

Pinto's Clock to be restored



The 18th century clock at the President's Palace in Valletta, which was built during the reign of Grandmaster Manoel Pinto, has been at a standstill for several months. Photo: Jason Borg.

A fascinating 18th century clock situated at the President's Palace, in Valletta, with four dials showing the time, day, month and phases of the moon, will be restored after being at a standstill for several months to the disappointment of tourists.

Known as Pinto's Clock, it is located in one of the courtyards of the Valletta palace close to the office of the Attorney General, an area that is open to tourists who often snap photos of the clock.

It is said to be the work of Maltese clockmaker Gaetano Vella and built in 1745 during the reign of Grandmaster Manoel Pinto. It marks the hours by bronze effigies of Moorish slaves wielding sledge-hammers. But the Moors have been at a standstill for several months now as the clock suffered damage to the mechanism, Heritage Malta's senior curator for art and palaces, Sandro Debono, said. He explained that Heritage Malta and the Valletta Rehabilitation Project were working together on the restoration project and will be launching a call for tenders in the coming weeks.

The restoration would take place in three phases starting from the building itself, moving on to the Moorish figures and the bells and ending with the mechanism.

Works are planned to start in the next few months but this would depend on the outcome of the tendering process, said Mr Debono.