondaatje	<i>WARLIGHT</i>
August 26 <i>Everyday Encounters</i> by John P. Portelli	<i>EVERYDAY ENCOUNTERS</i>
September 30 <i>All the Light We Cannot See</i> by Anthony Doerr	<i>ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE</i>
October 28 <i>The Truths and Triumphs of Grace Atherton</i> by Anstey Harris	<i>THE TRUTHS AND TRIUMPHS OF GRACE ATHERTON</i>
November 25 <i>The Blackhouse</i> by Peter May	<i>THE BLACKHOUSE</i>
December 30 <i>Touching The Void</i> by Joe Simpson	<i>TOUCHING THE VOID</i>

Join us on the last Wednesday of every month at Gozo Central Public Library from 10.00am - 11.30am.
For more details, please visit the group's Facebook page or ask library staff.

MALTA LIBRARIES

NATIONAL BIBLIO-GRAPHIC OFFICE

NBO

NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC OFFICE



Oliver Mamo

Director – National Bibliographic Office

The year 2020 will be remembered as the year in which individuals and institutions were faced with a new reality brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It overshadowed every sphere of life, be it professional, social and personal. Despite the protocols established by the Health Authorities instructing safeguards such as social distancing, which naturally impinged on the social aspects of office life, the pandemic offered us an exceptional scenario in which the NBO could stop and assess its operational methods and status. New methods of collecting and processing legal deposits were introduced

and the method whereby physical items proceed from a process to the next within established workflows. This unique scenario also gave us the opportunity to focus on the project at hand, namely that of enhancing DigiVault and providing a better service to our clients. It was also an opportunity to create the necessary infrastructure through which the library catalogue would be eventually upgraded to reach current market standards. The following report details the work carried out by the National Bibliographic Office during the year under review.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC WORK

Work commenced on material received under legal deposit. This current material is mainly in the form of monographs and periodicals that were published during the period 2019-2020, although some material pre-dates this period.

One ongoing project was that of retrospective cataloguing. The retrospective serial collection was continued. As stated in the previous Annual Report, the aim of this project is to have 100,000 issues available on the OPAC by the end of 2021. By the end of 2020, the number of serials catalogued amounted to 66,000.

Another important facet of the retrospective cataloguing project is to create an inventory catalogue of monographs accessible through the OPAC of monographs that form part of the national

collection. During the year under review a total of 1,000 books were added to the catalogue and are therefore accessible to the general public.

Following the NBO's assessment of the library catalogue, it was noted that the catalogue lacks the necessary visuals through which users are assisted when retrieving the materials required. This is the current market standard employed by the publishing industry whereby every record has a cover image attached to it. This measure complements enhanced services such as that of the creation of a synopsis for every bibliographic record. The NBO has designed a workflow through which retrospective and current publications will have their cover scanned. These images are edited, stored and eventually attached to the record. Apart from the efforts by NBO staff on this project, thanks are also due to National Library staff who assisted the NBO in image capturing. By the end of 2020, a total of 3,000 images were captured. As of 2021, this project will be integrated as an additional measure so that efforts are reported through official government channels, thus contributing to Malta's efforts in the field of e-Government.

THE DIGITAL LIBRARY

As reported in the 2019 Annual Report, DigiVault is being phased out through a new Digital Asset Management system. The approach being adopted is one whereby the user can search through the traditional library OPAC and where a digital surrogate exists, the bibliographic record would contain a hyperlink to the digital asset. This system rests on the principle that a user is given a single research source requiring minimal effort. The Budgetary Measure 202/2020 officially addressed this project which entailed creating the infrastructure required and

commencing on the Incunabula Collection which was projected to be completed by September 2021. The NBO is pleased to report that this project was completed by November 2020, ten months earlier than the forecasted date. Additionally, over and above the service that was provided by DigiVault, the assets can be searched within the content, meaning that the material has been processed through OCR (Optical Character Recognition).

During 2019, it was reported that the NBO has started harvesting digital government publications. While the harvesting exercise has continued during the year under review as will be explained further below, the NBO decided to start cataloguing this digital material. Since its inception, this collection is evidently on its way to becoming a major one. Note has been taken so that when possible, the NBO will invest in the human resources required to maintain this collection without adding further backlogs in

cataloguing. So far, 500 bibliographic records have been created covering publications by specific local councils. The hurdle encountered in this regard is the fact that this 'born digital' material has been printed, signed and uploaded as images on websites. Consequently, all the material processed had to be OCR'd before being uploaded to our servers.

RECEIPTS OF LEGAL DEPOSIT PUBLICATIONS

Due to the prevailing pandemic, arrangements were made with regard to the delivery of new publications that are bound by legal deposit. As has just been mentioned, all deposits were kept in a quarantine room, in observance of the health regulations. During 2020, 497 periodicals and 459 books were received by the NBO office, 87 of which were those published in preceding years. Receipts and letters of acknowledgement were sent to all publishers by our personnel.

OFF-SITE REPOSITORIES

Maintenance works at the Hal Far and Floriana repositories are ongoing. During the year under review, the NBO collected all the legal deposit copies and serial material that resided at the Custodian's House within the National Library. At the time of writing, these 100 standard boxes are stored in the quarantine room awaiting processing which would allocate a permanent fixed-shelving location at the Floriana repository.

RECOVERY OF RETROSPECTIVE MATERIAL

Primary recovery exercise

The current pandemic brought about changes on how to accrue and scrutinise material that was donated at intervals to several charity outlets. At one stage this flow was at a complete standstill when charities' operational hours were curtailed or halted. On retrieving Melitensia publications in all their various formats and taking the precautionary measures, these were first placed for a two-week quarantine period in an isolated location, and afterwards selected through verification with the online Malta Libraries catalogue, in order to determine if the document was already held in both national library repositories. A second copy was held when only one copy was found in each.

All pre-1940s book publications were held, given that in the pre-war period the malpractice of removing original covers to replace with 'in-house' binding deprived the NLM of possessing them as true whole copies. The chosen documents were cleaned from any residue or particulate matter and checked for missing pages, scribbling, enclosures or attachments. Where there was an evident presence of silverfish (*Lepisma saccharina*), the holding was covered in thin tissue paper in order to isolate it from the other documents.

Once the boxes with recovered material were taken to the NBO office in Floriana, these were put directly into quarantine for the second time, even though there had only been one handler since their original recovery.

Printed documents

All approved documents were listed in a spreadsheet that had been created with relative mandatory fields, including bibliographic data and physical status. These included the name of the author or corporate body; title and subtitle; publisher and place of publication, year of publication, number of pages, physical condition, number of holdings (if any) and general remarks. The statuses for the physical condition were merited as poor, fair, very good and mint. References were made in the remarks section for documents that had a specific attribute, such as being signed by the author, of limited circulation or requiring repair or fumigation.

The different formats recovered were books (including monographs of more than eight pages), periodicals, compact discs, digital video discs, audio cassettes and ephemera, which includes calendars, recipe cards and posters.

The majority of the 512 books recovered during 2020 were in the Maltese language, followed by those in English. As in previous years, there were also several instances when similar holdings that had been recovered in previous years were encountered in the process and therefore uncollected.

The most salient acquisition was the devotional book in Latin, published around 1727, when Malta was administered by Grandmaster Manoel de Vilhena. The volume was entitled *Officium Conceptionis Beatae Virginis Mariae* and includes a concluding chapter that suggests Melitensia content, possibly a pastoral letter by the Bishop of Malta, *pro tota insula Melitensi*. The inner back contains two pages of pencil scribbling, probably from the 18th century as well. The volume was sent to the NLM for fumigation and restoration.

Among the books collected were several bound volumes of facsimile novels, written by Emilio Lombardi and Arturo Dimech, dating to the 1950s and 1960s. Cumbo's *Il-furnar ta' Venezia*:

rakkont ta' mhabba was published in 53 facsimiles and all have been recovered. The Maltese translation of Paolo Liggeri's *Is-Sinjura l-bajda ta' Fatima*, by Ġużi Mallia and published in 1948, includes the preface by Mons. Filippu Muscat from the Metropolitan Cathedral of Mdina, dated August 1937, giving a clear indication of the first Maltese edition.



A substantial number of missing retrospective issues of glossy magazines mainly included early issues of *Design & Décor*, published by Eve Publications, *Flair* and *Taste & Flair*, published by Proximus Publishing and recovered for NLM (Gozo) and all the missing issues at NLM of *Kunsill News*, published by the Żurrieq Local Council.

Also recovered for NLM (Gozo) was a good collection of 442 recipes in Maltese, published in 1980 and 1981, which were categorised as ephemera. A set of eight blank cards depicting scenes of country folk and Valletta by Edward Caruana Dingli (1876-1950) was recovered for NLM, as was a set of six lithographs depicting scenes of Valletta, published by Lemaitre Derexit of Paris, with no known date and which require further analysis.

