

THE UNIVERSITY GOZO CENTRE FROM VISION TO REALITY

Edited by
Maurice N. Cauchi

Published on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary
of the Establishment of the University of Malta Gozo Centre
1992-2002

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Commemorative Publication
to mark the Occasion of the
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The facade of the University Gozo Centre premises.



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Foreword

Professor Roger Ellul Micallef

Rector, University of Malta

The idea of setting up a University Gozo Centre was first mooted in 1992, by the Hon. Anton Tabone during a meeting held between the then Minister of Education, Dr Ugo Mifsud Bonnici and the former Rector, Professor Peter Serracino Inglott.

The idea was enthusiastically accepted by the Minister of Education and the Rector, and Minister Tabone promised to help find suitable premises. Within a short period of time temporary premises were identified. The present premises of the Centre were inaugurated by the Prime Minister on the 4 May, 1996.

I have continued to encourage and support the Centre, fully aware of the important educational and cultural contributions it has made to Gozitan life during its first decade of existence. A number of Gozitans have already obtained a degree or diploma after following courses offered at the Centre. They would not have been able to do so had the Centre not been in operation. It is difficult for Gozitans in employment to follow part-time University courses at the Tal-Qroqq campus. The presence of the University in Gozo has made it possible for them to continue with their tertiary education.

The impact of the Centre on the welfare of Gozitan society however does not stop there. The Centre's activities extend beyond teaching. It has undertaken research in various subjects associated with Gozo, including its economy, its social fabric and its demography. The Centre's presence in Gozo has generated an intellectual revival, partly the result of the great number of scholars that regularly visit Gozo to lecture at the Centre.



Professor Roger Ellul Micallef.

I would like to congratulate the Board of Administration of the University Gozo Centre and in particular the Director of the Centre, Professor Lino Briguglio, for the sterling work carried out over the past decade.

Solid foundations have been laid down. I am confident that in the years to come the Centre will continue to grow from strength to strength.

The Ministry for Gozo and the University Gozo Centre

Hon. Giovanna Debono

Minister for Gozo

The University Gozo Centre is now ten years old, and I am very pleased that the Ministry for Gozo has been directly associated with its establishment and ongoing development. The Ministry has given its continuous and unfaltering support to the Centre, since its foundation in 1992. My Ministry collaborates with the Centre in matters relating to logistical support and lecturers' hospitality, in

Hon. Minister Giovanna Debono awards a certificate to a successful short course participant. The University Gozo Centre attracts students of different ages.



connection with the Centre's activities. The Ministry also extends its support for the administration and upkeep of the Centre's premises, and provides equipment and materials for maintenance. The Ministry also supports the production of books which the Centre publishes from time to time and the organisation of public lectures and seminars.

I am pleased to say that this support has yielded very good returns for Gozitan society. The setting up of the University Gozo Centre has been a success story that has further enhanced the educational sector in Gozo and introduced the highest level of education on the Island. Indeed, the ever-increasing number of graduates that followed and are still following courses at the University Gozo Centre reflects the void that the Centre has filled in our small island.

The success of the University Gozo Centre clearly indicates that there are great benefits to be derived through cooperation between different stakeholders. The Centre is now firmly established in Gozo and is providing golden educational opportunities for those who want to take advantage of the services it offers.

It is noteworthy that during the past ten years, about 200 students have attended courses leading to degrees or diplomas offered at the Centre, and about 800 followed the different short courses on a wide array of subjects.

Through the hard work of Professor Lino Briguglio, who, from the start believed that such a project could indeed succeed, as well as all lecturers involved, the Centre has managed to build a bridge between the leading national educational institution and Gozo.

The Centre offers very good quality services and facilities, through which it is fostering a culture of higher education on the Island.

The Gozo Centre Story – from Vision to Reality

Professor Lino Briguglio

Director, University Gozo Centre

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

I had a reputation of being a Gozo-lover; and I think that was the reason why I was asked to do the job. 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 Gozo. Relying on Gozitan lectures 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.

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



Professor Lino Briguglio addressing the gathering during the inauguration of the Xewkija Premises of the University Gozo Centre, in May 1996.

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 later.

Fr Peter, who, I learned later, was being prodded by Mr Anton Tabone, then Minister for 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 going 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. Lecture sessions were to be held on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. This arrangement worked, because it did not unduly disrupt 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 4 hours travelling, and often a long

The Hon. Anton Tabone (centre) talking with Gozitan graduates. His vision led to the setting up of the Centre and to the transformation of the former isolation hospital into a University premises. Mr Lawrence Galea (first left), as the Minister's Private Secretary, was also actively involved.



wait at the Cirkewwa Quay on Friday afternoons – 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 protagonists of the story

The Gozo Centre story would not even have begun 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 support and encouragement during the initial years of the existence of the 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 that have given a contribution to the Centre one by one – because during the course of these ten years, the Centre utilised the services of about 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 following courses at the Centre, who were mostly adults, 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 Gozo Centre story were the students. The first group of students that were accepted to join the BA course had made it possible for the Centre to come to life. It is true that they 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 I had 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 important driving force was that I loved (and of course still love) Gozo.

The Xewkija premises

As is well known, the Centre moved into its current 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, full of light and good feeling.

Before 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



Mr George Aquilina (right), the first administrator of the University Gozo Centre, with Mr Vince Vella, who represented the Parliamentary Secretary for Gozo on the Board of the Centre, between 1997 and 1998.

convent, partly inhabited by friars, which I considered to be unsuitable as University premises, for many reasons, not least of which was the incompatibility between short-skirted female students and the hallowed convent cells and corridors. I thought that a more mundane building was 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, the members of 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 we are very grateful to the Ministry for Gozo for making it available to the University.

A day in the life of the Centre

The University Gozo Centre is not an ordinary University Institute. We organise a variety of courses on different disciplines, prepare

Joseph Calleja (right), the current Administrator of the Gozo Centre, with his assistant Marvin Grech.



time-tables, 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 these we have to look after the maintenance and upkeep of the building and its surrounding grounds. We also look after the welfare of the students and act as a guidance office. As if this is 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.

Expression of gratitude

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

The Centre finds excellent and constant encouragement from the present University Rector, Professor Roger Ellul Micallef. The present Minister for Gozo, Hon. Giovanna Debono, never fails to extend her support.

The Centre also utilises the services of members of the Office of the Registrar and the administration of the University. We are also serviced by staff at the Gozo Ministry. I also 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. However, 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.

The staff of the Centre includes a librarian, Ray Agius, a cleaner, Antoinette Farrugia, and two handymen, Philip Zerafa and Paul Hili. They double up as gardeners, janitors, coffee and sandwich makers, waiters, photocopier operators, errand boys, flag raisers, and drivers. 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 for their contribution to the Centre.

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. Three members of the Board, namely Professor Maurice Cauchi, Revd Dr J. Bezzina, and Revd Dr J. Farrugia have been serving since the establishment of the Centre.

The story of the Centre, of course, goes beyond lecturing and administration. We have seen many things happening here. Students have got married during their studies, other have had babies (one student had two), and still others found their soul-mates here. We passed through joyous experiences, 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 for Gozo it is only normal because somebody had a vision and found it possible to turn it to reality.

We are now living this reality and I hope that, in the coming years, the University Gozo Centre will continue to strive and to thrive.



Professor Briguglio, welcoming Minister Giovanna Debono at the Gozo Centre, soon after she was appointed Minister for Gozo, in 1998.

The University Gozo Centre – A Success Story

Hon. Anton Tabone

Speaker of the House of Representatives

The setting up of the University Gozo Centre was a very courageous, though risky, initiative. Had there not been a satisfactory response from Gozitans for admission to the first course, the experiment would have failed, and this would have probably discouraged further attempts to establish a University campus in Gozo.

