

Secretary General's Report

For the Year 2014

Members, volunteers, members of the press, I welcome you to the 2015 Annual General Meeting of *Din l-Art Helwa*. This year *Din l-Art Helwa* celebrates its 50th Anniversary. Events are in full swing organised by the 50th Anniversary Committee ably chaired by Council Member Albert Mamo and a special 50th logo has been designed for *Din l-Art Helwa*. We thank graphic designer Reno Psaila for his work.

COURTESY VISITS AND CORPORATE MATTERS

Always mindful of our lobbying mission for heritage and environmental protection our Executive President, Simone Mizzi, Secretary General George Camilleri, Treasurer Martin Scicluna and Vice President Lucio Mule Stagno, spent many months in 2013 establishing collaborative relationship with the newly elected ministries. Following the 2014 Cabinet reshuffle, this exercise was again repeated. On 16 April *Din l-Art Helwa* officials visited the Minister for Planning together with Dr Philip Manduca and Council Member Dr Petra Caruana Dingli. Courtesy visits were made to the new Minister of Culture Dr Owen Bonnici (28 May), to the Permanent Secretary for Energy (6 August) to the Ministry of Tourism (17 September). National issues on heritage and environment protection were discussed as well as matters arising from our Guardianship deeds. On 17 June, Simone Mizzi visited the Finance Ministry Permanent Secretary, Mr Alfred Camilleri who is a keen follower of the cultural sector.

On the 26 February 2014 Council paid HE Dr George Abela, President of Malta a farewell visit on his retirement while on the 16 May we visited the incoming President, Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca. Both are most supportive of *Din l-Art Helwa*.

On the 10 August Her Excellency visited Santa Maria Tower and was greeted by Tower volunteers and our EP, Simone Mizzi.

On the 29 May Simone Mizzi on behalf of *Din l-Art Helwa* collected the *Ġieħ iż-Żurrieq* award for 50 years of dedication to *Żurrieq* heritage as did Anthony Mangion, custodian of the *Hal Millieri* Chapel. The *Żurrieq* community gave *Din l-Art Helwa* an ovation when HE the President presented the two awards.

Din l-Art Helwa became a founder member of PHROM, the Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta, Malta's first and only national coalition of NGOs working in the area of human rights, of which environmental protection is now a pillar.

PEOPLE

Our Executive President Simone Mizzi sits regularly on the re-energised Committee of Guarantee, lobbying for heritage on this influential cultural entity. She contributed to the Deloitte Business Breakfast organised by the Ministry of Culture submitting *Din l-Art Helwa* ideas for fiscal incentives to the cultural sector. Simone Mizzi also presented *Din l-Art Helwa* achievements to the National Cultural Forum on 23 January 2015 and has established relations with the Boards of V18 and the Valletta and Floriana rehabilitation committees.

Simone continues to represent *Din l-Art Helwa* at Europa Nostra and remains a jury member of its prestigious Dedicated Service to Heritage Award. She sits on the Boards of the MIA Foundation, the HSBC Malta Foundation and on the Committee Guardian for Future Generations

Lucio Mule Stagno continues to liaise with the International National Trusts Organisation. *Din l-Art Helwa* has renewed its reciprocal arrangements with the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Petra Caruana Dingli was elected ENGO representative on the MCESD Voluntary Sector Committee for the environmental protection category and attends its meetings

Martin Galea has relinquished his seat on *Din l-Art Helwa* council after 30 years of service as youth member, Treasurer, Secretary

General and Executive President. *Din l-Art Helwa* thanks Martin for his sterling contribution to the organisation over the years.

In July our Office Manager Rosemarie Stagno Navarra left *Din l-Art Helwa* to enjoy her retirement. We thank her for her support and for her responsible management of our accounts and for her management of volunteer recruitment and their roster. We welcome Rosanne Zerafa who has now replaced RSN in this important role. In July Mario Sciberras replaced Amy Sciberras as Custodian at Victory Church.