During 2020, the NBO office received:



497
Periodicals



372
Books

The different formats recovered are:



Books

Including monographs of more than eight pages



Periodicals



Compact discs



Digital video discs

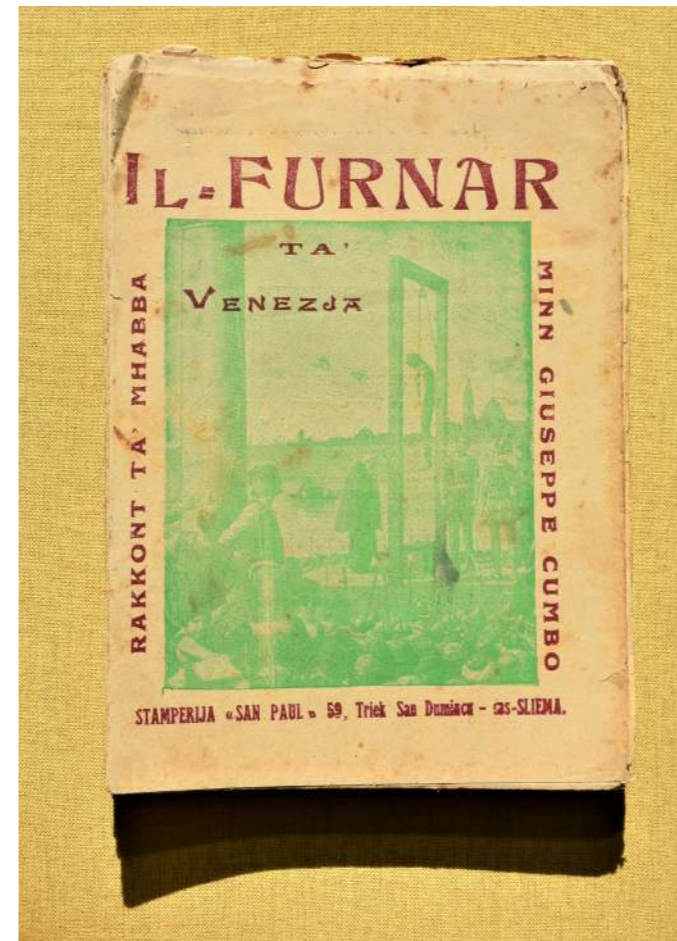


Audio cassettes

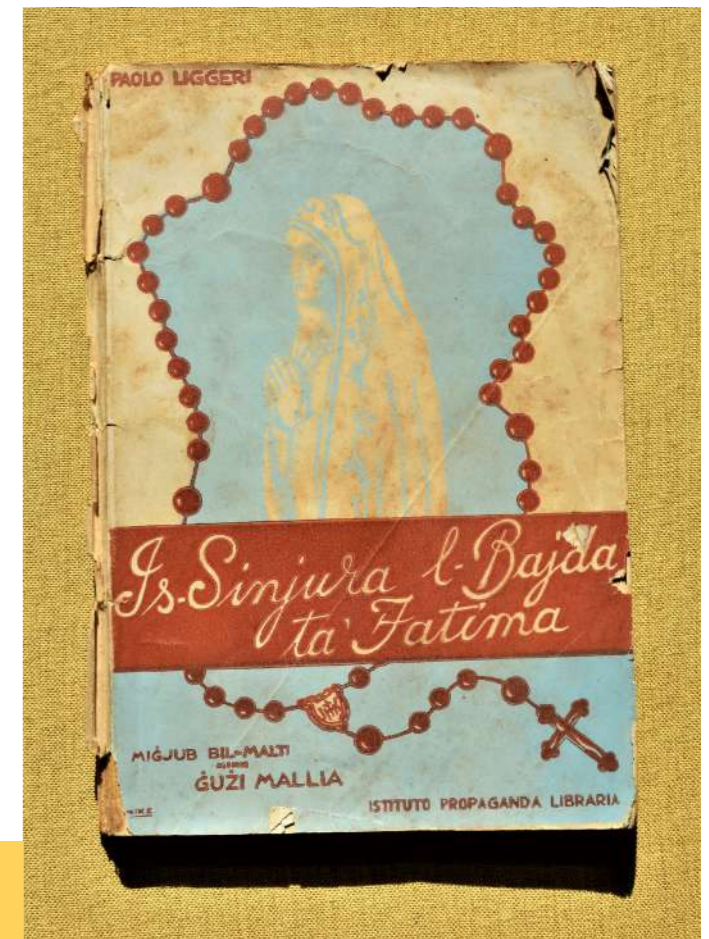


Ephemera

Includes calendars, recipe cards and posters

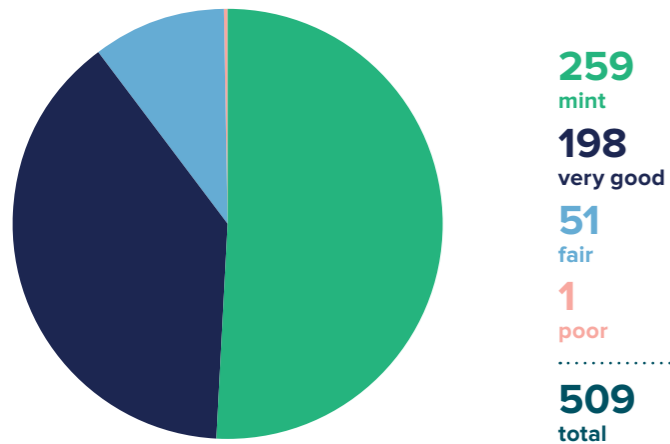


Il-Furnar ta' Venezia Giuseppe Cumbo



Is-Sinjura l-Bajda ta' Fatima Ġużi Mallia

Condition of books recovered



From this pie chart one considers the high number of 259 mint publications (50.5%), or in very good status (38.7%), that were acquired. These had either been purchased by their owner or received as a gift and remained unread; others had autographs or dedications. As in the preceding years, the predominant genre of mint publications was of a devotional content or Maltese poetry books, whereas those in a very good condition included many children's literature and various non-fiction categories in English, including finance and banking.

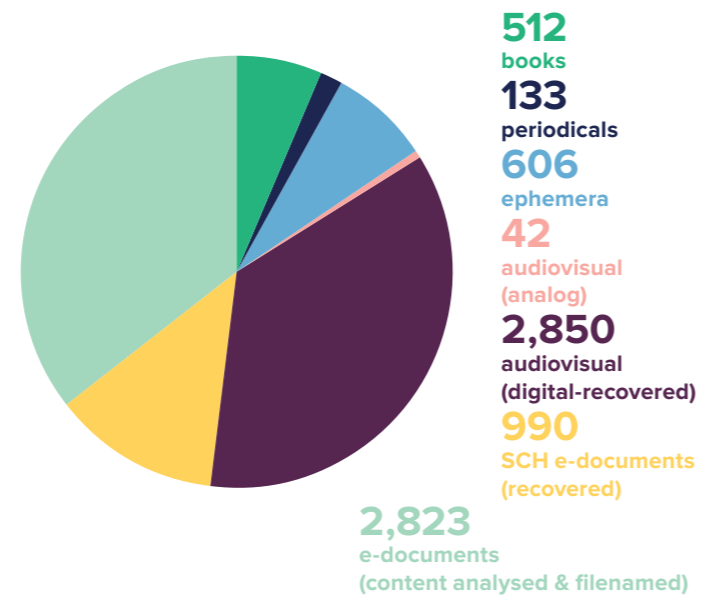
In 2019 a new approach in collection development was adopted, that of keeping books recovered in a fair and poor state on reserve until a copy in a much better condition be chanced upon. This practice resulted in a decrease of those classified as fair from 22.4% in 2018 to 8.2% in 2019 and 10% in 2020 and as poor from 3.9% in 2018, a negligible 0.4% in 2019 and 0.2% in 2020.

The evaluation process undertaken took several factors into consideration. These included a thorough inspection of all

documents, with regard to the complete text as published by verifying page number sequencing, fragility or brittleness of paper, as well as the removal of third matter irrelevant to document – such as paper scraps or rusting paper clips, creases on the spin area that signified that the book had been opened and leafed through, stains, moisture or fungal growth, silverfish and so on.

The rationale behind the categorisation of Melitensia books by decade of publication, was implied by the significant historical changes that Malta experienced throughout the 20th century. The pre-1920 category covered those documents published prior to the 1921 self-government period, the 1930s included the turbulent years when Maltese was declared (in 1934) as an official language instead of Italian and the 1940s were dominated by the war years.

