

DIN L-ART HELWA

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Din l-Art Helwa is a non-governmental organisation whose objective is to safeguard the cultural heritage and natural environment of the nation.

Din l-Art Helwa functions as the National Trust of Malta, restoring cultural heritage sites on behalf of the State, the Church, and private owners and managing and maintaining those sites for the benefit of the general public.

Din l-Art Helwa strives to awaken awareness of cultural heritage and environmental matters by a policy of public education and by highlighting development issues to ensure that the highest possible standards are maintained and that local legislation is strictly enforced.



Din l-Art Helwa



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photo - Fouad-Philip Saade



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FRONT COVER

Niche on the facade of
tal-Hniena Chapel



BACK COVER

Nature and stone



A Question of Aesthetics

Martin Galea

Executive President of Din l-Art Helwa



I think it was around the late 1950s when we lost our sense of aesthetics. This may be attributed to our new-found wealth, which we started to enjoy after the Second World War. Up until then, Malta was poor and resources were scarce. If someone had to build, it was more likely to be a developer, who would plan a row of houses, and the few who could, would do so with a sense of style and restraint, ensuring that what was built was in keeping with the neighbours. The style of houses

one sees with wooden balconies all around the country ensured that there was a unity of design – again, perhaps, restraint after the glory of the baroque period.

The rot started with the 1950s, when all the village cores were opened and traffic delivered to the village core. Houses and gardens were bulldozed so that large roads could be built right up to the church parvis. Come the 1960s and all restraint was lost. With our new-found wealth, styles changed and mediocre architects altered the face of our villages and towns, inserting inappropriate styles and materials in what was meant to be vernacular architecture, with no regard to context, fabric or style.

Worse still was the so-called “ribbon development” that began merging towns and villages into a sprawling mass of building. In the 1970s and 1980s, things got worse. With almost no planning, and much abuse thereof, village cores were flattened and vast swathes of the countryside were gobbled up in building development areas and gaudy non-style architecture.

We are left with quite a mess. Towns such as Sliema, which really did have a sort of unifying architecture, and our very own style of minor stately homes along the front (remember the Cassar Torregiani house or Rocklands), have given way to soviet-style apartments with little by way of aesthetics, and compromised function (since they were built on the same footprint as the original house and garden underneath).

Can we extricate ourselves from this mess? Can our towns once again have that sense of architecture and planning? The short answer is “No”. Indeed, the rot continues and we still have buildings being erected that were probably designed by the owners themselves, with some architects just signing off the applications.

I am not against new architecture – quite the contrary, I am very interested in it and can



Building more of the same

" Can we extricate ourselves from this mess? Can our towns once again have that sense of architecture and planning? The short answer is “No” "

Road leading to the parvis of Qrendi Parish Church



see new architecture even in our old towns and cities. But really one would be hard-pressed to find 50 buildings that one could call interesting or representative of modern architecture from the 1950s to the 1990s.

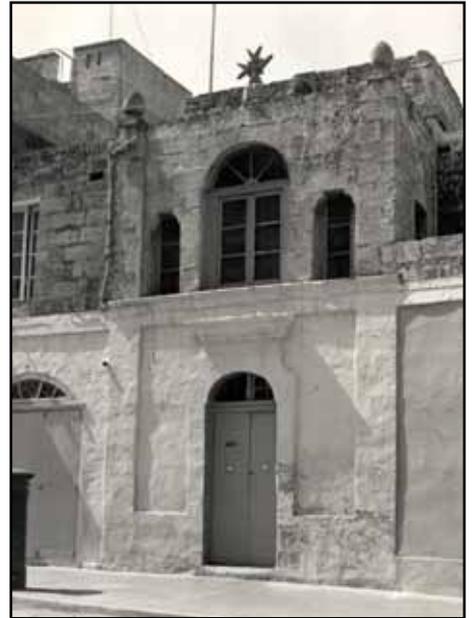
Things have taken a turn for the better and, more and more, people have realised that there is profit in good design, in good architecture and in style. One can see today, perhaps advertised in the welter of glossy magazines issued with the Sunday papers, buildings that are interesting, or conversions that have been carried out with thought and intelligence. Of course, the damage is done and redevelopment of the more inappropriate buildings will probably take centuries to repair, if it happens at all.

What is a great pity, however, is that we have also lost the opportunity to have some stunning new architecture in some Greenfield sites. The airport is a classical example of this. Very little design thought went into the architecture of this building. And now we have an even larger project that is crying out for a statement – Smartcity.

Smartcity is being hailed as the new economic direction for the country. It is to be hoped that this is the case, and if this depends on the capabilities of the people of this nation, then I am confident that it will be a great success. However, I am very much under-awed by the architecture of the proposals as presented in the press. Here we see more of the same blocks of apartments/offices that give no indication of time and place – just another high density development, which could be in Arabia, southern Europe, or the southern USA dating from the 1980s. This is a pity. If Malta wants to make a statement that it is moving into a brave new world, this is the time and place to make it. Valletta is unique and instantly recognisable. Smartcity should be as well (although please change the name). There are many buildings in cities around the world that make them recognisable, even iconic. The most obvious is the Getty Museum in Bilbao, designed by Gehry, which put this industrial town on the map, and the opera house in Tenerife is another.

Smartcity is doing nothing like that and, even worse, its strange lake – a pastiche if ever there was one, just 50 metres from the sea – gives it a dated, unimaginative appearance.

The project is still in the planning stage and I appeal to the authorities to ensure that the design of this new town – an opportunity that we are unlikely to see again in Malta, at least not in our lifetime – is something of which we should be proud, as impressive as Valletta (in a different way) that will show that the errors of the last 40 years have been well and truly laid to rest.



top and opposite left:
The timeless charm
of our village cores

National
aesthetic abomination



From the Secretary General's Desk

Edward Xuereb

Hon. Secretary General of Din l-Art Helwa

The first six months of the year were fairly hectic, especially as far as problems connected with the environment and fund-raising events were concerned. As already reported in the newsletter, the most important event was the announcement by Government regarding the establishment of a Nature and History Park (*Il-Majjistral*) in the northwest of Malta.

The board established by Government, on which *Din l-Art Helwa* is represented, is meeting regularly and will shortly be presenting the Management Plan for the park to Government. We thank the Alfred Mizzi Foundation for its sponsorship in respect of this project, which will cover the cost of consultancy fees.

The summer months have been fairly quiet, allowing the Executive Committee and secretariat to tackle various administrative problems and to study and follow up the various applications submitted to MEPA that affect both our cultural heritage and the environment.

In my annual report, and in the last issue of *Vigilo*, I mentioned that *Din l-Art Helwa* were expecting to take over various properties under Deed

of Guardianship. Unfortunately, to date this has not happened due, we understand, to certain legal aspects that still have to be resolved.

On the other hand, I am glad to report that the restoration of the Lunzjata Fountain in Kerċem has been completed and an unveiling ceremony will be taking place shortly. We again thank the Alfred Mizzi Foundation for sponsoring this project, and master mason Leli Saliba for his excellent work.

The restoration of the Red Tower has been completed, while work on Delimara Lighthouse is progressing steadily and should be completed before the end of the year. Work on the Sant Antnin Battery in Qala was delayed while a way of getting heavy transport to the site was established, but is now progressing. The restoration of the statue of St Paul on St Paul's Island began in August, and restoration work at our premises in Melita Street will be starting shortly. It is also expected that restoration work on Dwejra Tower will begin shortly.

I am happy to report that on 14 September Executive President Martin Galea signed the necessary agreement with the Curia for the restoration of Tal-

The restored Lunzjata
Fountain

photo – Victor Rizzo



Hniena Church in Qrendi (*see report by David Mallia on pages 18 - 19*). A meeting is to be held shortly with the ecclesiastical authorities to discuss the way forward and the submission of the necessary application to MEPA. It is hoped that the restoration work will begin early next year.

For several years, PricewaterhouseCoopers has sponsored restoration work undertaken by *Din l-Art Helwa* on Our Lady of Victory Church in Valletta. This year they have been doing sterling work at Santa Marija Tower on Comino and an account by one of their volunteers, Elizabeth Fenech, appears in this issue (*pages 14 - 15*).

We must record our sincere thanks for all PwC's efforts – spear-headed by the partners and senior management, who spent a day at the tower in May, planting tamarisk trees, repairing walls and clearing up the accumulated rubbish – and continued by members of staff who have manned the tower on Sundays throughout the summer so that it can be enjoyed by visitors. We are also very grateful to the Comino Hotel general manager Mark Abdilla for waiving the boat fare for conveying the volunteers to and from the island, and the *Din l-Art Helwa* Gozo Committee.

The main fund-raising event was our annual dinner at San Anton Garden, which was presided over by President Edward Fenech Adami and Mrs Fenech Adami. Also joining members and guests for the occasion was the Culture and Tourism Minister, Francis Zammit Dimech, as well as other dignitaries.

It was a very well-organised and enjoyable evening, with a sumptuous meal provided by Osborne Caterers and music from the band "The Quack" who for once managed to persuade people on to the dance floor and keep them there until the early hours of the morning! As usual, our sincere thanks and appreciation go to the organiser, Cettina Caruana Curran, helped by Charles and Maureen Gatt and Connie Mollicone, for all their hard work.

The next three months promise to be fairly eventful, with the start of our public monthly lectures – the first of which will be held on Thursday, 11 October with Martin Scicluna speaking on *Malta's Sustainable Development and Climate Change: Complacency or Confronting the Challenges?*

Din l-Art Helwa's Award for Cultural Heritage Journalism will be presented on Friday, 16 November, followed by the presentation of the *Architectural Heritage Award* on Friday, 30 November, both events at our premises in Melita Street.

Three fund-raising events will be held before the end of the year. From 9 to 11 November, The Nonsuch Players will be presenting the play *The Countess Sarkozy and the Hussar* by Christopher Fry at Torri Mamo, the Annual Concert is scheduled for Friday, 30 November at Palazzo Parisio and, as usual, there will be the Annual Christmas Draw, which is expected to take place during the first week in December.

I would like to end by appealing to members to help us increase our membership by encouraging family and friends to join *Din l-Art Helwa*, and to thank all our volunteers for their hard work and support during the long hot summer months.

PUBLIC LECTURES

2007 / 2008

Thursday, 11 October

Malta's Sustainable Development and Climate Change: Complacency or Confronting the Challenges?

By Martin Scicluna

Thursday, 8 November

Deities, Ritual and the Sea in the Maltese Islands

By Dr Timmy Gambin

Thursday, 6 December

Antonio Sciortino and His Influences

By Dennis Vella

Thursday, 10 January

53 Days to Compostela: 1,000 km on the Camino Francés

By Adrian Strickland

Thursday, 14 February

Contemporary Maltese Art

By Anton Grech

Thursday, 13 March

Language, Religion and Politics:

Australian Press Perspectives of Lord Strickland's Malta

By Professor Henry Frendo

Thursday, 10 April

Topic to be announced

By Dr John Sciberras

Thursday, 8 May

Water – a Crisis?

By Gordon J. Knox

Thursday, 12 June

The Roots of the Maltese Latin Christian Identity

By Professor Mario Buhagiar



Lectures begin at 18.00 hrs at the Din l-Art Helwa lecture hall, 133 Melita Street, Valletta.

If you would like to attend, please be seated by 17.45 hrs.

Red Tower Restoration Project

Cynthia de Giorgio

One of the main aims of *Din l-Art Helwa* is, of course, to promote the preservation and protection of historic buildings and monuments and the character of our towns and villages, especially in relation to the problems arising from modern urban development.

Over the years it has focused on preserving monuments of national value and one of the results of this aim is the restoration and conservation of St Agatha's Tower, better known as the Red Tower, at I-Ahrax tal-Mellieha. Standing on the crest of Marfa Ridge, on the outskirts of Mellieha, the tower is an important historical and architectural landmark in the Maltese countryside. It was constructed in 1647-8 during the reign of Grand Master Lascaris for the specific purpose of guarding not only Mellieha Bay but also the Straits between Comino and Gozo from the possibility of military attack by the Ottoman Turks.

Even by today's standards, it was an ambitious project. It was built entirely from local globigerina limestone and consists of a large, strong podium on which were constructed two more storeys, separated with a string course. The roof has a two-foot high parapet and four turrets that served as watch towers, finished with crenellations typical of the period.

In 1722 the Congregation of War instructed that the tower, which had been equipped with four canon in 1649, be armed with five guns and constantly manned by a garrison of four soldiers. It was subsequently used for defence purposes by the British Army and, following Independence, by the Armed Forces of Malta as a lookout. One of the shallow alcoves served as a small chapel that was dedicated to St Agatha and adorned with an image of this popular saint. The inscription on the plaque above the entrance to the tower, erected in 1649, begins with the words: "To those who wage war, I the Martyr Agatha..."

Some eight years ago the tower underwent a thorough and extensive restoration, sponsored by M. Demajo Group of Companies, Playmobil Malta Ltd and Toly Products Ltd, that took some two years. The work included significant repairs to the four roof turrets, one of which was partially destroyed. A wooden spiral staircase was custom-made and installed to replace the metal rungs that had been the only means of access to the roof after the destruction of the original stone staircase. The original stone floor, which had been covered by a very thick layer of concrete, was uncovered, the huge under-floor cistern was emptied and cleaned, the interior walls of the building were scraped and painted and preservation work was carried out on the exterior walls which, after consultation with the Museums Department, were painted in their original red colour.

Over the last few years, however, the architectural fabric had suffered from water infiltration that had resulted in some significant loss in the rendering of the exterior walls, as well as in the interior. As a result, during the last 18 months the tower has once again undergone some fairly extensive restoration work.



left - The inscription above the entrance

Opposite:

top - during and after restoration

centre - plaster loss following the first restoration

bottom - the newly restored Red Tower

The Red Tower before the first restoration





Because of the deteriorated condition of the stonework, the exterior of the tower has been rendered with a specific coating of hydraulic lime-based mortar. This material is particularly compatible with limestone, and not only protects the surface but acts as a deterrent to further deterioration. Before the laborious procedure of plastering the exterior could commence it was essential that all the cement-based rendering be carefully removed. Then the mortar joints were cleaned and repaired before three separate coats of plaster were applied. The final layer was once again coloured with the traditional red pigment that gives the tower its name.

The roof has also been given a coat to protect it from water infiltration after heavy rain. Repair work has been carried out on the cistern, and the thick layer of silt that had accumulated in the cistern has been removed. The timber bridge, that formed part of the original restoration work, has been replaced with one made of treated hardwood, constructed in the traditional manner.

Today, once again restored to its former glory, the Red Tower stands in all its monumental grandeur for us, and future generations, to appreciate.



Friends of Ta' Braxia AGM

Charles A Gatt - Executive Director

The sixth Annual General Meeting was held in the Memorial Chapel at Ta' Braxia Cemetery on Saturday, 2 June.

Among those present at the well-attended meeting were Association President Judge Maurice Caruana Curran, Vice-Presidents HE Mr N Archer, Chev. James Gollcher and Prof. Victor Griffiths, and DLH president Mr. Martin Galea. The meeting was chaired by Executive Director Charles A. Gatt.

The President welcomed members and reminded them that, unlike the first British-built cemetery, which is on trust to DLH, Ta' Braxia is the property of the government and as such the involvement of the "Friends" is purely on a partnership project basis. He expressed his sense of pride about his involvement with the cemetery, not only because an ancestor of his is buried there but also because, as Founder President of DLH, he sees this particular project as falling well within the remits of the mother organisation, which is to safeguard and preserve Malta's historical sites. Ta' Braxia is certainly a place of historical interest with its magnificent vaults and monuments.

Judge Caruana Curran said that he is fully aware of the efforts of the volunteers and the constraints they come across in their attempts to keep the site in a respectable and tidy condition. He expressed his genuine belief that without this effort the cemetery would very quickly deteriorate into an overgrown derelict site.

Opposite:

Funerary Monuments at
Ta' Braxia

Racing against time at
Ta' Braxia



The President also expressed his disappointment that another year has passed and the restoration work on the Memorial Chapel has not yet been tackled. He finished his remarks by thanking the members and volunteers for their active or supportive involvement and wished them well for the future.

The Executive Director summarised the Friends' activities at Ta' Braxia during the previous year. There had, he said, been a great deal of activity at Ta' Braxia Cemetery in the last 12 months and considering the obstacles and frustrations often encountered in dealing with this kind of project, it was surprising that "The Friends" Association is still in existence.

The Association is an arm of *Din l-Art Helwa*, Malta's National Trust. It must be stated at the outset that without the considerable support it receives from *Din l-Art Helwa*, both administratively and financially, the Association could not possibly function.

Charles Gatt said it was appropriate to start his report by reminding "The Friends" of the basic objectives of the Association. The cemetery is the property of the Maltese government, and the involvement of the Friends is in the form of a partnership with the government or, to be more accurate, with the Department of Public Health.

The Friends' involvement in the cemetery comprises three distinct elements:

1. To look after the graves, vaults and monuments of members' ancestors, their relatives or friends who are interred in the cemetery. The funds required for this activity are obtained through members' subscriptions and donations.

2. To maintain or restore the historical aspect of the vaults and monuments of this 150-year-old cemetery. Funding for this work is shared equally between the government and *Din l-Art Helwa*.

3. The third involvement is really a pre requisite of the second item, in that regular professional gardening is essential to ensure that the cemetery is kept tidy and that monuments are not dislodged or uprooted by overgrown trees or buried in the overgrowth. This aspect is managed by the Friends but funded by the department.

With regard to funding, the Executive Director said that the first responsibility of taking care of the Friends' interests is easily catered for, as they pace themselves within their financial constraints.

"However", he continued, "we invariably meet considerable delay in obtaining refunds from the Treasury for work done in monument restoration and gardening". It has become standard procedure for refunds to be received so late that they fall into the department's budget for the following year. Consequently, *Din l-Art Helwa* is perennially in a financial shortfall as it is obliged to pay the masons



and gardeners their wages as they become due and then wait a long time for refunds from the department.

The situation came to a head at the end of 2006 when, on top of the tardy refunds, the government decided to reduce the Ta' Braxia vote from Lm4,000 to Lm3,000 per annum. However, following strong objections by all concerned and direct intercessions by the President of DLH to the Office of the PM, this decision was rescinded. It was then decided to renew the partnership.

