

MALTA

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Introduction

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

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

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

The National Library

On 19 February 2008, the National Library launched volume I of the publication *Charles Frederick de Brocktorff: Watercolours at the National Library, Valletta*, partly sponsored by the Maltese National Commission for UNESCO and authored by Bernadine Scicluna. The book, of which 600 copies were printed, was a great success and was sold out within a week of its launch, due also to the large number of pre-publication bookings. The income generated from the sale of this volume was utilized to finance the publication of volume 2. The success of the publication was also thanks to the joint effort of three government departments – the Libraries Department, the Department of Information which took many of the photos that appeared in the book, and the Government Printing Press which, despite its many commitments, undertook the printing of the book and of the set of 12 A3 full-colour prints which accompanied the book.

During the year, preparations for the publication of *Charles Frederick de Brocktorff: Watercolours at the National Library, Valletta – Volume II* were undertaken. The text, this time examining 42 watercolours by Brocktorff depicting scenes of Valletta, was written by Theresa Vella. The photography and printing of the book were once more entrusted to the Department of Information and to the Government Printing Press respectively. The book is expected to be launched in February 2009.

Seminar for National Library Employees

On the 8th and 9th May 2008 the National Library organized a one-day Seminar for its employees. Members of staff from different sections attended the seminar on different days to ensure the smooth running of the Department. The seminar was held at the Assumption Chapel in Gharghur (Zellieqa). It centred on library work in general and other activities that might be taken to enhance the image of, and knowledge about the Library with the general public. Guest speaker was Dr. Stephen Spiteri.

Notte Bianca – Lejl Imdawwal Valletta 2008

The 3rd edition of this year's Notte Bianca was celebrated on Saturday, 4th October 2008. The National Library once again participated in the event and the Library opened to the public from 7.00pm to 11.00pm

Our contribution centred mainly on these two activities:

- Lectures delivered every half an hour on the services offered to the users and visitors of the Library.
- An audio visual “Bringing Books to Readers for Enjoyment and Enrichment” screened every 20 minutes to the audience present.

Digitization Programme

In February 2008 the National Library of Malta filed an application requesting funds under the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) scheme in order to enable the setting-up of a digitization section at the National Library to embark on the creation of a digital archive compliant with international digitization standards.

The ERDF 109 - *Digitisation Strategy and Framework for the National Library of Malta* project – will mainly involve the photography/scanning of each document held at the National Library with the aim of:

- (i) Generating a consistent, high level image quality digital archive, through the use of widely accepted standards and formats;
- (ii) Decreasing the necessity of handling the original material, hence ensuring its preservation;
- (iii) Enabling the generation of surrogate images (from the high-quality images) for various end users (e.g. web, publications, exhibitions, etc.), depending on the users' requirements/specifications – e-accessibility

Some weeks ago we were asked to submit clarifications on queries raised. We now hope to receive the green light and continue working on the project.

Security Services at the National Library, Valletta

The Department of Libraries in conjunction with the Contracts Department issued a tender document for Security Services at the National Library, Valletta. After its adjudication, in July 2008, the work was entrusted to a security services company. In so doing the Department had secured the following benefits:

- The National Library benefited from a 24 hour security service, which means that the building is now manned day and night, seven days a week.
- The Licensed Insured Full Time Officer who is a trained security Officer is also monitoring the CCTV and Fire Detection and Suppression System installed at the National Library.

The system has ameliorated the National Library's effort in safeguarding our national heritage for posterity.

Commemorating Anton Buttigieg

In May 2008, the National Library joined forces with St. Gaetan Band Club of Hamrun, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the death of Dr Anton Buttigieg, ex President of Malta, and one of the most important poets in Maltese literature. On Saturday, May 31st, a Literary and Musical Evening was organised at the Library under the patronage of H.E. the President of Malta. The recital of some of Buttigieg's poems alternated with the performance by the Hamrun Band Club of musical excerpts selected specifically to suit the subjects or moods of the poems. The band, composed of 45 musicians performed works by Mozart, Handel, Beethoven, Elgar, Mascagni, Sciberras, Grieg, Kattelbey, and others

To mark this occasion an exhibition illustrating the life and works of Dr Anton Buttigieg was mounted at the Readers' Hall of the National Library. The works which were on display between 31st May and 30th June, consisted of material from the National Library collection and included also other exhibits kindly lent by the Hamrun Band Club as well as Buttigieg's family.

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National Library of Malta