Types of records recovered



DIGITAL PUBLIC DOCUMENTS HARVESTING

The NBO began the content assessment of the 4,441 e-documents harvested by 2019. All the harvestable local council main documents categorised as annual reports, annual budgets and business plans were analysed, given appropriate file names and the cataloguing process was initiated. The quarterly reviews and financial statements are currently being content-assessed. All traceable ministerial e-annual reports were crawled and

filenamed. In 2020 the mapping of all government agencies, directorates and units that create annual reports was successfully concluded, as shall be discussed further on, whereas the harvesting of e-documents from the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage national inventory was also continued and currently stands at 1,050 records.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT E-DOCUMENTS 2003-2020

Throughout 2020 NBO wrote to all the local and regional councils requesting missing born-digital documents, some of which were received while others consequently uploaded online. From the 2019 harvested e-documents 1,672 were content-assessed and filenamed uniformly by the legal deposit unit, and then forwarded for internal NBO cataloguing. These pertained to 411

annual reports, 486 audit reports, 473 annual budgets and 302 business plans. Another 1,662 e-documents of quarterly financial reviews and financial statement indicators, that were captured in a disorderly status, are currently being filenamed appropriately. The overall number of local government e-documents should increase once crawling for 2020 is completed.

MINISTERIAL E-ANNUAL REPORTS 2007-2020

NBO undertook to harvest and filename all known 163 e-annual reports, commencing from the 2006 National Audit Office document and the gradual increase of ministerial e-annual reports from 2007 onwards. Between 2007 and 2012 all ministerial e-annual reports were published in one volume by the Office of the Prime Minister, whereas the e-annual reports for

2016 and 2017 were published jointly in 2018, following Malta's hosting of the EU Presidency the previous year. Altogether, the ministerial, Parliament, Commissioner for Standards in Public Life and National Audit Office e-annual reports for 2019, published in 2020, amounted to a record 23 issues. All have been harvested.

HARVESTING ONLINE GOVERNMENTAL AUDIOVISUAL PUBLICATIONS

During 2020 the harvesting of audiovisual publications continued, adding to the 211 of the previous year, with the total rising to 3,061 records. The subjects varied from those created by the National Archives, Malta Libraries, MEUSAC, Sport Malta, Heritage Malta, Malta Arts Council, Festivals Malta and other content creators and subjects varied from infrastructural works to

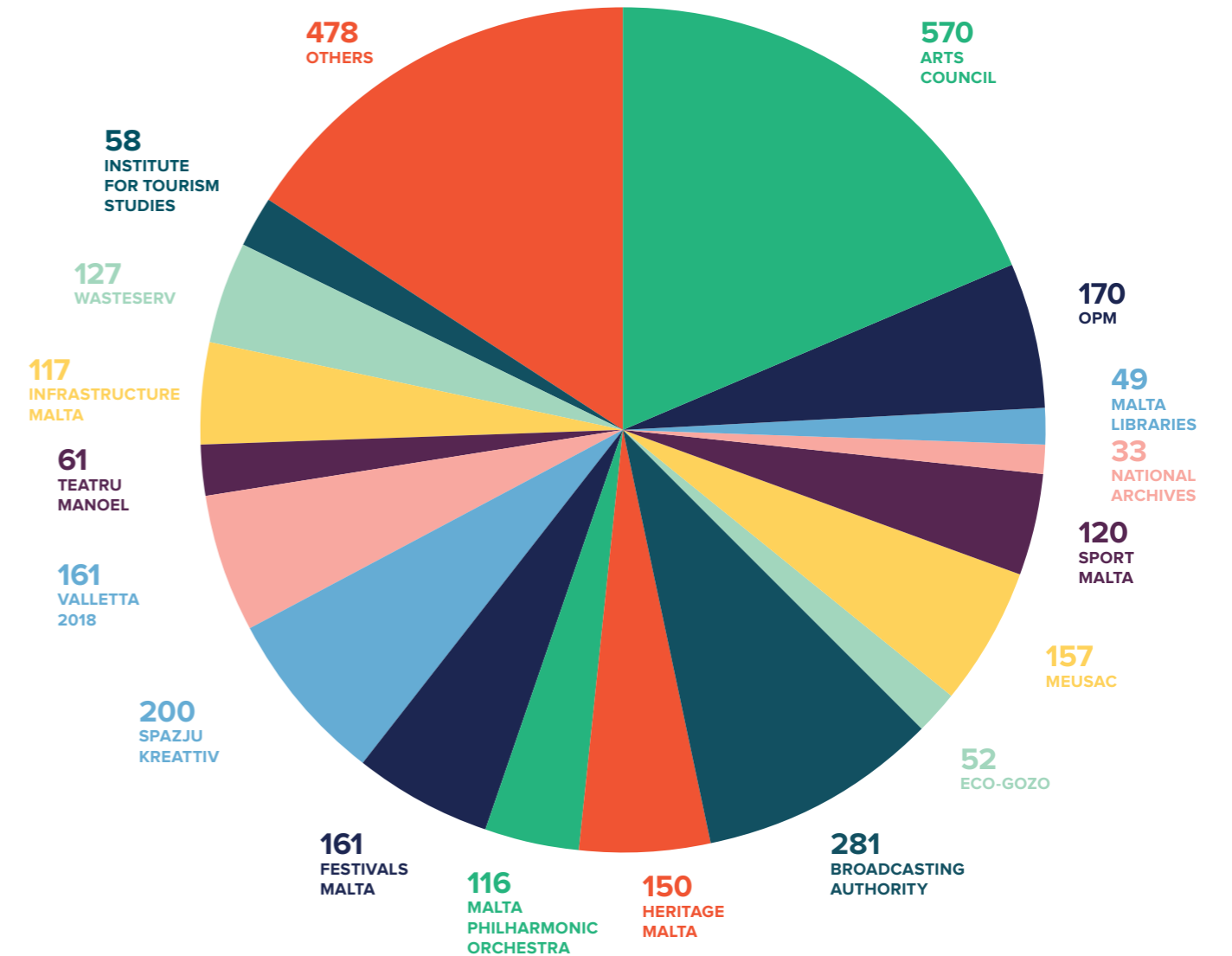
political debates, cultural happenings, COVID-19 related events, the search and rescue operations of the Armed Forces of Malta and other topical occurrences. More content-based analysis of the harvested e-documents is planned for 2021, whereas other fora have already been highlighted for eventual data capture.

MAPPING OF ALL GOVERNMENT E-ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2000-2020 BY ITS CONTENT-CREATING ENTITIES

During 2020 the Government effected a radical ministerial reshuffle that also saw the shifting of entities to other ministries, some newly created. NBO has also successfully mapped the e-annual reports published for public access by 83 different content creators that include authorities, agencies, directorates and units. Wherever possible, their structural changes from the original unit to the present one were also noted, thereby creating a respective e-document trail since their inception. NBO has also

charted the steady increase of e-annual reports from 6 in 2000 to 75 in 2019. E-annual reports published in 2020 and harvested to date amount to 70 in total. NBO noted that when, in the last quarter of 2020, it was requesting the awaited publications from these content creators, there was a late surge of e-annual reports. A total of 988 e-annual reports have been assessed and filenamed and the current content creators identified.

Harvested government audiovisual digital documents by ministry or entity



Harvested Annual Reports of Government Entities 2000 - 2020

■ Harvested
 ■ Biennial harvested
 ■ Awaiting publication

	ABBR.	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	2000	
Agenzija Appogg	AAP																							See FSWS
Agenzija Sapport	ASA																							See FSWS, established as agency in 2013.
Agenzija Sedqa	ASE																							See FSWS
Agenzija Zghazagh	AZ																							
Airmalta	AM																							
Arbiter for Financial Services	OAFS																							Founded in 2016.
Arts Council - Malta	ACM																							
Bank of Valletta	BOV																							Officially constituted in 2000 as KNPD.
Broadcasting Authority - Malta	BA																							Annual reports back to 1961.
Central Bank of Malta	CBM																							Back to 1998.
Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability	CRPD																							
Council for Nurses & Midwives - Malta	CNM																							
Council for Professionals Complimentary to Medicine	CPCM																							
Customs & Excise Department	CE																							
Debt Management Directorate	DMD																							Established within Treasury Department in 2006.
Dental Specialist Accreditation Committee	DSAC																							Established in 2003 with the Health Care Professions Act.
Department for Fisheries & Aquaculture	DFA																							As per Commission Implementing Decisions (EU) of 2016.
Directorate for Health Information & Research - Malta	DHIR																							
- Infectious Disease Prevention & Control Unit (Table)	DHIRIDPCU																							Formerly known as the Disease Surveillance Unit until 2007.
- Injury Data Base - (incl. Gozo General Hospital)	DHIRIDB																							Launched in September 2004, with Gozo General Hospital as pilot project.
- National Mortality Registry	DHIRNMR																							Harvested reports go back to 1998.
- National Obstetrics Information System	NOIS																							Launched in 1999.
Embryo Protection Authority	EPA																							Constituted in 2012.
Enemalta	EM																							
Environment Resources Authority	ERA																							Reports prior to 2017 published by MEPA.