The pioneers of this venture, namely the students who applied for the first course offered at the Centre, which led to the BA degree, gave an excellent example of dedication and persistence. Their performance was remarkable, since in their majority, they obtained

relatively high grades when compared to all students graduating BA in 1998. As a result the experiment became a successful reality. Since then, the University Gozo Centre was established, I hope once and for all, in Gozitan life.

The vision that the country's University opens a Centre in Gozo and offers its services directly to Gozitans, had its origin some forty years ago, and possibly earlier. I remember that during the days of the Gozo Civic Council, in the early Sixties, a proposal was made for the introduction of a series of lectures through what was called "The University of the Air" – a form of open distance learning – which was a concept that had just been introduced in the UK at the time. This would have meant radio-transmitted University education, enabling students to follow University courses without physically attending classes. This would have offered an alternative opportunity for Gozitans to take advantage of University education, with the possibility of sitting for the final examinations with other students and obtain University degrees or diplomas.

Unfortunately, this proposal was not realised, and thirty-five years had to pass until a Centre of the University of Malta was established on the island of Gozo. The Centre was set up in 1992, and the first course started in February 1993. The courses offered since then were various and included those leading to the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Commerce, the Master of Education, the Diploma in Commerce, the Diploma in Education, and other courses. Initially classes were held at the Sir M.A. Refalo Complex at Victoria, until May 1996, when the University opened its own premises at Xewkija, in Gozo.

The ceremony inaugurating the new premises was presided by the Prime Minister Eddie Fenech-Adami. I was then Minister for Gozo, and was extremely honoured to have been directly involved in this endeavour. In my speech on that occasion I said that the project was realised because in the country, at that time, there were the right conditions and the willingness on the part of the authorities



The plaque commemorating the inauguration of the University Gozo Centre Premises.

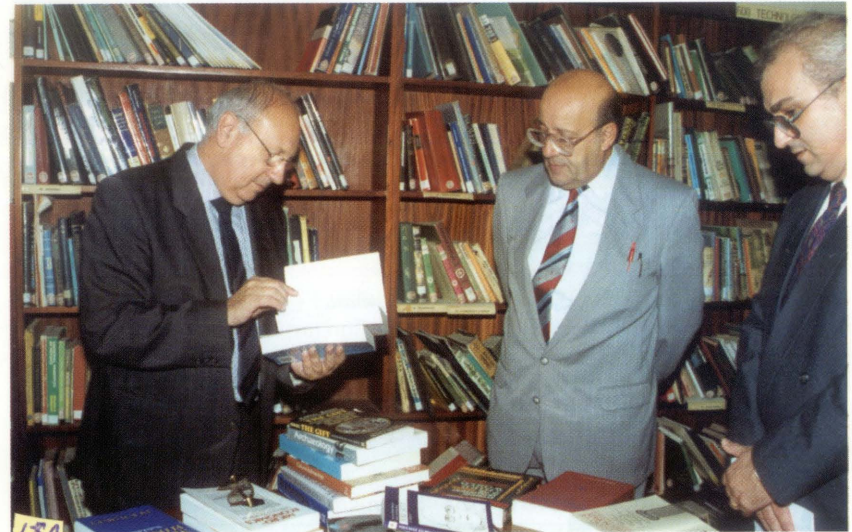
to support the idea. I said that it was important for one to be convinced in what one believed, to overcome the obstacles put by doubting Thomases – of whom we find many when it comes to introducing new ventures in Gozo.

I explained that, for some, the setting up of a University Gozo Centre appeared to be very pretentious and presumptuous. However, those of us familiar with Gozitan realities knew that the venture could take off successfully. Once again, it was shown that in Gozo there was space for new, courageous and sustainable initiatives. I also stated that with the opening of the Centre at Xewkija, University education in Gozo was going to be firmly established on the Island.

The premises – which earlier housed an experimental farm, an isolation hospital, and a mental hospital – had been transformed into an educational centre in a very short time, thanks to the hard work and skills of the workers employed at the Construction and Maintenance Unit of the Ministry for Gozo. On 4 May 1996, the premises were ready to welcome students and to house the administrative set-up of the Centre. I wish to take the occasion to express my appreciation for the contribution given by officials and workers at the Ministry for Gozo towards this end.

The involvement of the University in Gozitan affairs was an important milestone in Gozitan history, and was conducive to the development of the island of Gozo in all its spheres. The University – the highest educational institution in Malta – had taken a lead in establishing a Centre in Gozo, and this should be emulated by other national institutions.

At the end of my speech I referred to the Legal Notice that promulgated the statute of this Centre, providing the right set-up for the University to offer courses, conferences, seminars and related activities, to conduct research on Gozitan affairs, to develop contact



The Hon. Anton Tabone browsing through a collection of books donated to the University Gozo Centre Library by Marsovin Ltd.

with Gozitan institutions, and to help promote the welfare of Gozitan students, including those studying in mainland Malta.

I must express my gratitude to Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, then University Rector, who totally understood the need for a University Centre in Gozo, and who made the idea his own. Thanks are also due to the present Rector, Professor Roger Ellul Micallef, for his continued support of the Centre. I must also express my appreciation to the members of the Board of the Centre who, together with Professor Lino Briguglio as Director, sustained, strengthened and enhanced tertiary education in Gozo. Professor Briguglio still, after ten years, directs the Centre and is working hard to foster an interest in University Education in Gozo.

During these past ten years hundreds of Gozitans benefited from the services offered by the Centre – and this is the clearest proof and the most important benefit of this “success story”.

Benefits of Locating a University Centre in Gozo

Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott

Former Rector of the University of Malta

At present, as the nominee of the Maltese Government at the Convention on the future of Europe, my mind is, on several occasions in the long, drawn-out discussions in Brussels, jerked more than a decade back to the conception and inception of the Gozo Centre of the University of Malta, at the time when I was its Rector.

*Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott
addressing guests during the inauguration of the Gozo Centre Premises.*



In Brussels today I am canvassing for the idea that future Europe should not be either a Federation of the standard, superstate kind, or alternatively just an intergovernmental organisation, but a Network. In other words, it should not be a pyramidal structure with European institutions at the top, lording it over the member nation states, in turn lording it over regions and localities, but a system in which power is maximally distributed between the various participating entities, (including NGOs) with, for instance, whenever appropriate, some nation-states (with centralised forms of governance) co-operating with regional governments (belonging to states with a high degree of regional autonomy) horizontally in certain areas, such as education and culture. In such discussions, obviously, I cannot help thinking of Gozo and its status as a region.

It is of undoubted value to the status of Gozo that it is the location of a University Centre. When, in response to the insistence of Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo, I began to canvas for the idea of setting up a University Centre on our sister Island, I was surprised that the opposition to the plan was not on the grounds that it would not succeed, but rather that it would be over-successful.

That has not happened yet. But I am glad to know that the three dimensions in which I hoped the Centre would grow are there. Degree courses, as well as extension teaching, have been successfully set up in Gozo; research is being done in the areas where Gozo has comparative advantage, from the environment to lacemaking; ripple effects are increasingly being felt throughout the Island, with also some, at least, of the anticipated touristic refractions.

Professor Briguglio and his staff, as well as Minister Debono and her staff, have ensured that the Gozo Centre has survived and continues to flourish despite exits and entrances of some actors. Meanwhile, I look forward to the end of my Brussels stint in order to resume academic work on Calypso, from Homer to Joyce.

The University Gozo Centre – A Regional Campus

Professor Maurice N. Cauchi

Board Member of the University Gozo Centre

The idea of another campus away from base is of course not new, not even for Malta. For obvious reasons, the Medical School has always been housed at the Hospital, and more recently, the Institute of Health Care, which itself compares in student numbers with the total University student population of a decade ago, is also situated away from Msida, as it happens also snugly within the St Luke's Hospital perimeter.

