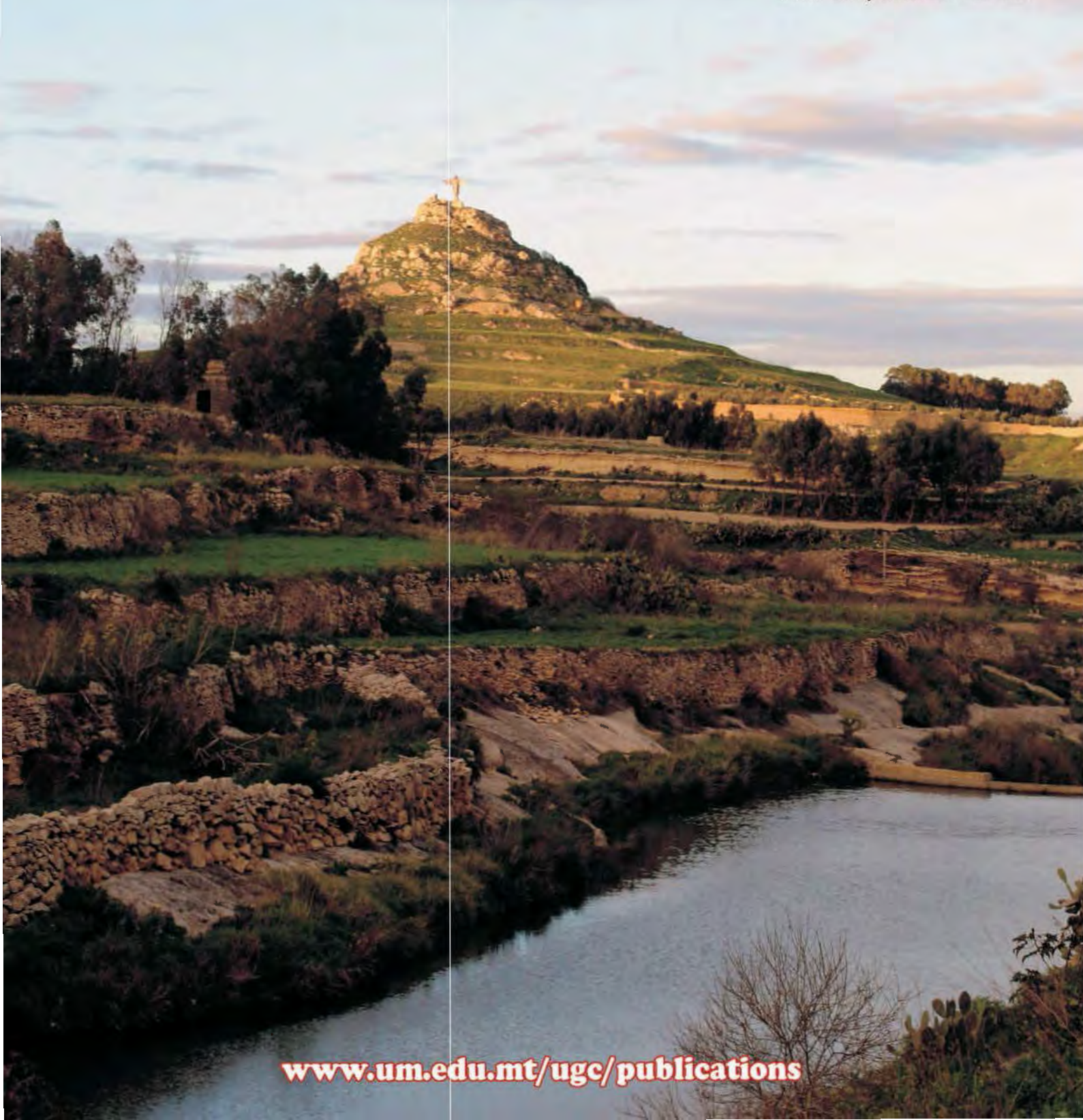


THE

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Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial: The Future Face of Gozo	2
A Tale of Two Frogs Patrick Schembri	3
Crime Mapping: A Gozitan Scenario Using the RISC Methodology Saviour Formosa	8
The Treasures at the NAG – the National Archives Gozo Joseph Bezzina	13
A Green Island in the Sun Roderick Pace	17
Nadur and its Countryside Mario Saliba	21
<i>Il-Campus</i> Anton Tabone	27
The Lace Programme at the Gozo Campus Consiglia Azzopardi	30
The First EU funded UOM course in Gozo Caroline Camilleri Rolls	33
Recent Activities at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus Joseph Calleja	35

The Gozo Observer

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Editorial:

The Future Face of Gozo

The everlasting battle continues between development, usually spearheaded by business interests, and conservation, the domain of those who believe that enough is enough and that continued development spells disaster for the future of Gozo.

On the one hand we have over the past few months seen applications to MEPA for a review of the Gozo and Comino development plan. This is obviously an over-due plan to upgrade facilities in Gozo, including improvement of facilities at schools, the extension of the Gozo General Hospital area and the enhancement of 'open vibrant public spaces'.

On the other hand we see the weak side of MEPA which seems at times to be powerless to reverse abuses and enforce a strict plan of development. The case in point is that at Dwejra. It was to be hoped that following the launching of the much-vaunted project to set up 'the first coastal nature reserve in Malta' at Dwejra in 2004 at a cost of €324,708, we would see that proper protection would be afforded to this place with its unique ecological, geomorphologic, palaeontological and archeological features.

Dwejra has over several generations been such a neglected site that anyone felt they had the power to do whatever they liked on their tiny plot of land which they owned and treasured. Buildings have gone up and changed from boathouses to summer residences. The pebbly beach has been transformed into a slippery concrete platform, with several mini-jetties erected for the occasional launch of boats. The authorities of the time did not just turn a blind eye: they simply excised this bit of geography out of their consciousness.

Then MEPA came into the picture with great plans to restore the status quo. Years have passed and the result is....what? Our understanding is that some owners have been asked to pay a fine. Others have been asked to remove the top floor. But nothing has been done to repair the major damage done over the years.

Related also is the largely unregulated traffic that now has engulfed and continues to endanger this tiny oasis called the Inland Sea. The quality of the water has deteriorated to a degree where swimming has become a health hazard from contamination from the never-ending stream of boats that take tourists out to the open sea. Even such a simple measure as replacing oil by electrical or even manual power has proved too difficult a measure to adopt.

But the most glaring example of disgraceful inactivity has been the saga relating to the 'information centre' cum restaurant projected for the site. A two-story concrete skeleton has defaced the Dwejra area for the last couple of years, with what appears to be a deadlock between the responsible authorities and the builders. If we need an information centre in the area, do we need it to be of such gargantuan proportions? If we need a restaurant of such a size, does it have to be in the most prominent position overlooking the Inland Sea? Are the authorities completely powerless to overcome the vested interests?

If this is a mirror of things to come, then Gozo is in for a very rough time. Conservation has become debased currency and replaced by a dangerous drive to maximise profits at the cost of our inheritance.

Maurice Cauchi



A Tale of Two Frogs

PATRICK J. SCHEMBRI

Introduction

Frogs belong to that class of vertebrates (animals with backbones) known as the Amphibia, which in the main are semi-aquatic in that the eggs and larvae (known as tadpoles) develop in water, or at least in moist environments, although some species have managed to adapt to live in arid habitats. The frogs of the title are the only two species that are presently found living in the wild in the Maltese Islands: the Painted Frog (scientifically *Discoglossus pictus*) and Bedriaga's Frog (scientifically *Rana bedriagae* also known as *Pelophylax bedriagae*). The Painted Frog is a true native and semi-fossilized bones of this species have been found in the superficial deposits at Ghar Dalam (Hunt & Schembri, 1999), however, Bedriaga's Frog is a recent arrival that seems to have only managed to establish a breeding population, in Gozo, sometime in the late 1990s – and therein lies the tale.

The Painted Frog

Globally, the native range of the Painted Frog is Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily and Malta, which is quite restricted. The distribution is actually more limited because the Northwest African populations of the species present morphological and genetic differences from the Maltese and Sicilian populations to an extent that these two groups of populations are considered separate races (subspecies) and have been named *Discoglossus pictus auritus* (Northwest Africa¹) and *Discoglossus pictus pictus* (Sicily and Malta) (Lanza et al., 1986). The Painted Frog that lives in the Maltese Islands is therefore what is called a Siculo-Maltese endemic, that is, this race is only found in Sicily and the Maltese Islands and nowhere else in the world.

The Painted Frog, being a true native of the central Mediterranean, is highly adapted to live in the



The Painted Frog, *Discoglossus pictus pictus*, the only native amphibian in the Maltese Islands. [Photo credit: P.J. Schembri].

¹ Although it has been introduced to parts of southern France and northeast Spain

semi-arid Maltese environment, where it manages to thrive in spite of a dearth of freshwater that it requires to complete its life-cycle. In the Maltese Islands it occurs wherever there is water: in rainwater pools that form on rocky ground, in ponds and reservoirs, and along watercourses; however, it is most abundant where there is a plentiful supply of freshwater for most of the year and such places are key breeding grounds that serve to regenerate populations in other areas where water is less abundant (Baldacchino & Schembri, 2002). Populations living in suboptimal environments are likely to go extinct should environmental conditions change for the worse, for example, during exceptionally dry years when the water supply might dry up; when conditions become favourable again, these marginal habitats are re-colonized by frogs that have survived in more optimal habitats.

Adaptations

If water is permanently present, the frog is active all the year, however, a key adaptation of the species is the ability to survive the arid summer months by aestivating (that is, the frogs enter a state of quiescence and remain dormant as long as dry conditions prevail). The animals have a remarkable capacity to detect water and emergence from hiding places is triggered by rain and occurs within hours of wetting.

The Painted Frog breeds whenever water is available, usually during the wet season, but also in the dry season in habitats with permanently available water. It is able to lay its eggs in even very small bodies of water but most perish if the water dries up too soon. For this reason, places with abundant water are particularly important since here the animal is able to complete its life cycle to replenish the population. Female frogs lay up to 500 eggs per clutch in a single layer on the bottom and the eggs hatch within 24 hours of laying, while development takes on average six weeks (depending on temperature and population density), which is very rapid and is yet another adaptation for coping with transiently available water (Sammut & Schembri, 1991).

Conservation Status

The *Red Data Book for the Maltese Islands* (Schembri & Sultana, 1989) lists the local populations of *Discoglossus pictus pictus* as 'Vulnerable'. This 'vulnerable' designation is according to the IUCN threat status classification that was current at the time of publication of the *Red Data Book for the Maltese Islands*. The IUCN has since replaced the old threat status categories by a completely new set (2001). The status of the local populations of the Painted Frog using the new IUCN criteria has not yet been evaluated, however, in a recently published report², the Malta Environment and Planning Authority lists local populations of *Discoglossus pictus pictus* as "inadequate and deteriorating".

The local populations of the Painted Frog have been legally protected since 1993 (Legal Notice 49 of 1993). Presently they are protected by virtue of being listed in Schedule V (Animal and plant species of Community interest in need of strict protection) of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2006 (Legal Notice 311 of 2006). These regulations transpose the requirements of the European Union's 'Habitats Directive' to local legislation. The 'Habitats Directive' is the European Union's Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. *Discoglossus pictus* is listed in Annex IV (Animal and plant species of Community interest in need of strict protection). Apart from this, *Discoglossus pictus* is listed in Appendix II of the Bern Convention. The Bern Convention is the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats; Appendix II lists strictly protected fauna species and the Convention prohibits the deliberate capture, the destruction of breeding or resting sites, the deliberate destruction or taking of eggs and the deliberate killing of, and trade in, these species.