European Maritime & Fisheries Fund - Malta	EMMF																							Formerly the European Fisheries Fund Programme until 2015.
Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit	FIAU																							
Foundation for Educational Services	FES																							
Foundation Social Welfare Services	FSWS																							
Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools	FTS																							
Health Care Services Standards Dir. - Haemovigilance	HCSSDH																							First national haemovigilance report published in 2007.
Heritage Malta	HM																							Founded in 2003, with retrospective reports back to 1903 published by the Department of Museums.
Income Support & Investigations Directorate	ISID																							Established in 2005 as the Benefits Fraud Investigation Department it was known as the Benefits Compliance Directorate until 2016.
Information & Data Protection Commissioner	IDPC																							As per Regulation (EU) 2016/679.
Institute for Education	IFE																							
Jobsplus	JP																							Formerly ETC.
Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb	KNK																							First annual report issued covered 2013.
Malta Air Traffic Services	MATS																							
Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology	MCAST																							
Malta Communications Authority	MCA																							
Malta Competition & Consumer Affairs Authority	MCCAA																							
Malta Council for Science & Technology	MCST																							
Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector	MCVS																							
Malta Crafts Council	MCC																							
Malta Digital Innovation Authority	MDIA																							Constituted in 2019.
Malta European Union Action Committee	MEUSAC																							Established as an agency in 2017.
Malta Financial Services Authority	MFSA																							
Malta Fiscal Advisory Council	MFAC																							
Malta Freeport Corporation Limited	MFC																							
Malta Gaming Authority	MGA																							Formerly Lotteries & Gaming Authority.

Malta Information Technology Agency	MITA																	Back to 1998.												
Malta International Airport	MIA																													
Malta Libraries	ML																	Founding of Malta Libraries in 2012.												
Malta Marittima Agency	MM																													Established in 2016.
Malta Medicines Authority	MMA																	Established through the Medicines Act of 2003.												
Malta Statistics Authority	MSA																													
Malta Stock Exchange	MSE																	Back to 1995.												
Medical Council of Malta	MCM																	Established in 2003 with the Health Care Professions Act.												
Medical Specialist Accreditation Committee	MSAC																	Established in 2003 with the Health Care Professions Act.												
National Antibiotic Committee	NAC																													Established through L.N. 122 of 2008. Strategy made public in 2018.
National Archives of Malta	NAM																	Established through Act IV of 1990, as NAM in 2005.												
National Commission for Further & Higher Educ.	NCFHE																													
National Commission for the Promotion of Equality	NCPE																													
National Development & Social Fund	NDSF																													Established in 2015.
National Statistics Office	NSO																													
Occupational Health & Safety Authority	OHSA																	Founded in 2000, first report covering activities in 2002.												
Office of the Commissioner for Children	CFC																													
Office of the Mental Health Commissioner	OMHC																	Established in 2013 through the Mental Health Act.												
Office of the Regulator Ind. Investment Programme	ORIP																													
Pharmacy Council - Malta	PCM																	Established through the Health Care Professions Act, 2003.												
Public Service Commission	PSC																	Established in 1960 through the Public Service Commission Regulations.												
Regulator for Energy & Water Services	REWS																	Formerly the Malta Resources Authority until 2015.												
Social Care Standards Authority	SCSA																													Founded in 2018.
Superintendence of Cultural Heritage	SCH																	Founded in 2003.												

Transport Malta	TM																	Founded in 2010.												
University of Malta	UM																													
- Centre of Labour Studies	UMCLS																													Biannual reports date back to 1981.
- Cottonera Resource Centre	UMCRC																													
- Edward de Bono Institute	UMEDI																													
- Faculty of Laws	UMFOL																													
- Faculty for Social Wellbeing	UMFSW																													
- Systems & Control Engineering, Department of	UMSCE																													
- Water Services Corporation	WSC																													

ICTSU REPORT

THE INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT UNIT WITHIN MALTA LIBRARIES

Simon Cutajar
Manager – ICT Support

The ICT Support Unit (ICTSU) is responsible for the management of all ICT-related functions within Malta Libraries, including the entity's Library Information System and other ancillary systems, together with the correct function of their related online portals. The Unit also contributes directly to the creation of Malta Libraries' ICT-related policies and is responsible for their implementation while also monitoring its adherence to general Government ICT-related policies and standards. It is also responsible for the management of third-party suppliers, including MITA and the enterprise system's supplier, to supervise all hardware and software-related issues reported daily, as well as requests for

password changes and the configuration of accesses to Malta Libraries' employees.

The ICT Support Unit's remit currently spreads over 57 Public Libraries in Malta and Gozo including the Central Public Libraries at Floriana and at Rabat, Gozo, as well as the National Library in Valletta and its annexe in Rabat, Gozo, together with 11 mobile libraries in elderly homes and Zammit Clapp Hospital. The ICTSU also provides support and training on the use of its Library Information System to 38 state and church school libraries, and a number of other Government Department Libraries.

MALTA LIBRARIES' ENTERPRISE APPLICATION

V-smart, being the core business application used by Malta Libraries for all its library business requirements including its online services, requires regular maintenance and upgrades to keep up with emerging technologies and/or services, while staying focused on the needs of its users, mainly being the Library's clientele. A record of 181 incidents and requests for enhancements were raised by the ICTSU this year with the system's supplier, mainly due to enhancements on online services brought on by the need to boost such services during the current COVID-19 pandemic. All these cases were followed up, tested, concluded and documented by the same unit.

MIGRATION OF CHURCH AND STATE SCHOOL LIBRARIES ONTO MALTA LIBRARIES ENTERPRISE APPLICATION

The Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary and the Sir Michelangelo Refalo Gozo Sixth Form, together with 12 other state school libraries, educational units, and four church school libraries, were migrated from the previous OLIVER Library Information System to Malta Libraries' V-smart Library Information System. The bibliographic and borrower data of these school libraries were successfully migrated and tested in two separate stages during 2020 and training to all the respective teacher-librarians was delivered both in class-format sessions at the beginning of the year and in online form during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

NEW LIBRARIES

Other libraries such as the Institute for Education and the Sacred Heart College Junior School have this year also started using the entity's Library Information System. Additionally, library services have been extended to another eight elderly homes as well as Zammit Clapp Hospital. The ICTSU was responsible for the system configuration of these new libraries and the training of all the related library personnel.

PUBLIC LENDING RIGHTS

The ICTSU, on behalf of Malta Libraries, undertakes the task to issue the Public Lending Rights report on a quarterly basis to be submitted to the National Book Council for the latter to be able to issue payments to Maltese authors for loans performed from libraries within Malta Libraries. A total of four quarterly reports were issued to this Council.

NEW NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHIC OFFICE

New network infrastructure was planned and coordinated by the ICTSU in 2020 in addition to the currently existing LAN in the same unit. Network infrastructure had to be extended to other areas of the unit due to increase of staff and modification of business processes within the same unit.

COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS

The current COVID-19 pandemic has inevitably affected in many ways, every organisation on the island, and Malta Libraries was no exception. All libraries falling directly under the remit of Malta Libraries had to close their doors by the end of March and reopened again on 26th June 2020. All school libraries were also shut because all school buildings closed their doors to mitigate as much as possible the spread of the virus. Consequently, the ICTSU had to implement a good number of bypasses and changes in the Library Information System to block the issue of overdue notices and to stop all its patrons from being blocked out of the system and consequently unable to use the Malta Libraries' eBook service. This included the implementation of a procedure within V-smart for the monthly extension of all loans. A good number of expired patron memberships had to be refreshed as more and more users were attracted to the convenient use of eBooks. Some online procedures had to be revised and several manual procedures adapted online while other services were enhanced to accommodate the need of patrons to avail themselves of our online services. When the libraries opened their doors again on 26th June 2020 after the partial COVID-19 lockdown, the ICTSU had to undertake the daunting task of reversing most temporary

bypasses that were implemented on the Library Information System as book loans were again building up speed following the re-opening of all the libraries.

During the libraries' temporary closure and throughout the current pandemic, the ICTSU had to supply several staff members with IT hardware to use at home seeing that most full-time library personnel were assigned teleworking tasks. The ICTSU also did its best to train most of Malta Libraries' personnel in the use of Microsoft TEAMS to facilitate communication and meetings since the latter could only and are still currently being held online.

