

Heritage Malta (HM) Annual Report 2013

Capital Works

During the year under review, focus was given to the transfer of the **National Museum of Fine Arts** (NMFA) from South Street to the **Auberge d'Italie**. Extensive structural works were carried out at NMFA, while the offices and staff of the museum were relocated at the Auberge. The official international competition brief for MUZA, as the project has been named, has been published in December. The NMFA has also participated actively in the discussions and plans for the creation of a Contemporary Art Centre as part of the Valletta 2018 project.

Other works have been undertaken in other museums and sites. Reconstruction work on **Ta' Kola Windmill** is in full swing. Consolidation works on the tower masonry fabric were carried out, while most of the internal wooden mechanism is being reproduced. The project will be completed in 2014. Extensive conservation works have been carried out at the **Inquisitor's Palace**. These include the refurbishment of the greater part of the second floor of the building, which can now host small conferences and other cultural events, and the restoration of the internal main courtyard. A Tourist Information Office managed by the MTA and a small museum shop has also been inaugurated at ground floor level.

A substantial part of the main façade of the **Malta Maritime Museum**, including the clock tower, has been conserved. A number of preliminary technical studies and surveys have been conducted at the **Xaghra Stone Circle** in anticipation of infrastructural improvements at the site. The dangerous roof structure of the former monetarium of the **National Museum of Archaeology** has been completely demolished and reconstructed, while an extra low voltage system, including security features, has also been installed. A new audio-visual and lighting system has been installed at the **Hal Saffieni Hypogeum**, and the Hagar Qim and Mnajdra protective shelters were given a full maintenance. Works have also commenced on **Bighi's** historic smoking shed.

Heritage Malta is currently also managing the following EU-funded projects:

The ERDF 032 **Archaeological Heritage Conservation Project** (c. €9.5m) includes technical studies on all three sites, the building of a visitor centre and other visitor infrastructure and extensive landscaping at Ggantija Temples and St Paul's Catacombs, and the construction of a walkway and a protective shelter at Tarxien Temples. All technical studies have been concluded and the required works tenders published. The walkway at Tarxien Temples has been installed and works on the shelter are in hand. Works at St Paul's catacombs are progressing well, while the new Ggantija visitor centre has been officially inaugurated in October. As a follow-up, HM has also published a major publication entitled *Ggantija: The Oldest Free-Standing Building in the World* (ed. G. Vella).

The ERDF 245 **Fort St Angelo Heritage Experience** (c. €13m) includes the restoration of the government-owned sections of the fort and their rehabilitation into a cultural attraction focusing on the importance of the fort in Malta's history. All archaeological investigations have been concluded. The major tender for restoration works has been awarded and works

have commenced, while the other major tender for finishes and interpretation is being adjudicated. This project is also complemented by national funds: the restoration of the main gate and the entrance ramp has been concluded, while the reconstruction of the sally port is nearly completed.

ERDF 244 **Fort St Elmo Heritage Experience** (c. €15m), includes the restoration of the enceinte and Upper Fort St Elmo as a cultural attraction, including the hosting of the current National War Museum and its transformation into a Military History Museum. This project is being led by the Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation in partnership with HM. All tenders have been published and works are well underway. All cultural heritage items in the Fort have been salvaged. Inauguration is earmarked for the last quarter of 2014.

The EAFRD M323/12 (REBACA – Rehabilitation of the Roman Baths and Christian Catacombs, c. €6m), includes the required conservation and rehabilitation works so that the **Ghajn Tuffieha Roman Baths and Ta' Bistra Catacombs** (Mosta) can be made accessible to the general public. The required technical studies are being concluded, while the works tenders have been published. The project is in delay due to a number of factors.

The EEA (Norwegian Funds) Financial Mechanism 2009-14 New Environmental Management System project for the **Hal Saflieni Hypogeum** (c. €900,000) has also been officially confirmed. Works are underway for the drafting and publication of the required tenders.

HM also participated in the following **EU projects**:

LITHOS: INTERREG Italia-Malta (€269,000) – to establish an international centre for research with expertise in the field of stereotomy and stone construction in Sicily and Malta. The project was concluded successfully with an exhibition at the Malta Maritime Museum and the publication of *The Art and Craft of Masonry Construction: Design, Stereotomy, Conservation* (ed. J. Grech).

REMASI: INTERREG Italia-Malta (€115,600) – to increase knowledge and develop measures of environmental conservation on the protection of biodiversity in nature reserves in Sicily and Malta. The project, to be concluded with a conference and publication, is in its final phase.

ARCHAEOTUR: INTERREG Italia-Malta (c. €157,000) including conservation and technical studies so that the St Augustine's Catacombs (Rabat) and Ta' Bistra Catacombs (Mosta) are made accessible to the general public. The project has been concluded and is due for inauguration in 2014.

CARARE: (c. €90,000) – to increase the quantity and quality of digital content available to users of Europeana by developing services that improve interoperability of this network's existing digital content for heritage sites and related objects, focusing especially on 3D and virtual reality models. The project has been successfully concluded.

FRAGSUS: On 1 May the project FRAGSUS, *Fragility and Sustainability in restricted island environments: Adaptation, cultural change and collapse in prehistory*, was launched. This collaborative project is being led by HM, SCH, UOM, University of Cambridge and Queen's University Belfast. It is funded through FP7 and the European

Research Council and shall address research into the social and economic aspects of Malta's prehistory. The project will be completed in 2018 and investigations will include field-walking, environmental sampling, archaeological excavations, remote sensing surveys and analyses of skeletal remains among others. Fieldwork started in September and will be followed by a project meeting in January where participants will plan fieldwork for 2014.