One would have thought therefore that the idea of setting up a campus in Gozo would not have been so cataclysmic, or seen so threatening in some quarters. Against all odds, and with the boundless energy and optimism of the Director, the Centre eventually took off.

Finding a venue was not the easiest of preliminaries. I well remember visiting the derelict ex-mental hospital on Mgarr Road, Xewkija. One could imagine Foucault scribbling graffiti like 'control and punish' on the dingy walls, slit with iron-barred windows. It took great imagination to believe that this could be transformed and upgraded into a modern teaching institution. Yet succeed it did. Within a matter of a few years, students yearning to make good for their previous inability to access tertiary education, now enrolled in relatively high numbers, sacrificing evenings and weekends doing part-time study towards a diploma or degree. Only those who have had to struggle as adult students, with their obligations of jobs and family, can appreciate the difficulties encountered and eventually overcome.



Professor Maurice Cauchi making a point during a public seminar organised by the University Gozo Centre, in collaboration with Lowenbrau, Malta.

Getting teachers from the 'mainland' also proved a superable problem. Diplomacy, tact, and incentives, consisting of compensation for travel, hotel accommodation, and board expenses encouraged even the more reluctant academics to cross the *Fliegi* in their effort to share their knowledge with their brethren in the smaller island, facilities – one might add – never provided for academics travelling in the opposite direction.

How has Gozo benefited from this organisation? There is no doubt that a number of students who would not otherwise have participated in tertiary studies took this opportunity and obtained a university degree. No doubt this is a positive gain, if not in the financial sense, in enriching one's world-view. Moreover, a number of other participants have been eager to take part in short ad hoc courses in e.g. computers and other topics promising an immediate practical application.

It is enough to list the courses that are now a regular feature at the Centre. These include: BA (Gen), B.Com., Masters in Education, Diploma in Education, and Diploma in Commerce. In line with the stated aim of the University to open its doors to the general public

it is also pleasing to note that the Centre also offers a number of short courses which have proved to be very popular, such as those on computer literacy, environmental science, legal studies, music appreciation, and lacemaking. The attendance at these courses argues in no uncertain terms for the need of such an institution in Gozo. One could also mention the attempt to reach the general public through the production of its own journal, *The Gozo Observer*, one of the few university publications that has been issued regularly since its inception three years ago.

Finally, the Centre has already found a role in encouraging specialised areas of study where Gozo can contribute in a specific way. Two such developments may be mentioned, as disparate from each other as one could possibly imagine. On the one hand, and from the very beginning, the Centre has eschewed the tendency of the Alma Mater to look down on crafts as not being of sufficiently intellectual rigour to be a proper subject to be taught at university level. The study of lacemaking presents such a topic, which can provide a spectrum of activity from mere hobby to advanced study into the history and practice of the art. At the other end, we find tucked away within the Centre, a Unit that has transformed our concepts of environmental influences that control our Islands. It is a unit which has enabled high quality research into atmospheric pollution of the Mediterranean and has put Gozo at the centre of European studies

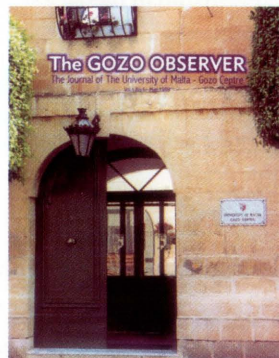
in this area. Ten years ago, anyone suggesting that scientific papers would start coming out of Gozo would have been laughed off as wet behind the ears, yet this is precisely the situation today.

Perhaps of greater significance is the frame of mind that such an institution by its very presence is bound to foster within a community. A country without a higher seat of learning can indeed survive, but cannot be said to be participating at the highest level of intellectual activity. It is rather like having a body without a brain – something fundamental seems to be lacking. Even Gozo, though in no sense a different country from Malta, suffers like all other islands from a sense of isolation, and this is what the University Gozo Centre will no doubt help to overcome.

What about the future? Like any organisation, the choice is either to go forward or to stagnate. I do not believe that with the momentum that it has gathered over the past decade, there is any doubt about its future. I am sure that there will always be a need for courses of the kind that it has been offering.

I would like to see a widening of its repertoire, a scope that encompasses not just the arts and business section, but also science and related topics. I would moreover like to see the Centre develop as the hub of distance learning, where computer links are set up joining it functionally with the Alma Mater, as well as with other institutes such as the Institute of Health, the Medical School, as well as non-academic organisations such as concert halls and lecture theatres. This will obviate the need of our students to keep traipsing to Malta every day. It would also encourage Gozitans to take advantage of any presentation, lectures by visiting dignitaries, even perhaps concerts and theatre. We are also not making full use of Gozo and its facilities to attract conferences and overseas visitors directly to this island. It is essential that the Centre provides an intellectual and cultural fulcrum to attract an ever-growing number of Gozitans who feel the need for this kind of stimulation.

The first issue of "The Gozo Observer". The magazine, published by the University Gozo Centre and edited by Professor Maurice N. Cauchi, covers a wide variety of topics related to Gozitan life.



The University Gozo Centre – Some Historical Notes

Revd Dr Joseph Bezzina

Board Member of the University Gozo Centre

A dream come true! That was how the Hon. Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo, described in a nutshell the story behind the Malta University Gozo Centre, officially inaugurated by the Prime Minister Dr Eddie Fenech-Adami on 4 May 1996. An event that is a fulfilment of what has been mere wishful thinking for almost two hundred years.

The first proposal

As early as 1815, the Colonial Office in London was deliberating to make Gozo the seat of a “a considerable university which may attract the young men of the most enterprising Greek and Italian families and become at the same time a lasting instrument for the extension of our [British] moral influence through the Levant and at least the south of Italy.” This proposal was made by Henry E. Bunbury, Under-Secretary of State, on behalf of Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. In a despatch of 12 February 1815 to Sir Thomas Maitland, the first British Governor of Malta, he dwelt at length on the argument. Yet the Governor was not the person to promote projects that were not his brainchild and he seemingly paid little or no attention to the suggestion of the Colonial Office.

One might assume that Bunbury's proposal was a very fantastic suggestion – a University on a remote unknown island in the middle of the Mediterranean – but time proved that it was not far-fetched at all. When fifty years later, on 4 November 1866, the Gozo Seminary opened its doors as a secondary boarder and day-school



Revd Dr Joseph Bezzina (centre), addressing participants attending a public seminar which the University Gozo Centre organised in 1994, with Professor Jeremy Boissevain (left) and Professor Anthony Bonanno (right).

for boys under the able direction of the Jesuit Fathers, a number of distinguished Sicilian families did send their sons to Gozo. It was at the Sacred Heart Seminary, as the institution was called from 1881, that tertiary education was first imparted on the Island. Students preparing for the priesthood followed the course of the *Scienze Sacre*, studying Dogmatic and Moral Theology, Sacred Scripture, History of the Church, and Canon Law. Several attempts to obtain the authorisation from Rome to confer first degrees failed not because of a lack of intelligent students and knowledgeable professors, but because some quarters in Malta were afraid of competition from the smaller island.

University of the air

The idea of a University Centre in Gozo was revived once again in the 1960s, when the feasibility of a University of the Air was discussed between Dr Anton Tabone, then President of the Gozo Civic Council,

and Professor Guzè Aquilina, at the time vice-Rector of the University of Malta. Gozitan-born Professor Aquilina began promoting the idea of University facilities for Gozitan students on the lines of the University of the Air, more precisely, on an adaptation of the British idea to the local situation. Through a sort of closed-circuit radio, students in a centre could listen to lectures imparted at the Valletta University with the facility to make questions and participate directly in the debate. He brought the matter to the notice of the University Council for approval of the idea which was fully supported by Dr Tabone, father of the above-mentioned Minister for Gozo. Yet, as often happens, the concept was not pursued further.