For the first time ever, the ICTSU had to devise and deliver its usually class-based staff courses in an online format to its librarians. Course material and course content had to be revised and adapted for online delivery to the last group of teacher-librarians that attended these courses between October and November 2020. The delivery of these courses included the preparation of student packages which included course material and tools which would have otherwise been used and shared in classroom-based courses.



OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT



Joanne Sciberras
Director Library Operations

The Operations Department within Malta Libraries incorporates the Finance, Human Resources, Procurement and Administration Units. This Department also encapsulates the Outreach Unit and works closely with the Curatorial Affairs Unit.

The main roles of the Operations Department include:

- Personnel administration,
- Programme initiation and implementation
- Direct co-ordination of the preparation of the entity's annual Financial Estimates and administration of the entity's Budget
- Capital Projects
- preparation and delivery of the entity's strategic and business plans
- Overseeing of personnel administration for library staff.
- Overall responsibility for the day-to-day running of the Finance, Administration, HR and Marketing Departments
- Managing and co-ordination of the holding of cultural/literary events on Malta Libraries' premises
- Revenue-generation through the holding of activities, hire of premises



HR MATTERS & ADMINISTRATION

During 2019, the Human Resources Section contributed to the areas of HR planning, capacity building, training and development. By the end of 2019, Malta Libraries had a staff complement of 99 employees across all units in Malta and Gozo, together with 4 RSS employees and 2 other employees from Engineering Resources Ltd as can be seen in the Table/Figure below:

Staff Complement



Throughout the year, the Operations Department issued the following External Calls:

External Calls
Position of Senior Manager (Legal Deposit) at the National Bibliographic Office – Malta Libraries
Post of Assistant Librarian – Malta Libraries
Post of Outreach and Cultural Events Officer – Malta Libraries

This Department also continued to effectively implement its Performance Appraisal Programme for all employees, which aims to evaluate each staff member's skills, performance and needs. In fact throughout 2020, despite COVID-19 restrictions, Malta Libraries continued to encourage career development and members of staff benefited from training, seminars and workshops. Main areas of training included fire fighting, manual handling, First Aid, Library Information Systems, Procurement, Payroll Systems and Accounting.

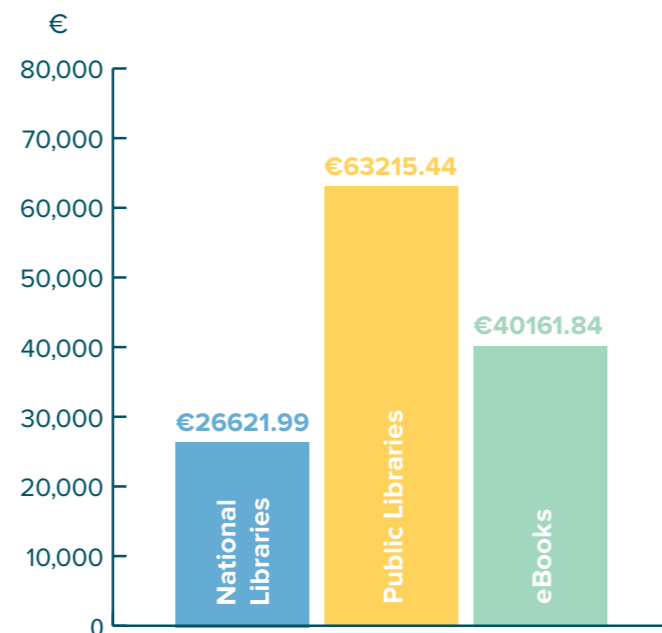
With regards to registry files, a total of 47 new files were opened in 2020. Besides, during 2020, this Unit also provided terms of reply to 53 Parliamentary Questions.

FINANCE & PROCUREMENT

During the financial year of 2020, Malta Libraries started operating its accounts through the tranche system as approved by the Ministry of Finance, whereby the entity received its annual recurrent budget of €3,180,000 in quarterly tranches of €795,000. The entity received a supplementary budget of €40,000 to cater for the acquisition of a collection of lace patterns, which now forms part of the National Collection.

During 2020 the Procurement Unit was responsible for the formulation, publication and processing of various closed quotations and expressions of interest as per Public Procurement Regulations. The Unit also provides other Directorates and Sections within Malta Libraries with the necessary support and advice on public procurement.

The Procurement Unit was also in charge of administering the sum of €130,000 granted by the Government for the acquisition of books. This sum was also supplemented by a refund given by the National Literacy Agency for the purchase of children's books.



COVID-19 CHALLENGES AND MEASURES

2020 challenged us in unprecedented ways. The COVID-19 pandemic has required a departure from the usual rhythm of our daily operations as we adapted and implemented new ways for fulfilling our role and the needs of our patrons. It also required a

rapid transformation into a 'digital first' national library. Our ability to do so has relied on our investments in digitising the national collections and our efforts to further enrich the eBook collection, with a 15% increase in purchases registered during the year.

The Operations Department also oversaw the transition and the implementation of measures as established in Directive 13, including the efficient implementation of remote-working. Internal meetings and activities, as well as public lectures and outreach initiatives which were moved to an online mode of delivery. Accordingly, communications and outreach intensified to ensure increased internal and external engagement.

Additionally, and to safeguard the health of employees and patrons when making use of our premises, the Operations Department ensured the implementation and compliance to the relevant procedures, including temperature control and protection facilities at receptions, the ample availability of sanitisation stations, appointment facilities for researchers, as well as quarantine procedures when handling the collections. Expenditure in this regard amounted to €25,510.

OUTREACH AND MARKETING

As we sat down for one of our outreach meetings in late 2019 to discuss 2020's Libraries Day Events Programme, nothing could have prepared us for the 'stranger-than-fiction' turn of events that would ensue. Little did we suspect that the chosen theme - The Changing Role of the Librarian - would ring true on so many more levels than originally intended come April 2020. Like the rest of the world, we had to cancel a number of events scheduled not

only for the week of the 23rd but also for the rest of the year. More importantly, we have had to adapt very quickly to totally unprecedented circumstances on the job. COVID-19 has marked as well as revolutionised our approach to event planning and marketing. It pushed us to shift gears and set even more long-term and sustainable initiatives in motion.

PUBLIC LECTURES

As part of Malta Libraries' aim at projecting the National Library as the centre of knowledge and learning, it was decided in 2018 to organise an annual theme-based series of free public lectures on the grand premises. The second series covering 2019-2020, entitled 'Power, Costume, Scenography: Making Fashion a Statement in 18th-19th century Malta', had to be suspended early on in the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The concurrent mid-monthly lecture series 'Discoveries from the Past: Promoting Research Findings' also suffered the same fate.

These were the free public lectures delivered at the National Library of Malta until March 2020: 'Managing and Interpreting

Living Religious Heritage: Challenges and Solutions' by Maria Grazia Cassar on the 15th of January; 'Fabrics for an Order: a technical and artistic appreciation of the liturgical vestments of the Order of St John' by Evelyn Baluci on the 30th of January; a two-part lecture on the 15th of February: 'Aspects of eighteenth-century Malta as seen through a study of the acts of Notary Bernardo Maria Callus, Vol.2, 1746-48' by Rakele Fiott and 'Social Life on Malta and Gozo in the light of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century petitions to the Grand Master' by Valentina Grima; and 'Joyful Jewellery: jewellery in Carnival and social events' by Francesca Balzan on the 26th of February.

Alternatively, lectures started being offered in the form of filmed documentary features which were uploaded on the National Library Facebook page and Malta Libraries' YouTube channel for free public dissemination. The on-site format of these lectures meant we were able to set up one-evening only exhibits complementing the lectures in collaboration with Heritage Malta. In this new format we strengthened this and other collaborative

ties with public and private museums and collectors by filming relevant artworks and documents from outside of the National Library collection. The initiative has proved to be a great success and it is envisaged that such features will continue to be produced with the kind cooperation of the academics and experts who, in good time, will be in a position to deliver their lectures before the public as well once again.



The National Library of Malta routinely opens its doors to other event organisers and on the 24th of February 2020 we were lucky to be able to host 'Architecture's Afterlife' with Prof. Harriet Harriss, architect and Dean of Pratt School of Architecture – an event organised by Architecture Alive.





Photos courtesy of Architecture Alive



CONFERENCES & BOOK LAUNCHES

On the 23rd of January, local photographer Daniel Cilia chose the National Library of Gozo to launch his latest publication *Gozo, A Portrait of an Island*. Later in the year, as some restrictions started being lifted, the National Library of Malta re-opened its doors for some controlled and socially-distanced events such as the 'National Reading' organised by the Embassy of Poland on the 5th of September and the launch on the 7th of October of the second edition of *L-Istorja tal-Partit Laburista* authored by Francis Galea.



