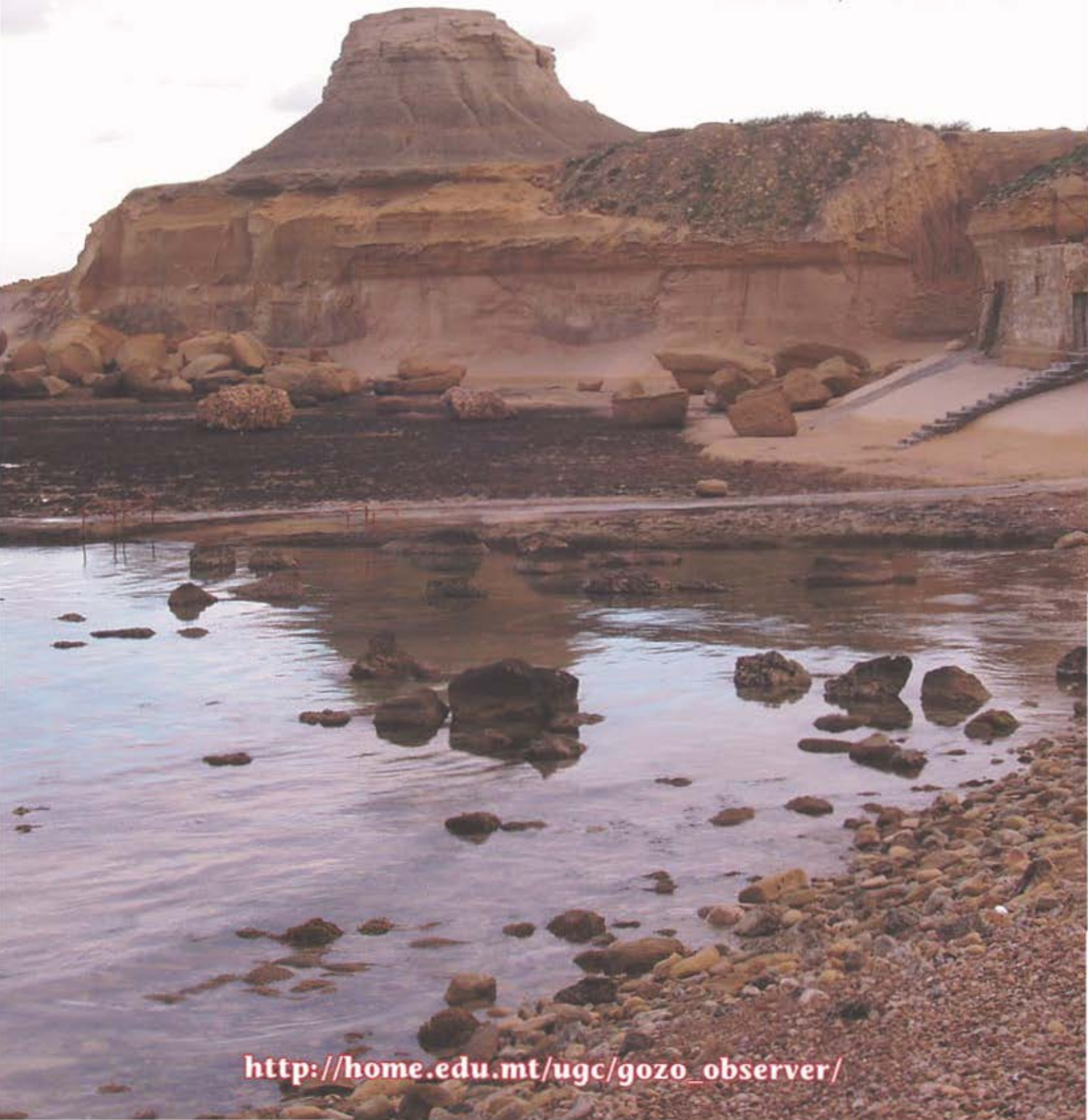


THE GOZO **OBSERVER**

No.17, December 2007



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The Gozo Observer

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Front Cover Photo: Courtesy of Joseph Calleja.

Editorial:

Crossing to and from Gozo

Two items of considerable interest relate to the everlasting question of traffic between the two islands. The first one relates to the economic 'recovery' reported recently, namely that at long last the Gozo Channel company is making a profit from this enterprise. This is no doubt the result of wise management and to some extent follows from the actions taken to ensure that all passengers pay for their passage. An increase in fees, though undesirable, has no doubt helped put the balance in the black.

The other aspect relates to the work itself at Mgarr harbour terminal which for the past several months has been a blotch on the landscape producing all sorts of inconvenience to passengers. Now that the Malta Maritime Authority has completed the work, it is expected that conditions might return to normal. One hopes that we shall not see any more hundreds of sweaty tourists huddled under a canvas tent with hardly room to stretch and an impossibility to escape. One hopes also that the parking facilities, so essential at any terminal, will be able to cope with the traffic which is bound to increase over the years.

Commendable also is the move to encourage senior citizens to make more use of the Gozo ferry service though the introduction of free travel. At a time when pensions seems to have become frozen while salaries are spiralling upwards, it is good to see that this sizable

and rapidly increasing minority within the population is not entirely forgotten.

Environment

Rejoicing by those who believe that the environment should be protected appears to be justified. MEPA has indicated that it is likely to reject applications which many would consider as an unnecessary challenge to Gozo's environment.

The other cause for rejoicing is the rejection of plans for Ramla Bay development, where Mepa also has had second thoughts and rescinded plans for building of hotel complex there.

Gozo's rural character has to be protected against development which aims at improving facilities for a few tourists while destroying permanently its natural characteristics.

On the other hand one cannot but have praise for initiatives such as those involved with the Qortin landfill in Xagħra. The projected park will transform this area into a common entertainment and relaxation ground open to all Gozitans.



V.I.P. Treatment, Election Celebrations and Appointment Ceremonials in early 18th Century Gozo

GODWIN VELLA

Introduction

Life in late 17th century Gozo took a positive twist. The threat of another major Ottoman assault looked appreciably remoter, and the Island's population rose again to pre-1551 levels (Fiorini S, 1996: 74-90). The Gozitans radiated out from centrally located Rabat and reclaimed the countryside as attested by the establishment of six rural parishes between 1678 and 1688.¹

Agriculture was by far the leading economic activity in insular Gozo and everyday life was dictated by its rhythmic cycle. Nonetheless, the Island had also a restricted, though clearly identifiable, circle of well educated and reasonably wealthy clerics, professionals and landlords (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fols. 247-8). A prominent member in this group was Dr. Giovanni Giuseppe Caxaro, a learned priest and an established judge. He served as Judge of Gozo from 1714 to 1720,² and as Head Juror of the Università during the years 1712, 1715-6, and 1719 respectively (Agius de Soldanis, Vol. I:137 – 156).

Caxaro is also the author of *Notizie del Gozo, e serie delli Giudici, e Giurati in detta Isola dopo la sorpresa della medesima con le cose più rimarcabili*, preserved in manuscript form at the National Library of Malta (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fols. 170-258). Included in this early 18th century valuable corpus of information are brief chronicles of the Gozitan reaction vis-à-vis three extraordinary events, namely the visit by a Prince, the election of a Grand Master and the appointment of a Governor. Besides being highly amusing, these

short write-ups offer a few but interesting insights on the social and administrative set-up of the Island. Forthcoming is a free translation.

Vendosme's Visit (Fols. 215-8)

The Grand Prior of France Prince Philippe de Vendosme reached Gozo on Saturday 6th July 1715 at 3.00 pm. He was accompanied by the Bali' De Frenoy and seven Knights. Once landed, the distinguished visitors mounted on the horses made available to them and headed towards the *Convento delli Padri Francescani*³ in the limits of Rabat. Vendosme and his companions were saluted from *Torre Garza* and were escorted by the Island's cavalry under the joint leadership of the Governor's Lieutenant and a Juror from the Università.⁴

On reaching the lower end of the *Corsa dei Cavalli* (present day Republic Street) at Rabat, the Castello fired a twelve-shot salute. Further uphill at *Porta Reale*, Vendosme dismounted from his horse to meet the Governor Fra Didaco Garzia de Mula, the Head Juror and Judge Dr. Giovanni Giuseppe Caxaro, the remaining two Jurors, and a handful of other prominent civilians. Following this quick introduction, Vendosme mounted again on his horse and proceeded towards his destination. Meanwhile, the Governor, Jurors and entourage hurried to the Franciscan Friary from a different street for a second round of greetings, this time complemented by mortar firing, bell ringing and organ playing.

Having entered the Church, Vendosme was guided to a purposely set-up throne with damask upholstery and matching cushions, and after a few moments in prayer he was shown the way to his lodging. The Prince changed his clothes, walked back to the much cooler cloister, and accommodated himself

¹ These are Xewkija (1678), Gharb (1679), and Sannat, Xagħra, Xewkija and Żebbug (1688).

² Judging from Don. Giovanni Maria Camilleri (founder of the Hospital of St. John the Baptist and St. Anthony of Padova – later renamed as the Gozo Hospital) and Dr. Giuseppe Cassar (accused of purchasing and hiding the golden calf allegedly discovered by a peasant at Ta' Gelmus), the wealthy class in Gozo earned substantial incomes from the renting out of properties and from loans. NLM, Lib. Ms. 384, Fols. 1-2.

³ Several of the distinguished guests that visited Gozo at the time resided in this Friary.

⁴ The Università was the regional administrative body for Gozo under the Order of the Knights of St. John. Besides overall governance, its responsibilities included the upkeep of the Island's infrastructure and coastal defences.

on a cosy chair to receive the gifts of the Governor and of the Università respectively. The Governor presented seven dead pheasants, twelve hens, twelve turkeys, twenty-four pigeons and twenty-four younger fowls, while the Università donated a calf, two rams, twelve turkeys, twelve hens and twenty-four younger fowls. On his part, Vendosme gave a cash donation of two *doppie* to each of the two servants who delivered the said gifts.