The Hon. Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo, inspecting work during the refurbishing of the Gozo Centre premises. The building was formerly an experimental farm, an isolation hospital and a mental hospital.



The idea was taken up again by the Ministry for Gozo soon after its establishment on 14 May 1987. The first Gozo Minister, Mr Anton Tabone, found full collaboration of the Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, then Rector of the University, as well as of his colleagues in the Government cabinet.

Innumerable obstacles had to be overcome before the dream could come true. It was not an easy task to convince the University Council and Senate to open a Centre in Gozo. In the meantime, Professor Lino Briguglio became another promoter of such a foundation.

“When the idea of the Gozo Centre was first voiced, many thought it was just a nice dream and not practical,” explained the Prime Minister in the inauguration speech. “But the idea has become a reality because over the recent years we have come to appreciate two things: the importance of university education, and the opportunities for education in Gozo.”

The Centre's establishment

The University of Malta Gozo Centre was established in September 1992, although its statute was formally approved in February 1993. Mr Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo, who was the principal promoter of the whole project, described the Centre as a dream come true.

The Centre has been established to stay. During the Labour Party administration between 1996 and 1998, Dr Anton Refalo, Parliamentary Secretary for Gozo, gave it his full support. In September 1998, upon the return of a Nationalist administration, the Ministry for Gozo was re-established. The new Minister, the Honourable Giovanna Debono, declared her interest in increasing and widening the scope of the Centre from day one. She has never ceased to give the Centre her full support.

The creation of a University Centre is a landmark in the history of education in Gozo, for many years consistently kept down to the secondary level. The Island can certainly pride itself, as Professor Briguglio pointed out, on being one of the smallest, if not the smallest island in the Mediterranean with a University centre.

The premises of the Centre

The Malta University Gozo Centre is located in a building best remembered by the people as il-Lazzarett, the Isolation Hospital of the Island. Located in an area known as Tal-Barmil, limits of the village of Xewkija, it was originally built as an experimental farm in the 1840s.

At that time, the economic depression that had hit the Maltese archipelago since 1813, was being slowly overcome. The British Colonial government, that for long had abandoned the people to their own destiny, began to take a closer interest in their plight. So it was decided to raise this experimental farm that had a section for fowls and rabbits, as well as a section for growing crops, both led by trained personnel. The results were passed on to the local farmers to upgrade their products. They could also acquire chicks and rabbits as well as seeds from the farm. The premises continued to serve their original purposes until the early 1890s.

During the nineteenth century, regular outbreaks of plague, cholera, small pox, and fever made the establishment of an isolation hospital ever more pressing. Cases of infectious disease were previously treated in premises hired ad hoc by the Government but these were unsuitable for the purpose and often criticised publicly; hence the decision for the setting up of an isolation hospital.

Since the early 1890s, the experimental farm and the surrounding fields – all Government property – were being suggested for the purpose. When a final decision was taken, the farm was re-modelled on a traditional Maltese house, with rooms on two floors



The Hon. Dr Eddie Fenech-Adami inaugurating the Xewkija premises.

surrounding a central courtyard. After the building of a second floor and other alterations, the building was officially inaugurated as a hospital on 21 October 1897. The hospital, enlarged on more than one occasion, was not open on a permanent basis, but whenever the need arose, a situation that lasted till the 1960s. Then the necessity of an isolation hospital was not felt any longer and it was closed down.

The building was left to rot, but in the beginning of the 1980s, it was rehabilitated and served as a mental hospital between 7 October 1983 and 26 January 1995.

The building did not stay idle for long. After discussions between Mr Anton Tabone, the then Minister for Gozo, and Professor Peter Serracino-Inglott, then University Rector, an agreement was reached to refurbish the building and turn it into the University of Malta Gozo Centre. It was inaugurated on 4 May 1996.

The Lacemaking Programme at the University Gozo Centre

Ms Consiglia Azzopardi

Coordinator of the Lacemaking Programme

The Lacemaking Programme is one of the most successful initiatives taken by the University of Malta Gozo Centre. The administrators of the Centre considered the setting up of such a Programme as very appropriate because the traditional craft of lacemaking has, for the past three centuries, been rooted in the island of Gozo. The aim of the Programme is to provide opportunities for the study of the craft at the highest possible academic level, whereby the practical aspect of lacemaking is revived in the context of the historical, technical and artistic study of the craft. The Programme organises a number of part-time courses at the Centre, one of which is spread over three years, leading students to very advanced levels of study.



Lace Day at the University Gozo Centre attracts many lacemakers from Malta and Gozo.

The Programme has also set up a library of lace books and patterns, and plans to develop a research centre where consultancy services about the professional care and restoration of old Maltese lace can be offered.

The Programme is administered by a committee chaired by the Director of the Gozo Centre, Professor Lino Briguglio, assisted by Revd Dr Joseph Bezzina, and is coordinated by me, as the main lecturer on the subject.

Subsidiary activities include the organisation of Lace Day as an annual event, short courses about different aspects of Maltese lace, a Summer School for international lacemakers, and participation in international events including the Conference of *l'Organisation Internationale de la Dentelle au Fuseau et à l'Aiguille* (OIDFA).

In the past, Gozitans took up the craft and developed it as an economic activity because of the hardships experienced on the Island. Today, lacemaking in Gozo is considered as an enrichment of the Island's cultural heritage, and the Lacemaking Programme is making an important contribution towards this end.

A lacemaking class in progress, under the direction of Ms Consiglia Azzopardi.



The Atmospheric Research Unit at the University Gozo Centre

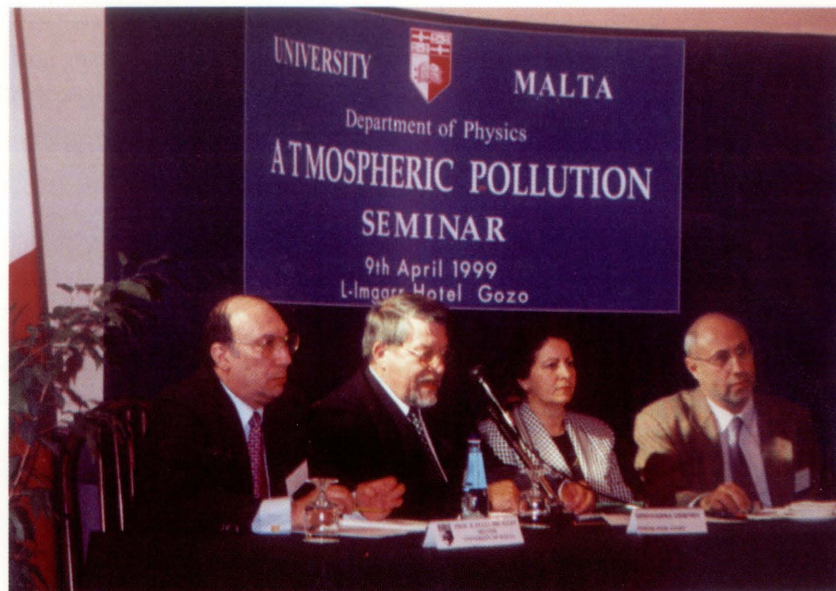
Dr Ray Ellul

Director of the Atmospheric Research Unit

The Atmospheric Research Unit of the Physics Department, which is located at the University Gozo Centre, was officially inaugurated in 1996. The Max Planck Institute in Mainz, the Karlsruhe Research Centre and the International Buro in Julich, between them, contributed a full set of research instruments in the first few years. These comprised Ozone detectors, generators for secondary calibration, meteorological instruments and a Carbon Monoxide monitor, with the result that this soon became the best equipped station in the central Mediterranean.