The extensive restoration work in Sections R and V of the cemetery, which were badly damaged by enemy action in WW11, is now virtually complete. Instead of the piecemeal repairs which would have taken years to complete, a deal was negotiated with the masons for the completion of the whole work in this area within a specific timeframe. The work, supervised by one of our volunteers, Mr Philip Galea, was completed a few weeks ago. Other masonry restoration work throughout the cemetery is still outstanding and we hope to deal with this, piecemeal, as necessary. Small repairs, such as the fixing of crosses and funerary ornaments, will be undertaken by the volunteers themselves.

Another major project which has been mentioned in previous reports is the restoration of this beautiful Chapel, built in 1893. As previously advised, the government has clearly indicated that no public funds will be made available for this project, even though it is a National Monument. However, we proceeded regardless and engaged an eminent architect, Antonio Mollicone, to carry out an assessment survey. In his report, he identified the nature and extent of the deterioration in the roof timbers and external stone structure and proposed the appropriate method of repair. The report formed the basis of the application submitted to MEPA, which is presently being considered.

As the restoration will involve a number of specialised skills, contractors are finding it difficult to produce a cost estimate for the work involved. Once this is known, we will be in a position to start searching for a benefactor or a sponsor.

Having been allocated a secluded corner of the cemetery and given permission to transform it into a secure storeroom for our tools and equipment, we can now concentrate on converting the room adjacent to the caretaker's room into a museum. Besides providing us with some office space, the room will house the cemetery plans, burial details, funerary artefacts, the lapidary inscriptions painstakingly recorded by our volunteers Col. Ken Valenzia and Nita Tabone, and other documents.

The number of visitors to the cemetery has increased. Besides casual visitors, we often make arrangements for group visits such as the British Residents Association, Russian residents and guided tours for tourists. It is therefore good to announce that at long last we are close to providing toilet facilities on the site. The external structure of the washrooms is now finished and the cathedral style doors and windows are being made. We hope to complete the fitting out and tiling in the next few months. The structure was

designed by our volunteer architect Louis Naudi in keeping with the aesthetics of the cemetery. He also supervised the construction.

Due to the frequent absence from work of the two caretakers employed by the government, it is often the case that visitors arriving at the cemetery, often from overseas, find the place closed during official opening hours. This has created much aggravation and after numerous complaints to the department we affixed a notice outside the cemetery gate showing the telephone number to call in such situations. Unfortunately the notice was vandalised. We hope the second notice recently fixed will survive a little longer.

Another matter which is causing us concern is the selling of some very old graves by people claiming to have acquired or inherited the ownership. Whilst this activity may be legitimate (although some people dispute this) we are appalled to see old engraved marble or granite gravestones broken up and discarded nearby. We have been told the removal of the remains and the cleaning of the graves is controlled by the management of the Addolorata cemetery. This matter has already been raised with the appropriate officials and will be on the agenda for the next meeting with the department.

The Jewish annex of the cemetery is now in a very tidy and restored condition, as far as could be achieved. Some plants and shrubs have been planted and further embellishment is planned. The site attracts a number of visitors.

The membership of the Association is fairly stable. It is difficult to increase the number, as establishing contact with relatives of the interred, most of whom came from the UK, will be an enormous task. Most records in the archives are fairly vague and often show just the name, perhaps the town in England and the service or ship the person served in. We have added a few members through casual visitors to the cemetery.

Finally, it must of course be emphasised that all work carried out by the Friends is voluntary. The volunteers actually involved with the activities at the cemetery on a regular basis are rather few, namely, Dr Andy and Mrs Jenny Welsh, Major Tony Camilleri, Alan Keighly, Col. Ken Valenzia, Mrs Nita Tabone, Major Maurice Micallef Eynaud, John Turner and myself. The contribution is largely managerial, secretarial, archiving and research, although some of us engage in some physical activities of repair and maintenance. We are constantly on the look-out for new volunteers, so please spread the word.

We wish to thank everybody involved in the running and supporting the The Friends of Ta' Braxia Association and the association's benefactors who, he said, support the association financially, and without fanfare, to enable it to continue its work.



Karmen Mikallef Buhagar (1922 - 2005)

Dr David Mallia



Karmen Mikallef Buhagar
1944

photo:
Akkademja tal-Malti

Karmen Mikallef Buhagar, who died in St Mary's Nursing and Residential Home in Tooting, London on Sunday 23 January 2005 – just short of her 83rd birthday, is the second person in the 43-year history of *Din l-Art Helwa* to have made a bequest to the organisation.

Karmen was born in the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria on 3 April 1922. Although her mother, Maria, was born in Bormla, her father, Anton, had also been born in Alexandria. Anton's parents, Karmenu and Konċetta née Zammit, had also emigrated to Egypt from Bormla in the mid-19th century, like thousands of other Maltese who left Malta during that century.

Anton was an engineer, while her mother had been a school headmistress in Malta, although the couple met and married in Alexandria. They lived at 128 Rue du Prince Abel Moneim. She was educated at a French Catholic girls' school, St Vincent de Paule, and soon became a member of the newly formed Maltese Girl Guide Company.

During the Second World War, the Malta Relief Fund was launched by Maltese émigrés in various countries in order to provide food, clothing and other items unavailable on the besieged island. The Fund was instrumental in alleviating the terrible hardship experienced by the Maltese in Malta during the war and, together with the President of the Central Council of the Maltese Communities in Egypt, Miss Mikallef Buhagar was one of those who helped to establish this fund in Egypt and she took an active role in the annual 8 September celebration commemorating the Victory of the Great Siege of 1565.

She also took a nursing medical course and went on to become an assistant sister in surgery at the French – or European – hospital of Alexandria, where she worked until she left Egypt. As an active member of the Maltese community in Alexandria, she

was also a member of the Festa sub-Committee of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Hon. Secretary of the Maltese Philharmonic Society "Valletta".

From her youth, Karmen was a great admirer of the Maltese language and dedicated much time to its preservation among the Maltese in Egypt. She was an active member of the movement *Għat-Tixrid ta' l-Ilsien u l-Qari Malti* and was a regular contributor to the publication, *Il-Malti*. She often wrote letters in appreciation or criticism of national subjects in Maltese journals in Egypt. She also supported and admired a number of authors in Malta such as *Ġorġ* Pisani, Laurent Ropa, Ninu Cremona and particularly Dun Karm Psaila, with whom she corresponded from 1940 until 1961, although the two never met. Their correspondence is a testament to their reciprocal love of, and a unity of mind for, all things Maltese, which is all the more surprising given the difference in age between them.

The Suez Canal debacle in 1954 resulted in a mass exodus of foreigners from Egypt in October 1956. Karmen and her family, which included her father and her sisters, Giovanna and Ġużeppa, had to leave their home in Alexandria at extremely short notice. Her father was offered the possibility of remaining in Egypt on account of his age, but demurred, adding that wherever his children went, he would go too. Indeed, the family dog "Boċċa Xortina" also accompanied the family to their new home. However, before leaving, Karmen managed to rescue the decorations of the Statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the flag of the Maltese Philharmonic Society "Valletta", which she subsequently donated to *Dar l-Emigrant* in Valletta. They were not allowed to land in Malta as refugees, but as British subjects they had the right to settle in England. Initially, they lived in Palace Road in London, but they subsequently moved to a house called "*Dar Bebbuxi*" in south-west London, where she lived until the last years of her life. She soon became a member of the Association of Maltese Communities of Egypt (London) that was subsequently formed in England.

Karmen Mikallef Buhagar promoted the work of Malta's national poet and the appreciation of Maltese literature through the Karmen Mikallef Buhagar Foundation at the University of Malta, which can be considered as the sublimation of her esteem for the National poet with whom she had corresponded for over 20 years. From 1971 she visited Malta at least once a year, generally to commemorate Dun Karm Day and to participate in the bi-annual lecture on the National Poet held in October, which was funded by the foundation, to preside over the awarding of the Dun Karm Prize for the encouragement of Maltese studies at the university, and to lay wreaths to the poet's memory at the house of his birth in Żebbuġ, his monuments in Valletta and Żebbuġ and the National Library.

Opposite:

Monument to
Dun Karm Psaila
in Floriana

She donated a sum of money towards the erection of a monument to Dun Karm in Floriana in 2000 and a bust of the poet at the Maltese Literature Groups of Sydney and of Melbourne. She also ensured that his tomb was taken care of. In 1956 she arranged for a commemorative plaque on the façade of the house of Dun Karm's birth and another one, the following year, at the house in Sliema where he lived during the war. Other plaques were subsequently fixed at the Seminary (now the Curia), the house in Old Bakery Street, Valletta, where he lived between 1910 and 1936, and at the Blue Sister's Hospital (now Zammit Clapp Hospital), where he died. On her initiative, all Dun Karm's poems were collected by Professor Oliver Friggieri and published by *Klabb Kotba Maltin* in 1979 in a volume entitled *Dun Karm – Poeżiji Migbura*.

She was an active member of the *Akkademja tal-Malti* and corresponded with numerous Maltese authors. A considerable number of the letters that Dun Karm wrote to her were subsequently donated by her to the University of Malta Library and form part of the University's "Dun Karm Papers" collection.

She also paid for the erection of a commemorative plaque to Mikiel Anton Vassalli at the university and one to Laurent Ropa in Xaghra, Gozo. Plaques commemorating Rużar Briffa and Ġużé Bonnici were unveiled in the Malta University Library on her initiative, as was one commemorating Mikiel Anton Vassalli. Another plaque to Ġużé Bonnici was also placed at the house in Sliema where he had lived between 1929 and 1934.

In 1984, Karmen Mikalleg Buhagar was awarded the title of "Mara Maltija" by the Toronto Maltese Forum for her work towards the appreciation of the Maltese language and literature. She was also made a Dame of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in recognition of her efforts towards the fostering of Maltese literature. Before her death, she donated a number of books in Maltese to the Education Ministry so that they could be used to promote Maltese literature.

It is remarkable that, never having lived in Malta, Karmen loved all things Maltese and, indeed, she personified the Maltese identity for much of the Maltese Community in Alexandria. It may be that although she lived her life away from her "native" shores, her heart and mind were always there. As the late Prof. Ġużé Aquilina once said: "It needed the initiative of a Maltese from Egypt to make the work of Dun Karm better known."

Anyone fortunate enough to have made her acquaintance will remember her as a personable woman who listened closely to whatever was said to her and was not above scolding the use of foreign sounding words, so dear to her was the homeland from which she was deprived.

For a number of years she made an annual donation to *Din l-Art Helwa*. Her generosity and love of Malta went beyond her initiative to create a national consciousness towards Maltese authors and this has been further confirmed after her death by the announcement of her most generous bequest to *Din l-Art Helwa*, which will enable the association to conserve the unique character of the Maltese landscape and architecture for future generations.



Preserving Wonderful Comino

Elizabeth Fenech

For over 380 years, Santa Marija tower has stood boldly and proudly on the island of Comino, a solitary sentinel with vigilant eyes over the two main islands of the Maltese archipelago. Witness to a span of the glorious history of our nation, the tower deserves from us the same level of protection today that it granted our people in times long gone by. This is why we, at PricewaterhouseCoopers, joined forces with our social partner *Din l-Art Helwa* to contribute our modest share towards the safeguarding of this historical gem.

Din l-Art Helwa has registered tangible successes in its mission to raise awareness of our national heritage and the need for its preservation. Since its foundation, more and more organisations have slowly but surely embraced its cause. PricewaterhouseCoopers is honoured to be one of the organisations affiliated with *Din l-Art Helwa* and is committed to provide its continuing support and assistance. Indeed, PwC is a strong believer in the richness of our culture and heritage, and the safeguarding of remnants of Malta's history is a top priority on its Corporate Social Responsibility agenda.

Equipped with nothing more than motivated spirits and eager hands, on 25 May the partners and managers of PwC spent a day in Comino, clearing and embellishing various areas of the island. In the area of Santa Marija Bay, one team planted a number of tamarisk trees, the watering of which will be entirely sponsored by the firm. Another team worked hard at restoring the perimeter of Santa Marija Tower. Such team-building activities, outside the usual working environment, were very useful in helping PwC partners and managers get to know each other better, and the tired smiles at the end of the day demonstrated the true sense of satisfaction that only genuine teamwork can generate.

The success of that day eventually led to the setting up of a scheme whereby, on a rotational basis, willing PwC staff would go to Comino every Sunday during the summer months to open Santa Marija Tower to visitors.

As an additional incentive, the firm granted an extra day of vacation leave for the members of staff who enrolled in the scheme. The response to this initiative was substantial, and the planned roster of two PwC staff members every Sunday was extended to accommodate even up to four members every weekend.

My team's turn came on 29 July. Each member in my team had some connection with PwC, with three of us currently working with the firm and the remaining two being ex-employees. Having thoroughly read the leaflets handed over by a *Din l-Art Helwa* representative who briefed us some days beforehand, we felt that we were sufficiently knowledgeable about the historical background of the tower and therefore ready for the task ahead of us. At Comino we were welcomed by Salvu, one of the handful of residents of Comino, who drove us up along the winding path to the tower. During the journey, the rugged scenery all around was enhanced by the enthusiasm of Salvu, who could not refrain from praising the unique charm of his homeland.

Once we arrived at the tower, each of us assumed responsibility for a specific task – including hoisting the flag, entertaining tourists, receiving donations and taking group photographs of visitors. The teamwork was excellent and yielded unexpectedly good results.

The torrid heat of that July afternoon did not deter tourists from walking all the way from the hotel or the bay to the tower. We had quite a number of visitors, particularly people with young children, who were delighted to hear stories of valorous knights and fearsome sea-faring pirates. The adults were more interested in the historical facts, but they also took the opportunity of asking questions and seeking advice on the activities they planned during their holiday. A German visitor told us that he had already been to



The Blue Lagoon seen from the roof of Santa Marija Tower

Taking off with a "Lucky Lady"





Comino, but the last time he visited the tower was in 2003, when it was closed due to the restoration work that was being undertaken at the time by *Din l-Art Helwa*. This time he was very pleased to have the opportunity to enter the tower and admire the inside of the building and the unobstructed view from its top. Most of the visitors were very surprised when we told them that the tower had featured as the Château d’If in the film *The Count of Montecristo* starring Jim Caviezel, and not the one with Gerard Depardieu – something we had to point out to some French tourists.

From our brief experience, we would like to make two suggestions that may serve to fine-tune the effort and thought behind such laudable projects of *Din l-Art Helwa*. During the summer months, we think it would be a good idea to have a vending machine inside the tower. Most of the visitors who walked from the hotel were quite dehydrated and we believe they would have spent more time admiring the panorama from the top of the tower, had they been able to buy a cold bottle of water. In addition, a Maltese couple pointed out that it would be useful if there could be a sign in the hotel’s reception area to indicate whether or not the tower was open, to avoid people walking all the way up to it and then finding it closed.

That day, more than 30 visitors came to visit the tower in a short period of time and we were kept “on-guard” throughout our stay. The amount of donations collected was a mere drop in the ocean of the money necessary to sustain the restoration and maintenance of historical sites, but we were fairly satisfied with the amount we managed to collect. Once our “duty” was over, and the flag had been lowered to indicate the closure of the tower, the refreshing crystal-clear waters of Comino beckoned us to conclude the day relaxing and bathing.

Many of the staff at PwC are looking forward to repeating this adventure, possibly even at other sites under the patronage of *Din l-Art Helwa*. The firm genuinely believes that this is an additional way of manifesting its appreciation to its clients, its workforce and society at large for being part of the success story behind PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Elizabeth Fenech is an assistant manager in the Tax and Legal Services (TLS) department of PricewaterhouseCoopers. Her team consisted of TLS partner Dr Neville Gatt, TLS manager Lara Pace Balzan and Geoffrey Camilleri and Michael Pace Balzan, both previously employed with PwC.

Shooting portraits for visitors



Planting Tamarisk trees



Executive President Martin Galea with PricewaterhouseCoopers volunteers (25th May 2007)



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Lm1000 (€ **2,329.37**)

for 5 years

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Tourism Industry Heritage Fund:

Lm200 (€ **465.87**)

for 3 years

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per year for 3 years

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Ignazio Anastasi Ltd was established in 1866 as a general trading concern. Today, the company has grown and restructured and now operates from a 3000 sq. metre purpose-built office and warehousing complex centrally located in Mriehel.

In the early 1980s, we took the first step towards re-organising our business to meet the needs of our growing portfolio of partner brands by setting up departments specialising in our three main sectors: automotive; hardware and stationery. In 1995, we went one step further.

We realised that in order to ensure future growth and the success of the Group, we needed to evolve away from a family-run firm to a more enterprise-efficient model. We have now established management teams dedicated to the promotion of each of our main areas of interest, which enables us to focus resources and cater more appropriately to the specific needs of each sector.

IAL provides quality brands in these sectors of the market and ensures that its customers are provided with the best possible service. We are always looking to the future and always aim to be one step ahead of our competitors.

We have the experience to know what our customers want and we have the know-how and expertise to provide it for them in the most efficient way.

Malta is a country that is rich in history and based on many different cultures. This is mainly due to its strategic location in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea.

Thanks to organisations like *Din l-Art Helwa*, which protect this historical culture, we in Malta have the privilege of enjoying and making the most of this culture and history, which is what makes us Maltese and makes us different from any other nation.

It is for this reason that IAL supports what *Din l-Art Helwa* stands for, because after being in business for over 140 years, IAL understands what it takes to survive.

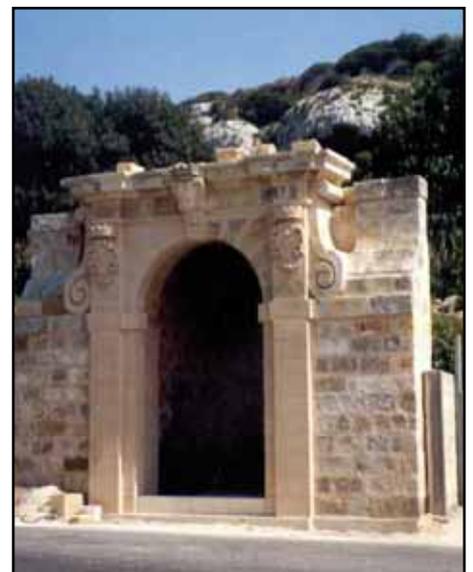
Opposite:

Bir Miftuh - interior

photo:
Joe Chetcuti



Restoring Mistra Gate



DLH to Restore Tal-Hniena Chapel

Dr David Mallia

The Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy, “*tal-Madonna tal-Hniena*”, on the outskirts of Qrendi, has recently come under the care of *Din l-Art Helwa*, following the signing of a deed of trust with the Archdiocese of Malta. This is the fourth chapel held in trust by *Din l-Art Helwa*, the others being Santa Marija ta’ Bir Miftuh, Santa Marija ta’ Hal Millieri and San Rokku in Żebbuġ.