The main purpose of Vendosme's trip to Gozo was to assess the Island's fortifications,⁵ and his visit to the Gran Castello turned out to be a golden opportunity for the staging of another symbolic ceremony synonymous with V.I.P. treatment. The Governor welcomed the Prince on the narrow bridge just outside the main gate and presented him the Castello's keys. Likewise, in the eventuality that he decided to visit the towers of *Mars 'ilforno*, *Dueira* and *Scilendi*, the *Comandante dell'Artiglieria* instructed the *Capi Mastri* to salute the distinguished guest with five, three and two shots respectively.

During his one-week stay, Vendosme and his companions surveyed all extant fortifications on the Island, and advised the Order to strengthen the coastal defences with the construction of five new batteries or redoubts.⁶ These were to be surrounded by a ditch and equipped with a garrison room and a gunpowder magazine, and were to be sited at *Colla il baida* (one on each side of the peninsula), two at *Mars 'ilforno* (at the centre of the bay and at the back of S. Paul's church respectively), and another at the centre of *Porto della Ramla*. Besides, the two batteries constructed by the Bali Iradano Geronda at Ramla (left) and at Marsalforn (S. Mary Point) were to be enhanced with the excavation of a surrounding ditch and the construction of a garrison room and a gunpowder magazine. The proposed works were entrusted to *Mastro Domenico Azzupardi Castellano della Torre di Mars 'ilforno*.⁷

⁵ The Maltese Islands were overtaken by strong rumours of another Turkish attack and the Gozitan fortifications were evaluated first by Bali Iradano Gironda and eventually by Prince Philippe de Vendosme.

⁶ Generally speaking, batteries consist of circular, semicircular, star-shaped or rectangular low-lying structures situated on peninsular sites where it was possible for the artillery to cover a wide area. Redoubts were smaller buildings of obtuse angled shape sited on beaches to offer frontal fire only.

⁷ The payment terms were: 4-palm thick free standing walls @ 3 scudi per canna; abutting walls @ 4 scudi per canna cube; 1-canna thick free standing walls @ 5 scudi per canna; excavation works @ 8 tari per canna cube (if the bedrock turned out to be too hard, the stipulated fee was subject to revision); roofing arches to be agreed upon; roofing slabs @ 10 tari per canna; flooring slabs @ 1 scudo per canna.

Philippe de Vendosme left Gozo the following Saturday. He departed from St. Francis Friary at 6.00 am and received a twelve-shot salute from the Castello. The Prince, however, opted to proceed towards Mgarr without the escort of the Island's cavalry.

Zondadari's Election (Fol. 251)

Grand Master Ramon Perellos y Roccaful whose last will allocated a generous sum of 500 scudi for distribution amongst the Gozitans living in poverty, passed away on Wednesday 10th January 1720 at 9.30 am. Three days later the Order elected as his successor, 64th Grandmaster and 23rd Prince of Malta and Gozo, the Bali Marcantonio Zondadari from the *Langue* of Italy.



Grand Master Marcantonio Zondadari.

The news reached Gozo that same day. Head Juror and Judge Giovanni Giuseppe Caxaro, who was also in command of the Island in the absence of the Governor Renato De Marbeuf, ordered the immediate firing of all mortars and of seven canons from the Castello. A replicate salute involving the firing of all muskets, seven large mortars and fifteen



A 1745 pen drawing by the Capuchin Friar L. Bartolo. Note the *scala* leading up from the *piazza del tocco* to the *Castello* and the Governor's residence next to the *Chiesa Collegiata* or *Matrice Chiesa*.

canons was executed in the evening from the same Castello. The latter was paid for by Caxaro himself, who financed also the lighting up of the facades of his private house and of the Governor's residence for three consecutive nights. The other Jurors and prominent citizens followed Caxaro's initiative and placed decorative lights on the windowsills of their homes during the same nights. Apparently, no celebrations of this scale were ever held on previous elections.

DeGuast Appointment (Fols. 252-3)

Fra Michele De Guast from the *Langue* of Provence was appointed Governor of Gozo by virtue of a Magistral Decree dated 22nd January 1720. His lieutenant, the novice knight de Maraghet, hailed from the same *Langue*. The new appointees reached Gozo the following February 1st, and were received at Mgarr by the Fiscal Juror Dr. Marcello Hellul Cardona and by the Island's Cavalry. De Guast was accommodated in a sedan chair and escorted to the *piazza del Tocco* at Rabat. Once there, more precisely at the foot of the *scala* leading up to the Castello, the new Governor and his Lieutenant made the acquaintance of the Head Juror and Judge

Dr. Caxaro, the remaining Jurors and all other prominent civilians gathered for the occasion. Caxaro and followers accompanied De Guast and de Margaplier to the *Palazzo Governatoriale*⁸ inside the Castello. The aforementioned Magistral Decree was read out by the Senior Notary and handed over to Caxaro, while De Guast was presented with the Castello's keys. Resultantly, the new Governor became effectively in possession of Gozo and its fortifications. The news was communicated to the rest of the Island via the firing of all muskets, seven large mortars and five canons from the Castello. Soon after, the new Governor and Lieutenant were ushered into the *Matrice Chiesa* to spend a few moments in prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

In the evening, Caxaro hosted a lavish dinner at the Governor's residence in honour of the new appointees. The other invitees were two Canons, the remaining Jurors, the Senior Notary, two Medical Doctors, and Monsignor l'Abevuinz (a Conventual Chaplin accompanying the new Governor).

⁸ The Palazzo Governatoriale was both the Governor's residence and the Castello's main armoury



Several of the distinguished guests that visited Gozo at the time resided at the *Convento delli Padri Francescani*.

A Generous Repayment

Caxaro's efforts to celebrate the election of Grand Master Zondadari and to offer a warm welcome to the new Governor of Gozo seem to have been greatly appreciated. He was eventually promoted to the post of Judge and Auditor of the Sea Consulate that same year, (NLM, Lib. Ms. 142, Vol. VI, Fol. 253), and died in Malta in 1742 (Agius De Soldanis, Vol. II, p 163).

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Gozo: The first and only Electoral District to keep its Identity

JOSEPH XERRI

Introduction

The first constitution to include an elective element, was that granted by the British by Letters Patent of the 11th May 1849. This Constitution proclaimed that “*there shall be within our said Island of Malta and its Dependencies a Body Politic to be called and known by the name of The Council of Government of Malta. And We do hereby grant and ordain that the said Council of Government shall consist and be composed of eighteen persons The Governor be one of the members.... and that nine other Members of the said Council shall always be persons to be nominated or designated by Us, and that the remaining eight members of the said Council shall always be persons holding their place therein by virtue of elections to be for that purpose made by the Inhabitants of Malta and its Dependencies...*” (Malta Government Gazette No. 1665, 23 June 1849: 35)

These Letters Patent empowered the Governor that by Proclamation “*shall also be determined how the said Island and its dependencies shall for the purposes aforesaid be divided in Electoral Districts*” (Ibid: 36).

In his proclamation (Ibid: 43-9) the Governor empowered those in charge of the elections to “*form the Islands into electoral districts and make out a list (of electors) for each district*” (Ibid: 45) Malta and Gozo were divided into thirteen districts, but this division was specifically made just for registering voters and not to return individual members of the Council. According to the same proclamation it was stated clearly that electors in the Island of Malta were to elect seven members, while the eighth member was to be elected from Gozo and Comino. (Ibid: 45-6) Thus Gozo indirectly gained the right to be represented as a distinct district in the Council of Government, a right which was not given to the other districts.

For vote distributing and collection purposes, Malta was divided in seven sections: Valletta: St Paul’s Parish; Valletta: Porto Salvo parish; Floriana; Senglea, Cospicua, Vittoriosa and the Campagna (the

countryside). These were then divided in districts for vote registration purposes. For example Valletta: St Paul’s Parish Section was divided in six districts.

The 1849 Constitution

Under the 1849 Constitution, the franchise was limited to males of the age of 21 years or upwards who were well versed in either English or Italian and who got a certain amount of income or paid rent from/for property.

To qualify for voting one had to be male between the ages of 21 and 60; residing in the Maltese Islands, who had in his own name or in trust of him at least 100 scudi (Lm8.34c) in lands or tenements or had a yearly income of the same value from lands or tenements; or held or occupied a dwelling of the yearly value or rent of, at least, 50 skudi or was a partner in a commercial establishment who had the above qualifications. The person eligible to vote had also to be well versed in the English or Italian Language and of good character or reputation

These qualifications limited the number of voters to a very small proportion of the Maltese population. Actually out of a population of about 123,500 only 3,767 were eligible to vote. In reality, the number of voters was less than this due to plural voting, that is the same elector, if he had property qualifications in both Malta and Gozo, could cast his vote both in the Malta district and the Gozo district. The property clause had a big impact on the Gozo district as the majority of electors – 183 out of 312 – who were qualified to vote in this district actually resided in the Island of Malta. Of course this indicates that a lot of the property in Gozo belonged to residents of the main Island and to a certain extent the level of education of the Gozitans.

When voting “*each voter at Malta may insert on his ticket not more than four names, and the seven persons who shall receive the greatest number of votes shall be deemed elected,*” (Op cit: 46-7) while in Gozo electors were asked to vote for one candidate. The vote was non transferable. The elector

had to write the name/s of the candidate/s he wanted to vote for. The vote was not secret as secrecy was introduced in 1861 (Ordinance No 1 of 1861 – Malta Government Gazette, No. 2097. 13th December 1861: 319).

Those residing in Malta did not even have to bother to cross to Gozo to vote, as policemen on election day carried the ballot boxes to the electors houses to collect the votes, although a ballot box was always available at certain police stations, in the case of Gozo, at the Victoria Police Station, and in other Police stations in Malta. Ordinance No IX of 1865 decreed that when elections were held in the Gozo district only, the ballot boxes at the Police Station were limited to those in Victoria, Gozo, Valletta and Mdina.

The first elections were held between the 16th and 20th August 1849. 88 percent of the eligible voters (3,315 out of 3,767) cast their vote. Dr Adrian Dingli with 117 votes was elected as the first elected member for Gozo in the Council of Government of Malta. Dingli made a name for himself as Crown Advocate, and became a renowned legislator. He was appointed Chief Justice and in 1860 was decorated with Knighthood.