Exhibitions and Events

Heritage Malta organised or participated in the following major exhibitions:

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly 'Mattia Preti: Faith and Humanity', a researched exhibition of Preti's masterpieces on the 400th anniversary from the artists' birth, first held at the Museo Civico of Taverna, Calabria from 24 February to 21 April, and subsequently at the Grandmasters Palace in Valletta from 3 May to 7 July. The exhibition, the major cultural event of the year, was accompanied by specific lectures, gallery talks, education programmes, and two publications: *Mattia Preti: Beyond the Self-Portrait* (Sandro Debono) and the exhibition catalogue *Mattia Preti: Faith and Humanity* (ed. Sandro Debono and Giuseppe Valentino). HM also assisted other institutions at Zurrieq and Xewkija to set up other minor exhibitions to celebrate the artist.

'Back to Life: Latest Conservation Projects by HM' displayed a number of artefacts recently conserved by HM's conservation laboratories, and was held at HM's Showcase from 28 January to 23 February to celebrate the tenth anniversary of HM.

'Temple and Tomb: Prehistoric Malta 3600–2500 BC' was the first ever exhibition on Malta's prehistory held in the US. It included a considerable number of artefacts, and was organised by the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University, between 21 March and 7 July. It was accompanied by an exhibition catalogue.

'Henry Mayo Bateman (1887-1970): The Man Who ... Loved Gozo', featuring paintings, cartoons and other memorabilia of this foremost British cartoonist from the National Collection and private collections, at the Exhibition Hall of the Ministry for Gozo from 12 April to 2 June. The exhibition was also accompanied by a catalogue *Henry Mayo Bateman (1887-1970): The Man Who ... Loved Gozo* (ed. Bernadine Scicluna).

'Kaleidoscope: Contemporary Art from EU Member States' included a selection of contemporary art works organised in collaboration with embassies and cultural organisations throughout Europe at the Farmleigh Gallery, Dublin, Ireland, from 1 May to 30 June.

'Jewellery through the Times' was a highly successful fashion show and exhibition of replica prehistoric jewellery held at the Auto Sales Limited Showroom, Lija on 7 May. The scientifically reconstructed prehistoric face of a Maltese inhabitant of the Ggantija phase was also launched on this occasion.

'The Bailli de Suffren and the Knights of the Order of Malta' was organised in collaboration with the Municipality of Saint Tropez and the Embassy of Malta in France, and displayed six suits of armour from the Palace Armoury at Saint Tropez, from 9 to 20 September.

'*Mixja ta' Poplu*' was held at the basement of Auberge de Castile from 5 October to 5 November and accompanied the visitors on a journey along the milestones of Malta's recent political history.

'*Graffiti Marittimi Maltin*', which displays a collection of maritime graffiti found on prehistoric megaliths, medieval prisons and modern buildings, was inaugurated at the MMM on 28 November.

Apart from the above, during the year under review HM organised, participated in or hosted around two hundred cultural events, including lectures, heritage trails, seminars, temporary exhibitions, re-enactments, and others. Worthy of mention are the Life at Sea festival at the Malta Maritime Museum, and HM's active participation in the *Notte Bianca*, *Birgufest*, *Notte Gozitana*, *Ziguzajg* and the Book Fair. All the museums and sites managed by HM were open free of charge to the public during an open day at least once throughout the year. Foremost among these open days was that of 21 April, when all museums and sites were open at one go.

Collections, Conservation and Education

Hundreds of natural specimens and cultural heritage items were acquired for the National Collection during this year, while the cataloguing of artefacts into MUSES, the database developed by the Agency, continued.

The Conservation Departments worked on the conservation and restoration of hundreds of artefacts from the National Collection, including metal, glass and stone objects, wood, textiles, paintings, books and paper. Worthy of mention are paintings of Erardi for San Anton Palace, paintings of Mattia Preti displayed in international exhibition on the artist, and ongoing work on historic photographic glass plates at the Fototeka of the National Museum of Archaeology. We also actively participated in the Palace Regeneration Project by restoring a number of paintings of the National Collection displayed in the Palace corridors. The Agency also organised a Research Seminar at the Aula Magna of the Old University in September, during which the latest research projects undertaken by HM's professional staff was presented to the public.

We were also very active on the education front through the production of specific education programmes and work sheets, and by the organisation of a series of activities including hands-on sessions, drama representations and treasure hunts for school children, and others attending *Skolasajf* and Culture Card holders. We also cooperated with the Ministry of Education in other initiatives such as the KREATTIV projects, the organisation of in-service courses for teachers, and career orientation visits in collaboration with MCAST and the Career Guidance Unit.

Heritage Malta official statistics – 2013

Site/Museum	Paying Visitors
Ghar Dalam Cave & Museum	37,384
Hagar Qim Temples	110,939
Hal Saflieni Hypogeum	28,330
Inquisitor's Palace	35,153
Mnajdra Temples	78,411
Malta Maritime Museum	21,903
Domvs Romana	29,468
National Museum of Archaeology	66,966
National Museum of Fine Arts	18,981
National Museum of Natural History	16,102
National War Museum	53,385
Palace Armoury	91,402
St Paul's Catacombs	44,717
Palace State Rooms	141,051
Tarxien Temples	79,603
Folklore Museum	8,071
Ggantija Temples	173,997
Gozo Museum of Archaeology	11,992
Gozo Nature Museum	4,781
Ta' Kola Windmill	16,970
Gozo Old Prisons	12,882
San Pawl Milqi	142
Ta' Hagraat Temples	354
Skorba Temples	193
Sub total	1,083, 189
Free admissions	91,017
GRAND TOTAL	1,174,206