All endemic species in the Maltese Islands are protected species in terms of Regulation 26 of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2006 and therefore cannot be deliberately picked, collected, cut, uprooted, destroyed, pursued, taken, damaged, captured, or

Sub-Report 8 on 'Biodiversity' of the 'The Environment Report 2008' [<http://www.mepa.org.mt/file.aspx?f=4580> last accessed 02 May 2010]



Tadpoles of the Painted Frog, *Discoglossus pictus pictus*. [Photo credit: Jacqueline Galea].

killed. Note that as defined by these regulations, ‘endemic’ refers not only to those species that occur solely within the Maltese archipelago, but includes all species whose native distribution range is limited to the Central Mediterranean region where ‘Central Mediterranean’ is defined to include Central and Southern Italy (all Italian territory south of Florence), Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily and circum-Sicilian islands (including Pantelleria and the Pelagian Islands), the Maltese Islands, Tunisia and islands off Tunisia. Moreover, ‘endemic species’ also includes possibly endemic species whose taxonomic status or identity requires further analysis. Therefore, not only are local populations of the Painted Frog protected by being specifically listed in Schedule V of the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2006, but being a Siculo-Maltese endemic subspecies, *Discoglossus pictus pictus* is further protected by the provisions of Regulation 26 of these regulations.

A New Discovery

The Painted Frog is the only native living amphibian in the Maltese Islands; however, a few years ago, an amateur herpetologist, Arnold Sciberras, discovered a thriving population of a different species of frog

in the freshwater pool at Ta’ Sarraflu in Gozo. This discovery was made when he investigated strange calls that he heard from the pool area. These peculiar calls were first noticed in 2000 but were dismissed as those of a bird, since they were similar to the sounds that a number of water birds make. However, more careful study of these calls showed them to be different from those of birds and similar to those that some frogs make. Investigation of the water in the pool revealed the presence of the Painted Frog, but also of what appeared to be a large frog, however, these larger frogs proved very difficult to observe since they disappear very rapidly under water and into the dense reed beds in the pool at the slightest movement. It was only in 2004 and after a lot of work that the animal was photographed and its calls were recorded. It was immediately obvious that these large frogs were something different and the two of us then attempted to find out what was this species that had suddenly appeared in Gozo.

The Painted Frog belongs to the family Discoglossidae, but the new frog had all the characteristics of a completely different group of frogs belonging to the family Ranidae and known as the ‘Water Frogs’. From its size, colour and morphology the species at Ta’ Sarraflu seemed to

belong to the southeastern European/northeastern African group of the genus *Rana*, but this is a very difficult group to identify because many very similar-looking species occur in the region, some of which hybridise where their ranges overlap. Identifying these frogs is rendered more complex as some species have been transported outside their range and have mixed with other species to give populations that are partly composed of hybrids and partly of the parent species. In many cases, certain identification is not possible from appearance alone. The problem was solved by Professor Ulrich Sinsch of the University of Koblenz, Germany, when he compared our recordings of the advertisement calls of the frogs from Ta' Sarraflu with reference calls of different species – although species of *Rana* may be near identical in appearance, the mating calls of the males are species-specific and quite distinct from each other.

The Ta' Sarraflu frog tuned out to be Bedriaga's Frog *Rana bedriagae*, now known as *Pelophylax bedriagae* (Sciberras & Schembri, 2006a). This species has a native distributional range in Cyprus, Egypt, Greek islands close to the Turkish coast, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey; it is also present in Iraq and possibly further east. This frog is not native to the Maltese Islands but has obviously been introduced, probably sometime in the late 1990s. Given their larger size, different coloration and the very loud noises these frogs make, especially in spring and summer when the males establish territories and court females, it is unlikely that these animals would have been overlooked, especially given that many naturalists visit Gozo regularly and



The freshwater pool at Ta' Sarraflu, one of very few permanent freshwater bodies in the Maltese Islands. [Photo credit: Jacqueline Galea].

that there are no other species present in the Maltese Islands that make comparable calls; in fact, it was the unusual calls from Ta' Sarraflu that alerted us to the presence of this species in the first place (Sciberras & Schembri, 2006b).

Alien Species

The presence of Bedriaga's Frog at Ta' Sarraflu is worrying. L-Ghadira ta' Sarraflu is a very important habitat in the local context since it is one of very few pools where natural freshwater accumulates and persists throughout the year, even during the hot summer months when most other freshwater dries up. For this reason, a significant number of plant and animal species that require a constant supply of freshwater throughout the year occur there and are overall very rare in the Maltese Islands, since their habitat is rare. Because of this, in 1995 the pool at Ta' Sarraflu was scheduled as a Level 1 'Area of Ecological Importance' and as a 'Site of Scientific Importance' under the Development Planning Act of 1992, while the entire western coastal area of Gozo, including L-Ghadira ta' Sarraflu, was declared a 'Special Area of Conservation - Candidate Site of International Importance' under the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2006, and the Ta' Sarraflu pool was further designated as a 'Special Area of Conservation - Site of National Importance' under the same regulations. The western coastal area of Gozo 'Special Area of Conservation' has now been accepted by the European Commission as a NATURA 2000 site.

What the impact of the alien Bedriaga's Frog on the biota and ecology of the pool has been, or will be, is not known, but where species of *Rana* have been introduced into environments where they did not occur before, the native amphibian fauna has generally suffered, since *Rana* eat the tadpoles and froglets of smaller species. The native Painted Frog used to occur at Ta' Sarraflu, but since the alien Bedriaga's Frog was introduced, populations have dwindled and the native species may have been extirpated from the pool. The impact of Bedriaga's Frog on the Painted Frog and on the other pool biota needs to be studied, especially given the status of L-Ghadira ta' Sarraflu as a protected area.

So far, Bedriaga's Frog seems to have remained confined to the Ta' Sarraflu pool, probably because



The alien Bedriaga's Frog *Rana bedriagae*, now known as *Pelophylax bedriagae*, from the Ta' Sarraflu pool.
[Photo credit: Jacqueline Galea].

of its requirements for water; unlike the Painted Frog, it does not seem able to traverse large expanses of arid ground. It is important that the alien Bedriaga's Frog does not spread to other habitats. However, there is a real danger of this happening as people have already collected specimens of this frog to keep as 'pets'. The danger lies if unwanted 'pets' are then disposed of in the environment. After habitat destruction, the introduction of alien species is the largest threat faced by local biota. At Ta' Sarraflu alone, apart from the alien Bedriaga's Frog, somebody has introduced a population of Mosquito Fish (*Gambusia*), that has devastated the insect fauna, and at least two terrapins, while in the past there were also goldfish there. While it is easy to introduce alien species, it is very difficult to eradicate them. In the same way that we would not dream of 'contaminating' our cultural heritage by, for example, introducing aluminium fixtures on the facades of historic buildings, we should not 'contaminate' our natural heritage by introducing alien species.

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Crime Mapping: A Gozitan Scenario Using the RISC Methodology

SAVIOUR FORMOSA

Introduction

Gauging a risk of crime in a locality is a complex process, complex enough to warrant an in-depth scientific process to calculate the risk-of-crime status of each spatial area at the different NUTS level (NUTS 1_2 – Country, NUTS 3 – Island, NUTS 4 – District, NUTS 5 – Local Councils). Gozo has the unique status of occupying both NUTS 3 and NUTS 4 levels, however crime analysis is best carried out at NUTS 4 and NUTS 5 due to the availability of data at those detailed levels. In comparing the Gozo risk of crime to the other areas the method calls for a comparative analysis across all the NUTS 4 and NUTS 5 areas in terms of the national (NUTS 1_2) rates of risk. The model used is based on the RISC (Relative Index of Spatial Crime) Model (Formosa, 2007; CrimeMalta, 2008-2010) as developed from the Craglia et al (2000) research. RISC is a dynamic model reviewing each council's relative position to the national crime rate as based on a scientific process analysing both observed and expected (predicted) rates for the diverse socio-economic, landuse and crime parameters.

The Theoretical and Methodological Background

Analysis on risk assessments (Craglia et al, 2000; Craglia et al, 2001; Formosa, 2007) looked at estimating the potential of an area to host crime. These methodologies are based on epidemiological and demographic studies and can be used to produce a method that can give a clear picture of crime risk in small areas. This method can be extrapolated in the analysis of socio-physical studies such as deprivation, health, education and other cross-thematic research, in this case the incidence of crime (Hirschfield et al, 2001; Formosa, 2010). As an example, Standard Theft-from-Residences Rates (SRR) were established by calculating the observed and predicted offences in terms of the number of residential units in each spatial area, which indicated whether an area has a high risk

of falling victim to such an offence. The methods used were based on the calculation of the national theft from residence rates per household and the resultant SRR was calculated for each spatial aggregation entity, in this case NUTS 4 and NUTS 5. This methodology ensures that each area is investigated in the same manner as all other areas irrespective of population size, locality land area, and each is placed on the same comparative level based on the spatial entity giving a rate rather than absolute figures. This ensures that Għasri which has the smallest population in Gozo, is placed on the same level as Birkirkara which has the highest population: transforming the absolute figure to rates such as population per square kilometer, place both on the same analytical base. The same methodology is utilised in terms of crime analysis that reviews the national rate and compared the same crime rate per 1000 persons or households and each area irrespective of size is compared to the main figure. Based on the expected relative national rate, the actual incidences are measured against that same rate and the relative higher or lower rate status is delivered.

This result gives the expected number of offences in an area, which can then be compared with the observed number of same-category offences. The result of the latter analysis would give an indication if an area is at lower or higher risk than the national rates. The method employed reviewed the correlations between different variables based on this method. Each variable's result was converted to ordinal groupings where the national rate is 1: 'no crimes', 'less than 1', '1 – national rate', '2 times', '2 to 5 times' and, 'over 5 times'. Each of these results was correlated against those of other variables for their relative strengths.

The RISC Model

The RISC process investigated each council and village in Malta at NUTS 5 level (Local Councils) of which there are 68 in the Maltese Islands: 54 in

Malta and 14 in Gozo. Based on data from 1998 to 2007, each council was analysed for its risk of crime on an annual basis by types of crime of which there are 18 main categories: 17 thematic categories and a Grand Total category. The main categories reviewed in this paper cover the 2007 data based on the Grand Total Offences, Theft from Residences and Thefts of or from Vehicles.

The analysis resulted in a league table of Gozo councils' risk of crime. The tables depict those Local Councils that are the safest to live in, the ones in between and those that are the worst off.

The RISC Results

RISC assessment is best viewed in terms of visualization outputs and Tables 1 and 2 depict the RISC levels for 2007 for the 3 data categories. Table 1 depicts the categories relative to the national crime rate, with shades ranging from white to black where white signifies (no offences or less than national) and black highest crime rate.

Table 1: RISC “grey-scale” Code Key

Colour Code	Risk of Crime as against the National Rate
	Zero Risk: No Crimes Reported - 0
	Low Risk: Less than National Rate
	National Risk: Equal to National Rate = 1x
	High Risk: Up to Twice the National Rate
	Very High Risk: Between Twice and up to five times the National Rate
	Extremely High Risk: Over five times the National Rate

Table 2 compiles all the local councils of Malta and Gozo with the Gozitan localities in italics indicating both their relative position in the league of councils for that particular offence as well as the rate with which it had been tagged depicted in grey-scale.

The next sections will review the main three categories of Grand Total, Theft from Residences and Theft of and from Vehicles (refer to Tables 1 and 2).