The chapel is situated in the former hamlet of Hal Lew and served as a vice-parish church for this hamlet when it formed part of the parish of Żurrieq. According to Ferres¹, the original church, which dated back to the 13th century, was deconsecrated by Mgr Dusina in 1575. However, there is no mention of this in the actual text of the Dusina visit, which reports the church of *Nativitas Beatae Mariae*, to which it was formerly dedicated² as being well-kept by its procurator Joannellus Pisaile³. The building of the current edifice was begun in 1650, when Dun Gio Maria Camilleri was parish priest of Qrendi. The new parish of Qrendi had been formed on 15 February 1618, when Bishop Cagliares removed the hamlets of Hal Lew and Hal Manin from the parish of Żurrieq and placed them with Qrendi. Both Dun Gio Maria Camilleri and Ganni Schembri, who paid for the second side altar, were notable benefactors of this chapel.

According to Ferres¹, the sacristy was added in 1668. Above the window is a highly impressive stone prospect of Almighty God that trails a decorative carved braid, on which the Guttenberg coat of arms features prominently. Fra Wolfgang Philip von Guttenberg was one of the principal benefactors of the chapel and he paid for many of the ex-votos, paintings and ornaments to be found therein. The sanctuary has long been held in great veneration. It was probably the most venerated sanctuary after that of the Madonna of Mellieha, and has been visited by innumerable pilgrims. On 18 March 1695, at the request of Parish Priest Dun Domenico Formosa, Pope Innocent XII granted indulgences in favour of Tal-Hniena. This parish priest’s excessive zeal was the cause of his death in 1699, when the new Qrendi parish church was being built. In setting an example to his parishioners, he fell while climbing a tall ladder carrying a heavy stone and was killed instantly⁴.

The chapel has a relatively elaborate plan, compared to other wayside churches, and from stylistic evidence has been attributed to Mederico Blondel⁵. The exterior is buttressed on the western side and the finely-proportioned main façade is now dominated by the portico. The main door of the church is flanked by statues of St Paul and St John the Baptist. Internally, the space is



divided by a cornice and articulated by giant Doric pilasters, which also define the space occupied by the side chapels. There are three altars: a main altar and one in each of the side chapels. Beyond the side altar to the right of the main altar is a spiral staircase, which leads on to the roof. Above the main entrance to the chapel is a timber choir gallery that is reached by a spiral staircase approached from the side door on the main façade. The whole building is dominated by a fine dome and an exquisite lantern that can be seen for miles around.

The main altar is decorated with highly-detailed stone carvings attributed to Paolo Zahra⁵. This reredos features numerous angels, two of which support the titular painting, while another two carry a crown to be placed on the Madonna’s head. The titular painting is of the Madonna and Child seated on the moon, surrounded by angels. Saint Cajetan, book in hand and lilies at his feet, stands at her lower right and two souls at her lower left. The work is attributed to the well-known Maltese artist Giuseppe D’Arena².

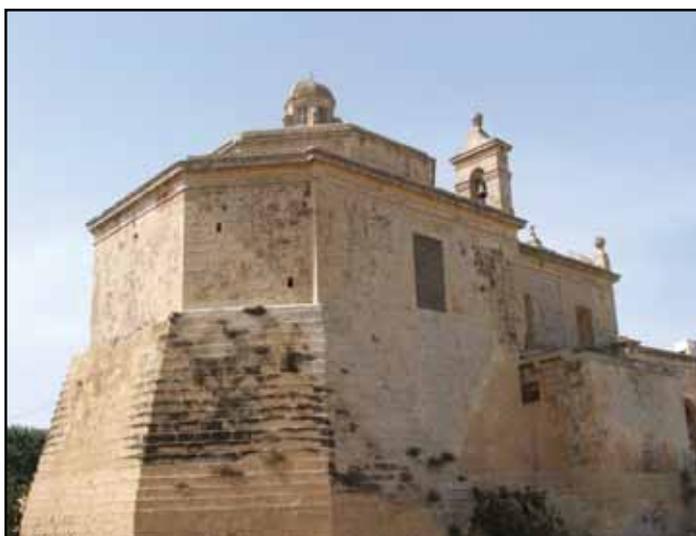
Numerous ex-voto (thanksgiving) paintings for graces received formerly adorned the chapel walls, but most of these have been removed for restoration. Until recently, there were some 45 paintings within the main body of the chapel alone. To the left of the main altar is a wooden candelabrum, on a gilt mural sconce, which is identical to the one found in the St John’s Co-cathedral in Valletta.

There is a small wooden niche containing a life-sized statue of the Madonna to the right of the main altar. This Spanish-style statue of the Madonna was donated by Fra Wolfgang von Guttenberg and is dressed in an authentic wedding gown. A marble scallop shell-shaped font, bearing the date 1769, also features the same coat of arms.

The papier maché statue of Christ the Redeemer (*Ir-Redentur*), that rests below this painting, was originally brought from Senglea and is carried in procession to Qrendi on Good Friday.

On the Gospel side of the aisle there is a stone statue of the Madonna and Child, which replaced an older statue carved in wood that was originally unveiled in 1658².

At one of the side altars hangs a painting of St Anthony of Padua, attributed to Rocco Buhagiar, that symbolises the great devotion to the saint. From the text of Bishop Alpheran de Bussan’s pastoral visit, we learn that the feast day of St Anthony was celebrated annually at Tal-Hniena chapel.





The portico



above right -
Detail of the elaborate
balustrade

photo: The author

In another painting in the chapel are three figures thought to be St Ramon de Penafort, St Peter Nolasco and Jaime Primero “*el Conquistador*”, king of Aragon (1263-1276), who founded the religious foundation “*De mercede redemptionis captivorum*” (“the ransom of captives”).

Near the main door is an interesting painting representing the 14 “saint protectors” who were invoked by the Maltese in cases of sickness or other trials. These are St Blaise (throat disease), St George (diseases of the skin), St Erasmus (bowels), St Pantaleon (tuberculosis), St Vitus (dance and poisonous bites), St Christopher (travel, storms), St Dionisius (possession by evil spirits), St Ciriacus (eye diseases), St Acacias (diseases of the head), St Euchachius (burns), St Giles (lunacy and the evil eye), St Margaret (kidney and childbirth), St Barbara (lightning and sudden death) and St Catherine (the study of philosophy).

There is a rather unusual painting of the *Specio del Ostinato Peccatore*, which portrays the seven deadly sins and shows an ass laden, with side-baskets brimming with the attributes of the sins or, as is they are locally known, “*Is-seba’ rjus tad-dnubiet il-mejta*”. A blindfolded and chained sinner on his hands and knees is beaten and then led away from the holy grounds by a winged Satan.

According to Ferres¹, a simple but interesting sacristy with a barrel-vaulted ceiling was added in 1668, in which there are numerous ornamental stone carvings. Above the sacristy’s window is a highly impressive stone reredos that trails a decorative carved braid in which the coat of arms of the Bailiff of Brandenburg, Fra Wolfgang von Guttenberg, features prominently. In one of the corners of the sacristy is a small cistern that supplies water to an underlying basin, supported by a stone statue of an angel, that provides running water used during religious services.

The sacristy also contains two interesting paintings, one showing Christ’s crucifixion on Golgotha that is attributed to Suor Maria De Dominicis, a pupil of Mattia Preti⁶, and the other of the penitent Magdalene, which is thought to be from the school of Mattia Preti.

Outside the chapel is a portico with a stone arched veranda that served as a shelter against inclement weather for pilgrims coming to worship at the sanctuary. It is decorated with statues of St Ignatius, St Cajetan, St Dominic and St Francis and is enclosed by an elaborate balustrade. In 1873, a cistern was dug beneath it. Beyond the portico is a dilapidated structure that probably served as a stable.

Very close to the chapel is the Guttenberg Palace, occupied by Bali von Guttenberg until his death in 1733, when he was buried in one of the most magnificently decorated graves in St John’s Co-cathedral⁷. This palace, now a private residence, has a number of defensive features, including downward-facing openings at first floor level. The feast of our Lady of Mercy is celebrated annually in this chapel on the Sunday following 8 September and for a number of years, St George Preca used to lead the MUSEUM vigil on the eve of the feast of St Michael, as well as use the chapel as a place of retreat.

Although in a relatively good state of repair, the chapel manifests evident signs of neglect and it is hoped that the maintenance programme that is to be undertaken by *Din l-Art Helwa* in the near future will save this jewel from further damage and conserve it for future generations to enjoy.

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- (2) Vincent Borg (editor), *Marian Devotions in the Islands of St Paul 1600-1800*, Malta, 1983.
- (3) N. L. M. ms. 643, *La visita pastorale di Dusina del 1575*. [f. 102.]
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- (7) Dane Munro, *Memento Mori: A Companion to the Most Beautiful Floor in the World*, Malta, 2005.

Opposite:

top - Interior view

bottom - The buttressed
western elevation

The Environmental Deficit

Martin Scicluna

Vice-President of Din l-Art Helwa

In the last three years, the government has most commendably tackled the country's economic deficit. While there is still a worrying gap between revenue and public expenditure – overall government debt is a massive Lm1,400 million, or Lm3,500 for every man, woman and child – the annual deficit has been considerably reduced. Entry into the eurozone in 2008 will force us to control it even better.

However, the environmental deficit has remained stubbornly out of control, and is growing. In most major respects the environment has actually become worse, despite the Prime Minister's well meant promises to make the environment a priority. Rarely has rhetoric exceeded reality more.

I should start by giving credit where credit is due, because in the enveloping environmental gloom there has been the odd shaft of sunlight. The launch of the first ever Maltese Heritage and Nature Park (*Il-Majjistral*) is a most enlightened and overdue initiative. Several minor and medium-sized restoration projects have been completed. Wayside chapels and other historic monuments have been saved. The refurbishment of a number of beautiful public gardens has been undertaken. Some afforestation projects – when they have not been destroyed by disaffected hunters – have started. Some new roads to be proud of have been laid.

The Valletta and Cottonera waterfront projects are outstandingly successful. Some coastal and village promenades have been completed. The old city of Mdina can now be ranked among the most beautiful mediaeval cities in the world. The management of cultural heritage sites under Heritage Malta's tutelage has greatly improved. The country's waste management strategy is well-founded, the monster of Magtab all but tamed. Some old quarries are being filled in and converted to vineyards. Roadside advertising is properly organised and controlled. The introduction of a park and ride scheme and "controlled vehicle access" into Valletta is a commendable start in the right direction.

But all these are far outweighed, in my judgement, by all the other combined deficiencies in our environment. The evolving state of the environment in the last few years has been like watching a car crash in slow motion. Rampant over-development and land abuse, the progressive

destruction of urban conservation areas and village cores and the creeping urbanisation of Gozo savage our past and intrude, for the worse, into every aspect of our lives. They exacerbate the deficit of which unbridled construction – fuelled by huge sums of cash looking for a respectable home – must bear the major brunt of the blame.

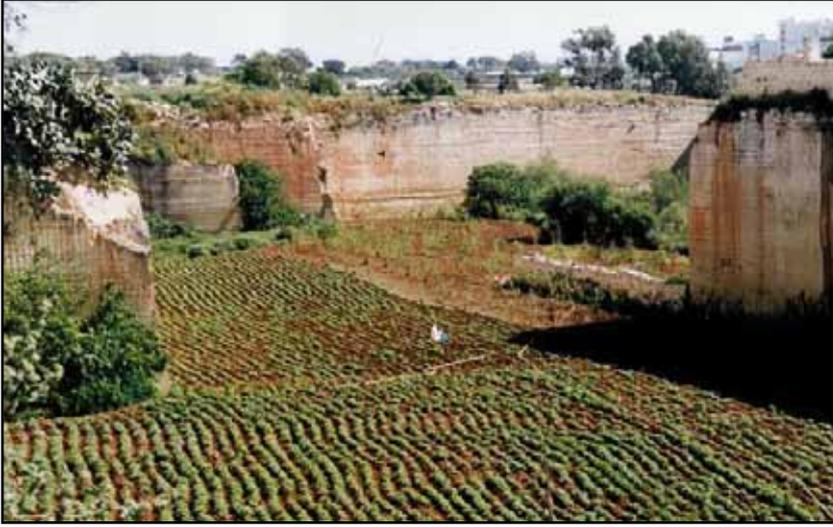
The shabby state of our islands, scarred by dumps and litter – despite the Prime Minister's worthy vow soon after he took office of "zero tolerance" on this – our chokingly poor air quality, excessive noise pollution, the threat to our fresh water quality, inland coastal waters and marine environment, the pressures on our remaining biological diversity and the gross impact of excessive transport use, solid and liquid waste add up to a picture of a country running a huge – and uncontrolled – environmental deficit. Even though a halting start has been made to control many of these areas, and there are well-intentioned nods in that direction under the, thankfully, watchful eye of the EU, the ground that has still to be

A STORY OF GREED, POLITICAL INERTIA AND LAWLESSNESS

"In the five years between 2002 and 2006, Mepa approved planning permits for the building of almost 38,000 dwellings – a record 10,500 in 2006 alone."

Our countryside is still in an extremely shabby state





Recuperated quarry

made up in the regulatory and implementation fields is formidable and growing.

Of course, Malta's small size and heavy population density make us environmentally more vulnerable. But these factors are all the more reason for us to care better for our environment. Air quality suffers as a result of inefficient energy generation and excessive transport use. Greenhouse and other toxic gases add to global warming, and particulate air pollution from quarrying and building construction poison the air we breathe. Renewable energy sources are a distant dream. Water quality in our aquifers is at risk from the most profligate extraction and from fertilisers and other intense agricultural practices.

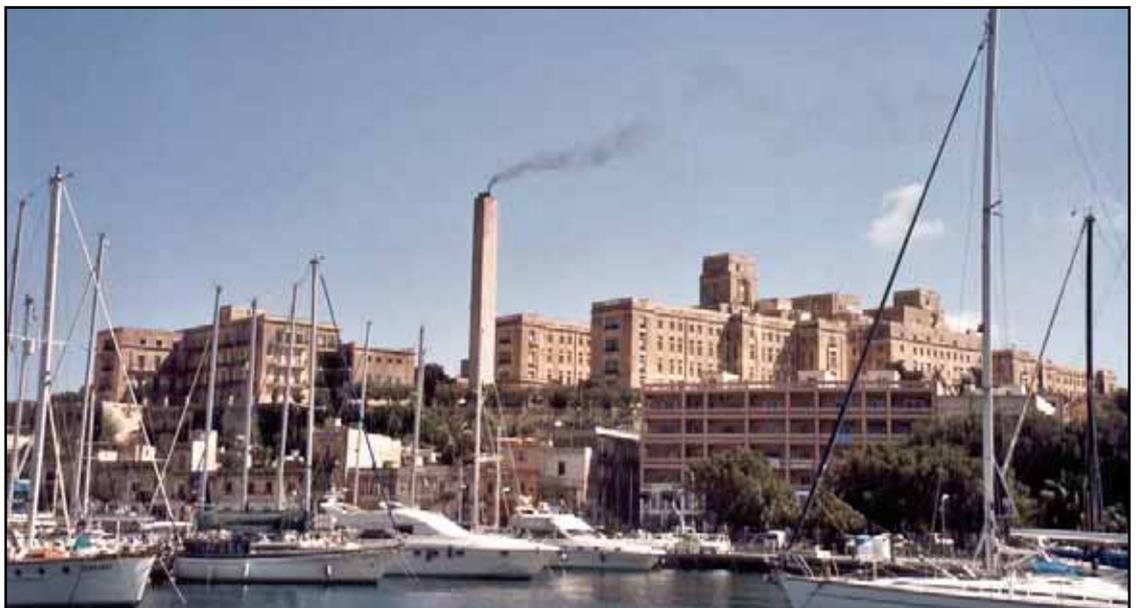
Our inshore sea waters are suffering from marine contamination hazards, including sewage, oil spills and land-based discharges and a range of pollutants. Despite major improvements to the sewerage system, effluents are still discharged untreated into the sea, resulting in pollution, the degradation of our marine flora and fauna and health threats to bathers and divers. The island's rare natural habitats are under threat and many have been obliterated by concrete. A number of endemic species have become extinct. In all these areas, Malta lags well behind the benchmarks set by the EU.

The principal cause of Malta's environmental deficit has been the construction industry – a seemingly unstoppable juggernaut that has made, and continues to make, large parts of our country look like Beirut – pockmarked roads, semi-demolished buildings, dust and detritus everywhere. The government's well-intentioned site management regulations to impose some modicum of order on contractors' work sites cannot disguise the fact that Malta looks like a shambolic building site, such is the intensity of construction under way.

In the five years between 2002 and 2006, Mepa approved planning permits for the building of almost 38,000 dwellings – a record 10,500 in 2006 alone. Construction development has increased, is increasing and should be reduced.

However, what is particularly disturbing about this construction frenzy has been the brazen manner in which Mepa – the regulatory authority – and the government have encouraged it. Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the vote taken in Parliament on 26 July last year to extend the building development zones. The vote represented nothing less than an act of institutionalised vandalism on Malta's environment without parallel in the last 20 years.

The extension to the development zones was pushed through Parliament in the face of overwhelming public concern at what was being proposed. The proposals were based on two false premises: that rationalisation was a pressing issue and that we needed more land for development. Quite the reverse is true. All logic pointed to a freezing of the development areas, not an extension. It was illogical to extend building zones when, by the government's own admission, there was sufficient vacant land within the then existing boundaries to build almost 100,000 "units", whereas the likely requirement for housing up to 2020 was well under half this figure. With, conservatively, almost a quarter of our housing stock lying empty, and in islands which are already severely over-developed, it was illogical as well as destructive to extend the zones – and ran directly counter to the Prime Minister's own declaration to give high priority to the environment.



Poisonous emissions in the air we breathe



The Fort Cambridge proposal

Opposite:
Tigné Point

*" Fort Cambridge,
Tigné Point and
Pender Place
represent
institutionalised
vandalism "*

The Pender Place proposal



The paramount environmental challenge facing Malta is the need to control building development and the way we use and share this tiny land. This is the root cause of our environmental deficit. The impact of excessive land use aggravates all our other environmental problems, as well as undermining our vital tourism industry.