Sir Adrian Dingli - First Council Member to represent the Gozo District.

The 1887 “Knutsford” Constitution

The electoral division set by the 1849 Constitution, was kept for almost forty years. In 1887, a new Constitution, the “Knutsford” Constitution, was granted to the Maltese Islands. The 1887 Constitution was granted by Letters Patent of 12th December 1887. The Council of Government was made up of the Governor and 20 members: 6 were official

members, while 14 were elected. However only 10 of these were to be elected by general electors as the other four were to represent (one each) the clergy, the nobility, the University graduates and the merchants (members of the *Borsa di Commercio*).

The vote qualifications were more or less those set by letters Patent of the 2nd March 1883 which had done away with the literacy clause thus allowing illiterate males to vote but kept the property clause. (Letters Patent: The Malta Government Gazette, No 2987: 19th March 1883: 44-6.) All male British subjects of 21 years or over, who either paid at least six pounds rent per annum or who received a yearly income of at least the same amount from immovable property, had the right to vote. The 1887 Letter Patents made a slight amendment to this as the income could be also be derived in the name of the wife. This meant that while females were not qualified to vote, their income could help their husbands to become electors. This raised the number of electors from 2,400 to 10,637.

The 1887 Letters Patent just established that nine of the elected members were to be returned by electors in the Island of Malta, and one from Gozo. However subsequent letters patent – those of the 19th March 1888 (the first election under the new Constitution having just been held a few days previously from the 1st to the 3rd March 1888), stated that “*The Island of Malta and its Dependencies shall be divided into ten electoral districts for the purpose of the election of the members of the Council of Government by the general electors....*” (Malta Government Gazette, No. 3247, 2nd April 1888: 125-6).

According to the schedule annexed to the same Letters Patent the districts were formed as follows:

1. East Valletta: all of the City of Valletta east of the centre of Strada Forni
2. West Valletta: all of the city of Valletta west of the centre of Strada Forni, together with Sliema and St. Julian's
3. Floriana together with Hamrun, Pieta' and Msida
4. Cospicua together with Zabbar
5. Vittoriosa and Senglea
6. Notabile together with Rabato, Dingli, Siggiewi, Mosta and Mellieħa
7. Birkirkara together with Balzan, Lija, Attard, Naxxar and Għargħur
8. Qormi together with Zebbug, Luqa and Mqabba

9. Zejtun together with Tarxien, Paola, Għaxaq, Gudja, Kirkop, Zurrieq, Safi and Qrendi
10. Gozo together with Comino.

Each of these districts had to return one councillor. The first elections after this division in districts were held between the 24th and 25th September 1889. The number of electors stood at 9,777 out of whom only 3,383 voted (34.6%). Once again plural voting was allowed. Technically the same person could vote 10 times as a person possessing the required property in two or more districts, could vote in each of these districts. In addition he could also vote for the special members of the Council if he was a clergyman, a University graduate, a member of the nobility or a member of the *Borsa di Commercio*. This time the elections in Gozo were contested by Dr Salvatore Castaldi and Michel'Angelo Maria Mizzi. The latter was returned obtaining 287 votes. In the previous election, the first held under the 1887 Constitution, elections were not held in Gozo as the only candidate to present himself was Dr Fortunato Mizzi LL.D, who was of course declared elected. Dr Mizzi at that time led *il Partito Nazionale*

These electoral districts were kept for the next five general elections, the last one being held in 1900. Elections were held in 1892, 1895, 1898, 1899 and 1900. In 1899 the electors were not asked to vote as only one candidate in each district contested the election, and all candidates were declared elected. The same happened in 1900, with the exception of the eighth district where the elected candidate was returned with 107 votes.

The 1903 “Chamberlain” Constitution

At the turn of the century, the local political scene was dominated by the language question as “*the Government persisted in its policy of free choice of language in elementary schools, (while) the elected members persisted in their policy of rejecting supplies for education.*” (Cremona, 1994: 21) This led to the closure of schools and when in 1903 the elected members, in spite of being threatened with the withdrawal of the Constitution (Malta Government Gazette, 22nd June 1903: 621-2), insisted on refusing the education votes, the 1887 Constitution was revoked and the “Chamberlain” Constitution was proclaimed (Ibid: 619-21). The new Council of Government was made up of the Governor, the Lt Governor and 17 members, only eight of whom were to be elected.

This change in the number of elected council members resulted in a reduction in the number of districts from ten to eight. This affected the Malta districts but the Gozo district retained its original form, except for a change of name: the eighth district. (Ibid: 628).

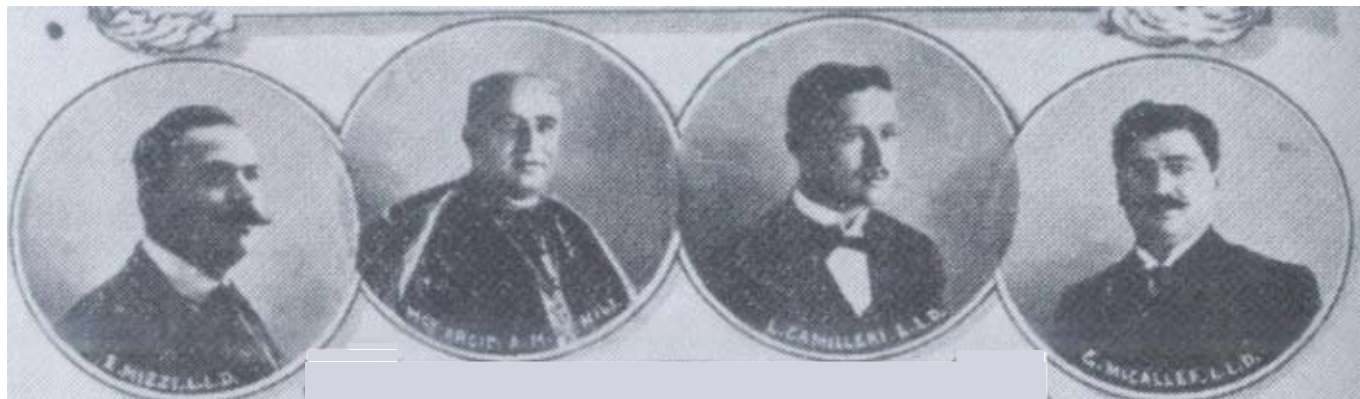
The first election under the new Constitution was held in January 1904 when the number of voters stood at 7,991. However voting did not take place as only one candidate in each district contested the elections. Dr Fortunato Mizzi was once again returned from Gozo. (Mizzi retired from active politics in 1889 but consented to an appeal by the Gozitan electorate (Anon: *L-Istorja tal-Partit Nazzjonalista*, 1972), and contested again in the elections as from 1898 when once again he was elected to represent Gozo). This sort of action was resorted to by Maltese politicians in a number of elections held between 1903 and 1917 as a protest against the oppressive form of the Constitution. Ten elections were held under this Constitution. In the majority of cases, all the candidates or some of them were returned to the Council unopposed and immediately resigned as a protest against the Constitution. In the case of Gozo, voting took place in 1909, 1912, 1915 and 1917. Dr Emerico Mizzi was elected in the 1917 election.

In 1914 World War One broke out, and although the Maltese Islands were not directly involved in the conflict, Malta played an important part as a port with thousands of troops passing through. It also served as the “nurse of the Mediterranean” with hundreds of wounded servicemen brought over to Malta. A total of 27 hospitals were set up with a total of 25,000 beds.

The “Amery-Milner” Constitution

World War One over (1918), Maltese politicians intensified their protests against the Constitution, and with the intervention of Dr Filippo Sciberras, l'Assemblea Nazionale was set up, with the specific aim of requesting a liberal Constitution for the Maltese Islands. This, the “Amery-Milner” Constitution, was actually granted in 1921 (Malta Government Gazette, 4th May 1921).

Under this Constitution the administration of local affairs was entrusted, with some reservations, in the hands of the Maltese Government. This Government was to be made up of a Senate and



The first members of Parliament to represent the Gozo District led by Dr E. Mizzi (first from left) who later (1950) became Prime Minister.

a Legislative Assembly. The Senate was to be made up of 10 special members representing certain bodies (two representatives of each of the following bodies: The Clergy nominated by the Archbishop, the Nobility, Graduates, Chamber of Commerce, Trade Union Council elected by the respective special members), and seven members elected by general electors. The Legislative Assembly was constituted of 32 members.

In the case of the Senate, Malta and Gozo were divided into two districts, while in that of the Legislative Assembly these were once again divided into eight divisions with each district electing four deputies. For the Senate elections, Gozo formed part of the Second District. The Districts were as follows:

1. Valletta, Cospicua, Senglea, Vittoriosa, Floriana, Sliema, St Julians, Pieta', Msida and Hamrun.
2. Mdina and the rest of the villages in Malta, Gozo and Comino.

However it retained its identity in the case of the Legislative Assembly, as together with Comino it formed the Eighth District.

Meanwhile the number of electors had grown considerably as the vote was granted to all males of 21 years or over who could either read and write (of course in English or Italian) or who had the required property. Those males who had an income, in their or their wife's name, of not less than five pounds per annum from immovable property or from other capital, or who paid not less than 5 pounds in rent annually qualified to vote. The Proportional Representation System by the transferable single vote (the system which we still use today) was introduced as from the first elections held in 1921.

Actually the number of electors for the Legislative Assembly for the Eighth District was 3114 of whom

2800 voted in the first elections which were held on the 18th and 19th October 1921. All the members returned came from the same party: the *Partito Democratico Nazionale*. The Partito Democratico Nazionale led by Dr Enerico Mizzi contested the Gozo district only. The election of all the members in one district by the same party is an all time record.