An analysis of all the crimes reported in 2007 (see Figure 1) suggests that Gozo at NUTS 4 (District) level garners the lowest rates in the Maltese Islands, indicating that in its aggregate Gozo is the safest district, an issue which is the result of various factors: higher rates of observance by residents, higher social cohesion, insularity that creates a barrier to the weekend revelers who clog the Maltese leisure and recreation area of Paceville, rendering that area at the top of the league.

Overall, Gozitan localities achieve lower than national rates of reported offences especially in the Grand Total offence categories with only Żebbuġ registering up to twice the national rate, albeit on the lower side of that same scale. This is due to the aggregation of high rates of offences across the categories with the main offences emanating within the seasonal residential area of Marsalforn.

The other locality of note in Gozo which rates close to the national rate is that of Munxar, again outweighed by the presence of the leisure and recreation area of Xlendi.

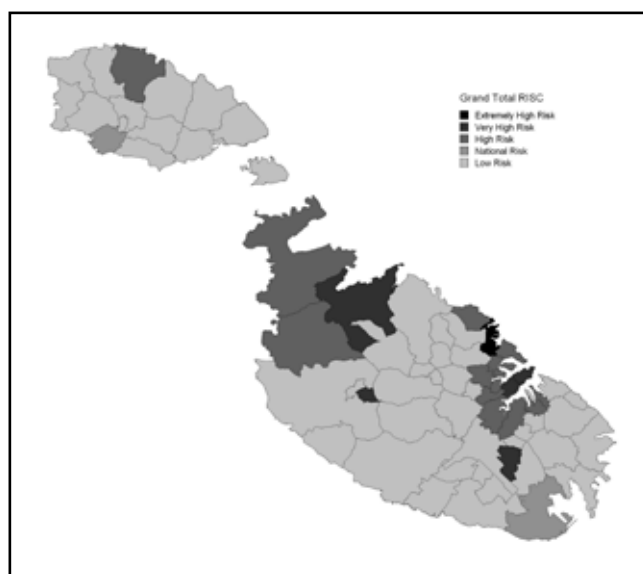


Figure 1: Grand Total Offences – 2007 All Councils

Theft from Residences

Gozo councils are not immune to theft from residences, with Għasri registering a very high RISC of over 2 times the national rate for 2007, an occurrence that is one of the highest in the islands.

¹ For updated RISC rates, refer to: Formosa S. (2008-2010), CrimeMalta website – www.crimemalta.com

Table 2: The NUTS 5 Offences

Grand Total		Residential		Vehicle
Council		Council		Council
SAN GILJAN		SAN GILJAN		FLORIANA
FLORIANA		SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR		PIETA
VALLETTA		MELLIEHA		PEMBROKE
MDINA		BORMLA		SAN GILJAN
SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR		<i>GHASRI</i>		BIRGU
GUDJA		SWIEQI		VALLETTA
SLIEMA		LIJA		MDINA
TA' XBIEX		PEMBROKE		BORMLA
PIETA		MDINA		PAOLA
BIRGU		MSIDA		GUDJA
PEMBROKE		KIRKOP		MARSA
MARSA		MARSAXLOKK		HAMRUN
PAOLA		SAN GWANN		MSIDA
MELLIEHA		<i>QALA</i>		TARXIEN
BORMLA		<i>ŻEBBUĠ (Ghawdex)</i>		GŻIRA
MSIDA		QRENDI		SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR
GŻIRA		SLIEMA		SANTA VENERA
MĠARR		GŻIRA		MĠARR
HAMRUN		XGHAJRA		ZABBAR
<i>ŻEBBUĠ (Ghawdex)</i>		MARSASCALA		MARSASCALA
BIRŻEBBUĠIA		<i>FONTANA</i>		BALZAN
<i>MUNXAR</i>		MĠARR		QORMI
MARSAXLOKK		VALLETTA		SLIEMA
ISLA		BALZAN		MARSAXLOKK
MARSASCALA		TA' XBIEX		BIRŻEBBUĠIA
LUQA		DINGLI		<i>ŻEBBUĠ (Ghawdex)</i>
<i>GHAJNSIELEM</i>		PAOLA		ISLA
RABAT (Malta)		NAXXAR		SWIEQI
QORMI		<i>KERĊEM</i>		TA' XBIEX
SWIEQI		<i>MUNXAR</i>		LUQA
<i>GHASRI</i>		ŻEJTUN		RABAT (Malta)
SANTA VENERA		LUQA		FGURA
BALZAN		BIRŻEBBUĠIA		ATTARD
KALKARA		MQABBA		MELLIEHA
TARXIEN		ISLA		<i>GHASRI</i>
NAXXAR		<i>GHARB</i>		<i>MUNXAR</i>
FGURA		<i>SAN LAWRENZ</i>		MOSTA
KIRKOP		ŻURRIEQ		KIRKOP
SAFI		ATTARD		BIRKIRKARA
<i>FONTANA</i>		SAFI		NAXXAR
<i>RABAT (Victoria)</i>		FGURA		KALKARA
SAN GWANN		SIGĠIEWI		IKLIN
<i>ŻEBBUĠ (Malta)</i>		RABAT (Malta)		<i>GHAJNSIELEM</i>
MOSTA		QORMI		ŻEJTUN
XGHAJRA		SANTA VENERA		SANTA LUĊIJA
ŻEJTUN		PIETA		LIJA
BIRKIRKARA		<i>XAGHRA</i>		<i>SAN LAWRENZ</i>
SIGĠIEWI		GHARGHUR		<i>ŻEBBUĠ (Malta)</i>
QRENDI		GHAXAQ		SAFI
ŻABBAR		ŻABBAR		SAN GWANN
<i>SAN LAWRENZ</i>		HAMRUN		<i>RABAT (Victoria)</i>
ATTARD		BIRKIRKARA		DINGLI
LIJA		FLORIANA		ŻURRIEQ
GHAXAQ		<i>SANNAT</i>		MTARFA
DINGLI		GUDJA		GHARGHUR
GHARGHUR		IKLIN		<i>XAGHRA</i>
ŻURRIEQ		KALKARA		SIGĠIEWI
<i>GHARB</i>		<i>ŻEBBUĠ (Malta)</i>		GHAXAQ
<i>SANNAT</i>		MARSA		XGHAJRA
<i>NADUR</i>		<i>RABAT (Victoria)</i>		<i>XEWKLIJA</i>
SANTA LUĊIJA		<i>NADUR</i>		<i>KERĊEM</i>
<i>KERĊEM</i>		MOSTA		QRENDI
<i>QALA</i>		<i>GHAJNSIELEM</i>		<i>NADUR</i>
<i>XEWKLIJA</i>		BIRGU		<i>FONTANA</i>
XAGHAJRA		TARXIEN		MQABBA
IKLIN		<i>XEWKLIJA</i>		<i>GHARB</i>
MQABBA		SANTA LUĊIJA		<i>SANNAT</i>
MTARFA		MTARFA		<i>QALA</i>

Ghasri, though comprising a small population, registered a high rate due to the relatively small number of households residing there as well as the number of non-Gozitan residents who may not occupy their homes throughout the year, rendering their property into an opportunity for predatory activity (Figure 2).

Qala, Żebbuġ and Fontana register higher than national rates whereas all the other councils have lower rates, though it must still be said that every council experienced theft from residences in absolute terms.

Theft of or from Vehicles

Theft of or from vehicles is relatively low in Gozo as compared to the Maltese councils. All councils register low risks with Qala registering no crimes at all (Figure 3). This is a highly interesting scenario considering that Gozo has two leisure and recreation areas which should be main attractors for vehicle-related crime as experienced in all other leisure and recreation areas as Paceville. There are various reasons for such a low rate of offence, possibly due to 'guarded' parking areas, proximity of vehicle to residential unit, amongst others. On the other hand, as in all the categories