Yet, the regulatory authority, Mepa, to whom we should look to exercise control and protection, has become an intrinsic part of the problem. In many instances, Mepa's perverse decisions have added to the overall picture of institutionalised vandalism. How else can one describe its decisions on Ramla il-Hamra, Fort Cambridge in Sliema and Pender Place in St Julian's, to name just the most prominent? (I make no reference to Ta' Ċenċ or Hondoq ir-Rummien where the structure plan may be about to be flouted and which are still under consideration).

At Ramla l-Hamra, Mepa has given a permit in an area of outstanding natural beauty that lies outside the development zone – in the face of a clear undertaking

by the Environment Minister, following last year's controversial extension of the development boundaries, that no further development outside the permitted zoning would under any circumstances be allowed. Mepa has justified this decision on the most specious grounds.

Fort Cambridge, Tigné Point and Pender Place represent institutionalised vandalism of a different kind – a crass misinterpretation when issuing permits for these developments of the spirit of Mepa's own mission statement "to pass on to our children a better country than we inherited. It is for this reason that we compare our environment to a treasure, something we place our energies in, to protect, care for and improve".

How can one reconcile these fine words – which should guide their every decision – with the ugliness that has been permitted by the planning authority in the three-mile seaside stretch from Tigné Point to Spinola Bay, once consisting of elegant and handsome buildings that have now been replaced almost entirely by faceless, high-rise apartments? (The same remarks could well be repeated in respect of Bugibba, Qawra, St Paul's Bay and Xemxija). These make a mockery of Mepa's mission statement to beautify, not "uglify", our country.

The permits for Fort Cambridge, Pender Place and Tigné Point (the latter now nearing completion) represent in the starkest possible way all that is wrong with our built environment. They wilfully violate the organic texture of the town. They destroy the street line, the skyline and every other consideration of visual harmony. They intrude with their piecemeal development and create a ragged skyline. They are an affront to Malta's indigenous architecture. They show no respect for – and care less about – the grammar of mouldings and ornaments, the traditional wooden balconies or the nature of light and shade.

At Tigné Point, Fort Cambridge and Pender Place what we are getting with these monolithic, intrusive, high-density foot-print buildings – too massive in scale for their surroundings and imposing too much on the existing infrastructure and previously peaceful neighbourhoods – is an excellent example of architecture that destroys its surroundings rather than adapting its art to the surroundings.

Mepa has connived in this vandalism by allowing buildings that do not fit in with the townscape; that do not use an architectural language that places a building in relation with its neighbours and with the casual passer-by; that do not respect the realities of our climate and the human need for light and air in a world facing the



consequences of global warming. They are creating a pale imitation of so many other foreign seaside resorts – characterless, sterile, modish, meaningless glass and concrete.

These three projects may be a symbol of urban virility to those who have commissioned them, vanity projects which will earn their developers a massive amount of money, but they are the epitome of what is wrong with Malta's environment and the institutionalised vandalism that has led to their being given planning permits.

Why is it that the environmental deficit is so large, and growing? One of the key reasons is that regulation is lax and there is no overall national strategic plan for the environment. Expediency, greed and political opportunism rule. Rather than an overall plan for sustainable development that links the economic, social and environmental issues together, we adopt a piecemeal approach. The National Commission for Sustainable Development, on which I sit, produced an excellent strategic plan, which was launched by the Prime Minister and the Environment Minister with considerable fanfare in April 2006.

Since then – 18 months – it has languished. The Cabinet has failed either to endorse it or, worse, to provide the minimal manpower resources necessary to co-ordinate and drive the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development forward. The principles of sustainable development – which include the multitude of concerns over the environment – need to be placed at the centre of government, into all its policies, decisions and the way it operates. A workable sustainability plan is the greatest test facing Malta's machinery of government since our accession to the European Union, but for the implementation of such a plan to succeed, there must be the determination – the exercise of political will – to convert the strategy into a dynamic action plan. This has been absent.

The second reason is the lack of enforcement of the law in the environmental field, the government's blatant omission in successive budgets to provide the additional resources needed and the sheer absence of political will to do anything about it. The rule of law will only be observed if there is a conscious re-direction by government of resources to environmental law enforcement, together with the application of political backbone that has hitherto been missing.

Illegal boathouse owners abound and are tolerated. Illegal structures continue to be constructed (though in fairness to the Environment Minister, a law to enforce quick action to deal with this is belatedly being passed). Structures built illegally outside the development zone continue to be "sanctioned" by Mepa; that is, they are made legal. Illegal hunters' and trappers' hides continue to disfigure the countryside. Illegal hunting and trapping continue (and Malta appears to be prepared to defy EU law to pursue this unconscionable "sporting tradition"). Vehicles – chief among them public transport – continue to spew out poisonous gases.

Illegal water extraction continues to deplete our precious and irreplaceable mean sea-level water aquifer. The state of building construction sites continues to defy government site management regulations. Illegal littering continues unabated. Illegal dumping in the midst of our remaining cultural landscape continues. Our once beautiful coastline continues to be defaced by extraneous structures and tourism development. The stench and slurry of tuna pens continue to afflict large parts of our sea. Construction development is permitted to intrude on cultural heritage sites. The ecology and natural habitats continue to be threatened by illegal construction. Public footpaths in the countryside continue to be illegally closed. Illegal noise pollution is endemic.

Failure to enforce the law – a lack of national discipline – lies at the core of the environmental deficit. A lack of application of the law brings the government into disrepute and undermines respect for the rule of law that is the basis of a civilised society.

At the root of the problem – a direct cause and reflection of the environmental deficit – is our greed and avarice. Rather than combat it, government appears to condone it under the mantra of "economic development", crucially forgetting that economic growth on its own is not progress. Excessive construction development dogs Malta's environment. We are collectively running an environmental deficit and mortgaging the next generation's quality of life for selfish, short-term economic gain. When a country is in environmental overdraft – as Malta is – it is surely wise to keep the next generation out of bankruptcy by taking determined steps to reduce the deficit, not increase it.

To conclude, I have focused in this article on what the deficit consists of and why it has arisen. I have drawn attention to the acts of institutionalised vandalism that have exacerbated – and continue to exacerbate – the problem. The environmental deficit will not be reduced until there is a conscious and co-ordinated effort by government to tackle it. To do this successfully it requires a strategic plan that lays down clear targets and the firm time-frame for achieving them. Moreover, government has to exercise the political will to ensure that the regulation of the environment is rigidly enforced and that it provides the necessary human and other resources to do so. The story of Malta's environmental deficit is a story of greed, political inertia and lawlessness.

I should add a post script. I have written throughout about the "environmental deficit" as a means of drawing a parallel with the economic deficit that this government has almost overcome. But the truth is that, unlike the economic deficit, the environmental deficit can never be wholly reduced because in the significant majority of instances – over-development, the extension of the building zones and other examples of institutionalised vandalism, the loss of natural landscape and marine coastline – once these are lost, they are lost forever. This deficit can never be redeemed.

Interview with Dr Luciano Mule Stagno

Chief Executive Officer - Heritage Malta

Heritage Malta chief executive officer Dr Luciano Mule Stagno kindly agreed to answer a fairly wide variety of questions regarding Heritage Malta.



How would you define the role of Heritage Malta?

The agency's role is clearly defined by the Cultural Heritage Act. The mission of Heritage Malta is to ensure that those elements of cultural heritage entrusted to it are protected and made accessible to the public. In 2005, Heritage Malta was entrusted with the takeover of the former MCR and is now also the national agency for conservation. To this effect, HM (in conjunction with the university and other institutions) also organises academic courses in various fields relating to conservation and conservation science.

What is your role within the organisation?

As chief executive, I am ultimately responsible for the smooth running of the organisation and for providing a vision for the future. The agency is responsible for some 35 museums and sites scattered all over the islands, 21 of which are open on a daily basis. I see my job as facilitating the various facets of the agency and making sure that they all converge in corporate goals and a common vision. More importantly, I am also responsible, with the Board of Directors, for formulating a vision for the Agency for the years to come.

What, in your personal opinion, is the organisation's greatest asset?

People! I contend that the group of dedicated employees at the agency make all the difference. I head an agency that employs more than 350 people, most of whom are specialised in different areas of cultural heritage, management and conservation science. It is ultimately their skill, knowledge and above all commitment to Heritage Malta that makes all the difference. Many of these people could be working elsewhere, for more money and with better working conditions,



and yet they remain at Heritage Malta. Theirs is a labour of love.

How do you, personally, define heritage?

That which defines a culture or a people's identity and which we want to pass on to future generations.

How would you judge the first five years of Heritage Malta?

A resounding success. I have to credit the Chairman, the Board and my predecessor for taking a concept defined in a law and turning it into a vibrant and highly respected agency. Despite being in its infancy, no one can deny the fact that Heritage Malta has made a difference to the way cultural sites and museums are managed and presented to the public. Heritage Malta has striven to find a balance between accessibility, preservation and presentation.

I believe that we have done an excellent job so far and that we have helped to establish a much closer link between culture and tourism. In addition, the agency is setting new standards when it comes to the refurbishment of museums and sites and has also undertaken ambitious projects that were unheard of up to a few years back. Perhaps the most significant aspect is that HM is not afraid to take up new challenges and see them through. The Chinese Terracotta Warriors Exhibition was a case in point as, in the same vein, will be the Caravaggio exhibition.

What have been Heritage Malta's greatest achievements and shortcomings?

Achievements :

getting all employees on board to realise that, ultimately, HM is a service entity. We now operate museums and sites seven days a week from 9.00 to 5.00pm, with the NMA opening till 7pm.

The refurbishment of the Roman Domus in Rabat.

The Chinese Terracotta Warriors Exhibition.

Active participation in various EU projects, which has helped us establish new contacts with other institutions working in similar fields.

Putting cultural heritage on the national agenda and making all stakeholders aware that we are the national agency for museums, conservation practice and cultural heritage.

Shortcomings :

not being able to do as much, and not always being able to do things as quickly, as we would like, partly as a result of the ever-present bureaucracy.

What do you envisage for the next five years?

Making vast improvements to our museums, sites and collections; increasing our revenue so we can do more; possibly opening up more sites on a daily basis. Teaming up and forming partnerships more with NGOs and private industry.

According to the Heritage Malta official web page, the four key aspects of the national cultural heritage are management, conservation, interpretation and marketing. How difficult is it to balance these potentially contrasting aspects?

It is constant work-in-progress, but there is nothing wrong with that. Times change and so do people's expectations and styles. For example, a 1970s' or 80s' era museum now seems old, so we have to continually keep re-inventing ourselves. At the same time we can never compromise on the conservation of the sites and artefacts – but we also want to make them as accessible and attractive as possible.

What is being done concretely to achieve such balance?

As national guardians of priceless treasures, we strive to conserve what is passed on to us in the belief that we are here to give a future to our past. To do this, we need to bring the various sectors of the public closer to cultural heritage and this is achieved through various marketing and educational initiatives that have so far yielded very positive results. We have set up an education division within HM that is already increasing the programmes with students. We are improving several of our sites as I speak – the National Museum of Archaeology, the Fine Arts Museum and the War Museum will be partially overhauled this year. We are building visitors' centres at Haġar Qim, Tarxien and Ġgantija and we are embarking on the covering of Haġar Qim and Mnajdra – which will be done early in 2008. We have taken on the management of Fort Saint Angelo and are applying for EU funds to refurbish it, in conjunction with Cottonera Waterfront Group. We have added to the number of conservators in our Conservation Division in Bighi. We have a proper PR and Exhibitions team to better present our sites and exhibitions. We actively seek out and purchase artefacts to enhance the national collection. We help block developments that would endanger critical sites. I could go on and on, but I think you get the general idea.

Heritage Malta has already been involved in the setting up of one major exhibition (the Chinese Warriors) and is currently finalising the preparation for the exhibition Caravaggio l-Immagine del Divino. What is the strategy behind these high profile events?

Exhibitions have an important role in educating and bringing more people into the museums. This is part of HM's remit. We are organising events that were unthinkable just a few years ago. We can do these things because of our new organisation and we believe the Maltese public and tourism is benefiting as a result. The Silent Warriors exhibition was the result of a collaboration we struck with our Chinese counterparts – a collaboration that should result in a Maltese exhibition in Beijing in 2008 or 2009. The *Immagine del Divino* exhibition will be held to mark the 400th Caravaggio anniversary and will give the Maltese public an opportunity to view these incredible masterpieces right here. Moreover, it gives this



Caravaggio's Ecstasy of Saint Francis, c. 1596, Wadsworth Atheneum, Connecticut

opposite:

Display window at the National Museum of Archaeology

Mosaic at the Roman Domus

opportunity to people who maybe otherwise would never be able to view such masterpieces – children, people who do not have the means or the inclination to travel, etc. Heritage Malta is a national agency and therefore needs to cater to ALL the people, not just those who are already interested in or knowledgeable about cultural heritage.

What are the organisational efforts involved?

The efforts are immense and my short answer can never do justice to the immense amount of work that is needed to make such an exhibition a success. From the negotiations, to the transportation, to the actual setting-up and maintaining of the exhibition, the





process is complex and delicate. However, our employees have now become accustomed to working in such an environment. HM has managed to build a solid working relationship with a number of entities and this further helps us to achieve our goals.

Has the public response to these events been to your satisfaction?

The introduction of the Heritage Malta Membership Scheme has also seen a number of locals enrolling as members of the national agency and frequenting museums on a regular basis. Added to this are the number of temporary exhibitions that are held both at our head office in Merchants Street and at the National Museum of Fine Arts, that are open to the public at no charge. We are very happy with the response from both the local public and from foreigners. Close to 75,000 people visited the Chinese Terracotta Warriors Exhibition and this is a tremendous success.

What will be the next big event, after the Caravaggio exhibition?

We are currently undertaking two very ambitious projects – the completion of the upper floor of the NMA and the completion of the tent project at Haġar Qim and Mnajdra, together with the building of a new visitors' centre. There are also a number of other projects, some of which I have already mentioned, that are on-going and that seek to improve the overall presentation of the museums and sites within our care.

No Maltese can ever forget the shameful attack perpetrated on the Mnajdra Temples. Do you believe that these and other temple complexes are now securely defended against similar attacks?

Definitely. The temples have a physical line of defence in the shape of a fence that was erected soon after the attack. The temples are manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. While we can never be assured that no such attacks will happen again, I am confident that given the way security at the temples is being managed, it will become increasingly difficult for would-be perpetrators to strike again at this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

What point have you reached with the Tenting Project for these temples?

The Temples will be closed to the public as from 7 October 2007, for a period of up to six months, and we are confident that this project will be completed on time. This is a very ambitious project, which we are proud to be undertaking.

Again, in your web page you say that one of your aims is that of "encouraging people of all ages and backgrounds to broaden their horizons through the museums' collections. This is done, among others, by developing a programme of events to develop museums as active and inclusive cultural centres". I am sure you will agree that attention to these issues was sorely missing in the national heritage policy in the recent past. How are things changing through Heritage Malta?

As I mentioned before, we have set up an Education Division to better reach out to schools. We have set up a very well-received membership scheme to encourage people to visit our museums often and we hold special events and exhibitions to attract more people. Heritage Malta is a national agency for all the Maltese people and needs to behave as such. There are segments of the Maltese public

who know very little about our heritage and we need to educate them, starting with the children.

Perhaps one of the most strongly felt shortcomings in our national museums set up is the lack of a permanent exhibition space for a national collection of modern and contemporary art? What are the views of Heritage Malta in this respect and is the organisation planning to rectify this shortcoming?

It is an open secret that HM chairman, Dr Mario Tabone, has repeatedly reiterated his idea that Malta should have a new museum for contemporary art. While this idea may still be in its infancy, we are already taking the necessary steps to ensure that it has a number of works of art produced by contemporary artists. One of the policies being implemented by our agency is to encourage contemporary artists to donate one work of art whenever they mount a temporary exhibition at Heritage Malta's head office or any other museum. Eventually, these works will hopefully be exhibited on a permanent basis in a new museum dedicated entirely to local contemporary art. In the meantime, however, we often hold temporary exhibitions of various works so that the public can enjoy them.



Detail from the intricate
decoration of the Salon,
National Museum of
Archaeology



opposite:

top - Protecting
Haġar Qim

bottom - Tarxien Temples

Din l-Art Helwa's Heritage & Environment Protection Committee has recently put a lot of its energy into arguing against proposed large projects in areas that lie outside the development zone, which the committee considered to be unacceptable. Most prominently, these included two proposed projects in Gozo that have frequently been in the headlines over the last six months: at Ramla l-Hamra and at Ta' Ċenċ.

On a more positive note, a proposal has been accepted by the Cabinet to amend the planning law. Assuming that these amendments will be passed by Parliament, they will give the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (Mepa) greater powers to enforce action against illegal buildings outside the development zone.



Ramla l-Hamra

The Ramla l-Hamra issue intensified in April, when Mepa approved a permit for the building of 23 villas and swimming pools as a "redevelopment" of the now defunct Ulysses Lodge complex overlooking Ramla l-Hamra Bay in Gozo. The strong negative reaction to this permit among the general public and many environmental NGOs prompted a national "Save Gozo" rally that took place in Valletta in April, in which *Din l-Art Helwa* participated with the support of many of its members.

Din l-Art Helwa, together with the Gaia Foundation, lodged a joint appeal against this permit in July and other parties also officially asked for the permit to be revoked. In their statements against the project, *Din l-Art Helwa* and the Gaia Foundation focused on various issues, including the fact that almost one-third of the area approved for "redevelopment" at Ramla Bay consisted of structures that had been built without a permit, and therefore could not qualify for "redevelopment".

At a meeting of the Mepa Board on 4 October, it was decided that both the full permit and the outline permit would be revoked through the application of Article 39A of the Development Planning Act, for reasons linked to the failure of the applicant to declare that part of the site was a public road.

Din l-Art Helwa and the Gaia Foundation welcomed Mepa's decision. While it is commendable that the board, by the unanimous vote of those present, deemed it necessary to revoke the permits, we believe that, in the interests of sustainable development, the way forward is to ensure that several planning and environmental issues that formed the merit of our joint appeal will be incorporated and clearly recognised in planning laws and procedures and in Mepa's future decisions. These include issues related to Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), the stringent rules regulating areas outside the development zone and the quality and standard of the development planning reports submitted to Mepa for consideration.

Ta' Ċenċ

The original application for development at Ta' Ċenċ was submitted in 1996. In 2005, the first draft of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the development was submitted. *Din l-Art Helwa* put forward its comments and objections to Mepa and then, in 2006, launched a petition against the development that collected around 10,000 signatures.