SPONSORSHIPS AND RESTORATION

This year was rewarding in terms of financial support due to the tireless efforts of the fundraising team, Martin Scicluna, Lucio Mule Stagno, Philip Mercieca and our Executive President. The list of sponsorships hereunder traces the numerous ongoing restoration projects and fundraising activities.

Din l-Art Helwa was awarded €120,000 from the MIA Foundation for the *Wied iż-Żurrieq* Tower restoration which was launched with a clean up by volunteers in September.

Another generous contribution of €40,000 came from the Alfred Mizzi Foundation towards the altars and niches at Victory church.

€20,000 came from the Malta Industrial Parks for the restoration of our Headquarters corner facades and funds for the restoration of Giuseppe Mantella Restauri of the Mattia Preti St Roque from MSV Life and David Curmi with proceeds from his March Solo Exhibition.

Further sponsorship from the HSBC Malta Foundation will complete the Erardi Vault at Victory Church while PWC's generous annual contribution permits ongoing work on its perimeter murals and artifacts.

Medserv, GlobeGround, GVC and the Malta Stock Exchange have contributed to the Victory Church Museum through the efforts of our Treasurer Martin Scicluna and Secretary General George Camilleri.

The ADRC Trust sponsored the Franciso Bernier concert at *Bir Miftuħ* while Life Member Heribert Grunert underwrote the Harp Concert at Villa Arrigo in November.

The Francis Miller Memorial Fund has sponsored the wonderful new publication by Stanley Farrugia Randon, *Din l-Art Helwa, Heritage Saved 1965 – 2015*.

Corporate memberships remain vital to our mission and have been received from Central Bank, BOV, MFSA, Malta Stock Exchange, APS Bank, Charles Darmanin, Deutsche Bank, Finance Malta, Globe Ground Malta, KPMG, Island Hotels, MSV Life, Shireburn, Sparkasse Bank, VJ Salomone, Middlesea Insurance. Other Victory Church supporters must be recognised: Vodafone, P Cutajar and Co, the Strickland Foundation, Farsons Foundation, the Corinthia Group and MEPA's UIPP fund.

Through our efforts the Ministry of Tourism granted another €2500 towards floodlighting Comino Tower while Stanley Farrugia Randon obtained €15,000 also from the MTA for the challenging restoration of the damaged statue of St Paul.

On the 23rd May the MTA ERDF grant of €100,000 was presented by Minister of Tourism Dr Edward Zammit Lewis to launch the major restoration of Wignacourt Tower while on the 30 September the ERDF Sustainable Tourism Grant establishing a Visitor Trail at Victory Church was concluded. Many thanks are due to all involved, in particular to Albert Calleja, Rosemarie Stagno Navarra for successfully navigating through the EU's daunting bureaucratic jungle.

The MFSA sponsorship for Red Tower will allow *Din l-Art Helwa* to restore its East Wall in a 25K operation while the ADRC Trust confirmed it will fund an audio guide system there.

The Delimara Lighthouse project has been completed and its canopy, Fresnel lens and lightning protector reinstated through the

efforts of Stanley Farrugia Randon and Josie Ellul Mercer. Its interior decor was carried out by Maria Grazia Cassar. We have applied for a Tourism licence to rent its two apartments to visitors. We thank GasanMamo Insurance for making this project possible

The work of our Restoration Team led by Josie Ellul Mercer and Stanley Farrugia Randon is invaluable to keep the heritage sites entrusted to *Din I-Art Helwa* in top condition while Carolyn Clements leads the Gozo and Comino team for the presentation and upkeep of the sites there.

HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

This has been a very busy year for all involved in Heritage and Environment Protection and 2015 is set to be even busier.

Between Feb and March, Simone Mizzi and George Camilleri attended several meetings with the Environment and Development Parliamentary Committee to lobby against the new Rural Policy Guidelines in the absence of a Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development. During the April 16 visit to the new Parliamentary Secretary for Planning Dr Michael Falzon, Council members and Dr Philip Manduca presented a letter stating the *Din I-Art Helwa* position on the proposed SPED.