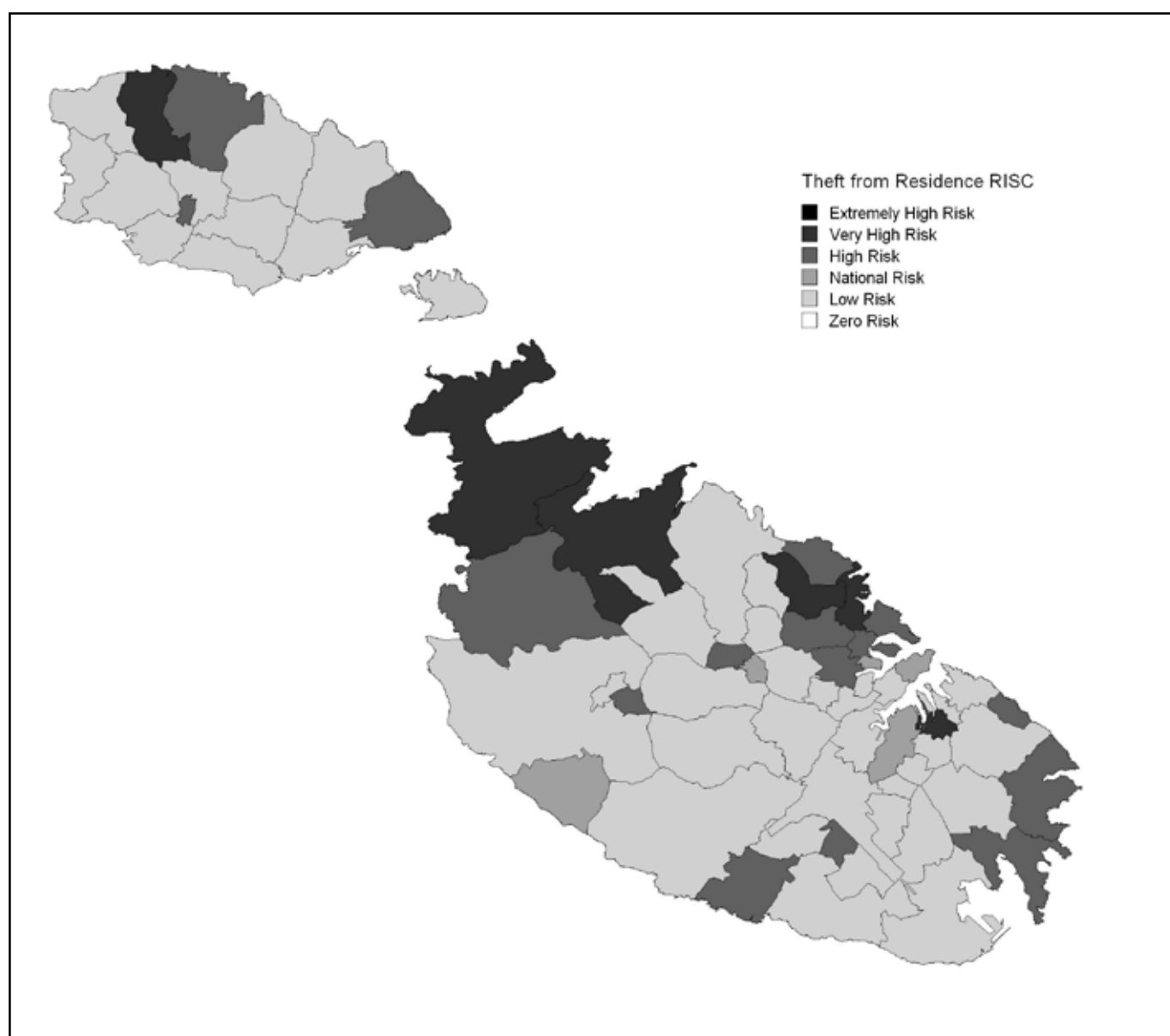


Figure 2: Theft from Residences – 2007 All Councils

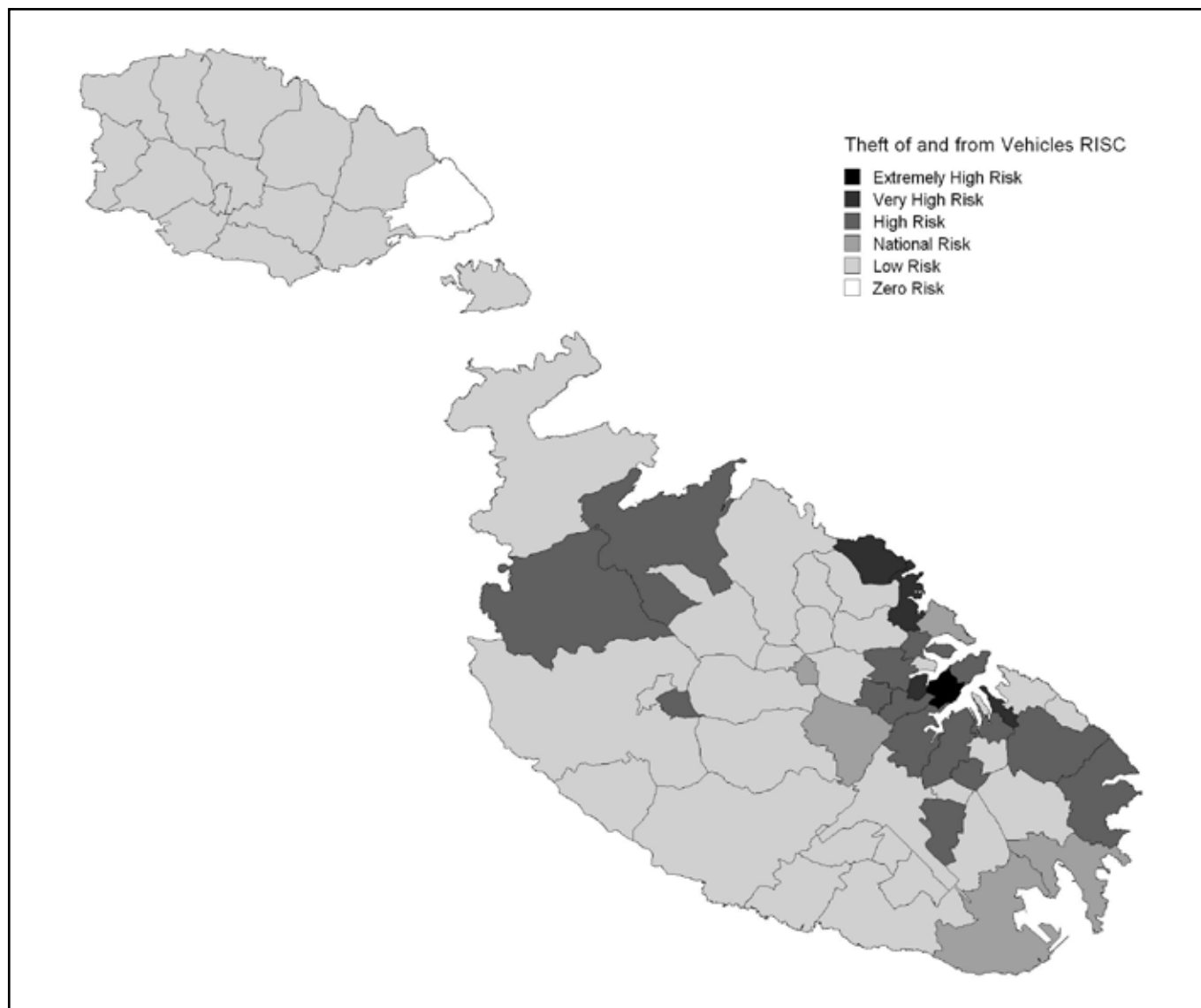


Figure 3: Theft of or from Vehicles – 2007 All Councils

of crime, there may be a higher dark figure rate, which dark figure represents unreported crime, not solely related to vehicle crime but all categories. Further study is required in this area.

In conclusion, although crime exists in Gozo, RISC rates in Gozo are relatively low in nearly all categories, though there are variations between one locality and another. As criminological analysis integrates new datasets, the cross-thematic analyses across time and space will enable the understanding of the social, physical and crime parameters that could be utilized for crime reduction targeting.

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The Treasures at the NAG – the National Archives Gozo

JOSEPH BEZZINA

“There is nothing that solidifies and strengthens a nation like reading the nation’s history, whether that history is recorded in books, or embodied in customs, institutions, and monuments”

This dictum by the American writer Joseph Anderson (1836-1916) states one reason why every nation in the world should treasure its papers in archives. Archives designate the organised body of records produced or received by an entity in the transaction of its affairs and preserved by it. The entity in this case is the regional administration of Gozo. Hence the National Archives Gozo, as other institutions of similar nature, holds deposits of records of a public nature that are no longer in use for the purpose of administration.

Foundation

The state of affairs in Gozo up to the 1980s vis-à-vis archives was catastrophic. When records of a public nature were no longer in use, they were put away in a basement and left to rot. It is known that in the late 1940s, a mass of hundreds of documents belonging to the *Universitas Gaudisii*, referred to further down, was handed over to the owner of a fireworks factory so that he could use the paper in the production of fireworks. These documents had been shifted from one place to another for close to four hundred years. They were last held in a cellar in a Government Department in the middle of Triq ir-Repubblika, Rabat, Gozo. During the festa season that summer, the history of Gozo literally went up in flames.

The initiative to put an end to this utter destruction of Gozo’s written heritage was taken by Anton Tabone, the first Minister for Gozo. Soon after the foundation of the Ministry for Gozo on 14 May 1987, he decided to set up an archive for Gozo. It was no small effort, as Malta still lacked a National Archives and a law governing public archives was still years away. The idea began to materialise when he roped in Joseph Bezzina, the undersigned, who had specialised in the science

of archivistics in London and in Rome, and shared with him his plan to set up an archive for Gozo.

The NAG – the National Archives (Gozo Section) – came into existence on 1 August 1989 inside a spacious hall annexed to the Public Library of Gozo in Triq Vajringa, Rabat. The premises had been built through the interest of Paul Cassar, Gozo Librarian, with the backing of Dr Daniel Micallef, Minister of Education, in 1986.

The NAG was officially inaugurated on Friday, 24 November 1989, by the Honorable Anton Tabone, Minister for Gozo, and by the Honorable Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, Minister of Education and Culture, a few weeks after the twenty-fifth anniversary of the independence of Malta and as part of the commemorative celebrations.

The National Archives Act

On 23 January 1990, the Malta Parliament enacted ACT IV (1990) to regulate the National Archives, an act that contemplated more than one section of the National Archives (parag. 3). As a result, the NAG became officially the public record office for the documentation produced and received by past and present Government departments and establishments of the islands of Gozo and Comino.



The NAG shares premises with the Public Library, Gozo, in Triq Vajringa, Rabat.



The main hall of the National Archives Gozo.

Circular OPM/E/82/83 issued by the Staff Development Organisation of the Office of the Prime Minister (July 1991) under the sub-heading Gozo Records clearly laid down that: *Records originated by the Ministry for Gozo, Gozo sections of Government Departments, and by public bodies established for Gozo should be deposited at the Gozo Section of the National Archives which has been set up at the Gozo Public Library.*

The National Archives was put on a surer footing through ACT V (2005) The National Archives Act enacted by the Parliament of Malta on 10 May 2005. It laid out the constitution, the composition, and the functions of the National Archives establishing it as an entity or agency in its own right. It also made provisions for the appointment of a National Archivist and an Assistant National Archivist for Gozo together with other dispositions ancillary thereto.

The NAG is a sub-agency within this Government entity. As such, the National Archives, as the Agency, is the *regulator*; the Ministry of Gozo is the *administrator*.

The Fonds

The NAG has twenty-six FONDS, that is, deposits from different entities. Each fond is divided into as many SECTIONS as is deemed necessary to reflect the various responsibilities or activities of the entity that created the fond. It is possible that a particular single office produced records related to various activities. In that case each activity

is considered a separate section and numbered accordingly to avoid the splitting of sections into sub-sections. Every single ITEM in each section is given a consecutive number.

The FONDS in the alphabetical order of the cataloguing code with the period covered are the following:

AG	• National Archives (Gozo Section)	1989+
CA	• Civil Abattoir	1891 – 1986
CC	• Civic Council	1959 – 1973
CG	• Curia Gubernatoriali (Courts of Law)	1609+
CI	• Charitable Institutions	1859 – 1947
CP	• Circulars and Posters	1814+
DF	• Documentaries and Films	1988+
GB	• Malta Government Savings Bank	1853 – 1978
GL	• Gurdan Lighthouse	1877 – 1981
HI	• Hospitals and other Institutions	1841+
IR	• Inland Revenue	1903+
LC	• Local Councils	1993+
MG	• Ministry for Gozo	1987+
MH	• Medical and Health Department	1875 – 1970
MP	• Monte di Pietà	1817 – 1979
PA	• Photographs. Albums	1945+
PD	• Police Departments	1889+
PM	• Plans and maps	1860+
PO	• Passport Office	1988+
PW	• Public Works	1840+
SG	• Secretariat to the Government	1803+
SN	• Street naming	1987+
SS	• State Schools	1845+
ST	• Statistics	1667+
UG	• Universitas Gaudisii	1560 – 1819
ZM	• Miscellanea	1575+

Records are catalogued in a four-level system – a system that most clearly reflects the workings of each entity. Level 1 is the depository (NAG); level 2, the fond (UG); level 3, the section (section 1 in this fond, being *Acta et Negotia*); and level 4, the single item (for example, volume 1).

The Earliest Records

The oldest surviving records in Gozo belong to the Universitas Gaudisii, the medieval government of Gozo. The Universitas was probably founded in 1350, on the occasion of the incorporation of Malta and Gozo in the royal demanum by King Ludovico of Sicily. It is first referred to in a document of



An important document at the NAG: the history of Gozo (1745) by Frangisk Agius de Soldanis, the doyen of Gozo historians.

7 March 1373, concerning the approval of Perius de Trapano as notary public for Gozo. A second reference two weeks later, on 24 March, refers to a concession granted by King Ludovico to the Gozitans on 5 January 1351, when presumably the Universitas was already functioning.

The Universitas was broadly similar to many town councils throughout the Mediterranean regions of the Latin West. It was headed by a *capitaneus* or captain, assisted by four jurats or town-magistrates. The captain was officially known as *Capitano della Verga*, Captain of the Rod, as he carried a staff as a symbol of his office, authority, and dignity, but was referred to by locals as *Hakem*. He was appointed annually by the King. The town-magistrates, known locally as *gurati*, were also elected annually subject to royal approval. The Universitas had the right to choose other officials to help it in the fulfillment of its duties.

The *Universitas Gaudisii* was autonomous from that of Malta. By the first quarter of the fifteen century, it even had its own consul in Palermo so that its capitula or petitions could be presented to the King without intermediations.

It dealt with numerous items of local business. Its multiform activities during its first one hundred and fifty years are known from foreign sources, for no records prior to the middle of the sixteenth century survive in Gozo. It is believed that the oldest records perished in 1551, when the island was ransacked by the Turks. Then the whole population was taken into slavery and official records were presumably stolen or burnt.

