

# Editorial: The Jewel in the Crown

Since ancient times the *Ċittadella* has been a central focal point in Gozo, the place of government when, in Roman times, Gozo had equal status with Malta. Since then, it has always been considered as being of pivotal importance for religious practice, for shelter against piratical incursions, and more recently for the administration of justice. It has always occupied a vantage point for tourists to admire a unique bird's-eye view of the island not readily available from anywhere else.

One important development that has happened in the last decade is the refurbishing of the whole site to transform it from a grim and forbidding ancient structure into a welcoming venue worthy of a visit by the many hundreds of thousands visiting Gozo every year.

This refurbishment has not only transformed the fortifications into a pleasant walk meant to elicit the historical imagination as it illustrates Gozo history. These changes have been described as having provided 'a very imaginative use of space', as they 'encourage the visitor to delve deeper within the structure of the *Ċittadella*'.

In addition, it has provided impressive AV technology to highlight Gozo's history, including

a 360° *Ċittadella* Show. The result is that visitors are now flocking to admire these developments, and in the process access the other facilities provided, including the previously much neglected museums.

One is not surprised that this development has succeeded in obtaining several awards. It won the Visitor Attraction Award, and more recently, the 'Entertainment Venue of the Year Award' at the AV Awards ceremony in London.

It has now developed into an open-space area for artistic activities and festivals.

At one such recent festival organised by the Gozo Ministry, 'Lejl Imkebbes', some 10,000 people were given the opportunity to enjoy historical enactments and other live entertainment, in an environment lit by 30,000 candles, amid attractive floral designs.

There is no doubt that Gozo is leading the way in providing quality artistic activities, the result of hard work by talented individuals. May this trend continue.

*Maurice Cauchi*