At the time of the petition, the application included 57 villas in the area of the site near Mġarr ix-Xini, 49 bungalows on the Xewkija side, a new five-star hotel and an extension to the existing hotel. This summer, a second draft of the EIS was submitted to Mepa, with some revisions to the original plans. The number of proposed villas and bungalows had been reduced to 38 and 36 respectively, and the proposed new hotel had been reduced by one storey.



Efforts for the Some Recent F

Left - Ulysses Lodge

opposite:

top - Ta' Ċenċ

photo Kurt Arrigo

centre - Mġarr ix-Xini

As appearing in The Times

Environment

Planning Issues



Din l-Art Helwa continues to oppose this project, on the same grounds as it did before. The scenic site of Ta' Ċenċ lies outside the development zone. The Structure Plan, which is the law regulating development in the Maltese Islands, does allow some development at Ta' Ċenċ but only in the vicinity of the existing hotel. This is the only development legally permissible.

The present application proposes to build 38 villas on the ridge overlooking Mġarr ix-Xini, and attempts to argue that the term "vicinity" can be construed as referring to this ridge, which lies right across the plateau in the area of the site furthest from the hotel. This interpretation of the word "vicinity" is incorrect, as it implies that all other areas of the site can also be taken as being in the vicinity of the existing hotel and, consequently, that the entire site is subject to development. This clearly goes against the intention of the Structure Plan, where a distinction is made between land at Ta' Ċenċ that is in the vicinity of the existing hotel and, by implication, land that is *not* in the vicinity of the hotel.

The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment, who endorsed the Local Plan for Gozo and Comino in 2006, has confirmed that no new development should be allowed on the ridge overlooking Mġarr ix-Xini.

There are also other considerations at Ta' Ċenċ which go against any development in the area. *Din l-Art Helwa* believes that whole area of Ta' Ċenċ should be declared a Natura 2000 site, including Mġarr ix-Xini, Wied Sabbara and the plateau.

Illegal Buildings Outside the Development Zone

Din l-Art Helwa and other environmental NGOs have long been concerned about the persistent lack of sufficient action taken regarding illegal buildings in areas outside the development zone (ODZ). This lack of action gives far too much rein to individuals



who choose to break the law and build small structures or extensions without a permit, knowing that years will elapse before any decision against them is enforced, if at all.

As a result, everywhere you look our countryside and coastline are filled with illegal walls, boathouses and other structures. Long drawn out enforcement procedures ensure that, for years, the owner is able to reap the benefits of having flouted the law, with the full enjoyment of the illegal property. In any event, any action eventually taken may well just consist of a small fine, along with the sanctioning of the illegal work.

It is to his credit that Environment Minister George Pullicino has recently pushed proposed amendments to the planning law through Cabinet in an attempt to rectify this situation. This is a valuable and long overdue step in the right direction and we can only hope that more along these lines will follow.

The new amendments will give Mepa greater powers to control illegal development. No longer will the authority be obliged to wait until lengthy and protracted cases have been heard and decided. Once an illegal building has been erected, their enforcement officers will be able to immediately seal it off or demolish it.

The aerial photographs taken by Mepa in May 2007 will be considered definitive – if an ODZ building does not appear on them and no permit has been issued, then the new amendments will enable Mepa to take immediate action. Furthermore, if an illegal building is constructed outside the development zone after May 2007, an application for its sanctioning can no longer be submitted before the building is removed.

Enforcement cases dating back to before May 2007 will, however, continue under the old system, but a new Appeals Board is to be established that will focus solely on illegal development. In this way, enforcement cases should be decided within six weeks and will not have to wait in line with all the other appeals being heard.



While these amendments are a step forward, it remains to be seen whether they will be implemented adequately. At present, the Enforcement Section at Mepa is grossly under-staffed and under-resourced. It has been promised that the capacity of this section will be increased substantially by the end of the year.

The Minister intends to lay these amendments before Parliament very soon and we trust that they will be endorsed and implemented in the shortest time possible, to finally begin to eliminate the rampant illegal construction that is the scourge of our countryside.

Windmills In Malta

Joe Azzopardi

This page
Ta' Kola windmill
Photo MJ Publications

opposite:

top - Windmill on
St Michael's Bastion
Photo BDL

bottom - The Xorolla
windmill in the 70s
Photo Din l-Art Helwa

Windmills evolved in response to two of man's earliest preoccupations. One of these was the provision of a continuous supply of food and the other was the improvement of production methods through greater efficiency in the exploitation of natural resources. These two issues were addressed through the development of agriculture which, in turn, played a decisive role in shaping the development of the human race and its environment. In this area, man has always tried to invent methods of harnessing natural power to relieve the burden of slow repetitive labour.

The Early Stages of Milling

Grain, which provided the staple food of most of the population in many civilisations, consists of three main parts: 14 per cent is the hard outer bran, 2 per cent the embryo (or germ) and 84 per cent the endosperm (kernel), which is rich in carbohydrate and protein. Early man ground his grain with his milling teeth

or molars. Incidentally, "*mola*" is the Latin word for "mill". Later, the grain was put in shallow stone hollows and broken up with a hand-held stone and eventually, pestles and mortars were adopted. These were superseded by the "saddle stone", examples of which have been recovered from many prehistoric sites in Europe and the Middle East.

With the "rotary quern", invented in about 200BC, grain was ground between a rotating upper runner stone and a stationary lower stone. Large examples of such quern (hand mills), which were operated by slaves or mules, have been found at Pompeii and other Roman sites. This method of grinding remained basically unchallenged for centuries, the only change in the process being the source of the energy used for the rotating upper stone.

Milling in Malta

The provision of an adequate supply of grain has always been a preoccupation for the governing institutions of the Maltese Islands, as such a supply was essential for the political stability of the Islands. However, the inherent lack of territorial resources was a reoccurring problem in this respect, as the Island could never produce sufficient grain to meet its needs.

By the mediaeval period the local government of the *Universita* negotiated treaties with Sicily for the supply of grain. During this period, the most common form of mill was the animal-driven *mithna tal-miexi* derived from the Sicilian prototype called a *centimolo*, and Maltese bread was probably produced from a mixture of wheat and barley, later referred to as *mischiato* or *mahlut*.

Unavoidably, the Knights of St John also had to rely on Sicily for supplies of wheat, though they were deeply conscious of the fact that this practice undermined their authority on the territory. The issue of grain supply become even more complicated as the population grew in response to the relative safety and prosperity fostered by the presence of the Knights. Population figures stood at about 20,000 in 1530, the year of the Order's arrival in Malta. By the time the Knights were expelled, in 1798, the population had grown five-fold to about 100,000. In 1686, during the reign of Grand Master Gregorio Carafa (1680-1690) the *Massa Frumentaria*, also known as the *Università dei Grani*, was established with the role of securing supplies of grain. Its headquarters were established at the *Casa dell' Anona*, built against the south wall of St James Cavalier in Valletta.

Together with the issue of supply arose those of storing and processing the grain. In the eyes of the Order, their mills formed part of the defensive infrastructure of the Islands. They were particularly valuable in the event of a siege – surely the reason why early examples of mills were located within the defensive lines. This reasoning also applies to the *fossos*, huge damp-proof underground granaries, which assured the proper storage and supply of grain.





Complexes of such *fossos* were built underneath Castile Square, as well as in Floriana and in the proximity of Fort St Elmo.

Maltese Windmills

Some forms of wind-driven mills probably existed even before the arrival of the Knights, although during the first century of their rule animal-powered mills were the principal method of grinding grain. Gerolamo Cassar provided 12 animal-powered mills for the bakeries of the new city of Valletta, and most of the auberges had their own animal-driven mill. Some form of watermills, referred to as *molendim*, was also used.

On an old map reproduced in *Insulae Meletae Descriptio* (by Abbe Jean Quentin d'Autun, known as Quintinus, published in Lyon in 1536), a post mill is shown located on the peninsula where Senglea stands today. These post mills were greatly diffused at the time. They were constructed entirely of wood and could be turned to face the direction of the wind. The Senglea post mill probably represents the Knights' first attempt to harness the regular wind supply of their new home and use it for milling purposes. The same location was chosen a few years later for the site of two masonry windmills. These were built as round towers in the *ester* tradition that the Knights brought with them from Rhodes. A fair idea of what these windmills looked like can be obtained from the siege fresco cycle by Matteo Perez d'Aleccio (1547-1628) in the Hall of the Supreme Council at the Palace of the Grand Master.

The first windmill in Valletta was built within the precincts of Fort St Elmo in 1606. This was subsequently replaced by two windmills built on St Michael's Bastion, overlooking Marsamxett harbour. These windmills were built on the highest part of the bastions in order to have maximum exposure to the winds. Building in their vicinity was strictly regulated and normally could not be higher than one storey.

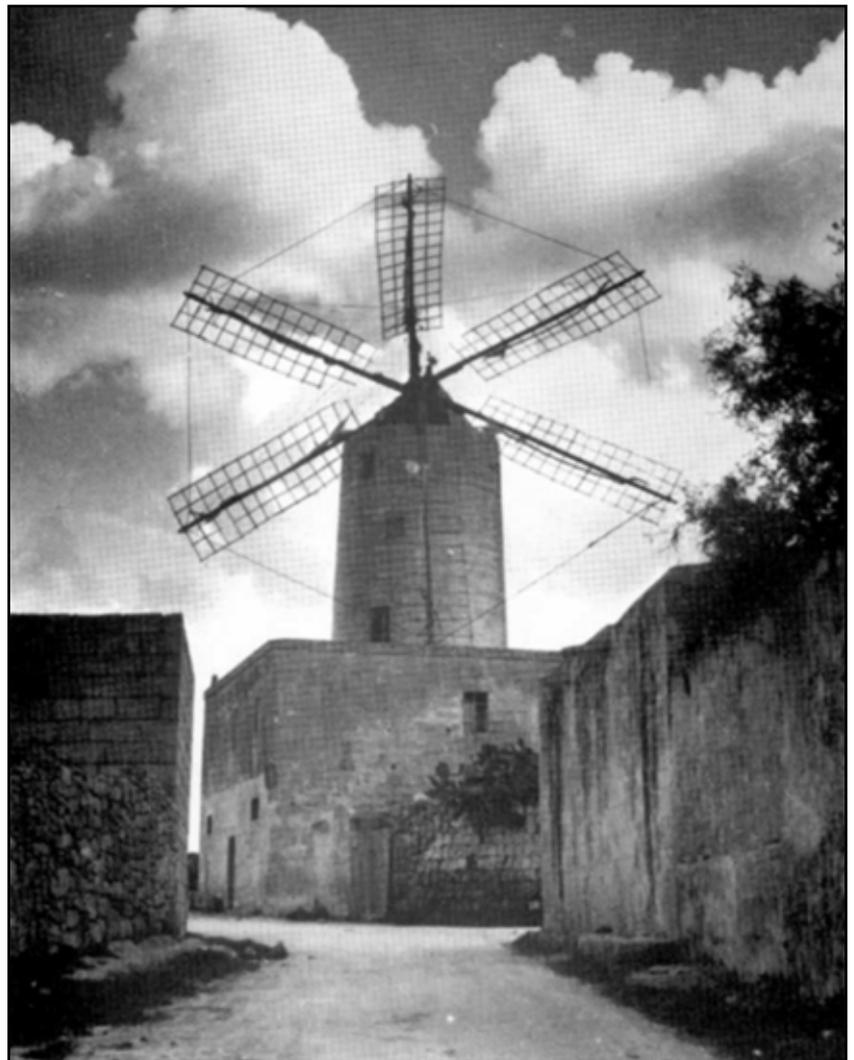
Following this introductory period, during which the technology of windmills was asserting itself on the Islands, a number of administrative regulations were put in place to assure its diffusion. The government of the Order reserved for itself the right of monopoly on the construction of windmills. This created the financial prerogatives to stimulate the interests of successive Grand Masters in tapping this resource, which had considerable lucrative potential.

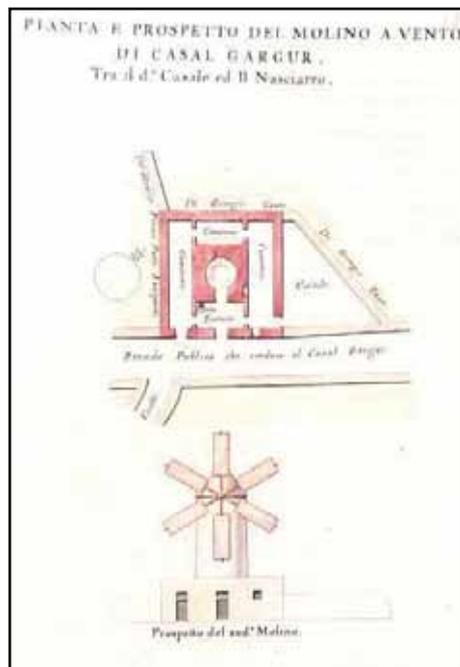
The first Grand Master to do so was Nicolas Cotoner (1663-1680), who not only introduced the basic design on which most future windmills would be built, but also created the *modus operandi* that would be followed by his successors. He set up the Cotoner Foundation with the manifest aim of financing the recurrent maintenance expenses of Fort Ricasoli. This was the institution that actually built, administered and made profits from the 10 windmills constructed under his reign, the design of which followed that of those still found in Majorca, Cotoner's birthplace.

On 22 September 1674 the Council of the Order authorised the Cotoner Foundation to start work on two windmills on St Margherita Hill at Bormla, another in Żebbuġ and a fourth in Floriana, close to the Capuchins' convent. By the end of 1676, the foundation had built an additional seven windmills, among which were one close to the *polverista* in Floriana, one in Naxxar and one in the Nigret area of Żurrieq – later known as "tal-Qaret". The average cost of construction was 500 *scudi* for the masonry work and 700 *scudi* for timber, iron and cotton parts. During this time the two windmills on St Michael's Bastion in Valletta were also built, at the expense of the Common Treasury. The total number of windmills by the end of Cotoners' reign was 12.

His successor, Gregorio Carafa (1680-1690), built another 10 windmills through his own foundation. Among these was the first windmill to be built in Gozo, sited on the outskirts of Rabat, close to the present bishop's seminary. In 1691, all 10 were leased for a ten-year period to Domenico Grixti.

Grand Master Ramon Perellos y Rocafull (1697-1720) built three windmills through his foundation, one in Żejtun, one in Naxxar and one in Xewkija. The one in Xewkija has a hexagonal plan and is the only one that still retains its original oven. For a long time it was in the hands of the Xicluna family of millers and millwrights. It ceased operating in 1886 following a devastating fire that rendered it unserviceable. Four of the five windmills in Gozo were rebuilt following structural damage. The only one that was not rebuilt was the one in Xewkija, making it the oldest windmill in Gozo.





The last Grand Master to build windmills was Manoel de Vilhena (1722-1736), who built eight through the *Fondazione Manoel* (which provided funds for the upkeep of Fort Manoel). Three of these windmills were built in Gozo – one in Gharb in 1724, that was rebuilt in 1784, one in Xaghra, built in 1725 and later rebuilt in a different location in the village in 1787, and one in Nadur, built in 1727. The Nadur windmill ceased operating on 9 May 1787 because of its dilapidated state and by November of the same year had been rebuilt on a new site in the village.

Among the windmills built in Malta by the *Fondazione Manoel* was the one known as tax-Xorolla, in Żurrieq. This bore the coat-of-arms of Grand Master de Vilhena on one corner, but these were later removed, probably during the French occupation. Another one, known as “ta’ Marmara” after its first miller, Luret Marmara, was also built in Żurrieq, in the area known as in-Nigret. Records of these windmills are preserved in the *cabreo* (register) of the *Fondazione Manoel*. Tax-Xorolla was restored in the 1960s but in October 1979 it was considerably damaged by inclement weather. Its sails were reinstalled in 1996, following which it was opened as a museum.

Ta’ Ganu windmill in Birkirkara was also built in 1724 and was still being used in 1929. In 1985-86 it was restored by the Public Works Division and now functions as a museum of contemporary art.

The Order also tried to ensure the quality of the service and product provided by the windmills. A *bando* issued by Grand Master Manuel de Rohan-Polduc (1775-1797) on 15 February 1783 appealed to all millers not to risk grinding grain that had been contaminated by extraneous elements that could harm public health. The penalty for

flouting this regulation could amount to the confiscation of 50 per cent of the provisions found in the mill and other penalties deemed fit by the same Grand Master.

The Order built a total of 33 windmills, five of which were in Gozo. These were all leased to Maltese millers and instances of sub-letting are also recorded. The commissions of the respective foundations, composed of high-ranking members of the Order, administrated the mills – deciding the terms of letting contracts, the duration of leases and the replacement of millstones and any other repairs. In 1724, for example, the Carafa Foundation auctioned the lease of its 10 windmills to different millers. The auction notices in respect of windmills were usually read in church, before or after Mass, and the parish priest was remunerated for this service.