Between March and May 2014, the HEP team focused mainly on the issue of the gas storage tanker at Delimara, the MEPA demerger, various planning policies and the draft Strategic Plan issued by government for consultation.

In March, the Coalition for the Abolition of Spring Hunting of which *Din I-Art Helwa* forms part presented 41494 signed petitions to the Electoral Commission to force an abrogative referendum to repeal the derogation allowing spring hunting. After verification, the petition was presented to the Constitutional Court, which in January 2015 confirmed the legality of the referendum This will take place on 11 April. The Spring Hunting Out (SH..out) campaign was launched at St James Cavalier and Simone Mizzi, George Camilleri, Pat Salomone, and Maria Grazia Cassar, together with youth leader Tara Cassar attended. *Din I-Art Helwa* is involved in campaign activities and urges all members to vote NO on the 11 April.

On June 27 2014 a meeting was held with the Malta Developers Association to exchange views, attended by Alan Deidun, Simone Mizzi, Martin Galea, George Camilleri and Petra Caruana Dingli.

In October Architects Alberto Miceli Farrugia and Joanna Spiteri Staines attended the University Seminar on new proposals to the current planning process on behalf of *Din I-Art Helwa*.

Din I-Art Helwa successfully applied to the EEA Grants NGO Programme for the Save the Countryside Facebook campaign which was launched to a packed audience on Nov 7 at our HQ. The campaign envisages many initiatives, the first of which was the launch of the Facebook page which has been a great success with over 11000 'likes' to date and is managed by a STC team led by Petra Caruana Dingli and Joanna Spiteri Staines. A photographic competition, an online poll and a seminar at the University are also envisaged.

On the 31 October at a press conference at our HQ, the six past and current Presidents of *Din I-Art Helwa* announced their open letter to the Prime Minister expressing concerns at the current state of the environment and on government's planning policies. Adverts were also placed in leading newspapers. The initiative raised much awareness however the PM reiterated that the legacy of this government would be positive for the environment. Our Executive President took up on the PM's New Year's address expressing interest in dialogue with environmentalists. We await his invitation.

In December, Birdlife Malta, *Din I-Art Helwa*, *Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar* and Nature Trust Malta wrote a joint letter to the Prime Minister against the proposals to build three hotel complexes in an Out of Development Zone between Smart City and Marsascala and proposed to establish a protected area and Nature Park instead.

Din I-Art Helwa submitted comments to MEPA on the SPED document issued for public consultation in March, and on the Design Policy Guidelines in Feb 2015.

Joanna Spiteri Staines attended a meeting for ENGOs with a delegation from the EU Director General for the Environment in October to discuss infringements relating to implementation of EU

environmental law in Malta. She presented a letter expressing *Din I-Art Helwa's* concern that the government's decision not to formally update the Energy Policy deprived the public of an objective discussion on the type of gas infrastructure being introduced. Joanna Spiteri Staines sits on the Malta Transport Committee.

COMMUNICATION

Din I-Art Helwa continues to have huge presence in the media with the following articles and Press Releases many of which also appeared as blogs on our website. High-rise policy (20 June), Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (26 June), San Blas (30 June), White Rocks (6 July), Gozo Bridge (15 July), 'The environment is not a minority interest' – Petra Caruana Dingli (Malta Independent, 8 June), 'The Thin Edge of the Wedge' – Joanna Spiteri Staines (Times of Malta 21 June), Numerous Times of Malta Opinions and Talking Points were published - Short Path to Environmental Destruction, Champion of the Environment, In Search of Quality, Tweaking of Boundaries not Justified, In Search of Dialogue by Simone Mizzi, A City of Palaces built by Gentlemen, Is this scaremongering? , LNG Gas explosions do happen, 'Delimara risk report still withheld from public' by George Camilleri, More Foresight for Foreshore and Building on the Common Good by Stanley Farrugia Randon while Martin Galea wrote 'Quest to Save the Countryside'..