The idea of setting up the atmospheric research started around 1990 when I was running the Physics Department. It was clear that this would be a good and practical topic for research given Malta's island situation and position between North Africa and Southern Europe. This idea was supported by Professor Paul Crutzen, Director of the Max Planck Institute, Mainz, Germany, a leading researcher in atmospheric chemistry, who in 1995 was awarded the Nobel prize for Atmospheric Chemistry.

With the impetus of the Max Planck Institute and the Karlsruhe Research Centre, which had considerable experience in the running of Mediterranean campaigns, an atmospheric research station was set up in Giordan Lighthouse, since this was relatively free of local pollution and exposed to the prevailing North Westerly winds. The Karlsruhe Research Centre also assumed responsibility for the six-monthly primary calibration of instruments that must be performed at such a station.



The German Ambassador for Malta, Mr Gerhard Kunz (second from left) addressing the Seminar on Atmospheric Pollution organised by the Atmospheric Research Unit, with (from left to right) Professor Roger Ellul Micallef, University Rector, Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo and Dr Ray Ellul, Director of the Unit.

A seminar on atmospheric pollution was held in 1999 and attracted over 130 delegates. The seminar was opened by the Minister for Gozo and the Minister for the Environment. Professor Paul Crutzen and Dr Hans Güsten, who had backed the station in its infancy, were the keynote speakers. A doctoral student, Michael Nolle, was recruited from Karlsruhe and in 2001, he became the first German student to obtain his Ph.D. from the University of Malta.

In 2001 the Unit was officially designated a regional Global Atmospheric Watch Station of the World Meteorological Organisation. Data are collected every ten seconds around the clock and the averaged data sets are then analysed locally and also forwarded to the WMO data centres in Norway and Japan.

Five publications have resulted from the work so far and two more are in the process of preparation. Gozo seems to be keeping up a tradition of Ozone research: back in 1883 meteorological records including ozone values measured using the Schönbein test were carried out three times a day by the Sicilian Jesuits in the Seminary in Victoria, Gozo. Comparison of the modern and historical records shows that the pollutant levels in the Mediterranean have increased by a factor of five in the last 100 years.

A Sulphur Dioxide instrument has recently been donated by Karlsruhe to try and pick up ships' emissions from traffic in the Straits of Sicily. The EMEP inventory maintained in Norway shows that Malta could be receiving around 16% of its Sulphur Dioxide and 38% of its Nitric Oxide emissions from these extraneous sources.

This is clearly a problem for the Maltese Islands that needs to be addressed. It is now intended that the cooperative work which had started with the Environment Protection Department be strengthened with MEPA. There is clearly much work that needs to be done in the future.

Professor Joe Friggieri (centre), engages in a discussion during a coffee break.



LECTURERS' EXPERIENCES

In the beginning...

Professor Joe Friggieri

Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Malta

Ten years is a long time if you count the hours. Though I was there when it all started, I do not quite remember the official opening. What I remember vaguely is a dark room, lit by one flickering neon-light (the other two were out of order), where the interviews for the first batch of 'mature Gozitan students' were conducted. I sat behind a small formica-topped table, sipping coffee from a plastic cup, waiting for the first candidate to step forward.

For me at least, the interviews were highly entertaining. 'Why do you want to study philosophy?' I asked each mature applicant individually. The best answer I got was a confession of Socratic ignorance, the worst a mini-sermon on the advantages of studying Freud. Only two failed, a woman with a shrill voice whose English was so poor that I felt she would not be able to follow lectures or read books in that language, and a lanky fellow in a green shirt who said he could not attend classes on Saturday because he worked at the bank. The rest were admitted.

As all experienced lecturers will tell you, University courses are governed by the law of diminishing returns. At the end of the first semester, numbers had fallen by a quarter. A few more dropped out after the summer vacation. Of those who survived, two topped the list of all BA graduates for their year, others have taken post-graduate degrees, while a student in the final year of the current course was nominated for the Dean's list and won a bursary.

We are now fast approaching the end of our second degree course. Three World Cups and as many general elections after that inaugural ceremony, whose photos hang in the front office, our students may not be much happier, though they are hopefully a bit wiser.

I was there at the beginning and I still enjoy the ferry crossing at sunset, the warm welcome I receive every time I arrive, the view from my hotel room, the long hours spent lecturing at the Centre, the animated discussions during coffee-breaks, the company of the many friends made in the process. To them I dedicate this poem, which I wrote on the terrace of Silvio's hotel in Mgarr, overlooking Comino, that barren stretch of rock floating like a whale on the shimmering sea in the misty light of dawn.

Calypso - a lament

*With the last throng
of camera-clicking visitors gone,
Ogygia dreams blind Homer's tale
of fair Calypso when with bleeding heart
she leaves her cave
and finds Odysseus sitting on the shore
yearning for death and looking out
across the barren sea.*

*Here comes the estate-agent wand in hand
to cast a spell upon our weary eyes,
the land-developer swooping down
on fertile fields and valleys
from the sky.*

*Just one last night of burning love and then
Calypso's singing as she weaves
is heard no more;
no scent of burning logs
of juniper and cedar fills the air,*



Gozo in spring.. evading (so far!) the attentions of land-developers.

*there are no birds who spend their lives at sea,
no crystal waters from the neighb'ring springs,
no trailing vine with bunches of ripe grapes,
no fragrant cypress sheltering the cave
from sun and wind;
the horned owls and falcons have all gone,
the iris and the parsley wilt and die.*

*Odysseus gone, with him Calypso too,
she of the lovely locks and golden belt,
our poets lost their magic
long ago.*

Joe Friggieri

Misapprehensions – and Appreciations

Gordon Cordina

Department of Economics, University of Malta

My lecturing experience at the Gozo Centre started in January 1996, when one of the lecturers asked me to replace him for a course spread over three visits. He was undoubtedly daunted by the prospect of a time-consuming trip, a long Friday afternoon wait at the Cirkewwa quay, the then somewhat primitive accommodation facilities available, and the potential severity of winter seas. I accepted, not without serious misgivings, mainly because the prospective visits were few.

Having overcome these initial misapprehensions, I started lecturing at the Centre, first on short assignments, which became longer, until work at the Gozo Centre became an integral part of my teaching load. Sometimes I have to commute on a weekly basis.

*Crossing over to Gozo has become less time-consuming for lecturers,
with the introduction of new ferries.*



I appreciate, first and foremost, the challenge and usefulness of bringing University education over to a group of students who, because of their place of residence and life commitments, would not otherwise have had such an opportunity to further their knowledge.

I appreciate the exemplary commitment and dedication of the students, which gives me, as lecturer, a very clear measure of the value of my work.

I appreciate the efficiency with which the University Gozo Centre is run, and the way in which it has been able to develop over the years to the benefit of students, lecturers and the Gozitan community. The Gozo Centre is indeed a fully fledged institution of tertiary learning, which often exceeds expectations in terms of the facilities available.

Lecturing at the Gozo Centre has also been for me a learning experience. I have gained some insight into the Gozitan character, moulded as it is by the sense of detachment from the mainland that generates a keener sense of competition, commitment to work, and ability to withstand inconveniences and sacrifices.

Detachment from a larger entity however, also instils a feeling of belonging to something special, be it the family, friends, the land or the environment of Gozo.

I am grateful to my students who over the years have made me feel this sense of belonging. I have learned to love Gozo in winter, which is an altogether different experience from that obtained by a typical summer tourist.

Last but not least, I have learned a lot about the winds and the sea, as well as the latest time at which one should arrive at the Cirkewwa Quay to avoid a long Friday afternoon wait.

STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

The Gozo Centre: An Ambitious Long-jump

Rose Marie Azzopardi

Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Economics and former student at the University Gozo Centre

The first meeting for prospective students at the new University of Malta Gozo Centre was held at St Augustine's Monastery in Victoria, in summer 1992. There was an aura of excitement – and some trepidation as well. No one really knew where the lectures would be held and what topics were on offer. Everyone was eager for more information and one could notice a feeling of uncertainty, yet of high expectations. It was the first time a degree course was to be offered in Gozo. This was an ambitious long-jump attempt in the small island's history of education.

