



**REPORTS**  
on the working of  
**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**  
covering periods between  
**1st April 1974**  
and  
**13th August 1975**

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## Museum

(Period covered:

1st April, 1974 to 31st March, 1975)

For the second year in succession the Department brought to a successful conclusion a major project with the completion and inauguration of the National Museum of Fine Arts in the former Admiralty House, South Street, Valletta. While pooling resources for some time to work on this project, all three Sections of the Department carried on with their respective activities in the fields of archaeology, the fine arts and natural history.

2. Mr Tancred C. Gouder, Assistant Curator of Archaeology was awarded an Italian Government scholarship and started a two-year course in Roman archaeology at the University of Rome on November 5, 1974. In his absence, the running of the Archaeological Section was taken over by the Director.

3. The remains of a Roman country house in the grounds of the Girls' Secondary School, Żejtun were further investigated and much useful information gleaned on its general layout and dating. During the campaign, the fourth on the site, volunteer assistance was forthcoming from a group of Maltese and foreign students attending the Summer School of English.

4. Compared with previous years, the casual yield of rock-cut tombs was extremely poor, although several reports of such discoveries were promptly investigated in every case but found to be unproductive. The only complete set of pottery items was obtained from a burial at *Ta' Xikluna* in the limits of Tarxien.

5. A considerable amount of Bronze Age pottery was recovered by a rock-climbing party under Mr Tony Lautier of Sliema from a cave known as *Għar ir-Riħ* on the sea-cliffs between *Il-Mara* and *Għar Hasan*. The operation was authorised and supervised by the Department.

6. A water cistern measuring approximately 2.5m x 3m on plan and standing in the way of the current extension to the housing scheme at Santa Luċija was surveyed and measured at the suggestion of the Public Works Department. Due to the friable nature of the rock in the locality, it was lined for the greater part of its depth with massive dressed blocks; a thick central column and two horizontal members of similar section supported a roof of over-size stone slabs. The type of construction suggested a Roman date at the latest.

7. The Hon. Miss A. Barbara, M.P., Minister of Education and Culture officially opened the National Museum of Fine Arts on May 7, 1974. The new museum is housed in the former Admiralty House in South Street, Valletta which had been restored and adapted for the purpose. It contains, in addition to the works of art and historical items previously exhibited at the Auberge de Provence in Kingsway, important material from the Department's collections and new accessions for which no space was available in the past at the latter premises. The display in it has been so designed as to cover the whole range of artistic activity in Malta and elsewhere from the 15th century down to modern times, with due emphasis on those artists and periods in which the national collections are particularly rich, together with a presentation on the Knights of St John amounting, in effect, to a history of the chivalrous Order through original material.

8. The organisation of temporary exhibitions at the venues available to the Department continued throughout the year under review, with the following events being successfully catered for:

### National Museum

(from 7.5.1974, National Museum of Archaeology)

Title or nature of exhibition	Exhibitor or organiser
Sculpture & paintings	Joseph Kalleja
Paintings ... ..	Michael Lewis
Paintings ... ..	LIL Group, Baden-Baden, West Germany
Paintings ... ..	Atelier '56
Paintings ... ..	Esprit Barthelet
Archaeological Discoveries in the New China ... ..	Embassy of the People's Republic of China
Laurent Ropa - a commemorative exhibition ... ..	"Klabb Kotba Maltin"/ Department of French, University of Malta

### National Museum of Fine Arts

Anthony Inglott — a commemorative exhibition ... ..	Museum Department using various loans
American Prints ... ..	United States Information Services
Paintings ... ..	Luciano Micallef
Graphics in multiples	Richard Smith
Woodcuts by Lucas Cranach ... ..	Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

### Drill Hall, Fort St Elmo

Relics of World Wars I and II ... ..	Museum Department/ War Museum Association
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9. The National Museum of Natural History at Mdina continued to show increasing popularity with visitors, as shown by the admission statistics. Improvements were made in the bird display thanks to new or better specimens from the large local collection acquired the previous year and from normal purchases. The long and patient work of cleaning and preliminary cataloguing of the mineral collection was completed and the specimens were housed in plastic furniture, in preparation to putting the bulk of the collection on display during the financial year 1975-76.

10. From amongst the several other collections cared for by the Natural History Section, those consisting of land and sea shells, insects,

fossils, and wild animals — the latter formerly belonging to the Argotti Gardens, University of Malta — were given the required attention. In the last case, preparatory work on a range of purpose-made showcases to exhibit the stuffed specimens in their natural habitat was begun in a large hall, later to be added to the existing public display areas of the Museum.

F. S. MALLIA  
Director of Museum

2nd May, 1975.

**Comparative Statement of Visitors admitted to Museums and Monuments during the Financial Years 1973-74 and 1974-75**

Place	1973-74		1974-75	
	On Payment	Free	On Payment	Free
National Museum of Archaeology ... ..	17,715	4,195	21,834	2,369
National Museum of Fine Arts ... ..	—	—	8,614	2,844
Palace Armoury ... ..	26,135	11,361	36,202	13,121*
Museum of Roman Antiquities ... ..	15,992	7,870	21,967	6,487
St Paul's Catacombs ... ..	28,600	5,852	37,914	3,995
National Museum of Natural History ...	6,688	6,645	14,788	10,773
Hal Saflieni Hypogeum ... ..	20,990	6,414	24,899	6,510
Tarixen Temples ... ..	13,408	11,677	18,759	8,199
Għar Dalam Cave and Museum ... ..	12,728	5,885	14,671	4,596
Inquisitor's Palace, Vittoriosa ... ..	2,306	375	2,982	712
Museum, Gozo ... ..	7,602	970	7,949	1,578
Ggantija, Gozo ... ..	33,293	1,452	42,040	2,121
General Day Tickets ... ..	77,689	—	92,260	—
<b>Total: ...</b>	<b>263,146</b>	<b>62,696</b>	<b>344,879</b>	<b>63,305</b>
<b>Total admission fees collected ...</b>	<b>£M16,133.95,0</b>		<b>£M21,467.22,5</b>	

\* Inclusive of 6,743 visitors admitted during the 8th September Exhibition.