The letter 'SPED is invalid' was sent to the Planning Minister and MEPA Chairman in April and released to the press. Reactions were published on the Monti relocation, the MDA report and Amnesties from Simone Mizzi.

Interviews were published in The Malta Independent on the SPED with Petra Caruana Dingli, in the Times Property Supplement with Joanna Spiteri Staines on 'A centre for preservation' and in Sunday Times with Simone Mizzi on 'We are back to the 80s' about revision of ODZ boundaries.

Blogging on the *Din I-Art Helwa* website carried on apace by Petra Caruana Dingli, Joanna Spiteri Staines, Alan Deidun, Stanley Farrugia Randon and Conrad Thake. The blogs were 'Tweaking' the Countryside, Interview – Plan for the Environment, Building on common good, Sceptical reactions, The Dubaification of Malta, High-rise buildings and government offices, The thin edge of the wedge, The old houses at Spinola Bay, The environment is not a minority interest, Fireworks and Quotas, The 100 Objects exhibition, Yet another PR disaster by the MDA, The environment – the good, the bad and the ugly, Ta' Hagra, Of U-turns, justifications and cremation hype, Another rationalisation exercise?, Insomma, We need a strong LEO, Buildings in the countryside, The Historic Cores Paragraph, Atlantropa – when Malta would have ceased to exist, When to appeal?, It's just hot air at the end of the day, The SPED: two starters but no main course, More on Delimara, Beyond the buses, Hamlet goes to Delimara, More foresight for foreshore. Lucio Mule Stagno continues to run the *Din I-Art Helwa* Facebook Group which has reached 5000 members, and has put *Din I-Art Helwa* on Twitter.

Pat Salomone continues to keep the media constantly supplied with information about our many cultural events.

Din I-Art Helwa's presence on the internet is maintained thanks to the efforts of George Camilleri who administers the *Din I-Art Helwa* website and bulk emailing, Luciano Mule Stagno who runs the social network contributions to Facebook and Twitter, and to Petra Caruana Dingli who administers the Save the Countryside page.

PUBLICATIONS

A most prolific year for publications.

Maria Grazia Cassar published the '*Pocket Guide to Mattia Preti paintings in Malta*', with the support of the Small Initiatives Fund. Simone Mizzi and George Camilleri produced the DVD – The First Church of Valletta, a ten minute documentary on Victory Church while Patricia Salomone produced the Audio Guides also for Victory Church. Dr Alexander Welsh donated his '*Essays on Malta*' to *Din I-Art Helwa* on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary and Stanley Farrugia Randon published the fabulous book *Din I-Art Helwa, Heritage Saved, 1965 – 2015*. After three years of dedication by Stanley, this book covers the work of *Din I-Art Helwa* since its foundation. It is dedicated to Council

Members, past and present, and Future Generations and will surely grace many a coffee table for years to come.

EVENTS

On the 22 February a concert organised by Patricia Salomone was held at Sarria Church to celebrate the restoration of Preti's Sarria titular through the Shireburn sponsorship. On the 26 March after 37 years of requests from *Din l-Art Helwa*, the human remains of a woman known as CP10, taken away for forensic examination, was reburied in her original place of rest at *Hal Millieri* in a ceremony with *Din l-Art Helwa* officials, the *Żurriq* Parish Priest, and Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

On the 27 April the Msida Historic Garden Team organised their annual Spring Fete and their Christmas Fair on 6 Dec registering higher visitor numbers to assist with the maintenance of this historic site voted one of Europe's 5 Most Beautiful Cemeteries by National Geographic. Thanks go to the team led by Mary Aldred and Albert Calleja for their assiduous commitment.

Organised by Patricia Salomone on 30 May Janet Grech's exhibition "Bulwarks of Fortitude" was held at Wignacourt Tower, proceeds partly going towards *Din l-Art Helwa*.