The British Period

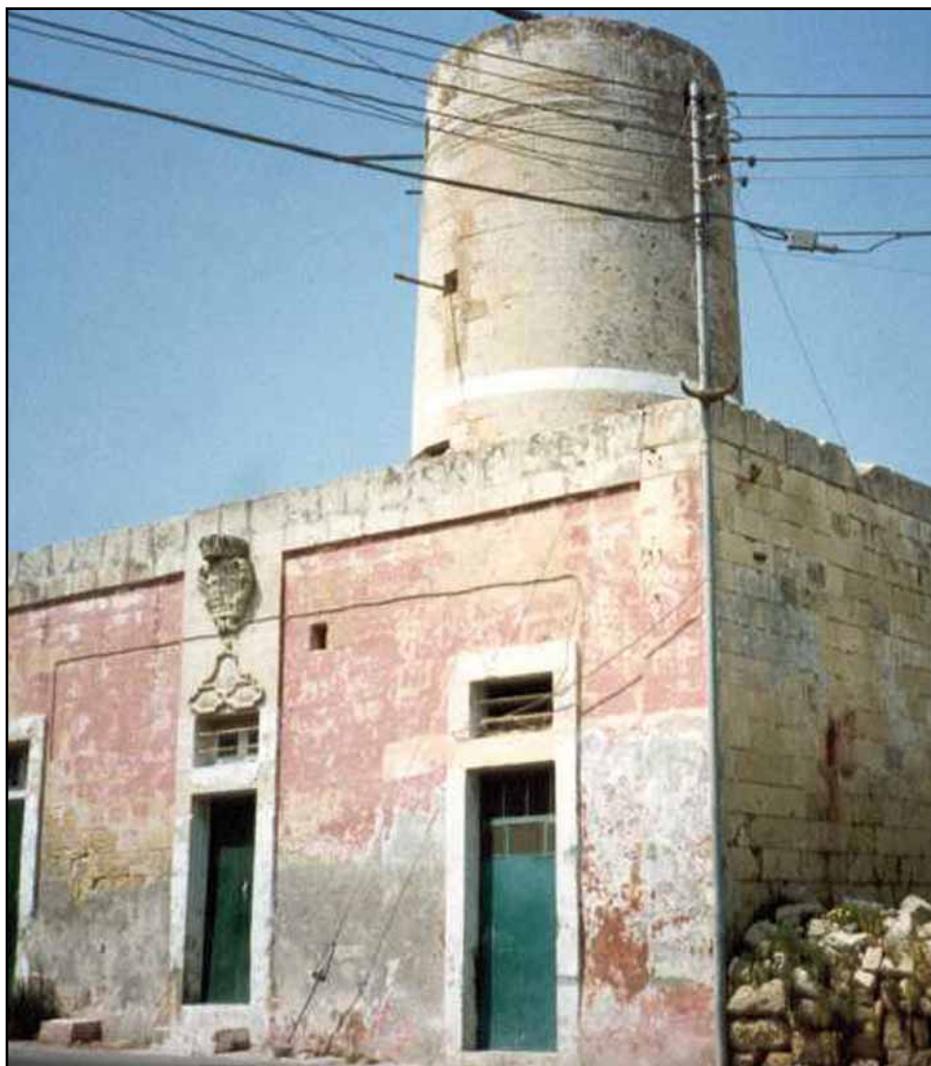
When Napoleon expelled the Knights from Malta in 1798, 31 windmills were operative on the Islands – 26 in Malta and five in Gozo. During the British period, windmills were administered by the Land Revenue Collector. Maintenance was an ongoing preoccupation and many requests, particularly for the replacement of the mill-

Opposite:

Ta’ Marmara Windmill
Photo Joe Chetcuti

left - Drawing illustrating a windmill
in Gharghur from the
Cabreo of the *Fondazione Manoel*

Windmill on the outskirts of Naxxar with
coat-of-arms of Grand Master Pinto
Photo Peter Kent Baguley



stones, have survived. If repairs were carried out by the person renting the mill, the rent was normally revised downwards.

In 1838, the British government abolished the monopoly on windmills they had inherited from the Knights. The first private windmill was built in Mellieha in 1849 and many applications by private individuals to build windmills followed. Between 1858 and 1872 the following were built: two in Żurriq, two in Żebbuġ, one in Siġġiewi and one in Mqabba. Interestingly enough, these were all built using designs and principles identical to those used at the time of the Knights.

The 19th century saw a resurgence in animal-powered mills. These became essential to provide a constant supply of grain to an ever-growing population during the first century of British rule. Although windmills might have, at a certain point, replaced animal-powered mills, it was the latter ultimately that were largely responsible for the demise of windmills. Animal-powered mills, in fact, were more efficient, easier to maintain, safer to operate, independent of the vagaries of the weather and did not require a specific type of building to house them.

The final blow to mills was dealt by the steam, oil and electrical mills introduced in the last quarter of the 19th century. Most windmills had ceased operation by the early 20th century and the few that were still operating were used for grinding cereals for animal feed or broad beans to be used as mix for bait in fish-traps.

The windmill in Qala, which was probably the last to be built, was also the last to cease working in Malta and Gozo. It was operated continuously and clandestinely at night during WWII and until the 1960s the miller was still accepting occasional small quantities of wheat, maize or broad beans to grind.

The Costs of Windmills

Judging by the fact that, despite the high costs of rent and maintenance, the number of windmills was continually increasing, the operation of a windmill was certainly a lucrative business.

In 1769, the 29-year lease on the Rabat, Gozo windmill, rented to Angelo Xicluna, was 340 *scudi* per annum. In 1778, it was deemed unfit for use and a proposal was made to convert it into small houses. In 1781 it was sold for 175 *scudi*. In the meantime, the Carafa Foundation, which owned the windmill, acquired a plot of land between Rabat and Sannat and a new windmill was built under the supervision of the *Maestro del Molina*, Angelo Camilleri. Two new millstones were transported to Gozo on the *Galera Capitana* on 30 April 1783, and soon after the windmill was operational. It was



handed back to Angelo Xicluna on a new lease of 400 *scudi* per annum. Francesco Xicluna, his son, was the next miller, and he took it over in 1794 for eight years at 623 *scudi* per annum. This shows how the rental costs of windmills escalated over a period of 25 years and also illustrates the hereditary nature of the trade over generations of the same family.

The Millers

Apart from a secure income, millers also enjoyed a certain social status. After windless or stormy periods, millers were exempt from the obligation of observing Sundays and holy days of rest by special ecclesiastical dispensation. There is a sort of higher justice in this, particularly if one considers that, after all, they provided the raw material for the Eucharistic bread. Windmills, in fact, could operate only when the weather permitted. The lack of wind deprived them of their supply of energy, while strong wind caused damage to the mechanism and the structure of the building. Millers were also favoured by the civic authorities, being exempt from guard duties that were imposed on the male population by the Knights.

When the weather was finally good the miller would blow his *bronja* to advise the villagers that the windmill was operational. The *bronja* consisted of a triton-shell also known as trumpet-shell. Two types of this shell exist: the *Charonia Lampas* that can measure up to 50cm and the *Charonia Variegata* that grows up to 35cm. The pointed end of these shells, referred to as a *calcarella* by conchologists, was broken off and when the shell was blown in from this end it produced a bass sound audible throughout the village.

Physical Description

Windmills were usually designed as a high, one storey, square building on which rose a circular tower, called a *tomba*, some 35 feet

high and 10 feet in diameter. This was capped by a cone-shaped wooden finial from which projected the wooden shaft that consisted of the pivot upon which the wind driven vanes revolved. Notable exceptions are the Xewkija windmill in Gozo, which is octagonal, and the *Mithna ta' Ghadir il-Bordi*, near the *tal-Mirakli* church in Lija, which was built to a round plan by the Cotoner Foundation. Many windmills had the coat-of arms of the Grand Master under whose rule they were built carved on door.

Windmills tended to deteriorate over a 60 year period, as demonstrated in the case of the Vilhena windmills in Gozo. This is testimony to the huge strain caused by the working of the milling mechanism on the masonry fabric. In some instances the windmill formed part of a complex, including a cistern, workshop, living quarters, milling tower, oven/bakery and stables for carts and mules. On the ground floor the grain brought by farmers was stacked before being hoisted by rope to the *tromba* for grinding between the set of two mill-stones. Milled flower was then bagged, lowered and stored on the other side of the ground floor pending collection.

The first floor provided the domestic accommodation of the miller and his family and from here stone steps went up around the inner wall of the tower to the mill-stones and mechanical gearing systems connected to the sails.

Technical Details

The function of the windmill was twofold – firstly to harness the energy of the wind and transmit it to the milling stone and secondly to efficiently collect and pack the resulting product.

The most important and expensive apparatus within the windmill was the two milling stones, which were mostly imported from Barcelona. The lower stone, which had



a slightly convex face, was stationery while the upper stone, with a concave face, revolved. They measured roughly 5ft to 6ft in diameter and were 6 to 9 inches thick. The stones had grooves cut into the grinding surfaces to add a shearing action to supplement the natural abrasive quality of the stone. The upper stone could be lowered or raised through a leverage system to produce grain of different texture. This lever was called the *rimona*. It was usually intricately carved in wood and was the pride of its owner. Each stone was surrounded by an iron rim. The lower stone was held in a wooden frame called a *nasba*, while the upper stone revolved inside a wooden circle called a *dawr*.

Dressing

The technical term “dressing” defined the cutting of grooves into the grinding surface and was an essential part of the milling process. No records have been found relating to the details of this craft in Malta, apart from the fact that the dresser was called a *naqqax*. In other countries, itinerant stone dressers would call at the mill to do this work. It is very probable that in Malta this work was carried out by a number of specialised millers who doubled as millwrights. Millwrights had to be men of considerable physical aptitude and one of the few recorded is Guzepp Grech, the last miller of the *Mithna ta' Kola* at Xaghra, who was an accomplished millwright. In the 1950s he restored this windmill single-handedly.

The principle, however, was always the same: the sharp edges of the many fine cracks and grooves met each other like a pair of scissors. For dressing, the runner stone was lifted up with callipers, as it weighed about a ton. The miller would allow a rebate to the first customer who brought grain following the dressing as compensation for the flour lost in the interstices of the cleaned machinery.

Working of the Windmill

An iron bar called a *seffud* or a *fus* passed through the circular hole in the centre of the upper stone and fitted into the under part of it,

in order to turn it. The upper end of the *seffud* revolved inside a pivot-bearing called a *trincetta*, which was attached to a horizontal beam called a *salib*. The pivot-bearing could be released by a lock called a *stiratur*.

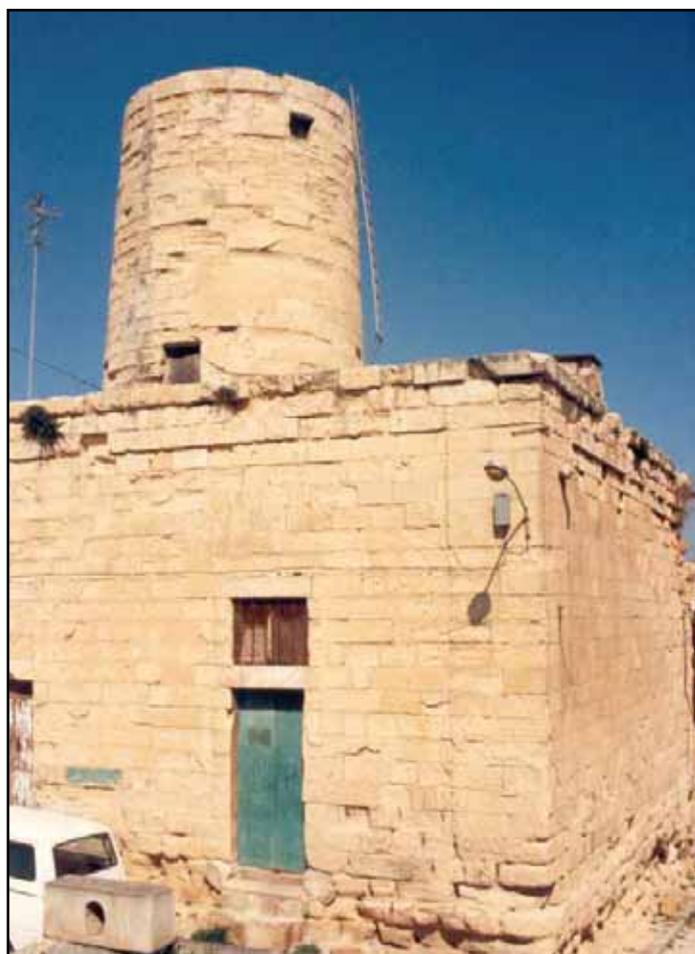
Fixed around the upper part of the *seffud*, just below the pivot-bearing, was a wooden spur wheel – the *luqqata* – that geared with a large cog wheel, called a *dawwara*, revolving at right angles with it. All the apparatus was housed at intermediate levels in the *tromba*. The level occupied by the millstones was supported on a pair of strong beams called *gazi* or *gzari*.

Externally, six vanes, called *qlugh*, spread over six wings – the *antinni* or *dirghajn*. Each *drigh* consisted of a pole, some 28 feet long, to which was attached a grid composed of *plane* and *lasti* or *gradiljoli*. Over each grid was slung a *qlugh*, made of Malta-spun cotton. Each *qlugh* was made up of two parts – the *maggura* and the *kultellazz*. The *dirghajn* were held firmly in position by means of ropes, called *bonnijiet*, rigged between their tops.

Each of the six *dirghajn* was also firmly attached to spokes, called *antinnoli*, radiating from a hub borne around a horizontal axis or shaft – the *arblu*. The *arblu* ended in an iron ring – the *legatura tal-hadid* – to which six hooks were attached. Additional rigging between the top of the *dirghajn* and the hooks of the *legatura tal-hadid* added to the stability of the whole apparatus.

The *arblu* was supported on a thick wooden circle called *stringell* attached to an iron ring, topping the round wall of the *tromba*. The *arblu* traversed the whole diameter of the *tromba* and revolved upon two wooden bearings – the *suffarelli*. The outer part of the *arblu* was reinforced by lengths of wood tied around it. These were referred to as *inforra*.

Attached to the *stringell* was a horizontal framework – the *fekruna* – from which hung four ropes – the *vitti* – tied to four blocks of stone – the *kuntrapiz*. These counterweights rested on the roof of the square section of the building and served to further stabilise the *arblu*. Attached to the *arblu*, inside the tower, was the *dawwara*.



The wind turned the *qlugh* that in turn imparted a powerful rotating thrust to the *arblu* which revolved to turn the *dawwara* that geared with the *luqqata*. In this way, motion was imparted to the *seffud* that turned the upper grinding wheel.

The *arblu*, with all its attachments, could be manoeuvred windward. This was a cumbersome operation. The *stringell* was rotated by a system of levers. The part in contact with the *tromba* was sectioned in *dras* (teeth). This had a corresponding sequence of holes on the wall side. A peg called the *pern* was plugged into one of the holes and by pushing hard between these with the aid of a long bar, the – *manwella* – with the peg acting as a fulcrum, the *stringell* and *arblu* were rotated along the perimeter of the *tromba*. The whole was lubricated with soft soap to facilitate the operation.

A conical wooden substructure referred to by various appellatives such as *barjol*, *pirjol*, *parjan* or *kupletta* topped the windmill. This rotated with the *stringell*. At the summit was a *pinnur* (weathercock) and slightly below this was a small window called a *bukkaport*.

Opposite:

top - Windmill on the outskirts of Naxxar

bottom – decaying windmill in Bormla

Photos Peter Kent Baguley

Packaging

Grain was emptied into a rectangular wooden container called a *delu*. Loosely attached to its bottom was a *mizieb* (spout) the angle of which could be adjusted to control the flow, by means of a string running over a peg – the *ghasfur*. The grain ran onto the grinding surfaces through the eye at the centre of the upper stone. It was spread over the lower stone through the rotating movement and thus ground. The resulting flour emerged from the space between the stones through a cavity called the *farinal* into a trough called a *kavetta*. From here it fell through a *lembut* (funnel) to the lower level where the sacks were filled.

The round tower of the windmill became one of the characteristics of the Maltese village skyline, challenging the supremacy of the dome and steeples of the parish church. In the villages they were centres of attraction – places where people met and brought themselves up-to-date with the latest news from the towns. Windmills usually stood slightly apart from the village in order to have unhindered access to natural resources and obtain maximum efficiency. The status of the windmills can be deduced from the fact that they left a mark on the street names of many villages. Many streets leading to windmills were, and still are, called Windmill or Mill Street. In many instances, the street name has survived the windmill itself.

The author was able to trace records of 54 windmills operating in different periods. 12 were demolished at some point in time, two lie in ruins and 40 are still standing, although in varying states of preservation. There are at present three windmills complete with their vanes and grinding apparatus in the Maltese Islands. These are the *Xorolla* in Żurrieq, *Ta' Kola* at Xaghra and the privately-owned *Ta' Randu* in Qala. Apart from physical dilapidation, the worst damage inflicted on windmills comes from urbanisation, which has hidden the windmills that were once built in prominent positions across the countryside.

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Il-Majjistral Nature and Heritage Park

Martin Galea



For three years, *Din l-Art Helwa* has been spearheading a campaign for a national park in the northwest of these islands. The idea was very well-received by the Prime Minister and the Rural Affairs and the Environment Minister when first floated, and we dared to hope that, one day, this could become a reality. We felt it was one of our most important initiatives.

Our countryside remains threatened by land speculators, illegal development and hunters and trappers who take over public land as their own, damaging the area with vehicular access and hides and trapping sites, as well as by indiscriminate dumping and people closing access to country lanes. We needed a plan to manage the countryside for us all, as well as those who come after us.

On 12 May the Prime Minister announced that the area around Ghajn Tuffieha as far as what is now known as "Popeye Village" (Anchor Bay) would become Malta's first national park. *Din l-Art Helwa* and Nature Trust were to be the managers of the park and a management board under the very able chairmanship of Dr Stanley Zammit would be established to oversee the management.

The management board has representatives from Mepa, the Estates Division (Lands) and the Rural Affairs and the Environment Ministry, while the NGOs are represented by *Din l-Art Helwa* and *Nature Trust*, and we also agreed to bring in the Gaia Foundation, which has particular expertise in this area.

The Park, now named The Majjistral Nature and History Park, was set up by legal notice in September, and we consider this to be a red-letter day. It is a huge step forward in the preservation of our natural heritage and the government must take credit for taking this step. The government has underlined how serious it is about this initiative by also providing considerable seed funding for the project and through Mepa we hope that further funding will come through the EU under the structural funding programme.



Opposite:

top - Prime Minister Laurence Gonzi and Minister George Pullicino visiting the park

bottom - Map of the park area

Source - MEPA



The management board

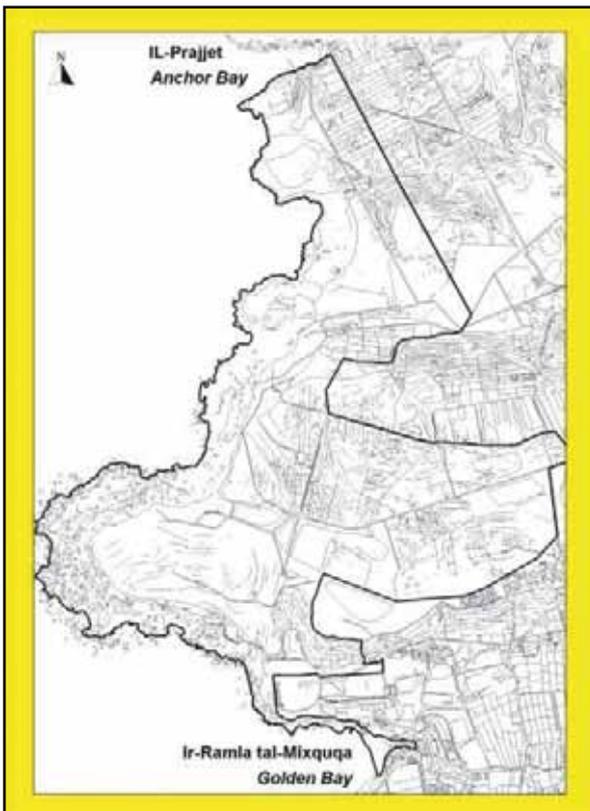


The management board has been meeting every week and the final plans, method statements and surveys are being concluded. An extensive public consultation process has also been undertaken. The board should be submitting its plans to Minister George Pullicino shortly and work will commence soon after.