CONCERTS

The Reading Room at the National Library of Malta hosted a lunchtime concert as part of the Valletta International Baroque Festival in January 2020. This musical appointment has become a yearly commitment for us and this year we had the pleasure to host 'Mediterránea' - a showcase of 17th-century soloist repertoire in original tablature style by Daniel Zapico on theorbo and Pablo Zapico on baroque guitar.



Photo by Mark Zammit Cordina

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

Our 2020 programme of events started off strongly following the momentum gained in 2019, but most initiatives and plans for the year had to be cut short due to the restrictions imposed as of March 2020. Some annual appointments which had to put on hold and eventually dispensed with were the much-awaited Summer Programme of Events, the week-long celebrations coinciding with Libraries Day, Europe Code Week sessions, the National Literacy Agency Storytelling Festival, Comic Book Day, and all our subsequent holiday-themed appointments.

Well-established book clubs, reading groups and board game or educational card playing clubs could no longer gather in our libraries across Malta and Gozo and had to find alternative venues or disband temporarily.

That said, till the first week of March the Central Public Library managed to host nine official school visits - 193 school children in all (97 of kindergarten age and 96 of primary-school age) for library readings and complementary hands-on craft sessions which Malta Libraries organises in collaboration with readers from the National Literacy Agency as well as in-house trained readers and volunteers.

The annual Carnival event at Central Public Library in February was the first and last family-fun themed event to be held at the library for the year. It attracted a full house of 55 young library regulars and their parents or guardians for an activity-packed morning at the library. Another full-house Carnival themed activity was held at Gozo Central Public Library earlier in the month and it included a magic show which held its audience captive.

The National Library of Malta's last appointment with a young audience was on March 4th when avid history students from Żejtun Secondary School attended a tour of the building and viewed samples from the Bibljoteka's priceless collection as well as a recorded demo about the work which goes on in



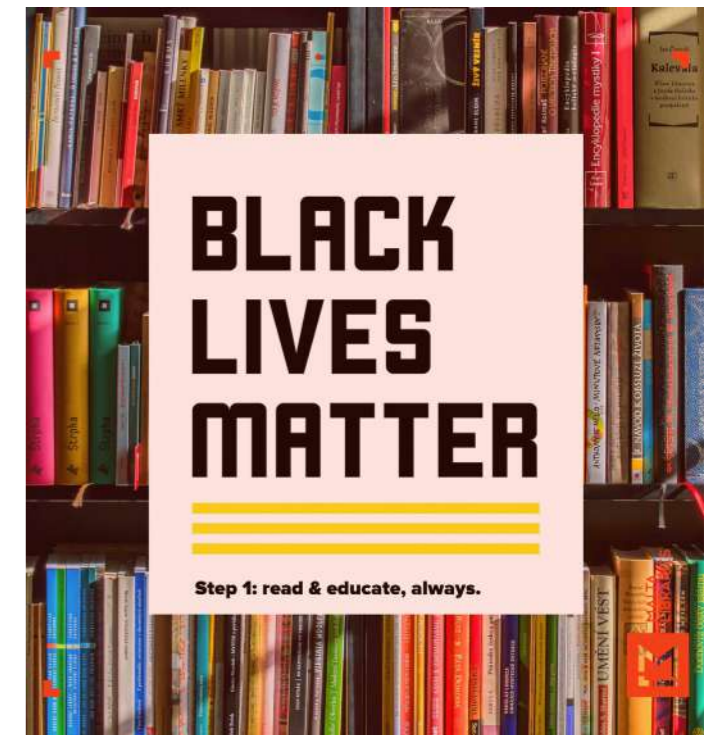
the Conservation and Restoration Lab. Similarly, on the 21st of January, Library Helpers from St Monica School, visited both the National Library and Central Public Library for a hands-on immersive tour. In February, the National Library hosted its last custom organised tour for the year when regulars of the Gozo

Book Club crossed the channel to spend one of their last monthly appointments on a cultural day out in Valletta. Similar custom tours were also held for a group of Seminarians, the St Benedict History Group and a group of He.Co (Heritage Valorization for Small Local Communities) representatives.

SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE PLATFORMS

In the year under review, the entity's online presence came to the fore as the official face of Malta Libraries. An extensive revamp of the portal maltalibraries.gov.mt began in the first months of partial lockdown to simplify the user experience and make our main services and most important notifications even more accessible. Moreover, revisions and updates in content and the re-design of visual elements helped bring this primary platform more in line with our brand guidelines.

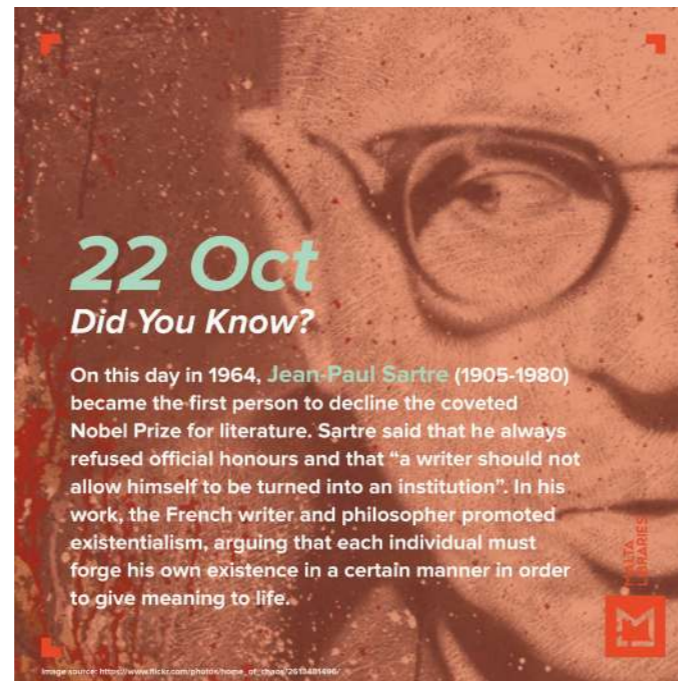
Similarly, our social media platforms flourished. Our official Facebook pages became our most immediate point of contact with our patrons almost overnight – logging in and tackling almost as many queries as our more popular alternatives; i.e. our telephone lines and email service. Our Instagram and Twitter accounts gained even more followers and cross posting of regular and up-to-the-minute content helped put our patrons' minds at rest about new procedures being adopted in view of the pandemic. The introduction of Stories on IG and Facebook meant that our presence was strengthened even more across both platforms. Stories made it possible for us to cement the informative yet light-hearted tone adopted in our social media strategies while attracting an even younger and more elusive age group.



Malta Libraries launched several online campaigns in a bid to reach out to its patrons and new library members such as #MaltaLibrariesReads, where Malta Libraries staff members shared their favourite book and eBook suggestions via personalised reviews. Similarly, with our ‘Did you know?’ social media posts, we sought to share with our bookish patrons some curious literary facts about authors they love or had yet to discover. #PrideMonth2020 and #BlackLivesMatter saw Malta Libraries committing to these causes by investing in and promoting a great number of e-literature on the subjects in question so that even in partial lockdown, anyone interested in learning more about the movements had access to educational material free of charge.

With the addition of an unprecedented amount of digital material to cater for readers who were stuck indoors and could not borrow physical books due to the temporary closure of libraries, new methods of support and promotion of services had to be introduced. Custom made and simple-to-follow tutorials to help with accessing our digital services not only informed newly-enrolled members about said services but also encouraged seasoned borrowers to finally take the leap, download Libby – the Reading App and start borrowing online.

The National Library of Malta, having had to cut short its on-site exhibition programme, decided to start publishing regular informative posts across our social media platforms from ‘Libr. MS 1161’ - also known as ‘The Beaufoy Album’ – as a continuous digital exhibition of sorts. Libr. MS 1161 is a precious and oft-consulted National Library holding containing a number of watercolours by the renowned Charles Frederick de Brocktorff (1782-1850), who made several drawings in Malta in the first half of the 19th century. The album also contains a number of watercolours by an unknown artist, dating to the early 19th century.



FILMING

Malta Libraries sought to open its doors to more collaborative photoshoots and video shoots in the last three quarters of 2020 in a bid to help other departments, entities, artists, researchers and students channel their messages in a time when the general public needed it most. By making our venues available for filming of features, shoots, virtual award ceremonies and artistic displays to name but a few – and by ensuring strict COVID-19 preventive measures throughout – Malta Libraries remained dedicated to offering a platform to various local and foreign voices and, by implication, managed to continue presenting its libraries as venues in newer and more creative guises.