The earliest records after the 1551 holocaust dates from 1560 and they are preserved in the most important section of the Universitas: the registers of acts and transactions. The variety of documents in this section is beyond description. One may interest himself in the list of Government officials, many of Sicilian origin, that were administering the island during the years of re-population, or the costs related to the horse and donkey races organized for the feast of Santa Marija. The Bandi or legal notices issued from time to time furnish a good idea of the problems that the officials met in the running of the island: problems as far apart as the cleansing of public areas in the Citadel and the regulations to be followed by the padroni of the boats licensed to run the passenger service and to convey goods between Malta and Gozo. Price-lists of all commodities especially foodstuffs were issued regularly after 20 November 1565 and it is quite absorbing to study how the officials went out of their way to keep rising prices in check.

The short French rule in Gozo (June-October 1798) is also reflected in this fond with several documents dated in the Republican calendar. When, in 1800, Gozo with Malta passed under British rule, the role of the Universitas was severely curtailed and, eventually, it was declared dissolved as from 1 January 1819.

A Treasury of Gozo History

With the British reforms introduced in 1819, the management of Gozo public affairs passed into the hands of a civil official known since then by



The title-page of a copy of the report of the Apostolic Visit carried out by Pietro Dusina in Gozo in 1575.

a variety of names: from the Chief Civil Officer, to Lieutenant Governor, to Commissioner, to Secretary, to Minister. The related fond at the NAG compliments that of the Universitas.

In 1960, the administration of Gozo was partly taken over by the Gozo Civic Council. The proceedings of the Council together with its account books, cash books and other miscellaneous registers can be consulted in another fond at the NAG.

The Archives has fonds from many other public entities. The *Curia Gubernatoriali Insulae Gaulos*, the Governor's Court of Gozo, is the most voluminous at the NAG, with thousands of registers that are a rich source for the social history of Gozo. There was a civil and a criminal court together with a court of appeal. Its functions were increased in 1803 and in 1840.

The fond of Saint John the Baptist Hospital, Gozo's general hospital, and other health institutions such as the village Government clinics is basic for a

study of health care and the incidence of disease in Gozo. The daily Occurrence registers from the local Police Stations are a diary of the day-to-day affairs in Gozo many of which are recorded nowhere else.

The house plans presented by persons who wanted to built or carry out adjustments in their houses are preserved in the Medical and Health Department fond. They are still of great benefit to their descendants who want to enlarge or adjust the old premises.

The photographs fond conserves thousands of pictures related to Gozo. These include some two thousand photographs of Gozo past that the NAG acquired by purchase or by donation. The general public can go through the albums and also acquire these photos.

Other interesting fonds are those of the Works Department, with a good number of plans; the Ġurdan Lighthouse fond that has a record of the weather in Gozo from 1877 onwards; and fonds from other minor, but not less important, entities.

All these fonds at the National Archives are at the disposal of the general public to pore through and to study. They are certainly a significant component of the national heritage of the Maltese archipelago.



A group from Metz, France, at the NAG.

Joseph Bezzina is the Assistant National Archivist for Gozo.

A Green Island in the Sun

RODERICK PACE

Introduction

How often have we heard of Gozo's communications problems, its quaintness, ecology and quietness? And how many times have we heard that insularity makes Gozo the attractive place that it is? Recently, I have come across a number of reports featuring Gozo which were published in *The Times of London*. These reports refer to these characteristics which can be said to form part of the Gozitan body tissue even though the 'body' has changed a lot over the years.¹

This article focuses on a number of reports, starting in 1953, which show that although times may have changed some perceptions, many of the present day issues regarding Gozo have changed very little. In these newspaper reports we find various descriptions of Gozo and Gozitan life at the time, as well as frequent references to it as being greener than Malta and as being the centre of Maltese lace-making. One account depicts Gozo as an island where every female inhabitant above the age of five is engaged in lace-making! This must be a far cry from the situation today.



Traditional lace making in Gozo. Lacemaker sitting at her pillow making lace in the traditional way.

Communications – Enter the Helicopter

Transport between Gozo and Malta has always been a hot topic – for obvious reasons. In recent years we have seen the building of a helicopter landing pad as well as the beginning and the end of a couple of helicopter services. The earliest account of a helicopter being used in inter-island transport might be that carried by *The Times* of 8 June 1953, which reported that the day before, the Acting Governor of Malta, Mr Trafford Smith, flew by helicopter to the island of Gozo to attend the coronation² celebrations being held there while a second helicopter flew in the Acting Prime Minister Sir Paul Boffa. This mode of transport, a one-off occasionally provided by the British Military services and not as part of a regular service, was used because the sea on that day was too rough to permit a ferry crossing. The report continues: “To the Gozitans, most of whom had never seen a helicopter before, their landing was almost the major excitement of the day’s events.”

Three helicopters of the Sikorsky Dragonfly type are thought to have arrived in Malta in December 1952 and were unloaded from the carrier *Perseus* at Marsaxlokk. The first helicopter demonstration in Malta took place a couple of days later. Hence the ride into Gozo on board a helicopter by Mr Trafford Smith and Sir Paul Boffa on these ‘new flying machines’ was a novel experience for many – not only Gozitans.

A More Tranquil Life

Further down we read: “The Gozitans, who have a tradition of rivalry with the Maltese, certainly

¹ The oldest of these newspaper reports dates back to the 22 October 1789, but I do not intend to go back that far in this brief assessment, other than to highlight in order to satisfy the curiosity which I may have already aroused, that the 1789 one just quoted, consists of a write-up by a Paris-based *Times* correspondent, describing the Maltese uprising against the French. Based on a “letter from Malta” sent by the French garrison on the island to the authorities in Paris, it includes this short description of the ‘revolutionary’ events in Gozo: “we have no intelligence on the fate of the garrison on the island, composed of 350 men, nor of that of the Old city, which consisted of 100 men; much fear is entertained of their having fallen under the poniards (daggers) of the assassins. The insurgents have rendered themselves masters of several batteries, which command different landing places, and of a powder mill”.

² The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place on June 2, 1953.



Princess Elizabeth with Philip in Malta.
Photo: http://i.telegraph.co.uk/telegraph/multimedia/archive/00429/travel-graphics-200_429447a.jpg

vied with them on this occasion in the vigour of their expressions of loyalty to the Queen. The whole of the small capital...was decorated with flags, arches and bunting, almost every other house displaying a picture of the Queen. By a coincidence, the principal hotel here has for long been called the “Duke of Edinburgh” and today it proudly displayed photographs of the Queen taken, when as Princess Elizabeth, she visited it with the present Duke of Edinburgh in April, 1951.” The article describes Gozo as being greener, more fertile and less crowded than Malta, and the Gozitans as being “less afflicted by the worries of the modern world than are the Maltese.”

Helicopters feature again in 1955 when according to *The Times* of Saturday 22 October of that year, some of the members of a UK delegation involved in the round table conference on the proposal to integrate Malta and Gozo with the UK, were carried to the island by helicopters.

Other Competing Destinations

In “Green Island in the Sun” which appeared in the edition of 10 February 1962, a number of contrasts are made between Gozo and Malta emphasizing in greater detail the reasons why the former is more attractive than the latter. However, one sentence in the report caught my eye: “The great majority of Maltese live and die without ever crossing the five-mile strait that divides them from it (Gozo) – it is easier if you want an excursion, to skip over to Sicily.”

Now that is surely no longer a fact of modern life: I would think that nowadays the majority of Maltese have crossed over to Gozo at least once in their lives. It is also the case that in the age of low cost travel other localities, alas Sicily not being the only one, compete with Gozo as destinations for the Maltese outbound travelers.

Malta Noisy, Gozo Quite

In the same article, and before describing in more detail the rest of Gozo’s attractions, the anonymous correspondent writes: “Malta the maritime crossroads of the Mediterranean , noisy with bells and traffic and thronged with people; Gozo, on its doorstep, primitive and secluded, a green island in the sun that has slept the centuries away, and somehow escaped invasion by the most determined of travel agents.” Nearly half a century has passed since this description was written. Since then travel agents have discovered Gozo, quite a lot of construction has taken place which changed the face of the island and traffic jams occur as well. But still Gozo is renowned to be quieter than Malta and less hectic.

The First Royal Visit?

According to *The Times*, in 1967 Gozo experienced the first visit by a reigning British monarch when the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh crossed over from Malta on the minesweeper Walkerton to lay the foundation stone of a new hospital and place a wreath on the war memorial at the main Rabat square (It-Tokk).

Under the heading “Rustic Gozo Greets the Queen”, *The Times* of Friday November 17, 1967 describes the Queen’s welcome thus: “The square of Rabat was filled with a sturdy, forthright crowd, many of the men in their working clothes, and with the robust rhythms of two energetic brass bands which local rivalries and local earthiness brought to a fine measure of stentorian vigour.”

The report quoted the late Dr Anton Tabone, then President of the Civic Council as summing up this Gozitan welcome for the royals thus: “a surging welcome by the island’s unsophisticated people.”

The Causeway

As the islands of Malta and Gozo were approaching the 1971 election, more important issues found their way in the pages of *The Times*. One of these concerned the building of the new hospital while the other was the proposed causeway to link Gozo with Malta and put an end finally and perpetually to the inter-island transport problem. In an article “Controversy Over Gozo Causeway Plan” which appeared on 29 September 1970, Lola Sammut had this to say about the causeway: “Most Gozitans are realistic about this venture and feel that there are more immediate needs, apart from the fact that the stretch of water which cuts them off from Malta is an important ingredient of the magic of their island.”

At the same time, Sammut did not under-rate the problems Gozo faced in its communications with

the rest of the world when she stressed that the “foremost problem is communications, and this affects workers, students and visitors as well as the transport of produce. The islanders need more than one ferry running more frequently, as well as better berthing facilities...The telephone service is inadequate and frustrating for both Gozitans and Maltese, and utterly exasperating for the few hoteliers and others in the tourist trade.”

What Can we Make of This?

This brief account is by no means a historical one as defined by professional historians. It relies on a few reports on Gozo written in a British newspaper, *The Times*. A lot has happened in the past sixty years: the harbours at Ċirkewwa and Mgarr have been improved, ferry services have been ameliorated with the commissioning of three vessels and frequent crossings, air services have



Malta and the Comino Islands as seen from Gozo.

Photo: http://www.gozoandmalta.com/pb/wp_e49f4e8e/images/img169204b488f41ca707.jpg



The Imperial Eagle was a Gozo ferry between 1958 and 1968. It could accomodate seventy passengers and ten cars.
Photo: <http://dmdiving.nl/images/ImperialEagle.jpg>

been tried on and off but they are too expensive to be turned into a viable regular service, fixed line and mobile telephony have improved the links between the two islands, as has the internet, but the communications problem persists. While quite a lot is heard of the need to provide an air link to connect Gozo to Malta (or is it to the rest of the world?) little is heard in public of the proposal to build a causeway.

The island is still greener and quieter than Malta, but life has changed in Gozo, irreversibly so in many instances. The proposal to turn Gozo into an ecological island builds on the island's enduring characteristics, but could it also be the case of shutting the gate when the horse has already bolted?

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Nadur and its Countryside

MARIO SALIBA

Introduction

Gozo still offers tourists an opportunity to enjoy a beautiful, unspoilt natural environment, away from everyday routine, tensions and pressures to satisfy both their physical and mental needs. One of the picturesque places in Gozo is the village of Nadur. Mother Nature endowed it with enchanting bays, citrus orchards, green fields, abundance of natural spring-water and valleys offering a good living for the villagers.

A Historical Glimpse

The word “Nadur” which in Maltese means “a spacious stretch of land situated on a hill top from where one can watch the surroundings” is derived from the Arabic word nadar (Erin Serracino-Inglott, 1979: 6 vol. 240). The town’s motto “Vigilat” which means “on the lookout”, is in line with this description. Nadur is situated

on the northeast of the island between the villages of Xaghra and Qala. It lies, on top of the first of the three hills, synonymous with the topography of Gozo. The hill, or plateau, which is 160 metres above sea level, greets the sun rising from the east every morning. This explains the rising sun on the emblem of Nadur.