The 1939 "MacDonald" Constitution

Gozo lost its identity as a district in 1939 when a new constitution, (granted by Letters Patent of the 14th February 1939), the "MacDonald" Constitution, was granted to Malta. This Constitution was a retrograde step in Malta's Constitutional Development as once again a Council of Government was set up. This was made up of 20 members under the presidency of the Governor. Only ten of the members were to be elected five from each of the two districts. Gozo formed part of the Second District (Ordinance No XIX of 1939, Malta Government Gazette, (Suppl) XLVIII, 1st April 1939: 464). The Second District consisted of: Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Dingli, Għargħur, Gżira, Hamrun, Lija, Marsa, Mdina, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Naxxar, Pieta', Rabat, Sliema, St Julians, St Paul's Bay, St Vennera, Gozo and Comino.

The 1947 "MacMichael" Constitution.

Gozo once again became a district on its own under the 1947 "MacMichael" Constitution. This followed more or less the lines of the 1921 Constitution (The Malta Government Gazette, 10th September 1947: 962-78). However it did away with the bicameral system as the Senate was abolished. The number of deputies was raised from 32 to 40. In virtue of Section 11 of the same Constitution, the number of districts was again set at eight, with each district now

returning five deputies instead of four. Gozo along with Comino was retained as the Eight District. (The Malta Government Gazette, 10th September 1947: 979).

The 1947 Constitution did away with the education, sex and property qualification, as all males and females who were 21 years old or more could vote. Actually a Bill extending suffrage to females was introduced in the Council of Government on the 2nd January 1947 (Malta Government Gazette, 3rd January 1947: 7). Plural voting had been abolished in 1939. (It is interesting to note that in Britain this was totally abolished in 1948). Thus due to the granting of universal suffrage, the number of eligible electors in the Gozo district increased considerably, from 3,693 in 1921 to 13,400 in 1947 (Report on the Working of the Electoral Registry for the Year 1947-48 in Reports on the Working of the Government departments 1947-48: 229). This was made up of 6311 males and 7089 females.

The first elections under the new Constitution were held between the 26th and the 28th October 1947. In the Gozo District the voters turn out was quite high as 10,527 out of 13,400 (78.56%) electors cast their vote. The major parties failed to elect any deputies from Gozo, as three of the members returned were from the Gozo Party, while the other two belonged to the Jones Party. As in the case of the 1921 election this was a record, as it was the only time in post 1921 electoral history that the major political parties did not manage to elect deputies from the Gozo District.

The 1961 “Blood” Constitution

The next major change in district formation came about in 1962 with the granting of the “Blood” Constitution. This was granted by the Malta (Constitution) Order in Council (1961) on the 24th October 1961. This time the number of members of the Legislative Assembly was raised to 50, while the number of districts was increased by two.

Gozo still kept its identity as a district, the only change being that it was now called the Tenth Electoral District. The number of voters compared to 1947 had increased by over a thousand – from 13,400 to 14,612. This was not due to any change in the franchise but to the post war increase in population.

In the first elections held under this Constitution (17th to 19th February 1962), 92.11 per cent (13,459 out of 14,612) of the Gozo electorate cast its vote returning three Nationalist candidates and two members of the Nationalist Democratic Party.

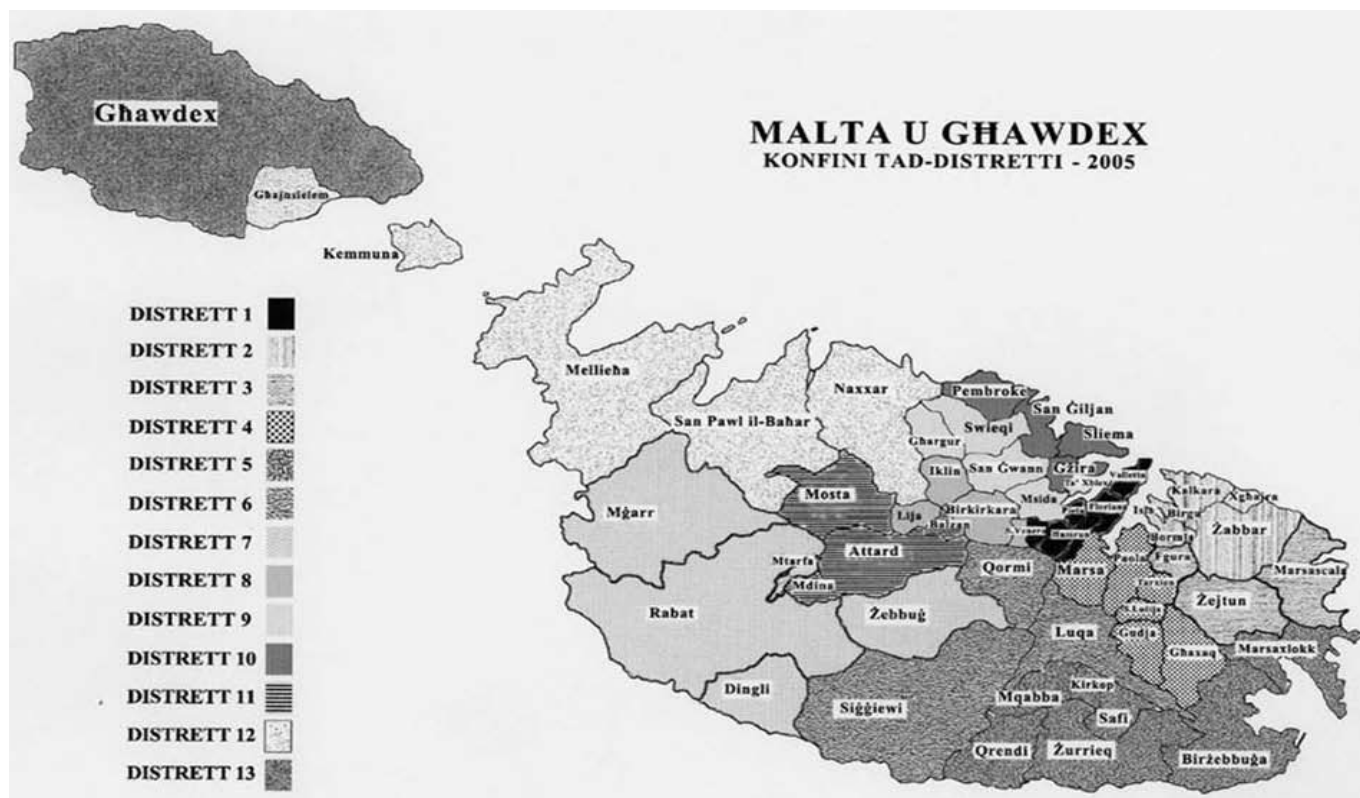
Due to the increase in the number of electors in certain districts, the Government, by Act XXVI of 1970, increased the number of members of Parliament by five; however the number of districts was kept at ten. This meant that some districts were to elect six instead of five members. Gozo was not effected by this change. An additional member was allocated to the Second, Third, Seventh, Eight and Ninth Districts.

The 1974 Republic Constitution

The 1974 Republic Constitution brought about important reforms in the electoral system amongst which, the regular revision of the electoral boundaries by the electoral commission. This Commission was actually set up by the Independence Constitution. The number of electors in each of the districts had to be reasonably equal. Article 62 (4) of the Constitution stated that the number of voters in each district, when divided by the number of members elected from the same district, would be as reasonable as possible, equal to the national quota which is derived from the number of registered electors for the whole Islands divided by the number of members to be returned to Parliament.

In accordance with this article, the Electoral Commission in February 1976 changed the electoral boundaries raising the number of districts from ten to thirteen. Once again the only change to the Gozo District was a change in the name, Gozo and Comino now becoming the Thirteenth District. The number of electors rose once again mainly to the lowering of the voting age to eighteen in 1974 and now reached 17,282 (Constitution of the Republic of Malta, Section 58: 48).

The number of electors in Gozo continued to rise reaching 23,632 in the 2003 election. By April 2005 the number of electors in the Thirteenth District reached a total of 25,388 when the national media for each district according to Article 61(4) of the Constitution was 23,564. Thus the deviation in the case of the Gozo District was +7.74, when the + or – deviation allowed by the Constitution is five percent. As a result the Electoral Commission in



Malta's electoral district boundaries as they were drawn in July of 2005. The Electoral Commission suggested that part of Gozo (Għajnsielem) and Comino form part of the 12th District. However Gozo retained its electoral identity through a constitutional amendment in 2007.

2005 suggested that part of Gozo, (Għajnsielem) and Comino – a total of 2020 electors) would form part of the Twelfth District.

However Gozo retained its electoral identity as an amendment to the Constitution providing “*that the Island of Gozo and the islands of the Maltese Archipelago other than the Island of Malta shall together be treated as one electoral division and may not be divided between two or more electoral divisions.*” (ACT No. XXI of 2007 : AN ACT to further amend the Constitution) was on the 26th September 2007 unanimously approved by parliament.

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Appendix

The Gozo District Elections Results between 1921 and 2003

Year	Electors	Voted	% Voting	District
1921	3,693	2,791	75.58	8th
1924	3,326	2,954	88.82	8th
1927	4,054	3,167	78.12	8th
1932	4,708	4,318	91.72	8th
1939	23,863	17,897	75.00	2nd*
1945	35,196	14,410	40.94	2nd**
1947	13,400	10,527	78.56	8th
1950	12,931	10,585	81.86	8th
1951	13,644	11,095	81.32	8th
1953	13,061	11,292	86.46	8th
1955	13,414	11,649	86.84	8th
1962	14,612	13,549	92.11	10th
1966	16,928	12,481	89.61	10th
1971	14,783	13,619	92.13	10th
1976	17,282	15,967	92.39	13th
1981	18,705	17,160	91.74	13th
1987	18,575	17,404	93.70	13th
1992	19,645	18,628	94.82	13th
1996	21,164	19,934	94.19	13th
1992	21,822	20,329	93.16	13th
2003	23,632	22,484	95.14	13th

* 1939: Voters for Gozo District 4,764

** 1945: Voters for Gozo District 6,254

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The University Gozo Centre Story - From Vision to Reality*

LINO BRIGUGLIO

Introduction

Fifteen years ago, in August 1992, Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, then Rector of the University, asked me whether I was interested in coordinating university courses in Gozo.