Three successful *Bir Miftuħ* concerts were organised by Cettina Caruana Curran and Charles Gatt on the 23rd and 31st May and on the 6 June sponsored by the Embassy of France and the Alliance Francaise Malte Mediterranee, the Italian Embassy and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura and the ADRC Trust in collaboration with the Spanish Embassy.

Cettina and Charles must also be thanked for organising the 49th Anniversary Dinner at San Anton Gardens on the 27 June: under the patronage of HE the President of Malta. Treasurer Martin Scicluna engaged the support of the business community who took up several corporate tables making the evening more profitable.

On the 27 August a clavichord recital by John Irving organised by *Din l-Art Helwa* member George Debono was held at Victory Church

A delicious Al Fresco Dinner on the 18 September at Chev. Maurice Mizzi's garden was organized by Council Member Philip Mercieca and the Voto volunteers in a successful fundraising initiative heralding our 50th Anniversary.

On the 13 October the 50th anniversary team led by Albert Mamo with Patricia Salomone launched a grandiose show of art works entitled 'The Gran Soccorsor' at the Casino Maltese inaugurated by Ms Michelle Muscat. Thirty of Malta and Gozo's best known artists donated art works to help us raise funds for our ongoing commitments. These also make up the *Din l-Art Helwa* new Contemporary Art Collection that now graces the Judge Caruana Curran Hall tastefully set up by Pat Salomone and Maria Grazia Cassar.

On the 16 October, also at the Casino Maltese, Dott Sante Guido, art historian, lectured about artistic exchange between Italy and Malta.

The restoration of the third Mattia Preti painting - the San Roque - was launched on the 12 November and on the 21 November an elegant Autumn concert & dinner with a Harp & Piano Recital was organized by Cettina Caruana Curran and Charles Gatt at Villa Arrigo.

In December our Executive President Simone Mizzi organised a series of individual presentations to the Victory Church sponsors to show them work progress and ensure continuity of support, launching the basement cinema and presenting them with the new DVD.

On the 12 December: the X *Din l-Art Helwa* Architectural Heritage Awards, which grow in prestige each year, were announced by Maria Grazia Cassar, Chairperson of the Award Scheme panel of judges. Culture Minister Dr Owen Bonnici presented the awards and on the 18 December the *Din l-Art Helwa* volunteers' annual party was again held at our HQ.

On the 20 December, organised by Patricia Salomone, the Enkor Choir gave their annual concert at Victory Church to a packed church.

Our dense 50th Anniversary Calendar organised by the 50th Events Team continues to unfold.

On the 24 January, Environment Minister Leo Brincat was met by Council members who braved the inclement weather to inaugurate the 50th Anniversary Grove at the Majjistral Park. This was made possible by Middesea Insurance Plc/MSV Life Plc through the good offices of Martin Galea.

On the 21 February an inaugural 50th Anniversary Concert at Teatru Manoel commemorated the foundation of *Din l-Art Helwa* in the same theatre in July 1965. HSBC Malta Foundation and Teatru Manoel supported this prestigious event.

LECTURES

Since our last AGM, these lectures were held at the Judge Caruana Curran Hall. 'The Roman Baths at Ghajn Tuffieha' by David Cardona, 'The Grand Master presides over Strait Street' by Professor Peter Vassallo, 'Conservation Treatments undertaken at the Auvergne Chapel, St Johns' Co Cathedral' by Dottessa Daniela Murphy Corella, Dottore Simone Vettori and Dr Cynthia Degiorgio, 'Environmental Management in Malta' by Professor Louis Cassar, 'Underwater Archaeology' by Dr Timmy Gambin, 'Aspects of Ta' Braxia' by Janica Buhagiar, 'Discovering Medieval Malta' by Charlene Vella, 'Hidden aspects of Gozo' by Fr Joseph Bezzina, 'Malta's Magna Charta' by Dr Michael Frendo, '1954-2014 Sixty years of Archaeology in Malta' by Dr. David Trump. We thank all lecturers for supporting *Din l-Art Helwa* cultural programmes this year.