It is planned that there will be three entrances to the park – one near the hotel, another near Manikata church and the third near Anchor Bay. Work will start on rehabilitating old buildings and converting them into visitor centres, restoring old pathways, clearing tons of rubbish and rebuilding rubble walls. Within a relatively short time we should have the park, if not complete then at least open to visitors. Needless to say, the Malta Tourism Authority was impressed with the idea, which should also enhance Malta's attractions, particularly in the winter and shoulder months.

The Government is to be commended on this initiative, which we consider to be a first step. The park area must be rapidly increased to encompass the area from Ċirkewwa to Wied iż-Żurrieq. But first we must prove ourselves and show what we can do.

Din l-Art Helwa is fully committed to this project and, together with the other NGOs, Mepa and Government Ministries, will do its utmost to make this a resounding success. A look at the area, which has such beauty, will show that we can hardly fail.



INTO

Martin Scicluna

The International National Trusts Organisation (known for short as INTO) is a new international organisation that has been set up to encourage and enhance the coordination, integration and development of the international National Trusts movement. I have been involved with it, as *Din l-Art Helwa*'s representative, ever since the Steering Board to bring INTO into existence was formed two years ago. The Charter that the Board has been drawing up will be formally signed and launched on 3 December by the Vice President of India, where the World Congress will be meeting in Delhi. *Din l-Art Helwa* will be among the founder Board members to sign the Charter.

The representatives of National Trusts and similar organisations from different countries throughout the world have long recognised the value of international cooperation as an essential tool to promote the conservation of cultural and natural heritage worldwide. Meeting periodically at international conferences of National Trusts, the representatives of these organisations have worked to develop an active international network of National Trusts to exchange information and ideas, to share common interests and concerns and to encourage the development of new organisations where they do not currently exist. I represented *Din l-Art Helwa* in Edinburgh four years ago and in Washington two years ago, where these proposals were given new impetus.

This international network now includes participants from National Trusts and similar organisations from across the globe and has helped develop a common voice for the preservation of the world's cultural and natural heritage. The mission of INTO is to reverse the progressive worldwide loss of cultural and natural heritage by promoting greater recognition of the benefits arising from their conservation and protection and by giving cultural and natural heritage a higher political and financial impetus in the determination of national and international priorities.

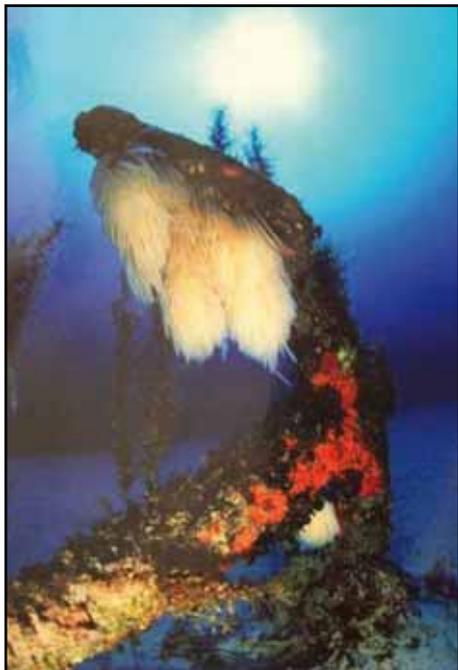
In furtherance of this mission, INTO will have the following objectives:

- To foster international cooperation and coordination between National Trusts and other similar organisations.
- To formulate and promote conservation best practice and increase and enhance the capacity of individual National Trusts.
- To encourage the establishment and development of National Trusts where they do not presently exist.
- To pursue advocacy in the interests of conservation of cultural and natural heritage.

The world headquarters of INTO will be based in London. The chairman of the Steering Board is Australian and members come from the USA, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Scotland, Japan, India, England, Malta, Canada and Bermuda.

Blue Campaign

Stanley Farrugia Randon



'Cirkezza Anchor with Squid Eggs' by Mario Micallef

A photographic competition was held recently as part of the Blue Campaign, launched by *Din l-Art Helwa* and led by the writer and George Camilleri, to raise awareness of Malta's marine environment.

There were two categories – one for photographs showing sea pollution or any other negative effects of human activity on the sea or coastal environment, and the other for photographs showing the beauty of underwater life. A prize of Lm100 was awarded to the winner of each category. The entries were judged by Kurt Arrigo, Joseph Chetcuti and the writer and the winners of the competition were Neil Jarrett, for his photograph entitled *Neglect In Our Harbours* and Mario Micallef for his photograph entitled *Ċirkezza Anchor With Squid Eggs*.

All the entries were exhibited during the event and for a month afterwards. *Din l-Art Helwa* hopes that this exhibition will

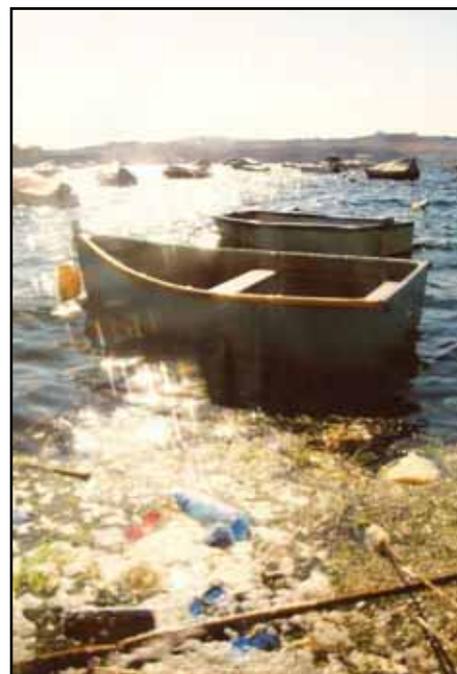
have helped raise awareness of the importance of our beautiful marine and coastal environment and the need to protect it for future generations.

Unfortunately our seas are continuously under threat. Year after year, it is becoming more obvious that our fish stock is declining rapidly, with both amateur and professional fishermen noting that they have to spend more time and effort to catch the same amount of fish as in previous years. What is even more worrying is the fact that fishermen are using nets with a smaller mesh and also smaller hooks. This is apparent when visiting the major fish markets around our islands as it is leading to the catching of immature fish which, in turn, serves to reduce the fish stock.

The negative effect of certain fishing implements on the fish population has been known for years. Continuous dredging of the sea bed, and the uncontrolled use of nets with small mesh sizes, are contributing to the depletion of fish in the Mediterranean. Many nets are being hauled in bays and creeks and this practice must stop because it is depleting these breeding grounds.

Pollution is another problem. Oil spills are an obvious threat, but we also see a large amount of domestic rubbish being thrown out at sea. Plastic and glass bottles, plastic bags, tyres, metal objects and a variety of other objects can be seen on a regular basis on the shore. These not only look ugly but also pollute the sea and endanger the livelihood of its creatures.

'Neglect in our Harbours' by Neil Jarrett



Fishing in Malta (ISBN: 978-99932-0-501-2, 225 pages in full colour), was written by Stanley Farrugia Randon to raise awareness of the problems being faced by the fishing industry, and the fall in fish stocks, as well as to document historical aspects of the industry.

With a forward by Dr Joe Borg, European Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, it is a book that will be of great interest to amateur and professional fishermen, as well as to all those who have Maltese history and folklore at heart.

The author describes in detail the fishing methods that were and are still in use by fishermen, including the various types of nets, pots and long-lines, as well as other minor implements commonly used by amateur fishermen, from the shore or boat.

The traditional fishing boats, their construction and the tools used by the boat-builders are also described in great detail. The book also includes a history of the marketing of fish, the Fisheries Department and aquaculture. An appendix includes a compendium of legislation relating to the fishing industry dating back 600 years, as well as graphs showing the amount of different species of fish caught during the past 60 years. Although the book is written in English, Maltese terminology is used whenever necessary.

Nature at Il-Majjistral Nature and Heritage Park

Annalise Falzon

Annalise Falzon is an Environmental Educator and Nature Tours Guide, Nature Trust (Malta)

One of the greatest assets of the Maltese Islands is that, despite their small size, they contain a wide variety of changing landscapes – and the northwest area of Malta is certainly no exception.

Il-Majjistral Nature and Heritage Park, situated within the area of Mgarr and Mellieha and extending from ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa (Golden Bay) to Il-Prajjet (Anchor Bay), offers the visitor an insight of some of the most interesting land and seascape features and unique coastal views in the northwest of Malta and beyond to Gozo's majestic southern cliffs. The sheer sense of wilderness and open space here is sufficient justification for it to be granted status as a protected area. More importantly, the park is also partly contiguous with the Majjiesa Marine Protected Area, ensuring better possibilities for coastal management. And it is the coast which often steals the show, with the most striking sunsets witnessed from Rđum Majjiesa, while the daytime attracts people to its sandy beaches surrounded by sand dune remnants with very rare plants, rolling clay slopes, cliffs and hidden shores. But the inland views are no less striking, with an expanse of aromatic garigue, cultivated land and corbelled stone huts, valleys and ridges.

The two extremities of the park, characterised by two popular and easily reached bays, hold between them the most secret and inaccessible of all Maltese landscapes – the wild, labyrinthine *Rđum*, with its impressive array of huge boulders tumbling beneath the plateau and defying the coralline limestone's apparent strength and toughness. But even here, where the Blue Rock Thrush reigns undisputed as the lord of the scree, one finds traces of human touches to the landscape in the form of minuscule abandoned patches of cultivated land and endless dry-stone walls in the most improbable of places.

The landscape of Rđum id-Delli and Rđum Majjiesa offers one of the best refuges for a wide variety of flora and fauna and is indeed considered as being a habitat endemic to the Maltese Islands. The uniqueness of this terrain is owed to the peculiarity of its formation – the Upper Coralline Limestone, which caps many hills, forms a plateau resting on an unstable and somewhat mobile substrate – blue clay. This impermeable layer becomes saturated with rainwater and slides

Wild, labyrinthine
Rđum



All Photographs are
by the author



Polygomon monsepiensis
Annual Beard-Grass



top left - Pankrazju
Sea Daffodil

top right -
Evergreen Honeysuckle

down, forming slopes. The overlying limestone loses its foothold and its weight becomes its downfall, as boulders detach and tumble down to the coast, often resting in precarious positions while at other times continuing their path straight down to the sea, where they form a striking underwater habitat.

Whether on land or underwater, these boulders, and the sheltered places in between them provide shade and a good hiding place, as well as a substrate on which plants can thrive. This coast, which can seem so harsh to some, is conversely attractive to many species for which this is the last relatively undisturbed land they can inhabit. On land one can encounter garigue and maquis species of plants such as the endemic Maltese spurge, evergreen honeysuckle, wild thyme, wolfbane, Egyptian St John’s wort, olive-leaved germander, Mediterranean heath, caper and the rare shrubby crown vetch. Sheltered places also offer a good habitat for climbers such as the common smilax or the rare black bryony, while some wild

vines are testimony to the traditional agricultural use of even the smallest patch of soil – a practice that still continues today in some parts of the park. Some trees also manage to grow amid the boulder scree, namely fig, olive, tamarisk and carob.

The aquifer formed thanks to the impermeability of the blue clay gives rise to some freshwater springs that are often defined by the presence of the great reed. Annual beard-grass and the rare chaste tree are also found in such sites of increased humidity.

The more barren slopes of blue clay support vegetation more typical of natural steppes, with grasses being the dominant species, namely esparto grass, which helps bind the clay substrate together, the common ground thistle and much rarer species such as fagonia.

Further up, the limestone plateaux, including the much disputed Xaghra l-Hamra, are dominated by garigue on sparse soil with low-lying shrubs facing the prevailing north-westerly winds or by rocky steppe. And this windswept land, with its deceptively “barren” appearance in the dry season, is in reality adorned by the most exquisite orchids, with a total of nine species recorded in the area. It is often in the winter and spring when most of the habitats come to life – although early summer is also similarly rewarding, with wild thyme spreading its scented carpet of lilac flowers.

The caper flower



References:

An Ecological Survey of the Rđum il-Majjiesa Area prepared for the GAIA Foundation by E. Calleja and V. Gaydarova Calleja, May 2000.

EIS Xaghra l-Hamra and Tal-Qortin l/o Mellieħa, Proposed Golf Course and Supporting facilities, technical appendix 5: Ecology Baseline Survey, L. Cassar, S. Lanfranco for the MTA, April 2006.





*Modern Marvels
of the Gozo
Countryside*



Letters to Vigilo

These pages are meant to be
your voice for your heritage.

Please mark your letters
for the attention of
The Editor, Vigilo,
and send them to:

Din l-Art Helwa
133 Melita Street
Valletta

Or email us on:
arthelwa@kemmnet.net.mt

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest the articles and pamphlets inserted in the recent Sunday papers regarding the 20 Government projects for Grand Harbour. Just as interesting was the Opposition's reaction, with its manifest – and in many ways justified – incredulity as to the workability of the proposal. As is often the case, both sides display some degree of constructive initiative, an everlasting supply of political opportunism and an even greater hypocrisy. They both, in fact, keep going on about how this core area of the country has been allowed to fall into neglect without, however, facing up to the fact that it was their ill-administration that resulted in the current situation.

Ironically, this institutional neglect has saved most of Grand Harbour from the savage development that has affected other parts of the Islands. Being considered as unfashionable preserved its authenticity and saved it from the sort of abominations that characterise other, once beautiful, towns such as Sliema. It is worrying to note, however, that the threat of insensitive development looms even here in the form of the out-of scale and out-of-place tower that has been allowed to grow just outside the Addolorata Cemetery. The Addolorata is a monument for which urban context and landscape supremacy is an essential part of its intrinsic value and this has been now irremediably compromised.

In Malta one never knows whether to rejoice when such projects are announced or succumb to the fear that it will be one more speculation bonanza that will ruin yet another part of the country. This must not be allowed to happen. Grand Harbour has been the historical, economic and political core of this country for centuries. Nothing short of the most enlightened ideas must be allowed to take shape within its environs. The Valletta Waterfront embodies a suitable, albeit not ideal, model. Lessons must be learnt from that project in an endeavour towards excellence in all development aspects for this unique area.

Mario Azzopardi
Senglea



Blending the old with the new
at the Valletta Waterfront

Dear Editor,

Something is certainly not well in the countryside around the lovely village of Nadur. I have been travelling to Gozo from my native Mellieha ever since I was five. As a child, I enjoyed the thrill of the boat trip and the charm of the yet much unspoiled sister island. Now that life has added another 50 to those early five years, the thrill has long dissolved but the charm persists – or it did until a few years ago.

It has been heart-breaking seeing how the sister island is being ravished by the same sort of ill-considered development that has ruined much of Malta. Gozo is still far away from the huge disasters we have seen taking shape on Malta, but the gap is narrowing fast. And it is not just at the hands of private enterprise, with big budget projects. Some of the most awful damage is perpetrated by local authorities, who implement cheap embellishment programmes, often disturbing a state of things that, although not ideal, had far less negative impact than the “embellishment” project.

What has urged me to write this letter is the shameful spectacle of assorted litter accumulated around what Nadur local council has tagged an “open skip”. This open skip is basically an area enclosed on three sides by a low wall. It is located in open countryside and its only result has been to officially sanction dumping in the area. I fail to understand why such dumping facilities should be offered in the open countryside. What are they intended for? Surely the council is not asking its law-abiding citizens to take their unwanted mattresses, broken household appliances and other assorted items and go all the way into the countryside to dump them at the official open skip? The sad thing about the situation is that this is precisely what is happening.

The end result is that a good seven square metres of countryside have been ruined by providing this open skip and surrounding it with illegal, non-endemic, trees. What is worse is that, rather than being a managed repository for items of refuse, the area has become yet another dumping site in the countryside.

Regards

FP
Mellieha



Photo taken Sunday 9th September 2007

We thought it would be interesting to refer the above letter to Nadur local council for their comments, and the reply from the council’s executive secretary is published below.

Dear Editor

I refer to the letter from FP of Mellieha regarding the area where Nadur local council provides an open skip for its residents. I would first like to point out that this area is exceptionally clean. The council has taken care to provide this service for its residents so that dumping in its valleys and countryside does not occur. The service is offered during specific times of the week, when the site is manned by an attendant so that abuse does not occur. The residents of Nadur do not find it out of the way to go to this site but rather are pleased that the service is not provided within an inhabited area. Who would want an open skip to be located near their home? Along with this facility, the council also provides a bulky refuse collection service, so that, contrary to what FP states, residents do not have to drag their bulky refuse (ie mattresses, appliances, etc.) to the countryside, as these are conveniently collected from their homes, free of charge. It can easily be seen that this area is far from being a dumping site.

Rita Mifsud Attard
Executive Secretary
Nadur Local Council

Dear Sir,

I was among the congregation in the beautiful Gozo Cathedral that heard the words of Bishop Mario Grech on the feast day of Santa Marija. His comments about how we personally as individuals, and collectively as a society, must make choices between what is right and good for the planet, and what is only in our material self-interest strike at the very core of the current global environmental problems. Many of these problems have developed as a consequence of selfish attitudes in developed countries that consider the planet's resources theirs for the taking. It is easy to say that we are not directly responsible for these problems, but our lifestyle and most of our consumer choices are the key support factors of this situation.

In the same speech he underlined his Church's commitment to safeguarding what, in the pastoral letter issued for the same feast, is referred to as the country's environmental heritage. However, contrary to what I would have expected, Bishop Grech did not go into this subject at much length and, amazingly, his next step was to lash out at Mepa for its reticence in issuing a number of development permits to the Gozo Diocese.

Among these development permits is the one to authorise the creation of a new cemetery for the Parish of Nadur. This cemetery will be sited in open countryside, outside the development zone, overlooking the valley of Ramla l-Hamra in an area known as il-Qortin tan-Nadur. It will cover an area of approximately 6,600 square metres and include an intrusive, oversized chapel. It will accommodate 740 graves and one must not forget the not indifferent economic aspect of this development. A grave sells for around Lm5,000, so for 740 graves the parish will net something in the region of Lm3,700,000 or €8,618,682.