Two distinct groups of student had applied for the BA degree programme: those who had the necessary entry qualifications and those under the 'maturity clause'. The latter were interviewed in order to ascertain that they had the aptitude and capability to take up university studies. Students who had the necessary university entry requirements had a meeting where they were informed about the major areas of study that were available, that is, Economics, Social Studies, Philosophy and English. For those who chose Social Studies, there was the possibility of a Social Work option. All students were expected to take two major areas of study as well as History of Mediterranean Civilisation as an additional module.

The excitement continued when the first group finally met for the first time. One could immediately notice the strong element of



The graduates who followed the first BA course offered at the University Gozo Centre, just after the conferment of the degree, on 21 November, 1998.

diversity that was present in the group. Ages ranged from those in their twenties to others in their seventies; social backgrounds varied, with students hailing from different walks of life, and engaged in different occupations: clerks, teachers, bankers, and businessmen. There were a few pensioners as well.

Lectures started with 43 students, in February 1993, at the M.A. Refalo Secondary School Complex in Victoria and were held mostly on Friday evenings, after 5.00pm and on Saturday mornings. At first it was difficult to conjure up a campus feeling as the physical environment was not conducive to this. Then on 4 May, 1996, the Gozo Centre moved to its own premises.

It is interesting to note that this same building had served both as an isolation hospital and a mental hospital. The not so evident relationship between a University and a mental hospital was

explained by the then Rector of the University of Malta, Revd Professor Peter Serracino Inglott on the day of the Centre's inauguration: "*Hemm linja sottili hafna li tifred il-genju mill-mignun*" (there's a very subtle line that separates the mad man from the genius). May I here venture to interpret the connection between an isolation hospital and a University. If an isolation hospital is there to prevent the spread of contagious diseases, a University exists to do exactly the opposite. A University's mission is to make learning contagious so that it may spread as widely as possible enabling the community to recreate itself and its members and thus to provide for its own sustainable development that guarantees a viable future for future generations.

On a more logistical note, the Gozo Centre was not exempted from teething problems and other early-life hiccups. During the first months, the main problem was the extra lessons that had to be organised because lecturers could not attend due to bad weather. Another problem was linked to the process of borrowing books

from the University Library as it was located in Malta and most of us had to take a day off from work to borrow books and to return them after three weeks. Yet another problem was the lack of opportunity to meet lecturers for consultation and discussion. Thanks to the good will of all those who had at heart the success of this project all the problems were eventually solved and in November 1998, the first Gozo Centre group of 28 students graduated.

It was a happy occasion, not only for those who graduated but for Gozo: this was proof that the Gozo Centre of the University of Malta was here to stay. From such humble beginnings, today, the Gozo Centre can pride itself on good and well-maintained premises, a growing library, an efficient administrative structure, a good number of students, various part-time degree and diploma courses, short certificate courses and weekend seminars. The Gozo Centre has become an important institution on our little island.

On a personal note, the Gozo Centre gave me the opportunity to build upon and develop further my previous academic experience at the University of Malta. It opened up new venues for an academic career by providing solid foundations for further studies, first on the basis of student exchange and later in the form of post-graduate studies in the UK.

In fact during my first-degree course at the Centre, we were given the possibility to participate in activities organised at the University Campus in Malta. One day, reading the memos on the notice board I saw the invitation to participate in student exchange programmes, with options to visit universities in USA, Canada and Australia. I applied, attended an interview and eventually found myself attending, for one semester, lectures at the Victoria University of Technology, Australia. The distinction grades I obtained in Australia showed that we were being provided with an excellent standard of education – at the international level.

Gozitan students just after the conferment of the Diploma in Commerce, on 14 November, 1998.



This fact encouraged me to continue with my personal development process and subsequently as I neared the end of my first-degree course I applied for a post-graduate programme. Having graduated with a First Class degree, acceptance on a Master's degree programme in a British University and the securing of funds through a scholarship turned out to be an easy and straightforward process. Indeed, a year after graduating from the Gozo Centre I graduated Master of Arts from the University of Sussex, UK.

However, it was not solely in the educational sphere that new opportunities sprung up. I feel the BA programme served as a springboard that radically changed my life and my career from a civil servant to an academic. This mid-career shift to a more dynamic and stimulating environment, which certainly ensures a higher degree of self-actualisation and increased possibilities of meeting other academics both locally and abroad, would not have been possible without the chance of the degree from the Gozo Centre. It definitely opened up new horizons. The Gozo Centre started a rolling ball that gathered momentum over time.

A word of gratitude is therefore appropriate at this point, to those persons who had the initiative and the courage to undertake such a bold step. This initiative certainly ameliorated the development of Gozo's community and gave the opportunity to many Gozitans who would not have ventured to Malta to take up a University course, due to family commitments, transport and time constraints.

A major step in the history of education in Gozo opened up for me a myriad of highways to other places in the world. I would like to encourage all students to build on their strength, on the support of those around them and to grab the opportunities that come along. They must also however, work hard and not take studying too lightly. Hard work pays off in the end. Furthermore, learning does not stop on Graduation day but any course should be considered as yet another stepping-stone towards higher goals.



The press conference, in February 1993, announcing the launching of the first BA Course offered in Gozo.



Initially classes were held at the Sir M.A. Refalo School Complex at Victoria.

A Milestone in the Education Development of Gozo

Michael A. Cassar

Assistant Director of Education and former student at the University Gozo Centre

The setting up of the University of Malta Gozo Centre was, in my opinion, a milestone in the educational development of our small island. I was one of the first group of students who started their

A coffee break during one of the public seminars organised by the University Gozo Centre. These activities attract diverse audiences.



BA evening course in Gozo. As a group of 43 students we attended the first lecture on the History of Mediterranean Civilisation by Revd Dr Joseph Farrugia at the Sir M. A. Refalo Post-Secondary School. Four major areas of study were offered, namely, Social Studies, Philosophy, English and Economics on Fridays and Saturdays.

It was not easy for some of us to cope with an evening course and by the end of the first year the group dwindled to 28. Although coming from different social backgrounds and areas of work, with ages ranging between the twenties and the seventies, we stuck together and managed to persevere till the end.

Conditions at Sir M.A. Refalo School Complex were not that good, but these improved considerably when we moved to Xewkija. With the help of Mr George Aquilina, acting as administrator at the Gozo Centre, we struggled along to the finals.

I was elected student representative for the first three years, during which I did my best to look after the interests of students and to ensure that services offered by the University on the main campus, were also made available to us in Gozo.

During the five-year course it was not all lectures, assignments and tests. We often organised dinners and other social events. These enabled us to get to know each other better and to develop camaraderie and friendly relationships among us. We used to share books and help each other in every way.

Looking back, I find it impossible to thank all those who were responsible for the organisation of the BA course, but I feel I should accord a special mention to the Gozo Centre Director, Professor Lino Briguglio, and my Philosophy lecturer, Professor Joe Friggieri, for their support and encouragement.

Promoting Human Resources Development in Gozo

Saviour Grech

Assistant Head of School. He graduated BA after following a course at the University Gozo Centre and is currently following the M.Ed. course at the same Centre

The setting up of the University of Malta Gozo Centre must surely rank as one of the most important developments carried out in Gozo during the early Nineties.

Human resources constitute our island's main asset, and so no stone should be left unturned in the quest to develop to the optimum this same resource. Our future prosperity depends on the presence of an educated workforce that is continually ready to adapt to new circumstances. Education must not stop at secondary level.

Those who missed out must be given a second chance. This is exactly why the University Gozo Centre is an important institution on the Island. It is giving a second opportunity to those who, like me, for one reason or another, missed out on their tertiary education.