We do not have many documents or archaeological evidence which could shed light on the colonisation of Nadur by its first inhabitants. In December 1990, two Dutch archaeologists Adrian van der Blom and Veronica Veen, unearthed several shreds from an otherwise unspecified triangular fields in the Ta’ Kenuna area. This points to the fact that there might have been a community living on the spot around 4000 BC (Bezzina, 2007: 11). Nevertheless, the plateau and its surroundings, with a few farm houses scattered here and there, were in existence for many years well before the area became a parish in 1688. The only trace of



Dahlet Qorrot. Photo: M. Saliba



Ta' Kenuna Tower. Photo: M. Saliba

archaeological evidence we had were a number of huge rocks with a large flat stone laid horizontally on them as if to form a roof. The field found between San Blas Bay and Dahlet Qorrot Bay is also named after this structure, *l-Għalqa ta' l-Imsaqqfin* (field of the roofing rocks). According to the Gozitan historian G. P. F. Agius de Soldanis these roofed structures which are not in existence anymore, once used to serve as a sort of temple to the gods. This popular historian imagined that these slabs of stone couldn't have been placed there by normal people but by very strong people or giants (Agius de Soldanis, 1999: 87).

Throughout history Nadur played a very important role in the defense of the island from ruthless corsairs who used to come by sea to rob and drag the inhabitants into slavery. During the reign of the Knights of St John (1530 – 1798) a watch tower was built by Grand Master Nicholas Cotoner (1663 – 1680).

Ta' Kenuna Tower and Maltese Garden

Nadur has been embellished with a number of gardens where the whole family can enjoy a few hours of relaxing in a nice and safe environment. One of these gardens, Ġnien il-Kunsill, is situated in Triq il-Madonna ta' Fatima. From here one gets a magnificent view of Mġarr Harbour and the channel between the islands with Gozo Channel ferries plying across it.

A few metres away there is another belvedere which will lead you to Ta' Kenuna tower and

garden. Ta' Kenuna tower was one of the three semaphore (flag based) signal stations built by the British in 1848 on the cliffs on the southwest tip of the Nadur plateau. Its towering structure was employed as an Electric Telegraph and Cable Station between 1861 and 1883 to pass signals to ships and other posts. In the 1990s the Nadur Local Council with the help of Maltacom sponsored the restoration works of the tower. A beacon to warn ships that they are nearing land, as well as a number of communication antennas were recently installed on the roof. One can even ask permission from the watchman to go on top of the covered roof of the tower. From the top of the tower one can get a panoramic view of most of the island, Comino Islands and the northern part of Malta.

The surrounding area has been transformed into a Maltese Garden with indigenous plants, amongst which one can observe the Maltese National Plant, Maltese Rock-Centaury, *Widnet il-Baħar* (*Palaeocyamus crassifolius*), wild flowers and shrubs. Nadur is renowned for its valleys, cliffs, beaches and garigue together with its monumental church, historical towers and lavish agriculture. The aim of this article is to help the visitor to discover parts of Nadur which are not that familiar to foreigners and Maltese alike. Two such spots are Ta' Soppu Tower and San Blas Bay.

Ta' Soppu Tower

Ta' Soppu Tower in Nadur is one of the watch towers built along the coast of Gozo during the reign of the Knights of St. John. In fact it was the last one in a series of towers built in Gozo by the Knights. We can state that before the coming of the Knights there were no towers or any sort of fortifications in Gozo except the Gozo Citadel. The coast used to be guarded by the Gozitans themselves (Zammit, 1999: 72).

When it was constructed it was called *La Torre Nuova* (Samut-Tagliaferro, 1993: 181). Throughout its history, it has been referred to by a number of names: Dahlet Qorrot Tower or San Blas Tower for the two bays lying on either side of the tower, or Rdum il-Kbir Tower for the Mistra Rocks on which it is situated. This tower is perched 120

metres above sea level. The position of this tower is a bit curious. It cannot be reached from the sea because of a labyrinth of rocks and the high cliffs. The tower, although set on a high level above the sea, cannot be seen from any place in Nadur except from San Blas Bay and Dahlet Qorrot Bay. This is because the cliffs on which the tower is built continue to rise to form a higher ridge called *il-Qortin* or Mistra Rocks. On the rocky land one can find a diversity of flora. Here one can come across pennyroyal, Mediterranean thyme, cape sorrel, rosemary, borage, squirting cucumber, and Maltese savory, various types of thistle, daffodils, and fennel. One can also find many natural holes in the rocks which catch the rain water and thus attract migratory birds. Here one can also find a masterfully constructed *girna* with its intricate style of masonry.

On the west lies San Blas Bay and on the east Dahlet Qorrot Bay and Qala Point. The best view one can get of Dahlet Qorrot is from this tower. One can enjoy a bird's eye view of this bay together with the surrounding small inlets of San Filep, Ghajn Berta and Rdum iż-Żgħir. To the north, the tower faces the

open sea, on the east side on a clear day one can see St Paul's Bay, St Julian's and as far as Dragonara Point. On the west side one can easily see Ghajn Damma which used to be Gozo's main dumping site and is now being converted into a national park. In olden times there used to stand a small tower called Marsalforn Tower. Qolla s-Safra in Marsalforn is also visible from Ta' Soppu Tower.

This tower, apart from being part of the defense of the island, was also one of the signaling posts. Francois Charles de Bourlamaque, Brigadier of the French Army, in his report about the fortifications of Gozo and Comino dated 24th October 1761, wrote that this tower is good for signals (Samut-Tagliaferro, 1993: 184). He came to Gozo with a retinue of five military engineers in mid-July to inspect the fortifications and make recommendations for strengthening the defenses.

The tower started to be built in 1667 but most of the work was carried out in 1669 and 1670 during the reign of Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner (Bonnici, Vol. I 1984: 232). The expenses for the masonry work was forked out by the local administration



Ta' Soppu Tower. Photo: M. Saliba

called the Universitas and so this means that it was paid for from the taxes imposed on the Gozitans. The Universitas also paid for the salaries of the soldiers working in the tower and was responsible for any maintenance needed from time to time (Zammit, 1999: 74).

The Order of St John was asked by the Grand Master to provide the artillery needed after he visited the tower on 19th April 1670 and ordered the supply of these armaments himself. This was not a normal procedure because the tower was not the property of the Order nor did it fall under the administrative control of the Commander of the Order (like the towers of Xlendi and Dwejra, which although belonging to the Universitas, were under the administration of the Order). The Commander of the Order, Fra Jean Jacques de Verdelin requested a written statement from the Council of the Order. Due to this technicality six months passed before the Council decided that the armaments and ammunition should be passed on to the tower but on paper to appear in the form of a donation to a Religious Order.

On the façade of the tower facing the land there are four escutcheons or coats-of-arms (now



Girna near Ta' Soppu Tower. Photo: M. Saliba

undecipherable through weather erosion of the stone) affixed to the wall above the entrance and drawbridge. The two most important coats-of-arms are those of the Grand Master Nicholas Cotoner and of the Governor of Gozo, Ludovic Xedler y Gomez. The other two coats-of-arms probably represented the Gozo Universitas and the Seneschal (Bonnici, Vol I 1984: 232). This tower had its own Castellano (Capo Mastro) who was a Bombardier in charge of the soldiers working in the tower. During the night there used to be three persons on duty. All the personnel were paid by the Gozo Universitas. In 1702, the Castellano of the tower or captain, was Gio Maria Gafa' and was paid €2.52 every four months or €7.56 annually (Bezzina, 2002: 9).

Ta' Soppu Tower remains renowned for its inadequacy to defend the island against the French invasion of Gozo on the 10th June 1798. The French Commandant had chosen an inlet between Soppu Tower and Ramla Bay called Rđum ta' Vnuta. When the Gozitans saw the ships loaded with French soldiers making their way towards land, the soldiers on guard in the Tower started firing on the incoming armada. But their efforts were soon neutralized by the cannons on *L'Etoile* and *La Pluvier*. Needless to say, on the tower there were only two cannons available. Therefore Reynier's troops soon landed without any further resistance (Debono, 1997:13).

The tower remained in operation until 1st April 1873, after which, no more soldiers were stationed for guard duties in the tower. Since then, it has been abandoned. During World War Two the tower was not utilized for defense but some bombs were still dropped in its vicinity. Fortunately none hit the tower. Until a couple of years ago the tower had been in total abandonment and the elements of nature had left their mark.

Today, thanks to the collaboration of the NGO, Din L-Art Helwa, together with Nadur Local Council, the proper repairs and restorations have been carried out and the tower has been restored to its former glory, and thus saved from total destruction forever.



The steep walk down to San Blass Bay. Photo: M. Saliba

Mixta Cave and Ramla Bay

Another picturesque spot in Nadur is Il-Qortin tar-Ramla. From this plateau one can get a breath taking view of Ramla Bay, Xaghra and Marsalforn. One can follow the path leading to a natural cave overlooking Ramla Bay called *l-Għartal-Mixta*. This is one of the last intact troglodytic abodes in Gozo and must have been inhabited from early times till the early twentieth century (Bezzina, 2007: 36). The entrance to this grotto is through a rock hewn passage and steps. This large cave was used as shelter for cattle and even the peasants used to live in it to look after their herds. *Mixta* is Maltese for a place where one shelters in winter together with the cattle (Serracino-Inglott, 1979:173).

During the time of the Knights of Malta this cave served another purpose that of defending Ramla Bay from approaching ships. In 1743 the opening of the cave was blocked with stones and they left only two openings for cannons to fire against enemy's

ships. This could be the reason why the French in 1798 didn't land in Ramla but used *Ta' Vnuta* which cannot be seen from Mixta Cave. According to a local historian there was a secret passage leading from the cave down to the bay where there was a man made cannon in the rocks (the fougasse). The fougasse is one of the most fascinating adjuncts of coastal defence introduced in Malta by the Knights of St John in the 18th century. The fougasse formed part of broader military arrangements that were



View of Ramla Bay from Mixta Cave. Photo: M. Saliba



View of the Comino Islands and Northern Malta from near Ta' Kenuna Tower. Photo: M. Saliba

designed to protect the shores of the Maltese islands against invasion. Carved out in the rock, the Fougasse-Perrier (as it is technically known) is a sort of large well dug close to the shoreline that was cut at a 45-degree angle. Technically, this hollow was shaped to simulate a mortar and designed to fire a huge mass of stone boulders. The objective was to shower about 300 boulders of various sizes to hit the enemy ships and boats intent on disembarking their troops at a nearby bay. In Gozo it is believed that there were fourteen of these defensive systems, however most of them have been destroyed.

Several hundred feet below lies Ramla Bay, where the sea is a deep iridescent blue and the sand a distinctive fiery orange. In the middle of the bay there is a statue of the Holy Mary Star of the Sea and behind the beach are swathes of dunes and mature tamarisk trees. High up on the opposite side lies Calypso's Cave, overlooking the bay, which is believed to have housed the nymph in Homer's Odyssey. Far away to the west one can see the *Qolla s-Safra* (Marsalforn) jutting out into the blue sea. Ramla Bay was mentioned by the Sunday Times of London as one of the best beaches in Europe.