I had the reputation of being a Gozo lover, and I think that was the reason why I was asked to undertake this task. Coordinating part-time courses is not an easy task in the best of circumstances – but the Gozo assignment was even more difficult, since it required finding Maltese lecturers to teach in Gozo. I presume that Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott (or Fr Peter, as he is more familiarly known) thought that the prospect of frequent visits to the Island, involved in this assignment, was enough of an attraction for me.

At first I was inclined to refuse the offer. I was sure that very few lecturers – if any – would want to offer their services in Gozo, given the time and discomfort involved in travelling to and from the Island. Relying on Gozitan lecturers was not an option, since there were very few of them and in any case, most of them worked in Malta. Finding a solution to this problem was a major challenge for me. After giving some more thought to the matter, I decided to accept the offer. Looking back, I am very glad I did so.

The Establishment of the Centre

I was of the opinion that the operation should be organised in the form of a University Institute, with a specific statute, and a Director appointed by Senate and Council. Rector agreed, and he asked me to draft the statute, which I did. The Centre started to operate in late summer 1992, although the statute was formally approved about six months after.

Fr Peter, who, as I learned later on, was being prodded by Mr Anton Tabone, then Minister for

* This is the text of a keynote speech delivered by Professor Briguglio at the inauguration of the Photo Exhibition marking the 15th Anniversary of the establishment of the University Gozo Centre.

Gozo, to open a University branch in Gozo, was himself very enthusiastic about the idea, and he asked me to start the operation by coordinating a BA course. Unfortunately, such enthusiasm was not shared by many members of the Faculty of Arts – they did not relish the prospect of commuting to Gozo after normal office hours. So it was obvious that some sort of incentive had to be devised to attract University lecturers to teach in Gozo.

The solution – like most good solutions – was a very simple one.

We decided to hold the lecture sessions on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. This arrangement worked, because it did not unduly disrupt the work schedules of the lecturers involved. Additionally, this permitted them to combine work with leisure. Crossing over to Gozo every weekend or every other weekend still involved discomfort for the lecturers, especially due to the fact that a two-hour lecture required about four hours travelling and, as often as not, a long wait at the Cirkewwa Quay on Friday afternoons. This, not to mention the frequent inclement weather during the winter months.

The response of the lecturers was however satisfactory, and the Gozo Centre took off, with the first BA course commencing in February 1993.



The Hon. Anton Tabone, inaugurating the first BA course in Gozo. His vision led to the setting up of the Centre and to the transformation of the former isolation hospital into a University premises.

The Protagonists of the Story

The Gozo Centre story would not even have been conceived had it not been for the initiative taken by the Hon. Anton Tabone and Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, who shared a vision which they wanted to put into practice. Obviously, the Centre would not have been established without their seminal role and their encouragement during the initial years of the existence of the Centre. When Professor Roger Ellul Micallef became Rector, he continued to extend excellent support to the Gozo Centre.

The lecturers who accepted the Gozo assignment also played a major role in this regard. It goes without saying that without them, classes would not have been held, and the whole project would have floundered. It is not possible to name the lecturers who have given a contribution to the Centre one by one – because in the course of these fifteen years, the Centre utilised the services of more than 200 different lecturers. As stated, travelling to Gozo from Malta on a regular basis involves discomfort and requires dedication, and I take the opportunity to thank the lecturers concerned for their ongoing commitment.

The first administrator of the Centre, Mr George Aquilina, was my assistant on the ground during the initial years. I could only visit during the weekends, so the day-to-day administration was in his hands. The Centre owes a lot to George's dedication and enthusiasm. Before taking over the Gozo University Office, he was a guidance teacher and he used his skills to help students who followed courses at the Gozo Centre to adjust to the rigours of University courses. I must say I also made use of his guidance skills, especially when I needed to understand the Gozitan psychology. George was also an accomplished carpenter – his contribution to the Centre extended beyond office administration and guidance, and included free furniture repair and maintenance.

However, the star protagonists of the initial years of the Gozo Centre story were the students. The first students that were accepted to join the BA course had made it possible for the Centre to come to life. It is true that these students were the main beneficiaries of the service offered by the University, but it was

thanks to them that an idea was transformed into an institution.

I will accept the compliment that mine was an important role in the success of the Centre. I wanted the project to succeed and I really felt I had a mission to fulfil, namely that of promoting university education in Gozo. But the crucial driving force was that I loved (and of course still love) Gozo.



Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, former University Rector, addressing guests during the inauguration of the Xewkija premises, May 1996.

The Xewkija Premises

As is well known, the Centre moved into its current Xewkija premises in 1996 – four years after it was established. Again the University Authorities and the Ministry for Gozo backed the move and provided the necessary support towards this end.

The Ministry for Gozo was particularly generous in this regard, and made available materials and labour, which, within a few months, led to the transformation of a dreary mental hospital into a beautiful cloister-like building, bright and airy and brimful with good feeling.

Prior to moving into the Xewkija premises, lectures used to be held at the Post-Secondary School at Victoria. We were offered different options as to which buildings to move in. One was a convent, partly inhabited by friars, which I considered to be unsuitable as University premises, for many reasons, not least among which was the incompatibility between short-skirted female students and the

inhabitants of the hallowed convent cells and corridors. I thought that a more mundane building would be more appropriate.

As soon as I saw the Xewkija building, I immediately felt that it was the right place. There were some who were not so keen about the idea of moving into a former mental hospital. The rooms seemed too narrow, the windows were barred with metal mesh for security reasons, the central courtyard was mostly used for dumping old mattresses and broken beds; the floors had an acrid smell. The place was obviously not very inviting. But I, together with other members of the Board of the Centre, saw the potential of the place. We were of course aware of the predictable joke that the place was going to change from one mental institution into another – but this was a very small price to pay for acquiring such a beautiful building. Admittedly, it requires ongoing maintenance, and the shapes of the rooms are not ideal, but we are very happy with this place and are very grateful to the Ministry for Gozo for making it available to the University.



Professor Joe Friggieri lecturing during the early years of the BA course offered in Gozo. Before moving to the Xewkija premises the Gozo Centre was housed at the Sir Michelangelo Refalo Post-secondary School, Victoria.

Life at the Centre

The University Gozo Centre is not an ordinary University Institute. We organise a variety of courses on different disciplines, prepare timetables, organise lecture rooms, approve payments of lecturers, act as the University Office when it comes to applications for admissions, organise logistical support for courses, including travel and accommodation arrangements for lecturers, keep records of students' progress, administer tests and

examinations, run the library and liaise with the Ministry for Gozo.

Over and above, we have to undertake the maintenance and upkeep of the building and of the grounds surrounding it. We also look after the welfare of the students and act as a guidance office. As if this were not enough, we also carry out research on Gozitan affairs, publish books on same, and cooperate with Gozitan organisations on matters of mutual interest. And, in addition to all this, we organise social activities, which I am glad to say, are considered as part of the cultural calendar of Gozo.

Of course, life at the Gozo Centre, of course, goes beyond lecturing, administration and maintenance. We have seen many things happening here. Students have got married during their studies, others have had babies (one student had two). Many found their partners in marriage at the Centre.

The Centre has experienced sad and joyous events, especially when students graduated. We have seen students on the verge of desperation on learning that they failed a study unit and others in a state of jubilation after getting an A, especially when they expected a lower grade.

I presume this is normal for an Institution of higher education – but in the case of Gozo, it became normal because somebody had a vision and found it possible to turn it into reality.

Expression of Gratitude

There are many people, apart from the ones I have already mentioned, who merit appreciation and gratitude for their contribution to the Centre.

The Centre finds excellent support from the University authorities, including the Rector, Professor Juanito Camilleri and the Registrar, Mr Anthony Gellel. We also receive assistance from various University personnel and I take this occasion to thank all those who service the Gozo Centre.

The current Minister for Gozo, Hon. Giovanna Debono, never fails to support the Gozo Centre whenever her assistance is needed. We are also serviced by the staff of the Gozo Ministry. I also



The Hon. Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi “virtually” talking to Professor Lino Briguglio during a video lecture session. Also present are the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, and Mr Joseph Calleja, administrator of the University Gozo Centre.

wish to thank all those who provide the services we require.

The Centre is being very efficiently run – and I often get the credit for this. In reality, the credit should mostly go to Mr Joseph Calleja and Mr Marvin Grech, who administer the place in a very professional manner. They are diligent and well-organised, and have made the success of the Centre their own success. They are very respected by the students, lecturers and the staff of the Centre. They know the meaning of flexibility – in terms of tasks and working hours. They have to work on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings and afternoons, and sometimes even on Sundays. I am very grateful to them for their contribution to the Centre.

The staff members of the Centre also include a cleaner, Antoinette Farrugia, and two handymen, Philip Zerafa and Paul Hili. They double (triple, quadruple) up as gardeners, janitors, coffee and sandwich makers, waiters, photocopier operators, errand boys, flag raisers, and drivers.

Thanks are also due to the persons who served on the Board of the Centre and to the secretary of the Board, Mrs Maryrose Vella.

Epilogue

The Gozo Centre is fifteen years old. It has helped hundreds of Gozitan students to graduate from a tertiary institution. The vision has turned to reality and we are now living this reality.

I feel confident that, for many years to come, the University Gozo Centre will continue to offer its much needed services for the promotion of higher education in Gozo.

Professor Briguglio is the director of the University Gozo Centre. He also directs the Islands and Small States Institute and heads the Economics Department of the University of Malta.

Aspirations of Gozitan Female Students Attending Area Secondary Schools in Gozo

MARILYN ATTARD

Introduction

Should I continue studying or should I find a job? This is the most frequent question that students ask themselves when they reach form five of their secondary education. It is very often believed that there is a difference in the attitudes of students attending Area Secondary schools when compared to Junior Lyceum students. It is often assumed that students attending Area Secondary schools tend to seek a job when they complete form five rather than to continue studying. In this paper, it will be shown that this assumption is not correct, at least in so far as female students attending Gozitan Area Secondary schools are concerned.