Besides, it is also providing yet another opportunity to a good number of persons who, after having completed their Tertiary Education, are finding it necessary to explore new areas of knowledge. After all, as many are realising, learning is a lifelong process.

Prior to the establishment of the University Gozo Centre, it was very difficult for a person who lived in Gozo to follow part-time courses at the University of Malta. Family and other commitments,



The Gozo Centre contributes to the development of human resources on the Islands.

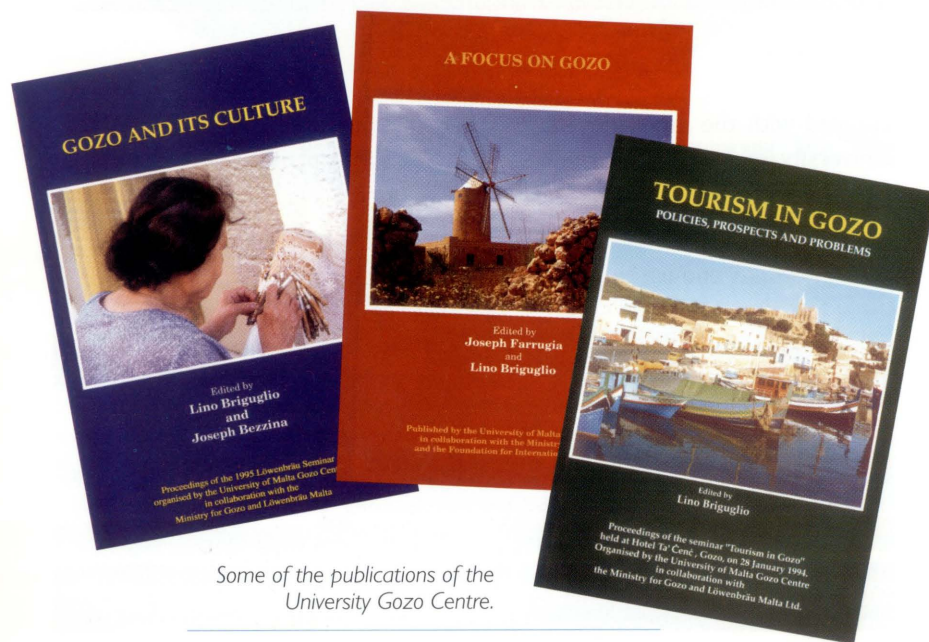
coupled with the time needed to commute from Gozo to the University campus at Msida, made it practically impossible for Gozitans to consider attending a University course – once settled in life. Fortunately this is no longer the case. This is due to the foresight, commitment and unrelenting effort of all those who believed that the setting up of a University Centre in Gozo could help to rectify the situation. Through the effort and vision of some Gozitans and Gozo-friendly academics, what in past decades was considered to be a dream became a reality.

Since its establishment, the Gozo Centre has proved to be a catalyst in Gozitan Society. The undergraduate and diploma level courses, and now the post-graduate courses, together with the wide range of short courses being provided in the Centre, are enriching human resources in Gozo. Some of those who successfully followed

courses at the Gozo Centre have moved to better jobs, others have been promoted in their chosen career. All have been culturally enriched.

Having achieved so much during these last ten years, the Gozo Centre should not rest on its laurels. It should retain the innovative spirit and entrepreneurship of its founders by looking forward to explore new pastures.

Not only should the areas of study, and types of courses presently available be widened, but also an effort should be made to create new courses, which might have more direct relevance to Gozo and the economic, social and cultural well-being of Gozitan society. In addition, research activity should be strengthened. In this way the Gozo Centre will continue to enhance its already important contribution to Gozitan life.



Some of the publications of the
University Gozo Centre.

Juggling Studies and Motherhood

Gillian Martin

Working mother of two young children and currently following a degree course at the University Gozo Centre

*'Was there ever a becoming...' "Mum! where's my blue T-Shirt?"
'...of motion before which it had no...' "MUM! Tell Christophe to stop hitting me!" '...being, and is perishing again so as to leave nothing in...'
"MUM! What's for supper?" '...and is perishing again so as to leave nothing in...' "MUM !!"...*

If there is one thing I have learnt over the past four years, it is that 'Aristotle and kids' is not the best combination. 'Nietzsche and kids' is even worse and when it comes to Talcott Parsons... !

It seems capricious to deprecate what I have, in fact, learned over the past four years. When I think back to the violent kick-start to my long dormant neural synapses that our inimitable Latin lectures had caused at the start of this course, the myriad concepts, theories, critiques and hypotheses that have since wandered through my grey matter is awesome. Hopefully a decent proportion of this mass of knowledge is sitting snugly, somewhere back there, waiting to be used on cue... (ever an optimist!).

Studying part-time leads to a peculiar way of life ...any of my fellow students would agree that it requires a particular skill – effective time management. Juggling family responsibilities and work commitments with assignment deadlines and interminable reading lists is no easy task. There is a constant assessment of priorities that comes into play and, I suppose, we have all found our own particular way of dealing with them.

One point beyond question is that it would be physically impossible for most of us to follow a part-time BA course if lectures required three hours of travelling. The fact that our professors and lecturers go out of their way to provide their services here in Gozo is salutary, the personal effort entailed in taking on the extra commitments, a tribute to their academic ethos.

There is no doubt that the career prospects and sense of personal achievement of all of us 'part-time students' will be enhanced by completing the course. This is where the concept of a Gozo Centre as a satellite of the University of Malta shines through as a triumph in the cause of Lifelong Education for the Gozitan community.

The Reluctant Student

Michael Refalo

Notary Public and currently following a degree course at the University Gozo Centre

"No, I won't do it."

"Imagine me, over 40 years old, a student! And anyway I do not like studying."

These were my first thoughts four years ago when I chanced upon applications for a part-time BA Course offered at the Gozo Centre of the University. Despite these negative thoughts, the idea persisted. History and Philosophy were among the subjects offered. Economics, Sociology, and whatever else was on the menu, held no attraction for me. But History was another matter – I really liked the subject. As to philosophy I had read popular texts like *Sophie's World* and, way back in time, I also sat for A level, and passed!



The short courses of the University Gozo Centre attract persons from different social backgrounds.

In the end, thanks to a helpful push from my wife, I filed the application and paid the fee. "At worst," I was told, "you will lose the registration fee, at best, you might gain something from it all."

October came and the thought of entering a classroom full of students young enough to be my children daunted me. But things turned out to be different. It seemed that the thirty odd students were, if not my age, the age of my younger brothers or sisters, rather than my children's.

In the back row I stayed, as I usually did ... a quarter of a century before. Many of the faces were familiar, a few were not. The guy next to me could possibly have been my older rather than my younger brother; and that was more comforting still. The face seemed familiar but I was not sure I knew him. "Maltese," I thought, never for a moment imagining that he would become a friend.

As to the rest, there was a mixture of men and women who seemed as apprehensive as I was. And that was how I started the part-time course four years ago.

Since then my attitude changed completely. I can count on my fingers the lectures missed; I took an interest in the course, an interest which quickly became a passion, affording new challenges and opening up new avenues of knowledge for me. I never regretted the decision I took to join the course.

With time, the number of students diminished. That was to be expected. However, it did not diminish as much as one would have

expected. Some (the female ones of course) got pregnant and had children during the course; others got married; others (who took it too seriously) had breakdowns or were on the verge of one. Some were appointed to high office during the course.

And I. I loved every moment of it, and still do.

As to the lecturers, it was well known that these came to Gozo on a voluntary basis. It is thanks to them that the BA Course could be held. Their efforts may not be financially remunerative but they have certainly gained the respect of us Gozitans who have had the opportunity to meet them and to learn from them.