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Il-Campus*

ANTON TABONE

Iċ-Ċentru tal-Università f'Għawdex, illum il-għurnata jista' jitqies li qiegħed jagħti hu ukoll identità lill-Għawdex, imma importanti li nirrealizzaw li dan seta' jsehh biss għaliex Għawdex għandu l-kredenzjali u allura jikkwalifika li jhaddan fih Ċentru tal-ghola istituzzjoni edukattiva tal-pajjiż li hija propju l-Università. Wieħed irid jikkunsidra li iċ-Ċentru m'ilux tant snin jiffunzjona fil-gżira. Infakkar li

kien infetaħ uffiċjalment fil-post fejn jisab illum f'Mejju 1996, għalkemm beda joperaminerba' snin qabel sa mis-sajf tal-1992. Fi Frar 1993 ingħata bidu tal-ewwel kors li wassal għall-Baċellerat fl-Arti (B.A.) f'sala tal-Iskola Sekondarja Sir M. A. Refalo fir-Rabat. Dak kien post temporanju sakemm gie rinnovat u kkonvertit b'sengħa kbira l-bini tal-Lazzaret, kif insibuh hawn Għawdex, fi triq Mgarr, ix-Xewkija. Ta' min isemmi wkoll



L-eks Prim Ministru u eks President tar-Repubblika Dott. Eddie Fenech Adami waqt l-inawgurazzjoni tal-bini l-gdid fix-Xewkija.

* Dan l-artiklu gie ippublikat għall-ewwel darba f' *Il-Hajja f'Għawdex*, Hargħa - Jannar 2009.

li qabel Lazzaret, kien hemm żewġ postijiet oħra li ġew esplorati biex iservu ta' Ċentru. Wiehed kien il-Kunvent ta' Santu Wistin u l-ieħor il-Konservatorju fir-Rabat fejn illum hemm skola Sekondarja tal-Bniet. B'kollox għalhekk l-Università ta' Malta ilha involuta direttament f'Għawdex għal dawn l-aħħar 17-il sena.

Iċ-Ċentru għandu l-istatut tiegħu li tfassal fl-ewwel xhur tal-1993 u li illum hu regolat permezz ta' Avviż Legali. L-iskop ta' dan iċ-Ċentru skond dan l-Avviż hu li:

- jassisti fil-logistika u f'aspetti simili korsijiet ekwivalenti ta' Grad, ta' Diploma u/jew ta' Ċertifikat li minn żmien għal ieħor ikunu organizzati f'Għawdex
- jorganizza konferenzi, seminarji u attivitajiet simili fil-gżira
- jippromwovi riċerki f'affarijiet Għawdxin u jiżviluppa rabtiet ma Għaqdiet lokali biex magħhom ikun jista jorganizza attivitajiet varji
- isegwi u jassisti lill-istudenti Universitarji Għawdxin f'Malta, u
- jmexxi attivitajiet anċillari mal-iskopijiet msemmija hawn fuq.

L-Avviż Legali jikknotempla li iċ-Ċentru għandu jitmexxa permezz ta' Bord biċ-Chairman tiegħu ikun ir-Rettur tal-Università jew rappreżentant tiegħu.

Naħseb li f'dan il-kuntest hu fid-dover tiegħi li hawn insemmi t-tentattiv li kien sar lejn tmiem is-snin sittin biex titwaqqaf dik li kienet tissejjah



L-eks Ministru għal Għawdex u eks Speaker tal-Kamra tad-Deputati, Anton Tabone waqt l-inawgurazzjoni tal-ewwel kors f'Għawdex.

'University of the Air'. Dan kien esperiment li beda fl-Ingilterra li permezz tiegħu student seta' jsegwi kors universitarju fuq ir-radju minghajr ma jattendi għalih, hlief biex joqgħod għall-eżamijiet. Speċi ta' video conferencing tal-lum. Dak it-tentattiv Għawdxin ried jikkopja l-esperiment Ingliż billi johloq l-opportunità biex studenti Għawdxin jibdew jew jissuktaw l-istudji Universitarji tagħhom minn Għawdex, filwaqt li jisimgħu il-lectures minn fuq ir-radju. Dak it-tentattiv nibet b' kollaborazzjoni bejn l-Università, il-Kunsill Ċiviku ta' Għawdex u sa ċertu punt mill-Ministeru tal-Edukazzjoni. Fuq quddiem nett minn naħa tal-Università kien hemm il-Professor Ġużè Aquilina, Għawdxin bħalna li dak iż-żmien kien Viċi Rettur, u missieri bħala il-President tal-Kunsill Ċiviku.

Iżda dak it-tentattiv kien donnu destinat li jfalli għax nifhem jien, ma kienx hemm biżżejjed heġġa minn kullimkien, u anki għaliex iċ-ċirkostanzi politiċi tbiddlu malli nbidel il-gvern. Xorta waħda nsellem lil daww in-nies involuti f'dak it-tentattiv. Tajjeb li jiġi registrat ukoll li propju f'dak iż-żmien, jiġifieri fl-1969, għall-ewwel darba il-Gvern beda jgħati allowance lil kull student Għawdxin li jidhol fl-Università f'Malta b'hekk jinkoragixxi liż-żagħżagħ Għawdxin isiru studenti universitarji huma ukoll. Dan kien prinċipju gdid li ddaħhal u kompla jiġi segwit sal-gurnata tal-lum. Jiġifieri li l-Gvern hassu obligat li jwieżen lill-istudenti gejjin minn Għawdex biex itaffilhom l-ispejjeż addizzjonali li jesperjenzaw, u b'hekk l-Università ssir ukoll tagħhom.

Kellhom jgħaddu kważi erbghin sena sabiex jerga jsir tentattiv ieħor din id-darba għal ftuh ta' Ċentru f'Għawdex li fortunatament din id-darba irnexxa. Irnexxa għax iż-żmenijiet jitbiddlu kif ukoll iċ-ċirkustanzi. Definitivament il-klima din id-darba kienet wisq iżjed akkoljenti u konduċenti għal proposti ta' din in-natura. Għawdex kien stmat iktar u aħjar, imma fuq kollox kien beda jgawdi minn doża ta' awtonomija bis-saħħa tal-Ministeru tiegħu u għalih, li kien twaqqaf fih ftit ta' snin qabel. Il-proposta kienet giet varata fil-Kabinett u bl-arti jew bis-saħħa tal-perswazzjoni giet navigata għal gol-port. Irrid ngħid li il-proposta kellha alleat qawwi fir-Rettur ta' dak iż-



Il-Professur Peter Serracino Inglott, eks Rettur tal-Università ta' Malta waqt l-inawgurazzjoni tal-bini l-ġdid fix-Xewkija.

zmien Fr Peter Serracino Inglott, li fih sibt spalla zonqrija. Kellu il-fortuna ukoll li iċ-Ċentru sab min imexxi bni dem li għaliha waqa' mis-sema, sakemm sirt naf li kien avviċinat mir-Rettur. Qed nirriferi għal Professur Lino Briguglio li fehem mill-ewwel l-eżiġenzi reġjonali tal-proġett kollu u hass fih is-sens ta' storja fl-introduzzjoni tal-edukazzjoni terzjarja ġo Ghawdex.

Fil-jum tal-inawgurazzjoni tal-post il-ġdid, niftakarni ngħid fid-diskors li għamilt li dik iċ-ċerimonja kienet verament holma li saret realtà. Komplejt li dak li konna qed nassistu għalih f'dik l-ghodwa kien akkwist ta' dak li hu sew li jsir, għax jixraq li jsir u jista' jsir. Tannejt imma, li jrid ta' bilfors ikollok fidi kbira f'dak li temmen fih b'konvinzjoni totali u assoluta, għaliex żgur li tiltaqa' ma hafna Tumasijiet fi triqtek, speċjalment jekk dik it-triq twasslek Ghawdex. Issuktajt ngħid li l-proposta ta' Gozo Centre tal-Università setgħet fil-bidu dehret bħala wahda pretenzjusa jekk mhux ukoll prużuntusa għal min lil Ghawdex ma jafux, jew ma jafux biżżejjed. Imma għal darb'ohra gie ippurvat li f'Ghawdex hemm wisa' għall-inizzjattivi godda u kuraġġjużi li huma sostenibbli, anzi li f'hafna każi jifilhu jsostnu lilhom infushom.

Argumentatjt li l-involviment tal-Università fl-affarijiet ta' Ghawdex kien pass mill-iktar importanti u sinifikattiv għall-emanċipazzjoni tal-gżira Ghawdxija fil-hajja nazzjonali. Anzi bl-involviment tagħha, l-Università tat sinjal lill-

Istituzzjonijiet u Organizzazzjonijiet Nazzjonali biex huma wkoll jagħmlu kuraġġ u jmiddu riglejhom fuq Ghawdex tagħna ha jagħmluh tagħhom ukoll.

Illum nistgħu nħarsu lura b'sodisfazzjon shih u nsellmu lill-mijiet ta' studenti Ghawdxin li gradwaw, kisbu diploma jew ċertifikat u jew segwew korsijiet fiċ-Ċentru matul is-snin li dan iċ-Ċentru u l-arrangamenti ta' qablu ilhom jiffunzjonaw f'Ghawdex. Jalla jkompli jitkattar l-ghadd ta' studenti u ta' korsijiet, anki kif diġà qed isir, permezz ta' programmi ko-finanzjati mill-UE. Niehu l-opportunità biex insellem minn qalbi lill-kollaboraturi kollha u lil kull min b'xi mod ikkontribwixxa biex jgħamel din il-holma sabiha ssir isbah.

Ir-rakkomandazzjonijiet tiegħi huma li l-Board jiltaqa' iktar ta' spiss u jsegwi mill-qrib is-sitt skopijiet li għalih twaqqaf iċ-Ċentru u cioè li jkompli fil-programmar tal-korsijiet; li jorganizza konferenzi, seminarji u attivitajiet simili; jippromwovi reċerka f'affarijiet t'Ghawdex; isegwi l-progress ta' studenti Ghawdxin fl-Università ta' Malta; jiżviluppa rabtiet ma' Għaqdiet Ghawdxin, biex jorganizza attivitajiet flimkien magħhom, u biex imexxi attivitajiet anċillari ma dawn l-istess għanijiet. Fl-aħħar l-awgurju tiegħi hu li iċ-Ċentru jiehu promozzjoni u jsir Campus. Il-Campus ta' l-Università ta' Malta f'Ghawdex. Hekk jixraq.

Anton Tabone kien l-ewwel Ministru għal Ghawdex u wara Speaker tal-Kamra tad-Deputati.

The Lace Programme at the Gozo Campus

CONSIGLIA AZZOPARDI

Introduction

During the past fifty years, while observing the decline of the Gozo lace industry, nobody seemed to notice that the weak point lay in the absence of lace education. Lace making was regarded as a means of using up free time during the day in the role of unemployed females from which a little subsistence was gained to help the family income. When the industrial estate in Xewkija opened in the 1970s providing jobs mainly for females, the lace industry took its fatal blow after having already suffered from the surge of mass emigration in the 1960s. After these hard times lace making was implanted as an art taught in special schools and from there its evolution started to create awareness.

During the 1990s, the then Minister of Gozo, Mr Anton Tabone was of the opinion that lace making should be taught on an academic level as a subject

at the Gozo Campus because of its particular roots on this island. Mr Tabone also took the initiative to discuss the matter with the University authorities.

As a result, in 1998 the present author collaborated with the Director of the University Gozo Centre to set up a Lacemaking Programme. The aim of the Programme, which has the present author as its coordinator, is to provide lace education to all strata of society, be they workers or merchants, male or female, young or old, to teach the craft, as well as lace design and ancillary studies including lace history. Traditional techniques are taught, as these are associated with Gozo's identity, but modern approaches and design also form part of the teaching programme.