YOUTH SECTION

The Youth Section organized a cleanup at Qalet Marku with the participation of the Naxxar Local Council. In September Tara Cassar and our Youth Section, through a Youth in Action Grant scheme, hosted twenty two youths from Malta, France and Israel who learnt stone restoration techniques at the Garden of Rest. Council Members Maria Grazia Cassar, Ian Camilleri and Albert Calleja helped coordinate these activities. Other youths participated in another project at Coucy France on the invitation of our partners Union Rempart. On the 15th and 16th November Youth Members, conservators Amy Sciberras and Sarah Yeoman Gafa organised a very successful two day Restoration Workshop at Victory Church. The Ministry of Education sponsored the event. Dr Evarist Bartolo the Minister launched the workshop which was visited by 650 people.

IN CONCLUSION

Other valuable work is done which must be recognised. We thank Albert Calleja for the huge amount of work preparing the annual State Of The Heritage Report, Joe Busietta for registering Visitor and Volunteer statistics and keeping stock of our inventory, Prof George Camilleri who continues to organise our Archives, council member Joe Chetcuti who helps with the filing, Karen Galea and Rina Mamo who help out with the office work, Joe Azzopardi who runs the Vigilo for us and Judith Falzon for its proofreading.

On behalf of Council Members I would like to thank all our volunteers for the sterling work they put in. A special mention must be made of the great results from the Red Tower which has been consistently reporting increased income but a huge thank you is also due to all *Din l-Art Helwa* volunteers everywhere, who give up many hours of their personal time to maintain and keep the properties open for the public to enjoy. 35,000 voluntary hours were registered including those of the Executive Team and Council who are permanently on the go with activities, contractors to chase, sponsors to visit, articles and releases to write, research to do, numerous meetings to attend, while our hard working permanent staff Rosanne Zerafa and Anne Marie Navarro help us keep the show on the road. When quantified, these volunteer hours amount to a hefty contribution to Malta's economy of nearly half a million Euros. One person must be thanked as he will not be here next year, and that is our loyal handyman John Gafa who retires in June. He will be sadly missed. Thank you John.

AN APPEAL - VOTE NO

Finally on behalf of *Din l-Art Helwa* I would like to repeat our appeal to all environmentalists to support the abolishment of Spring hunting by voting NO at the forthcoming referendum.

Din I-Art Helwa

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2014

	2014 €	2013 €
Fixed Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	<u>45,182</u>	<u>51,463</u>
Current Assets		
Inventories	29,035	30,769
Trade and Other Receivables	36,621	104,923
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>126,073</u>	<u>45,247</u>
	191,729	180,939
Total Assets	<u><u>236,911</u></u>	<u><u>232,402</u></u>
Accumulated Funds and Liabilities		
Income and Expenditure Account	<u>122,053</u>	<u>69,986</u>
Current Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	88,459	153,608
Bank Overdraft	0	8,808
Bank Loan	<u>26,399</u>	<u>0</u>
	114,858	162,416
Total Accumulated Fund and Liabilities	<u><u>236,911</u></u>	<u><u>232,402</u></u>

Income Statement for Year Ended 31st December 2014

	2014 €	2013 €
Income	483,955	535,564
Direct Expenditure	<u>-357,068</u>	<u>-459,946</u>
Funds available for recurrent expenditure	126,887	75,618
Administration expenses	-74,941	-74,887
Surplus/(Deficit) on recurrent expenditure before interest	<u>51,946</u>	<u>731</u>
Finance Income	120	589
Surplus/(Deficit) for Financial Year	<u>52,066</u>	<u>1,320</u>
Accumulated fund brought forward	69,987	68,667
Accumulated Fund carried forward	<u><u>122,053</u></u>	<u><u>69,987</u></u>

When stating their opinion, our auditors, Vincent Curmi and Associates confirm that the financial statements give a true and fair view of *Din I-Art Helwa's* financial position as of 31st December 2014, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with General Accounting Principles for Smaller Entities.

Vincent Curmi and Associates have intimated their willingness to continue in office, which appointment is being recommended to the AGM.