In February, the Public Broadcasting Services used the National Library as a film set for its popular TV series ‘L-Ispettur Bonnici’ and later in August, MITA also chose the Reading Room as one of the venues for the filming of its dance-based feature to celebrate its 2020 rebrand. Alessandro Gandolfi, the Italian photographer



and journalist, co-founder of Parallelozero photo agency, also chose to photograph the same library as part of his incisive photo-story ‘No one ever conquered us’. Frequent collaborators Heritage Malta, the Malta Tourism Authority and a number of



University students also filmed and staged photoshoots at the National Library throughout the year.

In September, the National Library of Malta also hosted ONE TV for filming relating to a documentary about the origins of the Malta Labour Party as well as a group of eminent local singers, musicians and dancers who performed a multidisciplinary series of performances for Notte Bianca 2020's virtual event 'Ghanjiet waqt l-imxija'. Later in the year, Spirit of Yachting TV filmed documents and plans relating to the Lazzaretto Quarantine

Complex for a documentary coinciding with and promoting the Rolex Middle Sea Race 2020. The National Book Council also opted for the place to film the virtual award ceremony of the Doreen Micallef National Poetry Contest 2020.

The year came to a close with the filming of local singer-songwriter Dario Genovese's collaborative project 'Library Tapes' – a series of on-site duets performed and filmed live from the National Library Reading Room and planned to launch in 2021.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

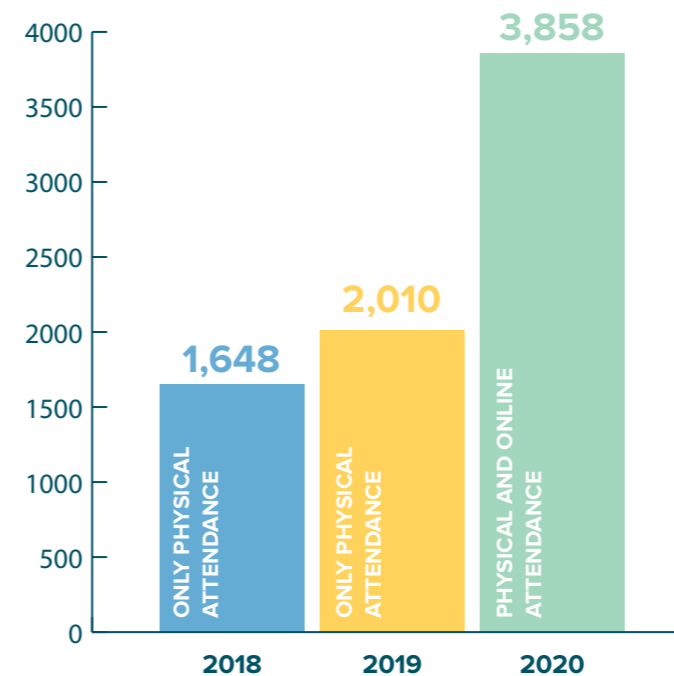
Malta Libraries is aware of the vital role it plays in supporting the well-being of our ageing population. Evidence has shown that while plot details of books might not be recalled, through the rekindling of emotions, reminiscing can be beneficial for those with dementia and other elderly challenges. Malta Libraries responds to differing needs to ensure that members of the community, who cannot easily access libraries owing to age, health issues or caring responsibilities, can still benefit from a holistic library service.

As part of our commitment to extend our reach beyond the physical library, Malta Libraries, in collaboration with the Active Ageing and Community Care Directorate, has for the past years been successfully running weekly leisure-reading sessions at the Mellieħa and Mtarfa residential homes for the elderly and the St Vincent de Paul Dementia Day Centre. However, in March 2020 and with the additional collaboration of CareMalta, Malta

Libraries was able to reach out to even more elderly people in homes and day centres at a time when they were most in need of it via live and online reading sessions instead. Our reading co-ordinator also organised online interactive reading sessions with local authors Trevor Zahra and Charles Casha for the elderly residents in question.

The pandemic proved how on-site libraries in elderly homes have become a real necessity. So much so, that in partial lockdown, only the library lending service offered at the Mellieħa residential home for the elderly could continue uninterrupted. In the year under review 1,766 books were loaned to elderly residents who would otherwise have had no opportunity to keep reading. This healthy statistic is still a marked decrease from the 2,245 loans registered in 2019 and can be entirely attributed to the precautionary restrictions imposed in the homes due to the pandemic.

Grand total rise in overall attendance



Following on this successful library model, in August 2020, Malta Libraries started discussions with CareMalta to launch eight new libraries in their homes by the end of 2021 which follow the Malta Libraries model of a lending library and can be accessed using the same membership card. Any books which the homes already casually circulated among the residents were gathered, expertly weeded and catalogued. An extensive enrollment programme was also set off among the elderly as well as staff members at the respective homes. These libraries will henceforth be furnished by brand-new books purchased by Malta Libraries, the Welfare Committee and CareMalta.

Residential homes for the elderly that form part of our outreach on-site project

Dar Madonna tal-Mellieħa

Mtarfa Home

St Vincent de Paul Dementia Day Centre

Joined us online in 2020:

Birżebbugia Day Centre

St Paul's Bay Day Centre

Mellieħa Day Centre

Qormi Day Centre

Hamrun Day Centre

Sliema Day Centre

Żejtun Day Centre

Dar Saura - Rabat

Casa Marija – Sliema

Casa San Paulo – Buġibba

Żejtun Home

Villa Messina – Rabat

Casa Arkati – Mosta

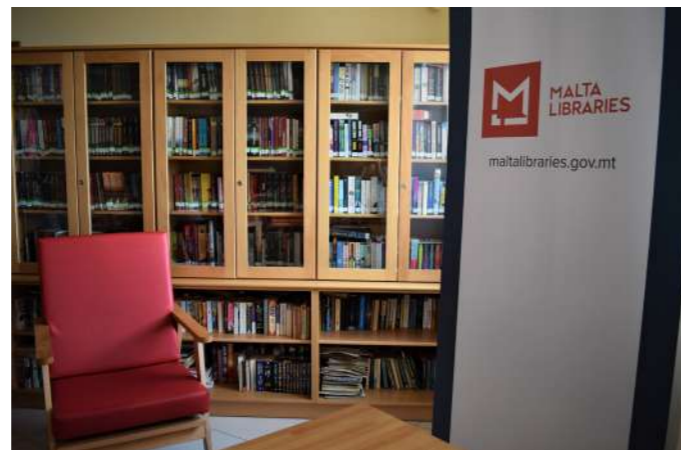
St Elizabeth Home – Rabat

Golden Care Home – Naxxar

Separately but similarly, in November 2020, Malta Libraries also started work on opening another library in the state-run elderly home Dar il-Madonna tal-Isperanza in Mosta

Following the launch of these combined initiatives, several publishers, entities and individuals stepped forward to join the cause and book donations by Horizons Malta, Miller Distributors and author Michael Galea started pouring in.

In 2020 Malta Libraries also received the substantial annual donation from The Welfare Committee specifically intended to help supplement the libraries in the already-established elderly homes of Mellieha, Mtarfa and Mosta.



CURATORIAL AFFAIRS UNIT

Works carried out by the Curatorial Affairs Unit within the Library Operations Directorate in 2020 included:

- The curatorship of an exhibition entitled “Folder 78A: Library Plans and Drawings” as part of a project of collaboration between Malta Libraries and the Records and Archives Section of the Works and Infrastructure Department concerning a set of 19th and 20th century plans and drawings mainly of the National Library. The exhibition was inaugurated on 6th March and was meant to be open to the public from 7th March to 16th April. COVID-19 measures saw the closure of the National Library to visitors, and as such, other means by which to disseminate the exhibition online were created.

The completion of the project included the compilation of an inventory of the digitised images of all the restored documents of Folder 78A, their appropriate binding and return to the Works and Infrastructure Department.

- The creation of content regarding items from the National Library’s collections for dissemination on social media, especially in view of the limitations brought about by COVID-19, by which actual events at the Library that normally showcase the Library’s treasures had to be stalled.