The Routes to Tertiary Education

As in other countries, in Malta the educational system is based on three different levels – the primary level, the secondary level and the tertiary level. Both the primary and the secondary level are compulsory while tertiary education is optional. Primary schools are found in almost every village.

Secondary education may be considered to be segmented into two, namely (1) the Area Secondary Schools which are free and for which an entrance examination is not required and (2) the other secondary schools, including (a) the Junior Lyceum which is free but students are required to pass a common entrance examination, (b) private secondary schools, for which a fee is requested and (c) the church secondary schools, which are free of charge¹ but where children are required to take an entrance examination. Students are chosen by ballot at primary level.

Many believe that students attending the Area Secondary Schools, the majority of whom having failed the common entrance examination, do not aspire to proceed to sixth form and then to University, but prefer to find a job as soon as they

complete form five. This assumption has been tested through a study carried out by the present author (Attard, 2007).



Research Findings

Research work on education in Malta often leads to the conclusion that there is a link between educational achievement and the home background of the students. Cachia (1997) analysed the occupation of the parents of students in lower streams and found that most of the fathers had a low level of education, and attended school until it was compulsory to do so.

Mifsud (1997) states that students in lower streams associate themselves with the culture they feel at home. This makes it difficult for them to adapt to the school culture. Another finding by Debono, Debono and Caruana (2003) is that working-class students tend to attend Area Secondary Schools, while middle-class students generally attend schools which prepare students for University admission and prepare them for their future work.

However these findings can be disputed. Research also shows that working-class students have an equal chance to do well at school as those belonging to the middle class. Grima (1997) claims that streaming for students in lower streams may be an advantage because it creates a competitive environment which motivates them to work harder. Students coming

¹ Although the authorities of church schools often solicit contributions donations from parents

from rural areas and working-class students can achieve as much as middle-class students. It all depends on their will to achieve.

Several studies also show that there is a link between the choice of subjects that students take and the job their parents do (Debono et al, 2003). It is often concluded that children of white-collar workers tend to follow University courses more than students whose parents have skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled jobs.

An interesting finding by Gatt and Mula (1997) is that parents tend to give more attention to their sons' education rather to their daughters'. It was found that parents encouraged their sons to do better at school and they saw their sons as being more intelligent than their daughters, even if both boys and girls got the same grades.

The Maltese educational system is based on streaming. Some studies conclude that streaming may be related more to the students' social classes rather than to their abilities (Sultana, 1997).

Sultana (1997) concludes that there is a difference between the teachers' behaviour towards students in different streams and between different schools. In middle class schools, teachers have a different approach with students; there is more creativity and development.

The Careers Report on Gozitan Students (2006) concludes that the most preferred subjects among Gozitan students are languages, although surprisingly there is a higher preference for science subjects when compared to mainland Malta.

This report also shows that gender is a significant factor when it comes to subject choice, especially in Gozo. For example the number of male students who choose computer courses is double that of female students. Female students prefer to choose subjects related to human sciences and managerial courses. According to this report, male students study Accounts, Economics, Technical Drawing and Commerce while their female counterparts choose Home Economics and Business Studies.

The National Statistics Office also states that in tertiary education as in Secondary Schools we find

there is a great division between the subject choices of males and females. Males tend to choose subjects that are related to Mathematics, Science and Technology while females choose subjects linked to social science, art and health care (Education Statistics Survey, 2004: 261-263).

Cassar et al (2004) also conclude that there is a distinction, according to gender in the type of school chosen. For example, females who choose to attend MCAST courses choose Business and Commerce, Community Services and Art courses while males choose Mechanical Engineering, Building and Construction, ICT, Maritime and Agribusiness.

Gozitan Secondary School Students

The present author carried out a study with the intention of obtaining information on the aspirations of female students attending an area secondary school in Gozo.² Students were asked questions regarding their subject preferences, their performance at school, their teachers, and what they aspire to do when they finish school. Eighteen students aged between fifteen and sixteen were interviewed.

Subject preference

Students were asked which subjects they preferred most. The subjects were divided into four different categories, namely Sciences, Languages, Humanities/Arts and IT/Managerial subjects. The Science category consisted of Geography and Mathematics whilst the second category included German, Maltese and Italian. Home Economics, Social Studies, Religion and History were part of the Humanities and Arts. Accounts, Computer and Business were part of the fourth category. The most preferred category according to these students was Humanities/Arts. This category was chosen either because of the teacher who taught the subject or because it was considered as interesting in itself. The most preferred subjects were chosen by the students either in Form 1 or in Form 3. In both these forms, students have to choose two subjects which they would like to specialize in.

The students were also asked which subjects they least preferred. It was found that the least preferred

² Kan. Agius de Soldanis, the girl's secondary school in Gozo

category was Science. This category consisted of Chemistry, Geography, Mathematics and Physics. The reasons given were either because the students did not understand the subjects well or because they failed their exam.

Career aspirations

According to this research, there was no clear-cut tendency in the responses to the question as to whether the choice of subjects followed in Form 3 was related to a career aspiration. About half of the students interviewed had made a conscious choice in this regard, while the other half were not so sure and their choice of subjects depended on their preferences and what interested them most. In many cases, their choice was influenced by the students' parents.

Post secondary study

Surprisingly, according to the study carried out by the present author, the majority of the students interviewed wanted to continue with their education after finishing their secondary education. When asked why they wanted to continue studying, most respondents stated that with good qualifications they would stand a better chance of landing a job with a good salary. The general direction of their responses revealed their belief that they would not have a good salary without adequate qualifications.

It is interesting that the motive is not a job with a prestigious position and personal satisfaction, but an attractive salary. Earning a high salary could mean to such students achieving a high status and a position of power. This leads to material success since one had more choice and could afford to buy expensive objects (Abela, 2000).

The role of women

According to the research carried out by the present author, the students interviewed believed that women should be going out to work, but at the same time should be taking care of the house and the children. Basically, what the majority of the students were saying was that housework and taking care of the children are still the main responsibilities of the mother. The majority of the students also believed that a woman should continue to work after she has

had children, but there were also good proportion of respondents (about 33 per cent) who stated that mothers who do not have close relatives to leave the children with should stop working during child rearing, and return to work after the children start going to school.

The teachers in different streams

The study sought to obtain information about teachers of different streams. Eight out of eighteen of the students interviewed stated that teachers adopted a different approach when teaching different streams. The general tendency, according to these respondents is that students in lower streams are not given as much homework and attention as students in higher streams.

The majority of the students interviewed (72 per cent) stated that teachers preferred to teach higher-stream classes. One of the reasons why teachers might prefer to teach higher stream pupils may be related to students' family background. If this is so, it is likely that this could affect the students' achievement. Some students gave as an example the possibility that those students, who feel that their teachers are not interested in their performance, may lose interest in trying to achieve good grades.

The remaining 28 per cent of the students interviewed were of the opinion that the teachers treat each student fairly, according to how they behave and perform in their exams.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, it can be said that the majority of the students were aware that on the whole, those who are in higher streams are in a more advantaged position. However there was still a sizeable minority who did not express such views.

Some students also stated that schools are not always based on meritocracy and that sometimes social class and social connections are more important. Because of this we can say that although the educational system gives the same opportunity to everyone, in reality the level of outcome is not the same for students with different home backgrounds.

It is likely therefore that class and educational



Kan. Agius de Soldanis Girl's Secondary School.

achievement are linked, and therefore working-class students tend to end up in lower streams, and as a result may not get the best form of education and ultimately the best jobs, because of certain preferences.

A conclusion, which to some may be surprising, is that students in Area Secondary Schools in Gozo, who mostly come from working-class families, hold a desire to continue studying rather than to finding a job when they finish form five. The basic motive for this is that a better education means a job with a better salary.

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Nadur: A Best Emerging Rural Zone for the Maltese Islands

MARIA THERESA FARRUGIA

Background

Located in the east of Gozo, Nadur is set one of the highest hills in the Maltese islands. It has a population of around 4,700 people. The locality offers an interesting mix of urban, rural and coastal areas forming a diverse agglomeration of landscapes and ecosystems. About 87.5 per cent of its land territory falls outside the permitted development zone.

Rich Cultural Heritage

Nadur boasts of a rich cultural heritage. The feast of its patron saints – St. Peter and St. Paul – also known as the feast of “Mnarja”, celebrated on the 29th of June, is rooted in Maltese religious and social rituals and customs.

The village of Nadur holds specific events that have become an important fixture in Gozo’s calendar of

cultural events. These include the Nadur Carnival, the Wine Festival and the Christmas Market amongst others. The Nadur carnival has today become synonymous with the locality and has grown into an event which is attended by many visitors from mainland Malta and by foreign tourists. The event has special characteristics and is characterised by spontaneous activities. Another major event is the wine festival – three days of local wine tasting. This festival is set within an agro-tourism context, which should help to create a tourism niche market. The Christmas market is another attraction for tourists and helps to popularise Nadur as an off-peak tourist destination.

Major Landmarks

The Ta’ Soppu and Ta’ Kenuna towers are major landmarks in this locality. Ta’ Soppu Tower was built during the reign of the Knights of St John (1530 – 1798) by Grand Master Nicholas Cottoner



and has been referred to also by the names Dahlet Qorrot Tower or San Blas Tower taking the name of the two bays lying on either side of the tower. The tower, perched 120 metres above sea level, is renowned for its inadequacy to defend the island against the French invasion of Gozo on the 10th June 1798. Truly, the French Commandant had chosen an inlet between Soppu Tower and Ramla Bay called Rdum 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 the two cannons on the incoming armada. But their efforts were soon neutralized by the cannons on L'Etoile and La Pluvier. Reynier's troops soon landed without any further resistance. The tower remained in operation until 1st April 1873, after which date, no more soldiers were stationed for guard duties there. Since then, it has been abandoned. The other watch-tower found in Nadur is Ta' Kenuna Tower that was built by the British towards the middle of the 19th century. This tower now serves as a telecommunication link between Malta and Gozo. From its top, one can get a panoramic view of most of the island of Gozo, Comino and the northern part of Malta.

