

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cause for rejoicing is the rejection of plans for Ramla Bay development, where Mepa also has had second thoughts and rescinded plans for building of hotel complex there.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