- The finalisation of the “Policy for Preservation and Collections Care” at the National Library. Measures were also taken to ensure that the work carried out at the Restoration and Conservation Unit is in accordance with the provisions of

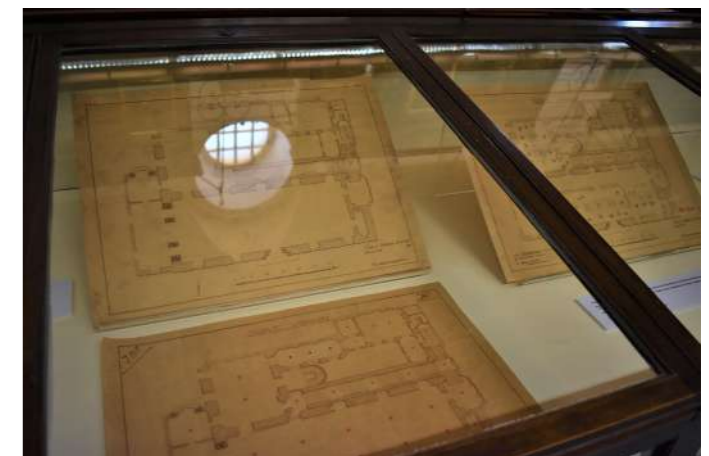
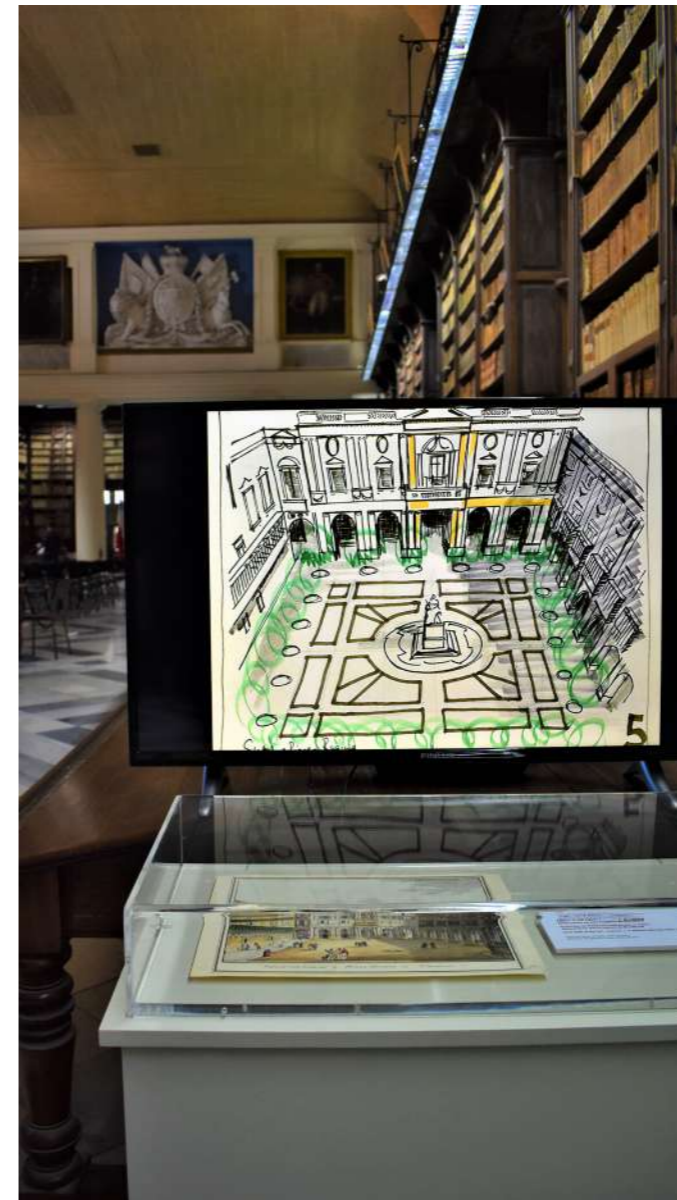
the Cultural Heritage Act through which Restoration Warrants started being granted.

- The commencement of an extensive and in-depth research project relating to the history of the National Library building and its use.

- Working on an outline long-term strategy for the National Library that would address issues of its premises and the increase in the national collection. This includes discussion with the Ministry for National Heritage and the Lands Authority in terms of the acquisition of additional property to house the ever-growing collection, as well as perceiving a way by which the historical collection is given a distinctive status from that of the modern collection.

- Works related to the project of the installation of a lift at the National Library, including those related to the necessary structural alterations.

- Enhancement of the national collection through the acquisition of a number of Melitensia documents and books from foreign auctions and through local and online purchases.



REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the financial year ended 31st December 2019
Excerpts from the Audited Accounts

Malta Libraries Management responsibilities for the year ended 31st December 2019

The Malta Libraries Act requires the National Librarian to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Corporate Body and of the surplus or deficit of the entity for that year. In preparing these the management team are required to:

- adopt the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Corporate Body will continue in the business;
- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- account for income and charges relating to the accounting period on the accruals basis;
- value separately the components of asset and liability items; and
- report comparative figures corresponding to those of the preceding accountant period.

The National Librarian is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and to enable him to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Malta Libraries Act (Cap. 511) enacted in Malta. This responsibility includes designing, implementing and maintaining such internal control as the management team determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. The management is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Corporate Body and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent auditors' report to the shareholders of the company

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Malta Libraries, which comprise the balance sheet as at 31st December 2019, and the income statement, statement of changes in reserves and cash flows statement for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Corporate Body as at 31st December 2019, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Accountancy Profession (General Accounting Principles for Small and Medium-sized Entities) Regulations, 2015 and the Schedule accompanying and forming an integral part of those Regulations (GAPSME).

Basis for opinion

We have conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibility under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Body Corporate in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in accordance with the Accountancy Profession (Code of Ethics for Warrant Holders) Directive issued in terms of the Accountancy Profession Act (Cap. 281) in Malta, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Management

The National Librarian is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with GAPSME, and for such internal control at the National

Librarian's that is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the National Librarian is responsible for assessing the Body Corporate's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Body Corporate or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Body Corporate's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of the management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Other matter

Malta Libraries implemented the Accountancy Profession (General Accounting Principals for Small and Medium-Sized Entities) Regulations, 2015 and the Schedule accompanying and forming an integral part of those Regulations ('GAPSME') as from 1st January

2018. Previously the entity kept the accounts on a cash basis whilst as from the 1st January 2018 the accounts were prepared on an accruals basis.

To provide a true and fair view of the current financial period a prior year adjustment was made for any accrued or prepaid expenses. However no adjustment was made for any Heritage Assets or Property, Plant and Equipment the Corporate Body might have owned previously. In view of this fact the Balance Sheet of the Corporate Body is understated by these assets.

Christian Zammit

For and on behalf of

Steven Galea and Associates Limited

Certified Public Accountants

37, St. Mary Street Naxxar NXR 1406 Malta

Date: 24th July 2020

Income statement for the year ended 31st December 2019

	Notes	2019 €	2018 €
Revenue	3	3,052,805	3,001,204
Cost of sales		-	-
Net Revenue		3,052,805	3,001,204
Administrative expenses		(3,257,909)	(3,004,759)
Other operating income	4	89,387	49,817
Operating surplus/(deficit)		(115,717)	46,262
Other interest receivable		96	114
Surplus/(deficit) before tax		(115,621)	46,376
Income tax	6	(14)	(17)
Retained surplus/(deficit) for the year		(115,635)	46,359
Retained surplus brought forward		76,608	30,249
Accumulated surplus carried forward		(39,027)	76,608

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2019

	Notes	2019 €	2018 €
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Heritage assets	7	19,897	19,664
Property, plant and equipment	8	241,976	164, 872
		261,873	184,536
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	10	28,744	8,110
Cash and bank balances		208,984	237,171
		237,728	245,281
Total assets		499,601	429,817
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Reserves			
Capital expenditure fund		200,000	100,000
Accumulated fund		(39,027)	76,608
Total equity		160,973	176,608
Non-current liabilities			
Deferred income		117,442	76,831
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	221,186	176,378
Total equity and liabilities		499,601	429,817

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 24th July 2020 and signed on its behalf by:
Cheryl Falzon (National Librarian and CEO) and **Joanne Sciberras** (Director Library Operations)

Income statement for the year ended 31st December 2020 (UNAUDITED)

For: January 2020 To: December 2020

Income Statement

Account	Actual
Other Income	
Recurrent Vote	3,180,000
Additional Vote	40,000
Other Income	30,900
Total	3,250,900

Other Grants Received **159,500**

Expenditure

50100 (SALARIES)	2,446,212
60100 (UTILITIES)	50,429
60200 (MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES)	91,781
60300 (REPAIR AND UPKEEP)	60,157
60400 (RENTS)	46,047
60600 (OFFICE SERVICES)	31,099
60700 (TRANSPORT)	13,181
60900 (INFORMATION SERVICES)	3,710
61000 (CONTRACTUAL SERVICES)	211,222
61100 (PROFESSIONAL SERVICES)	294,505
61200 (TRAINING)	2,902
61300 (HOSPITALITY)	779
61400 (INCIDENTAL EXPENSES)	364
9998 (Other Expenses)	5,771
Depreciation	158,000
Total	3,416,160

(Deficit)/Surplus **-5,759**

Retained Deficit brought forward **-39,027**

Accumulated (Deficit)/Surplus carried forward **-44,786**