Agri-Tourism Potential

Nadur has great potential for agri-tourism. Agriculture in this locality includes the cultivation of thousands of citrus and olive trees within the Bingemma and San Blas valleys. If properly developed, agri-tourism could further integrate the livelihood of farmers and with that of tourism operators, as the valleys offer a congenial visitor experience.

The promotion of agri-tourism in Nadur generates various benefits for farmers and business. Farmers have a wider market for their citrus and olives, while business people gain from the increased visitor flows to the locality. In addition property owners benefit by the growth in demand for the renting of farmhouses and flats in the area. There are also spill-over effects such as the embellishment and conservation of the natural environment the restoration of cultural assets. In addition, the scenic beauty of the locality is exploited for walking tourism activities.

The European Destinations of Excellence Pilot Project

Nadur has been selected amongst ten other rural villages as the Best Emerging Rural Zone for the Maltese Islands, in the framework of the European Destinations of Excellence Pilot Project, launched by the European Commission. This locality has successfully met the required qualities and standards of sustainability, holistic management and improvement, offering visitors an agro-tourism experience. Nadur is a typical example of an initiative that enshrines the principles of economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability. Through the European Destinations of Excellence pilot project Nadur has gained recognition on both a local and international level whilst also setting an example of best practice to other localities. Not only has it led to further initiatives being organised in the village itself but also to the promotion of Nadur throughout the European Union.



The logos in connection with the European Destinations of Excellence: Best Emerging Rural Zone pilot project.

Maria Theresa Farrugia, B.A (Hons.) (Geography), worked as a Project Administrator for the European Destinations of Excellence: Best Emerging Rural Zone pilot project at the EU Affairs, Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate within the Ministry for Tourism and Culture.

A Mum and a Student at the University Gozo Centre *

CAROLINE CAMILLERI ROLLS

Introduction

A dream almost impossible to contemplate? What were the odds of being accepted into a degree course? The opportunity was there. A centre in Gozo, a branch of the University of Malta was offering me the chance to follow a part-time course leading to the Bachelor of Arts Degree on a part-time basis. Was this too good to be true?

In 1999, I was twenty-eight years old and a full-time mum of a three year old boy - Nathan. When I got to know of the chance of being able to read for a degree in Gozo, I grabbed the opportunity. I figured I had everything to gain by trying so I applied. When I was called for the interview I went with much trepidation, fearing that I was not going to be considered eligible to join the course. I was thrilled when I received a positive reply. I started to rally myself up for the upcoming challenge – for a challenge it really was!

Back to the Classroom

Sitting in the classroom with my fellow students on that first day, I had to fight away the impression that I was in the wrong place. Some of them were much younger than myself. Others had children almost my age and I admired their determination. This heightened my feelings that I could actually succeed.

I had not been in a classroom situation for ten years. At first it was full of the usual 'first day of a new school' feelings. It felt like I was back in Secondary School getting to know my fellow students but eventually we all grouped off into twos and threes as everyone found their niche. After a while, attending class became something to look forward to on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. The camaraderie between the group was always present and there was always a feeling of disappointment when the holidays were upcoming because we would not be meeting for a while.

I felt privileged that so many lecturers were sharing their wealth of knowledge with us. I was taught

by some of the best people I could ever hope to meet. They were always there to offer advice and encouragement.

A Major Challenge

But if I believed such an undertaking was going to be a challenge, I was right! Learning to manage time was the major obstacle in the whole experience. At the end of the first year, once Nathan had started pre-kinder, I went back to work in a Primary School. Now I had to juggle a full-time job, a child who could go for hours without sleeping, keeping the house from becoming a major disaster zone and my studies.

The major problem was finding enough time to get the assignments done, to study for the end of semester tests and at the same time to avoid chaotic situations in the house! Keeping a four-year-old busy while trying to mentally sort out aspects from the Iliad and understanding microeconomic theories could wear you down, especially if you are hanging out the washing or cleaning the ever present mound of plates in the kitchen at the same time.

Moving into our new house during the first year was probably not a good idea but unfortunately it was better than paying rent on the flat we were occupying. Digging out my lecture notes and assorted books out of unlabelled boxes and onto a make-shift desk under the stairs to get on with my work was my first priority as my first exams were looming. As I had not sat for an exam in over twelve years it was not something I was particularly looking forward to. However, the determination to succeed was there, and so the exams came and went and the time slowly, albeit hectically, went by.

Managing Time

Eventually I became an expert at managing time. Trying not to deny quality time for Nathan and allocating time for studying and other school work is not an easy task. I had a lot of support from my husband who would make me coffee at all the right times and the cooking was totally within his domain. I would meet some of my fellow students at either their house or mine and we would study together, encouraging each other. And so it went on.

* This article appeared in the commemorative booklet *The University Gozo Centre: Fifteen Years On*, published by the University Gozo Centre on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of its establishment.

During the third year, the routine had become much easier to handle. However this all went pear-shaped when I became pregnant with our second child. Jamie was born on the 25th of May 2002, during the exam session of the second semester. The day before I went into hospital to give birth, I sat for an hour and a half revising History of Mediterranean Civilisation for the exam, absolutely terrified that the baby would arrive a day early! Thank God he did not! I gave birth the next day and I also passed the exam.



A lecture in progress at the University Gozo Centre

Life After School

We sat for our finals in June 2003. A really frightening prospect - but I put a lot of energy and determination into preparing for them. The exams came and went as do most things in life. The problem now was that it was all over. Suddenly my life seemed rather empty without the constant occupation of studying and writing assignments. It is true that I had two young children which took a lot out of my time, but when they went off to bed I found myself wondering what to do with myself. I missed the whole experience – my friends, the lectures, even the assignments and studying. I would sit at the computer wondering what to do!

Once a Student always a Student

During my first year, my Economics lecturer and the director of the Gozo Centre, Professor Lino Briguglio, had said to me that once I started studying I would always be eager for more and would find it difficult to stop. And he was so right! When the Gozo Centre offered a Masters of Arts Degree in Islands and Small States Studies, I jumped at the chance and went in head-first. Many of my fellow students had also caught the bug and we once again found ourselves going through another three hectic but wonderful years together.

Multiple Graduation

Initially I never expected to go the whole length. I imagined it would be too much and I almost gave up after Jamie was born. However since then I have graduated twice. Something I never expected to do even once! In 2003 I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Sociology and again in 2006 I graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Islands and Small States Studies. I never felt prouder than at that moment when I walked up the aisle of the Jesuit Church in the Old University Building in Valletta to receive my certificate, with my family watching, including my two boys who both wanted to be present.

Gratitude and Appreciation

Gozo has various limitations due to its small size, and higher education opportunities are not easy to come by – the Gozo Centre has lifted many obstacles which stood in the way of so many people just like myself who, with so many other obligations, would not have dreamt of travelling backwards and forwards to Malta to further their studies, no matter how tempting the end result was.

I have a lot of people to thank for that. First and foremost the director of the Gozo Centre, Professor Lino Briguglio who, through an unimaginable amount of work and sacrifices, made a success of the Gozo Centre thereby opening the door for so many Gozitans to obtain a tertiary education, and in doing so changed a dream into a reality. I am also very grateful to the many lecturers who had to travel frequently from Malta to Gozo, even in bad weather. They always gave us the best they had to offer. The administrators of the Gozo Centre, Mr Joseph Calleja and Mr Marvin Grech, so efficient and helpful in all aspects, have done, and continue to do, such a wonderful job in the running of the centre. I am particularly grateful for the support I received from my family who had to put up with the lousy housekeeping, baked beans on toast on a good day and arguing over whose turn it was on the computer.

And finally thanks are due to my fellow students, the friends I made during our eight year journey together.

Caroline Camilleri Rolls obtained her degree in MA Islands and Small States Studies at the University of Malta Gozo Centre.

Book Review: Nature in Gozo

MAURICE N. CAUCHI

It does not happen often that one can wax lyrical about a publication about Gozo, but without a doubt the publication of *Nature in Gozo* [Birdlife Malta, 2007] is one such occasion. This is a book that highlights nature at its best and is certainly a mirror showing why Gozo is the wonderful place we all think it is.

Three of the best-known naturalists have combined to produce a beautiful book, profusely illustrated with high quality photos of the flora, fauna and the natural environment of the Island.

Joe Sultana introduces the book with a chapter on *The Nature of an Island* where he describes the geology, ecology and other aspects of nature in Gozo. This is followed by a detailed description of the flora to be found in Gozo, written by Edwin Lanfranco. And finally, a chapter on the fauna of Gozo written jointly by Joe Sultana and John J Borg.

Each section describes in detail each individual plant or animal, giving a short description, with photographs for easy identification. It also points out their habitats and how common or rare these species may have become.

One point made in the *Foreword* by Guido Lanfranco is worth repeating: He warns that Gozo, “is in greater danger of its habitats being lost with all they sustain, because a hasty step in development or one encroachment too many will constitute a greater percentage loss in relation to available habitat area, than if the same thing happened in a bigger country.”

This puts considerably more pressure on those responsible for allowing development to occur, because “a lost habitat cannot be brought back”.

This is a book which should be in the hands not only of every adult in Gozo, but every child

over the age of five. It is a treasure-trove that we should be proud of and for which we should be ready to make considerable sacrifices to preserve.

Gozitans in general have not, in the past, been known to be particularly sensitive about preservation of their environment. It is through the efforts of people like the authors of this book that we are made familiar with our environment.

Hopefully we will be sufficiently stimulated to go out and look around us and admire nature at its best. It is also to be hoped that we, as trustees of these riches, will take our responsibilities seriously and ensure that future generations will also be able to enjoy nature in Gozo.



Professor Maurice Cauchi was the head of the Pathology Department at the University of Malta. He is currently retired in Australia, where he is also President of the Maltese Community Council of Victoria.

Recent Activities at the University Gozo Centre

JOSEPH CALLEJA

Photo exhibition to mark the 15th Anniversary of the establishment of the University Gozo Centre

This photo-exhibition was held at the Exhibition Hall of the Ministry for Gozo, St Francis Square, Victoria. The exhibition contained captioned photos tracing the activities of the University Gozo Centre since its establishment in 1992. A commemorative booklet was also published on the occasion.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Hon. Minister Giovanna Debono who thanked the Hon. Anton Tabone, Revd. Peter Serracino Inglott and Professor Lino Briguglio for being instrumental in setting up the centre in 1992. She said that since then, the Centre has become a sustainable institution in Gozo.

