

THE MALTA  
**INDEPENDENT**  
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# Massive boost for Gozo

The news that the Malta Environment and Planning Authority granted the necessary permits for a cruise liner mooring point off Xlendi must be music to the ears for the Gozo Tourism Association.

The government has stated its intention to make Gozo a tourism destination in its own right. The links to Gozo have improved dramatically in past years with vast improvements to the Gozo Channel terminals, quays and the service itself — especially on the Gozo side. However, as fantastic as the new facilities are, Cirkewwa is still a shambles as the project to upgrade the terminal ground to a halt — pending approval for co-financing from the European Union.

The air link to Gozo also finally resumed after the helicopter service had stopped, replaced with a float plane service. These facilities make Gozo much more accessible, but there still remains the problem of seasonality. If the weather is bad, then tourists cannot make it over to Gozo. This might not be such a problem during high season, but once the shoulder months come around — it becomes an affecting factor.

All this said, Gozo cannot be a separate tourist destination to Malta unless it has its own access

points. Merits of an air terminal in Gozo will not be discussed in this editorial as that is an argument in itself.

The new berthing facilities will allow cruise ships to visit Gozo directly. Different cruise companies cater for different travellers and perhaps those with an older target market might deem Gozo to be a more suitable destination than Malta. The off-shore berthing system works well, for example at Ville Franche on the French Riviera. Passengers are taken to shore by tender and then have the day to explore or go on guided tours. This could possibly be another source of income as the relevant authorities could seek to launch water taxi services to the various beauty spots around the island that are only accessible by sea. Water taxis could also serve Malta if needs be, if some passengers decide that they want to see the larger island.

Whatever the case may be, Gozo will surely stand to benefit from this move and the authorities should be urged to place more mooring points around the island. The authorities have already said that there are plans to build a quay off the main harbour and this is also good news.

The whole cruise line strategy needs to be imple-

mented as quickly as possible — both with the development of Marsamxett Harbour, the conversion of berths in Cottonera and extension of facilities in the Grand Harbour.

As it stands, air travel is getting more and more expensive and the cruise liner market is growing exponentially — despite fears that the industry would be hit from a duty free aspect in the run up to joining the EU. Malta has proved itself to be a viable, strategic and popular destination for cruise liners and we really need to capitalise on this market and stay on top of the situation.

Specific to Gozo, however, the authorities must also ensure that the public transport infrastructure is upgraded significantly. It is a small island, but visitors will still need the necessary links to get from one site to another. The authorities must not be short sighted on this issue — although tours are offered, not everyone is keen on them and some people like to explore places under their own steam. One hopes that next summer, Gozo will be fully equipped to deal with its new visitors — the island stands to gain a lot if it gets its act together. One thing though — let's not over do it and have cruise ships visible from every point on the island.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your comments on editorials, columns, other topics in *The Malta Independent* or any subjects. Only letters that include name, address and day and evening phone numbers and that are verified by *The Malta Independent*, can be considered for publication. Letters are edited for length, accuracy and clarity. Send letters by e-mail to [tmid@independent.com.mt](mailto:tmid@independent.com.mt), fax to 2134-4860 or mail to *The Malta Independent*, Standard House, Birkirkara Hill, St Julian's STJ 1149. Email addresses will be published unless the sender specifies otherwise. Letters to the editor and articles submitted to *The Malta Independent* may be published or distributed in print, electronic or other forms.

### Appreciation:

# Dun Guzepp Bonello (1928-2008)

Last Saturday, the parish community of Cospicua paid its last respects to Fr Joseph Bonello. Fr Bonello's life commuted between the Bishop's Curia in Floriana, where he held the post of vice-chancellor and his hometown parish.

Personally, I had got to know Dun Guzepp at the Archbishop's Curia years back, when I approached his office to ask permission to undertake historical research for my doctoral thesis for which I had just enrolled at the Sorbonne University in France. In his capacity of vice-chancellor, he was the person responsible, together with the chancellor for the upkeep of a great wealth of historical documentation that is preserved at this place. He was always of great help. He did not just help me by literally going into the archives, climbing up the library scaffold

ing to bring me the documents and old registers but also by indicating documents, which he had encountered during the occasional look that he used to give to church registers.

His love for the history of his hometown enticed him to search in the archives for new and unknown information about his beloved parish church. It was not a rare occasion that when one visited him at his office at the Curia, one would find him at his desk full of books and he would be in an inclined position with an old register in hand, reading through its Latin folios to discover new things about Bormla's church history. Moreover, he had the rare humbleness to share his vast accumulated historical knowledge with fellow researchers.

In my regards, he was of great assistance, always ready to answer my assidu-

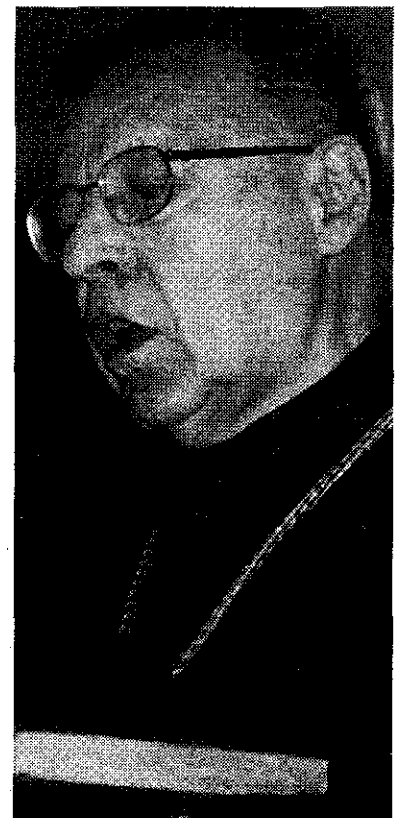
ous queries. For such help I would like to express my great thanks. Then, when I became part of the University of Malta's lecturing staff and eventually Director of the Mediterranean Institute, I took advantage of my friendship with Dun Guzepp to ask him to help my students with their research. He also did it with an expression of great kind heartedness.

With Dun Guzepp, I shared a common interest, the love of our Maltese history. Moreover, as my doctoral thesis was on the parish community of Cospicua, his hometown, this increased the bond of friendship between us. Thanks to Dun Guzepp's interest in history, he also introduced me to the rich archives of Bormla's parish church. This introduction brought about the development of a national project which is seeing the edition of

a number of musical scores by the students of the Music Division at the University of Malta as well as the restoration of a rare Maltese portable organ. It is a great pity that he did not live to see this ambitious project being realised. As the member of Bormla's Collegial Chapter, responsible for the parish church music, he had a special interest in this project.

My last note about this great man has to be towards his greatest love, the Immaculate Conception. The parish statue was for him his biggest source of inspiration, helping the human mind to figure the eternal Beauty of Virgin Mary, which cannot be described by the human senses. Now, that Dun Guzepp is no more in the world of the earthly living, I have no doubt that he is sharing this eternal bliss.

Simon Mercieca



# Congrats and good luck

On behalf of the Nationalist Party Youth Movement, MZPN, I congratulate the Maltese female basketball team for winning the gold medal in the division C tournament organised

by FIBA. The hard work and commitment of these Maltese athletes and the technical staff has paid, we are proud of our athletes.

MZPN also wishes the best of luck to the Maltese athletes taking part in the Beijing Olympics.

We are sure that they will do their very best to get the best possible

results for our country.

**FRANK PSAILA**  
Information Secretary  
MZPN