There was only one snag. I was elected student representative. I had always shied away from committees, meetings and such like. But all of a sudden I found myself being elected to represent my "fellow students" on the various committees which, it seems, are vital for the course to go ahead. To be honest, I did not hate the experience.

I may have looked on the lighter side of things in this short piece, but that does not mean that I do not appreciate the work being done at the Gozo Centre.

It is my fervent hope that the opportunity which I have had will also be made available to others in the years to come. In this small island where roads are bad, where hunting and festa bangs are oppressive, where law enforcement is far from optimal, we have an institution that is doing much more than was expected of it.

The Gozo Centre of the University of Malta is making available to us Gozitans a vista over that vast ocean of knowledge, which is enriching the lives of those willing to accept this service, and without which life would be reduced to the routine and the banal.

Xewkija: the village where the University Gozo Centre is located.



Chronology of Major Events

1992

The Centre was established in August 1992, following a process of consultation on this matter between Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, then University Rector, and the Hon. Anton Tabone, then Minister for Gozo. The Rector asked Professor Lino Briguglio to act a Director *ad interim* of the University Centre in Gozo.

1993

The Statute of the University Gozo Centre was formally approved by University Senate on 3 February, 1993. It was subsequently also approved by Council on 17 February of the same year.

The first Course leading to the BA degree was launched on 6 February, 1993. The course was offered on a part-time basis and was spread over five years. This was the first time that a degree course was offered in its entirety in Gozo. Between February 1993 and May 1996, lectures were held at Sir M.A. Refalo Secondary School Complex, Victoria.

The first meeting of the Board of the Gozo Centre was held at Tal-Qroqq, on 13 April, 1993.

On 6 October, 1993, Rector wrote a letter to the Minister for Gozo, requesting that the Government makes available the former isolation hospital at Xewkija to be used as

premises for the University Gozo Centre. Following the processing of this request, the matter was referred to the Cabinet of Ministers, and the request was approved in April 1995.

1994

The first in a series of Lowenbrau seminars dealing with topics of major interest for Gozo was held on 28 January, 1994. Six such seminars were held dealing with the following themes: "Tourism in Gozo" (1994); "Gozo and its Culture" (1995); "Gozitan Famous Personalities" (1996); "Women in Gozo" (1997); "Education in Gozo (1998); and "Older Persons in Malta and Gozo" (1999).

The Gozo Centre undertook its first research project to assess the economic multiplier effects of tourism in Gozo. The Centre participated directly or indirectly on various research projects, including the University funded studies on "Regional Statistics", the EU funded project on the Special Needs of Gozo and the ETC funded study on the labour market in Gozo. In addition, the Atmospheric Research Unit carries out research on an ongoing basis.

The first book published by the University Gozo Centre, was issued in March 1994. The Centre published six books so far, namely *Tourism in Gozo* (1994), *Gozo and its Culture* (1995), *A Focus on Gozo* (1996), *The Effects of EU Membership on the Island Region of Gozo* (2000 - together with the Gozo Business Chamber), *Let's Go to Wied il-Lunzjata* (2000 - together with the International Tree Foundation), and *Gozo Past and Present* (2002).

1995

The first short course offered by the University Gozo Centre was launched on 28 April, 1995. It was entitled "An Introduction to Public Administration" and was coordinated by Dr Godfrey Pirotta. The Centre organised a large number of short courses, covering a wide variety of subjects, including "Professional Ethics", "Introduction to Law and Legal Studies", "The European Union", "Introduction to Company Law", "Financial Markets", "Social Care Work", "Systems of Knowledge", "Environmental Science", "Teaching English as a Foreign Language", "Basic Concepts of Medicine", "Prevention of Substance Abuse", "Conflict Resolution", "Food Hygiene", many computer-based courses including "Computer Aided Design", "Geographic Information Systems", "Sage Accounting Package" and "Website Design and Development".

On 27 October, 1995, the Legal Notice promulgating the statute of the University Gozo Centre was issued (LN152 of 1995).

The first series of public lectures was launched in November 1995. It was entitled "A Focus on Gozitan Personalities" and was coordinated by Revd Dr Joseph Farrugia. The Centre organised many public lectures touching on various aspects of Gozitan life.

1996

The first two-year part-time course leading to the Diploma in Commerce started in February 1996.

The Gozo Centre moved to new premises at Xewkija on 4 May, 1996. The Prime Minister of Malta officially inaugurated the premises.

The Atmospheric Research Unit of the Physics Department was set up within the University Gozo Centre in December 1996.

1997

The first course leading to the Diploma in Education (Administration and Management), commenced in February 1997.

The Lacemaking Programme was established as part of the University Gozo Centre in June 1997. The Programme organised a number of courses, including a three-year part-time course aimed at developing future teachers of lacemaking, covering historical, cultural and technical aspects of the craft.

The first Summer Social Evening was organised at the central courtyard of the Centre in August 1997. Five such evenings were organised namely "An Evening of Maltese Music" (1997); "An Evening of Jazz, Blues, Rock and Reggae" (1998); "Evening at the Opera" (1999); "An Evening of Operetta", 2001 and "An Evening of Drama" 2002.

The Centre organised its first international conference on "Water Resources Management" in collaboration with UNEP, in December 1997. A second international conference on Lacemaking was organised by the Lacemaking Programme in June 1999.

1998

The second course leading to the BA degree and the second course leading to the Diploma in Commerce commenced in October 1998.

On 14 November, 1998, the Diploma in Commerce was conferred on 17 students who had followed the course at the University Gozo Centre. On 21 November, 1998, the BA degree was conferred on 28 students who had followed the BA course at the University Gozo Centre. This was the first time that Graduates of the University of Malta obtained their degrees or diplomas after having followed a course in Gozo.

1999

In May 1999, the Centre issued the first edition of the magazine *The Gozo Observer*, edited by Professor Maurice Cauchi. Issue No. 7 was published in April 2002. The magazine is also available on the internet and on CD.

In October 1999, Part 2 of the course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce degree was initiated. The course was offered on a part-time basis and spread over three years.

2000

In January 2000, the Centre organised two teleconferencing events, utilising equipment loaned by Maltacom. The experiment was successful. Teleconferencing equipment at the Centre is likely to be installed in 2003.

In June 2000, the Board of the Gozo Centre allocated office space to the Malta Red Cross. A fully-equipped emergency ambulance has been stationed at the Centre.

The second course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce and the third course leading to the Diploma in Commerce commenced in October 2000.

In November 2000, the Diploma in Commerce was conferred on 8 students who had followed the second course leading to the Diploma at the University Gozo Centre.

2001

In February 2001, the second course leading to the Diploma in Education (Administration and Management) commenced.

In October 2001, the course leading to the Master of Education commenced.

The Course in Pre-tertiary Certificate in Education for Learning Support Facilitators was also initiated in October 2001.

2002

The first course leading to the Bachelor of Commerce and the third course leading to the Diploma in Commerce came to an end in June 2002. All students who sat for the final examination passed.

In August 2002, the Gozo Centre celebrated the 10th anniversary of its establishment.

This publication marks the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the University of Malta Gozo Centre.

In his foreword, the Rector of the University of Malta, Professor Roger Ellul Micallef, while acknowledging the important educational and cultural contributions that the Centre has made to Gozitan life during its first decade of existence, says that:

“A number of Gozitans have already obtained a degree or diploma after following courses offered at the Centre. They would not have been able to do so had the Centre not been in operation. It is difficult for Gozitans in employment to follow part-time University courses at the Tal-Qroqq campus. The presence of the University in Gozo has made it possible for them to continue with their tertiary education.

The impact of the Centre on the welfare of Gozitan society however does not stop there. The Centre's activities extend beyond teaching. It has undertaken research in various subjects associated with Gozo, including its economy, social fabric and demography. Its presence in Gozo has generated an intellectual revival, partly the result of the great number of scholars that regularly visit Gozo to lecture at the Centre.”