Professor Alfred J. Vella, who also addressed the guests, said “many would have thought that the Centre would just offer a few evening lectures, with some possibly leading to a certificate or a diploma. In reality, the Centre has achieved much more than this. Many degree courses have been offered in Gozo, including post-graduate ones. The Centre, as its mission obliges it to do, has logistically assisted University departments in offering these courses in Gozo and has also offered its own short courses. The Centre has made a very important contribution to higher education in Gozo.”

The Hon. Anton Tabone and Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the University Gozo Centre, spoke about the history of the Centre and its prospects in the future. Their main message was that the Centre was needed in Gozo and that it was a very successful venture.

Mr Tabone said that initially there were many doubting Thomases, but the success of the Centre has shown that where there is a will there is a way. He said that he was particularly pleased that the Centre has been permitted a large number of Gozitans to obtain higher education qualifications.



The audience present during the inauguration.

The Summer Activity

The central courtyard of the University of Malta Gozo Centre was again the venue for its annual summer activity entitled “Woodwinds for Summertime” with The Victoria Clarinet Quartet. The event took place on Friday 31 August 2007. An audience of about two hundred persons attended an unusual clarinet virtuosity.

The Victoria Clarinet Quartet which was established in January 2004 is composed of its four founding members, namely Mario Galea (1st Clarinet), Marvin Grech (2nd Clarinet), Joseph Debrincat (3rd Clarinet), and George Larry Zammit (Bass Clarinet/4th Clarinet).

During the evening the ensemble performed music by Gershwin (Summertime); Rossini (William Tell); Monti (Czardas); Lennon & McCartney (Yesterday); Mancini (The Pink Panther), Pace (L-Imnarja), Elgar (Pomp and Circumstance), (My Way) among others.

The concert also included video features related to the musical pieces being performed. The well acclaimed soprano Georgina Gauci and Michael Camilleri on drumkit, also joined the quartet to perform classical and pop music. The event was very ably compered by Mr Rob Ricards.

Among the guests were the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, Hon. Anton Tabone, Speaker

of the House of Representatives and Professor Lino Briguglio, Director of the Centre. The annual activity organised by the University Gozo Centre has become a popular event for many Gozitan and Maltese patrons as well as for tourists.



The event was attended by a large audience.

Courses

In October four new courses commenced at the University Gozo Centre. These include a course leading to the Diploma in Commerce, a course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce, a course leading to the Masters of Arts in Island and Small States Studies and a course leading to a European Masters Degree in Mediterranean Historical Studies. All courses are being offered by various Faculties and Institutes of the University of Malta.

In November a set of courses commenced at the Centre. These were aimed at promoting literacy and numeracy. The subjects consisted of Basic English, Basic Maltese, Basic Reading and Writing Skills, and Basic Numeracy. Concurrently a set of courses dealing with Poultry Production, Good Agricultural Practices, Pesticide Application and Use also started. All courses are offered by the Ministry for Gozo, and are co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006.

Two short courses, one in 'Geographic Information Systems' and the other entitled 'Working with Children with Dyslexia', were also offered at the Centre.

Award of Certificates

On 12 October the Hon. Giovanna Debono, distributed certificates to 31 candidates who had followed courses that were offered by the Ministry for Gozo at the University Gozo Centre between October 2006 and June 2007. The courses formed

part of a project part-financed by the European Union under the Structural Funds Programme for Malta 2004-2006 European Social Fund. The courses related to Agriculture, Business Studies, E-commerce and IT and Environmental Planning and Management.



The Hon. Giovanna Debono awards a certificate to a participant who attended a course in Agriculture.

Graduation of University Gozo Centre Students

Forty two students who completed courses at the University Gozo Centre received their certificates during the recent graduation ceremonies. The courses completed were those leading to Masters in Islands and Small States Studies (7 students) Bachelor of Commerce (10 students), Diploma in Commerce (13 students) and Diploma in Lace Studies (12 students).

The students who graduated in Masters in Islands and Small Studies are Marvic Cassar, Mark Cini, Atanasio Degiorgio, Daren Fava, Jennifer Portelli, George Refalo, and Marie-Josette Vella Magro.



The Gozitan and Maltese graduates in MA in ISSS, with Professor Lino Briguglio, Director, Islands and Small States Institute.

The students who graduated in Bachelor of Commerce are Joseph Agius, Francis Borg, Violet

Camilleri, Felix Cefai, Liliana Curmi, Maria Grech Calafato, Cheryl Grech, Christine Grima, Diane Grima and Vicky Xuereb.



The graduates in Bachelor of Commerce with Professor Lino Briguglio.

The students who graduated in Diploma in Commerce are Karmenu Azzopardi, Marvic Bajada, Mary Bajada, Sue-Ellen Bugeja, Dennis Cini, Simone Cini, Lawrence Formosa, Joseph Mizzi, Michelle Mizzi, Georgianne Saliba Azzopardi, Diana Vella, John Vella and Maureen Zerafa.



The students who received the Diploma in Commerce.

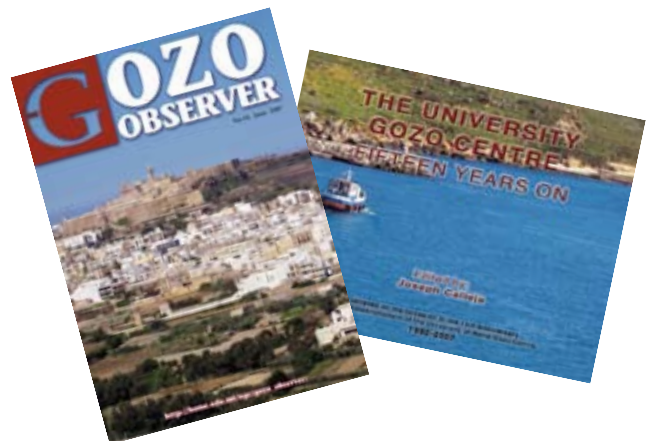
The graduates in Diploma in Lace Studies are Mary Abela, Mary Louise Bajada, Monica Bonnici, Spiridiona Camilleri, Serah Cini, Maryanne Cremona, Anna Maria Gatt, Fiorentina Giuliano, Alessandra Haber, Jacqueline Muliatt, Angela Scerri Cassar and Marguerite Tabone.



The students who received the Diploma in Lace Studies, with Professor Lino Briguglio and Ms Consiglia Azzopardi.

Publications

June 2007 saw the publication of the 16th edition of the *Gozo Observer*. Once again it contained a diverse selection of articles relating to Gozitan affairs. Joseph Azzopardi and Pete Mann wrote about the socio-psychological process relating to the ability of Gozitan managers and business leaders to informally cope with pressing problems. In an article entitled 'A Glimpse into the Commercial and Domestic Life at It-Tokk', Godwin Vella discusses the archaeological occupation levels from the Bronze Age to the Medieval period, uncovered at it-Tokk. In her article, Catherine Vella provides the regional statistics relating to Gozo's economic and social realities, with a comparison with mainland Malta. Professor Lino Briguglio gives an account of the Consultation Conference on Career Prospects in Gozo, organized by the Ministry for Gozo and the Gozo Council for Education and Vocational Training in collaboration with the University Gozo Centre, held in January at the Grand Hotel. Included in this article is the speech delivered by the Hon Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo, during the same conference. Maurice Cauchi gives an insight into Gozitan achievers living in Australia, while Consiglia Azzopardi presents a brief history of the lace production techniques, since the turn of the sixteenth century. Paul Curmi describes the ongoing valley restoration and management of storm water project of Wied il-Mielah.

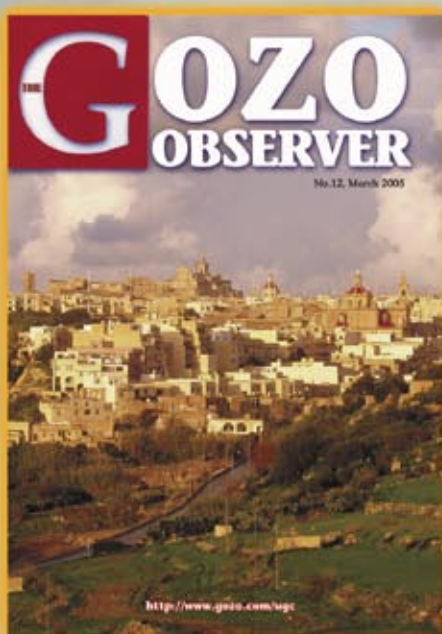
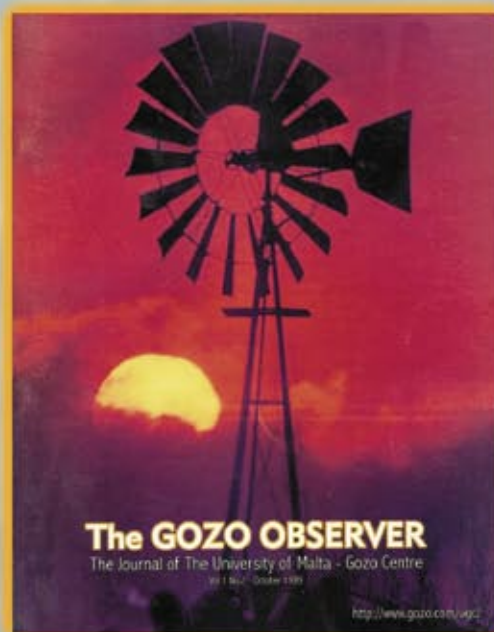


In June, the University Gozo Centre also published a booklet entitled *The University Gozo Centre - Fifteen Years on*, to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the University Gozo Centre.

Joseph Calleja is Administrative Officer at the University Gozo Centre.



The Gozo Observer is published twice a year by the University of Malta Gozo Centre. 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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