The Diploma in Lace Studies

A University course leading to the Certificate Course in Lace Studies was offered in 2002 at the



Exhibits on display in the Lace Room at the Gozo Campus on Lace Day 2010.



Professor Lino Briguglio delivering the introductory speech at this year's Lace Day held on Sunday 25th April along with (from left) Consiglia Azzopardi, Coordinator of the Lacemaking Programme, the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo and Mr. Anton Tabone, former speaker of the House of Representatives.

University Gozo Centre, and this was eventually raised to diploma level, spread over two years. The course consists of a number of study units on subjects relating to lace, including the craft itself, cultural aspects of lace making (including its history, its use in vestments, and its various techniques in different islands) as well as business aspects of lace making.

The courses were attended by Gozitans as well as by Malta residents, the latter having to cross over to Gozo on Saturdays to attend their lace classes.

In future sessions of the Diploma course this drawback could be overcome by having the theoretical section of the course delivered by video-conference.

The Gozo Lace day

An annual event, which is organized by the Lace Programme in collaboration with the Lace

Guild, takes place in spring and shows the results achieved during these lace courses. On this day, besides the projects made by students, one can see many lacemakers sitting at their pillows at the same time in one place. There are also stands which supply information about local and international lace organisations.

This year the Gozo Lace Day was organized on 25 April. The event was introduced by Prof Briguglio and followed by an address by Consiglia Azzopardi who gave an overview of the works and courses offered by the Lace-Making Programme at the Gozo Campus. Ms Azzopardi stressed on the needs of lace education on an academic level in order to keep abreast with the style of the lace market of present times.

Mr Anton Tabone delivered a very interesting speech about Lace Studies in Gozo, arguing that the Lace Programme at the University Gozo Campus has been instrumental in revising an



Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, presenting certificates to the participants of the Lacemaking Programme held at the Gozo Campus.

interest in Lace, not just as a craft or a pastime, but more importantly as an aspect of culture and an area of study.

The Minister for Gozo, who also attended the event and addressed the audience during the inauguration session, praised the various initiatives taken at the University Gozo Campus and remarked that the collective effort of all those concerned are resulting in more educational services on the island. This includes the Lace Making Programme that has added an academic level to the traditional and artisan value through the inclusion of other related subjects in the course programme. The Minister explained how lace making is considered as one of the unique characteristics of the Gozitan touristic product and how it forms an intrinsic part of the island's traditions. Thus it still retains an economic as well as a heritage value as one of the authentic products of the island of Gozo. The Minister then presented certificates to five students attending the first year of the Certificate course in Lace Making.

On this occasion, a commemorative ten-year book of lace patterns was launched. The book, which contains lace patterns exhibited during past Lace Days, is printed in such a way as to permit photocopying of the patterns. In addition the patterns are indexed for ease of reference.

Consiglia Azzopardi is the Coordinator of the Lace Making Programme at the University Gozo Campus.

The First EU funded UOM course in Gozo

CAROLINE CAMILLERI ROLLS

Introduction

The Ministry for Gozo in collaboration with the University of Malta – Gozo Campus has organised the first EU funded University course in Gozo.

The course leading to a Diploma in Commerce is the result of the project entitled 'Higher Education Courses to Address Skill Mismatches in Gozo,' of Operational Programme II (ESF), Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, the main priority of which is to improve education and skills in Gozo.

The diploma is aimed at improving skills in three key, high value-added sectors for Gozo, namely ICT, tourism and financial services.

Organisation

The aim of the organisers was to deliver all the study units over one calendar year as against the

usual two academic years needed to obtain this diploma on a part-time basis.

Preparations for the course were extensive and started in 2009. Brochures were prepared, applications were processed, lecturers, mostly residing in Malta, willing to travel to and from Gozo, were engaged. Books were ordered for the Gozo Campus library and timetables were painstakingly drawn up to accommodate the busy schedules of the lecturers.

Structure

During the first semester six study units, each one worth four ECTS (European Credit Transfer System), were offered. These were:

- EU Institutions
- Accounting and Financial Control
- Human Resource Management
- Introductory Micro Economics
- Fundamentals of Information Systems
- Introduction to Programming



Diploma in Commerce students attending a lecture being delivered by Professor Lino Briguglio.



Professor Roderick Pace delivering a lecture to the Diploma in Commerce students.

During the second semester the following study units were offered:

- Introductory Macro Economics
- Cost Accounting
- Mathematics
- Introduction to Marketing
- Introduction to Tourism Studies
- Introduction to Management

During the summer months the following study units will be offered:

- Quantitative Techniques
- Foundations of Finance
- Tourism Practices and Principles

Most lectures are offered on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings and afternoons.

Student Work

Nineteen students are following the course. From the feedback obtained so far, it appears that students are finding the course interesting and fruitful. The work involved for students is very demanding. Most study units are accompanied by assignments, which students have to prepare during semester time. In addition students have to sit for examinations in connection with the respective study units at the end of every semester. These assignments and examinations require considerable effort from students especially as being mature students they

have to juggle a variety of commitments including full time jobs and parenthood.

The Bachelor of Commerce Course

Students who complete the Diploma in Commerce will be eligible to join the Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) course where three major areas of study will be offered, Finance, IT and Tourism studies, of which students will choose two.

The B.Com course will also be funded by the EU, and will be spread over three years on a part-time basis.

Unique Opportunity

Mature students, who are employed in Gozo or are raising a family, cannot normally follow courses in Malta, even those offered on a part-time basis, so the University Gozo Campus offers the Gozitan Community a unique opportunity to follow University courses in Gozo. The DipCom and the B.Com courses funded by the EU go a step further in making them more attractive for Gozitan students as the student fees are waived.

Caroline Camilleri Rolls possesses a Master of Arts Degree in Islands and Small States Studies and currently assists in the administration as Academic Coordinator at the University Gozo Campus.

Recent Activities at the University of Malta - Gozo Campus

JOSEPH CALLEJA

The Gozo Lace Day

The annual event “Gozo Lace Day” was organised for the fourteenth consecutive year on 25th April 2010 at the University of Malta – Gozo Campus. As in previous years the event included a number of exhibitions and demonstrations of Gozo lace and talks on matters related to lace-making.

Present for the event were the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the Gozo Campus, Mr Anton Tabone, former Speaker of the House of Representatives as guest speaker and Ms Consiglia Azzopardi, coordinator of the Lace Making Programme.

A large number of lace makers and friends both from Malta and Gozo attended the event. The exhibits included contemporary lace master-pieces and textile crafts. There were a number of stands one of which was mounted by the International Organisation of Needle and Bobbin Lace (OIDFA).

The Gozo Lace Day is becoming more and more popular and one can say that it has now established itself in the gozitan cultural calendar.

End of Semester Examinations

During the month of June 54 end-of-semester examinations were held at the Gozo Campus. The major part of these examinations are related to the courses being held at the Gozo Campus. Some examinations, however, are related to courses being held at the Msida Campus. The Gozitan students following such courses in Malta had the opportunity to sit for the exams in Gozo.

The IOI-KIDS Spot the Jellyfish

On the 4th June the International Ocean Institute - Malta Operational Centre of the University of Malta held a launching event to promote an initiative entitled ‘IOI-KIDS Spot the Jellyfish’ at the University Gozo Campus. This initiative aims to increase awareness, especially amongst younger generations, about the local diversity of jellyfish species, through a hands-on exercise involving the reporting of sightings of jellyfish around our shores and beaches. In so doing this initiative will supply useful data for local marine scientists and tourist authorities through a citizen-science approach, while also helping bathers avoid stinging jellies!



Some of the exhibits at the Gozo Lace Day



Dr Alan Deidun giving a presentation on the various species of jellyfish found in the waters around our islands.

During the event the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, stated that the presence of jellyfish in beaches around Malta and Gozo is a worrying phenomenon, because it not only affects the Maltese but also tourists and eventually our economy. Hon. Debono said that this initiative can be considered as another step in the effort to enhance Gozo as an eco-island.

Professor Aldo Drago, the director of the IOI-Malta Operational Centre, outlined the aims of this initiative, while Dr Alan Deidun, a biologist within the same centre, gave an interesting presentation on the various species of jellyfish found in the waters surrounding our islands. Professor Lino Briguglio, director of the University Gozo Campus delivered the introductory speech.

This initiative enjoys the support of Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), Nature Trust, EkoSkola, the BlueFlag Malta programme and the Friends of the Earth.

Photovoltaic System at the Gozo Campus

As part of the activities in connection with the generation of Green Energy, the University of Malta submitted a proposal for ERDF funding. The proposal deals with the installation of a

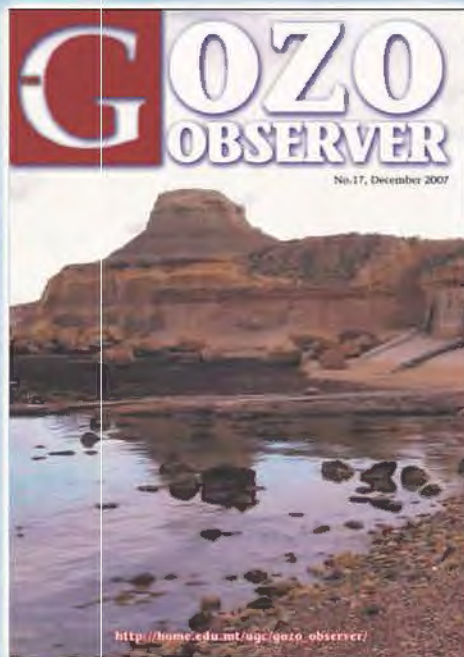
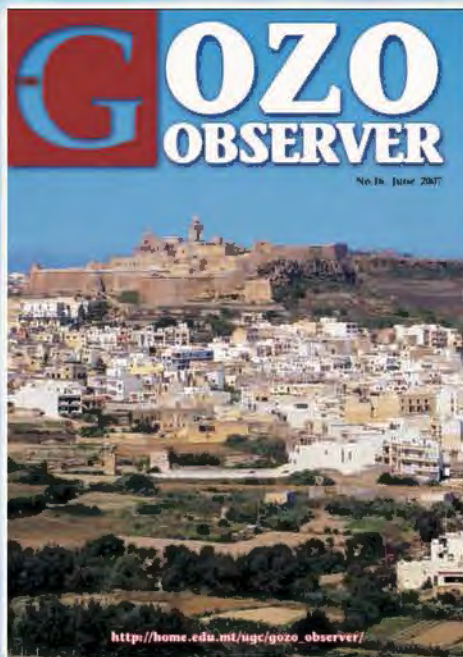
photovoltaic system on the roof of the University Gozo Campus. An on-site visit was carried out last year and details worked out for the area available for the installation of such a system.

It has been established that on the available roof area of the Gozo Campus, it is possible to install about 21 kWp solar panels, generating an annual 35,000 kWh of electrical energy, considering a 1650 kW generation from 1 kWp. This will also contribute an annual reduction of 31 tonnes of CO₂ emissions, considering an emission factor of 0.8782 kg CO₂/kWh. The proposed solar energy generation would correspond to around 75% of the Gozo Campus annual consumption.

The proposal also contributes to the Eco-Gozo objective of the Government and the reduction of CO₂ emissions will result in consequent environmental benefits to Gozitan society.

The proposal has been accepted for ERDF funding by the Planning and Priorities Coordination Department (PPCD) in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Joseph Calleja is Administrator of the University of Malta - Gozo Campus.



The Gozo Observer is published twice a year by the University of Malta - Gozo Campus. It contains articles relating to all aspects of life in Gozo, including culture, education, business, arts and literature. Those wishing to submit articles for inclusion in the Gozo Observer should contact the Editor of the magazine (contact details below).

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