

Editorial: Gozo Festivals

What is the use of festivals? Now that the festa season is upon us, for the next three months we will witness celebrations in different towns and villages in Malta and Gozo where a lot of people congregate to an accompaniment of noise and merry making.

This year a special festival, “Gozo 1234” was organised for the first week in May, perhaps an early yearning for the summer festival season. It was advertised as a special event “no less than 99 things to see and do”. Thousands of compatriots crossed over from Malta to make this a resounding success.

In addition we find individual local councils vying with each other to organise a ‘lejla sajfija’ or other open-air celebrations to cheer up the local congregation and attract others from surrounding villages and from further corners of the islands.

Why do we need so many festivals? There is no doubt that such attractions help to inject cash into

the local economy. There is also no doubt that such activities help to increase the sum total of human involvement and hopefully satisfaction and even happiness with their lives, their neighbours and those who run the government, national or local. As such they serve a very useful purpose, oiling the works of social life.

It is worth bearing in mind, however, that such open-air activities do not come without a cost. Invariably there is a considerable intrusion and interference with the normal way of life which could be of great significance to many individuals.

There are those who are not keen on milling masses or noise gatherings. There are those who fear the forthcoming festa celebrations with their infernal fireworks. There are the sick and the very young who would rather not be subjected to these. In particular there is no reason why any open-air celebration should continue beyond the 11pm limit, which should be strictly adhered to.