Notwithstanding Bishop Grech's manifest commitment to environment protection, this development application smacks as much of land exploitation as any of the huge and ugly hotels that have ruined much of our country. During the course of the application procedures, the Gozo and Comino Local Plan was approved, within which the site and its surroundings were designated as an "Area of High Landscape Sensitivity". Yet this did not deter the parish from pushing forward with its application.

A strong indicator of the sensibility towards nature of the Nadur parish can be deduced by its continuous insistence on the uprooting of three legally protected carob trees on the site. The parish wanted to eliminate these even against the better judgment of the Planning Directorate and the Agricultural Department. Is this the way in which Bishop Grech and his diocese "assure you that the Church will be at the forefront in defending the environmental heritage of the country"? At the outline development permission stage, Mepa had stated that the carob trees should be retained, but the parish applied for a reconsideration of this decision. Now the fact that the carob trees should be retained forms part of the conditions attached to the full development permit and it is to be hoped that this will be duly respected. In addition, 35 olive trees that were planted in 2004 are also to be uprooted and relocated to make way for the development

In reality, I fail to understand Bishop Grech's remonstrations against Mepa. In fact, notwithstanding the fact that the Planning Directorate, the section within Mepa that consists of planning professionals who compile the reports, recommended that the application should be refused, their recommendation was overruled by the board of the Development Control Commission. An Environmental Impact Assessment was also considered unnecessary.

We live in a country where we take land to build new houses while a considerable percentage of our housing stock lies empty, and build new cemeteries when we already have a number of abandoned ones. And every time we reclaim parcels of the countryside of which we have so little. When even the church, which should see the natural environment as a divine gift to humanity, fails to live up to its words, what hope do we have that there will ever be an end to this country being exploited and ruined?

Mario Aquilina
Floriana



Dear Editor,

The auberge-type building illustrated in Vigilo 31 (Pg.35) cannot, as claimed, have been the Auberge of England, since no such auberge was ever built. The identifications of other auberges in Birgu are also debatable; see detailed discussion in A. Luttrell, Hospitaller Birgu: 1530-1563, Crusades, 2 (2003), pp 141-144.

Anthony Luttrell
Bath UK

**When contacted the author
replied as follows:**

Before writing my text I consulted several authors. I think that what is written by well-known authors in the two volumes Birgu- A Maritime City, is a good reference that one can rely on. For the Auberge of England, I refer to another authoritative source – A Mifsud, The Knights Hospitaliers of the Ven. Tongue of England and EJ King – The Knights of St. John in the British Empire.

Regards,
Anton Attard



Dear Editor

It was heartening to read on the Mepa web page that the authority has intervened to remedy the atrocious eyesore caused by the silver paint applied to the rear wall of Mdina Cathedral. The constant state of peril in which local cultural heritage has to exist never fails to astonish me. Often I have blamed this on poor education, greed or downright stupidity, but when it is the Canons of the Cathedral Chapter who perpetrate such incomprehensible acts, words simply fail me. The local church is the custodian of a great chunk of the national heritage, and the Curia should have ad hoc committees charged with the implementation of the best preservation methods in respect of this heritage. The fact that such a thing should happen is simply unacceptable.

May I express the gratitude of a heritage-loving citizen to Mepa for intervening and for making sure that the defacement of Mdina will be reversed. My compliments also go to Din l-Art Helwa for the excellent work carried out in preserving our heritage for future generations.

Paul Camilleri
Rabat



Heritage Publications Review

Publications for consideration
within this section
are to be forwarded to
the Editor :

Din l-Art Helwa
133 Melita Street
Valletta

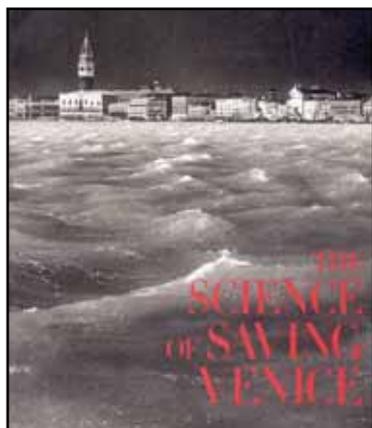
As can be inferred by its name, this book is a compendium of the scientific research carried out with the aim of establishing the causes and dynamics of decay within the beautiful city of Venice. This is being done with a view to devising protection methodologies that will ensure the survival and rehabilitation of both the historic urban fabric and the natural ecosystems of the lagoon surrounding the city.

Although being applied to the unique case of Venice, many of the issues, difficulties and ideas presented in the book have a universal significance. All over the earth, heritage is under threat in astonishingly similar manners – the greatest enemy human greed. This may take any form, from the over-exploitation of resources, the search for quick and easy financial profit or simply the conviction that as long as one's own situation is good, the rest of the world has to fit in. Such attitudes have resulted in threats that risk dramatically changing the delicate balance that has allowed our species to evolve and prosper.

Climate change and global warming, with the resulting rise in sea levels, are problems that are affecting Venice already. But they are problems that we will also have to reckon with in due course. In 100 years, sea levels might rise anywhere between 8cm and 88cm. Although there is no wide agreement on by how much sea levels will increase, it is universally accepted that increase they will. In a short number of years our heritage, and our very way of life, will be facing the same threats being faced by Venice today and there seems to be a failure to understand the link between environment degradation and the deterioration in the quality of life.

This book identifies yet another great problem – procrastination. Procrastination is the great invisible enemy of heritage and a nasty malady, the effects of which become evident only when much damage has already been done. We tend to think that, because heritage items have been around for so long, we can simply pass the buck on to the next generation. But we have arrived at the point where there will be precious little to pass on.

Yet among such gloom, hope persists. This book is published by the Venice in Peril Fund, a British-registered charity the aim of which is the preservation of Venice. Those involved with it represent the other end of the human scale – people who have selflessly decided to give their time and abilities in an effort to save a city outside their own country. They are the heralds of yet another – for once positive – aspect of the concept of “Global Village”.



The Science of Saving Venice

Authors - Caroline Fletcher
& Jane Da Mosto

Published by - The Venice in Peril
Fund

ISBN - 88-422 1310-1

Reviewed by Joe Azzopardi

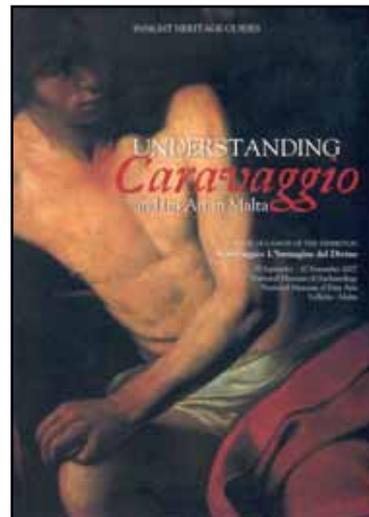


A strange fever has grabbed the Island. In a period that is about to witness the delivery of a budget speech, the move to a new currency and an imminent general election, the talk of the town is not about one of our many active politicians but an artist who was in Malta 400 years ago. Many are being spellbound anew by Caravaggio. The artist works his magic not through words but by entrancing his viewer with fragments of magnificently conceived colours set against a hypnotic darkness. We are stimulated by his work because, unlike much art, it is not mainly a thing of beauty but mostly a thing of truth. Caravaggio does not present pretty figures set in appropriate scenery. He presents man afflicted by the darkest aspects of human nature – a victim of himself and his perpetual loss of innocence.

In 54 pages, the book under review distils a mass of information to open the window of time during the period between July 1607 and December 1608. The most prominent element in this landscape is obviously the artist himself, outshone only by his works. Then comes a myriad of other personages who provide the context, principal among whom is the figure of Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt.

Faithful to the nature of his undertaking, that of being mainly a guidebook, the author provides a structured framework that illustrates a series of issues without going into any depth. We are provided with a general overview of the life of the artist, the vicissitudes that brought him to Malta and the situation he found here. The artist's contribution to the local art scene is perhaps too hastily covered in two pages, and is followed by an interesting glance at artists who, at some point in their creative careers, have manifested the influence of Caravaggio, many simply by reproducing his dramatic *ciaroscuro* and reoccurring themes without understanding the deeper implications of his art. A few did understand the innovative power of Caravaggio's art, and it is these few who can be truly termed "Caravaggisti" and who are responsible for Caravaggio being considered a turning point in the history of western art.

Visually this is a very dynamic publication, rich in graphic material that is impeccably reproduced. The two timeline tables, one illustrating Caravaggio's stay in Malta and the other the magistracy of Alof de Wignacourt, are very helpful. For some, this book will certainly provide a tangible reminder of when Malta was in the grip of Caravaggio fever – a fever that will no doubt fade very quickly. To a few it may well represent a starting point from which to begin a journey over the ocean of printed material concerning Caravaggio.



Understanding Caravaggio

Author - Sandro Debono

Published by - Heritage Books

ISBN – 978-99932-7-164-2

Reviewed by Joe Azzopardi

Treasures of Malta

No. 39 Vol. XIII No.3

Summer 2007

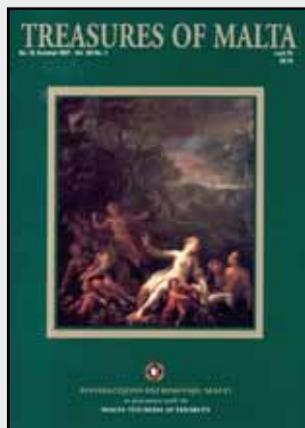
Editor - Paul Xuereb

Published by - Fondazzjoni

Partimonju Malti

ISBN – 1028-3013

Reviewed by Joe Azzopardi



If ever anyone needed confirmation of how great and varied is Malta's cultural heritage, this could certainly be provided by flicking through the pages of the large number of issues of *Treasures of Malta*. Like all its predecessors, the current issue, No. 39, is jam-packed with interesting articles on a wide array of historical and heritage-related subjects.

With every issue I like to compile statistics and classifications in an effort to identify the most interesting, the best-researched or the best-illustrated article. Often this constitutes a considerable effort, the results of which are a manifestation of personal interest rather than a reflection of the intrinsic quality of the material presented. The current issue is a case in point. Starting from the captivating cover illustration up to the last article, it offers such a vast amount of well-presented information that expressing a preference becomes almost impossible.

A highlight, within a very luminous spectrum, is certainly provided by the article by Giovanni Bonello. The subject is Tiepolo's *Consilium in Arena* (Council of the Order of Malta). My imagination was caught due to a long-standing admiration for this artist's body of work as a whole, and this painting in particular, with its almost impressionistic rendering. With his customary panache, Bonello relates the fascinating story behind this fascinating painting.

My interest was also considerably captivated by the article regarding the tussle between former Prime Minister Dom Mintoff and the late Archbishop Michael Gozi regarding the ownership of property formerly belonging to the Order of St John. In the specific, the author relates the struggle over the two Caravaggio paintings now in the Co-Cathedral of St John. Throughout the article one can almost palpably feel the strong personalities of these two figures in recent history.

These are but two standard-bearers in a collection of articles that must be read in order to be fully appreciated.

In the pluralistic culture in which we live today, it can be seen as difficult, if not to say blatantly unacceptable and undemocratic, to make any attempt to determine which style of architecture is beautiful and which is not. Architects and their clients are free to make their own stylistic choices, and the rest of us have to live with them.

Viewed as an art form, architecture is large and “in your face”; an unpleasant painting can easily be moved to the basement, but a hideous clanger of a building must be suffered on a daily basis by hundreds, if not thousands, of people. In contrast, a successful building can be regarded as a valuable asset to the entire community.

We appreciate buildings for reasons that stretch far beyond their function or usefulness. If this were not the case, then why would we argue that ancient Roman ruins should be protected, or strive to preserve old fountains and restore aged towers that have long ago lost any practical purpose? Our responses to buildings can be at the same time emotional, intellectual and aesthetic.

The Architecture of Happiness

Author - Alain de Botton

Published by Penguin

ISBN –

Reviewed by Petra Bianchi

Opposite:

top - L’Eglise Saint-Pierre de Firminy

centre - Notre-Dame du Haut

both by Le Corbusier

bottom – The Renaissance Ideal City



Loggia of the Palace of the Doges
Venice

What is it about certain buildings that makes them continue to be alluring and pleasing, in spite of changing fashions and tastes? What is it about them that appeals to our minds and sensibilities? In short, why do we consider them to be beautiful?

The question “what is beauty?” has been wrestled with time and again over the centuries by art historians, architectural critics, philosophers, artists and countless others. Alain de Botton’s *The Architecture of Happiness* can be added to this list. It is an attempt to understand our psychological responses to beauty through an exploration of architectural aesthetics, with buildings analysed as artefacts.

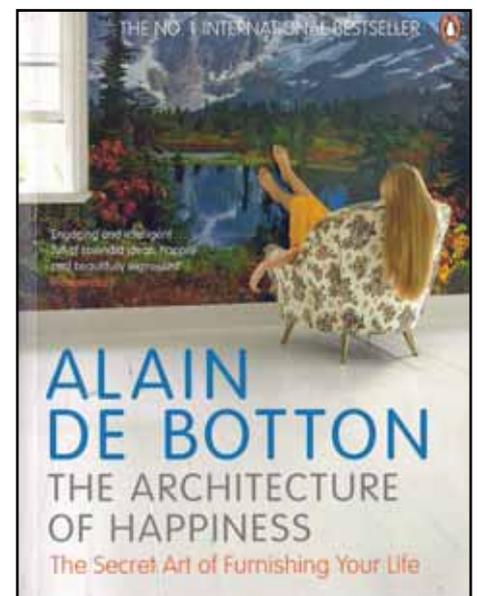
One of de Botton’s central tenets is a quote from John Ruskin who, in his writings on Venice, famously claimed that, apart from providing shelter, we want our buildings to “talk to us” – to speak, that is, of whatever we consider to be important or want to be reminded of.

Throughout his book, de Botton expands this idea, explaining that different buildings encourage or sustain certain moods and thus invite us “to be specific sorts of people”. He holds that, in architecture, people seek a kind of “stage set” to enable them to act out their “drama” or vision of an ideal contemporary life. This drama, says de Botton, is a vision of happiness – hence the title of his book.

This leads us to the second central tenet, a quote from the writer Stendhal, who stated that “beauty is the promise of happiness”, and that “there are as many styles of beauty as there are visions of happiness”.

Through our buildings, says de Botton, we can aim to express a religious mood, or one of domesticity, scholarship, commerce or rusticity. We can present an ideal of democracy, or aristocracy, feelings of welcome or of threat. Our buildings may stand as symbols of the future or as a longing for the past. These ideals are often articulated in public buildings of some importance.

De Botton appears fascinated by Modernist architects such as Le Corbusier, who aimed to design a house to most efficiently reflect its function: “like an aeroplane where





requirements of flight eliminate superfluous decoration". Yet, all the same, Modernist buildings speak to us of their particular "vision of happiness", evoking symbols of the future "with its promise of speed and technology, democracy and science".

Through such examples, de Botton seeks to explain a type of "hidden order" behind the aesthetic appreciation of architecture. He concludes that the recognition of beauty is the recognition of our idea of "a good life", although admittedly this does not make the question of the nature of beauty any easier to answer. Equally, this analysis can be applied to all objects of design or art, not just architecture.

However, de Botton does not tackle the notion that we can perceive things to be beautiful when they do not coincide with our idea of the "good life". How about the beauty of a storm, or a menacing yet beautiful building? One of the special qualities of art is that it can encourage us to empathise with people and ideas that do not form part of our understanding of "the good life" at all.

In the chapter entitled *Talking Buildings*, de Botton goes into detail to explain a psychological basis for our recognition of beauty in design. He begins his analysis by crossing over from buildings to abstract sculpture, to show how a three-dimensional mass can convey meaning. He assumes that we "read" and judge objects using the same skill that we employ to judge human character through fine changes in facial expression or other differences in physiognomy. Ultimately, buildings "talk" to us by prompting a series of associations. According to de Botton, any object of design indicates a psychological and moral attitude.

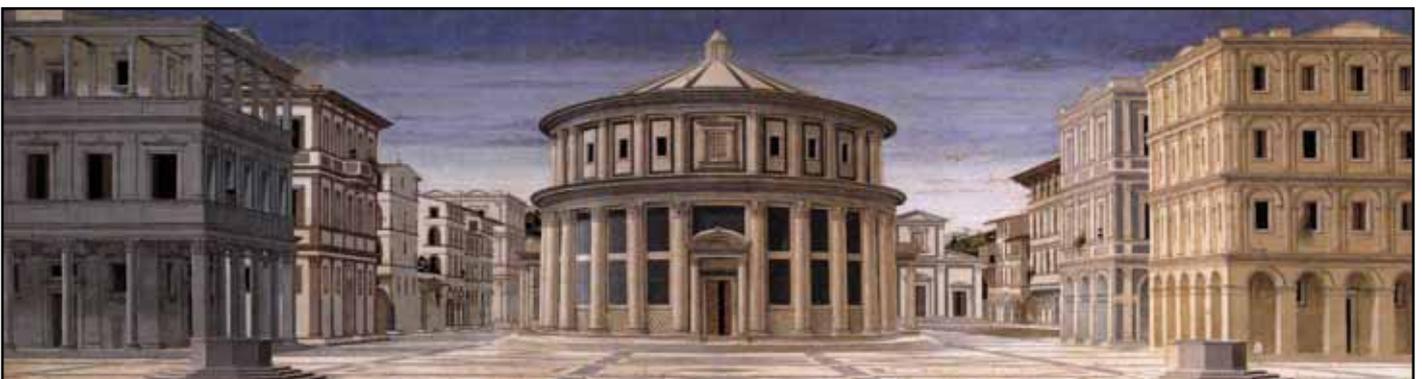
The difficulty with passing judgement on aesthetics is that, throughout history, people have swerved from one style to another – from the restrained to the exuberant, the rustic to the urban. De Botton concludes that this is only natural, as these are the moods around which our own lives revolve: excitement and calm, grandeur and cosiness and so on.

The beginnings of our confusion, or lack of confidence, about aesthetics can be traced back to the 19th century, when many different choices of architecture became possible and acceptable. Originality became increasingly important. Up until then, accepted aesthetic ideals could lead to entire cities being built in a relatively similar style – such as Valletta, for example, or Bath in the UK.

De Botton does not – and cannot – resolve any questions about the nature of beauty, yet offers an intriguing psychological and emotional analysis of the question. However, he does manage to remind us about the significance of beauty in our daily lives. From paintings in our living rooms that "act as guardians of a mood", to staircases that "prompt different states of the soul", he reminds us that we continually strive to create material reminders of the things that are important to us.



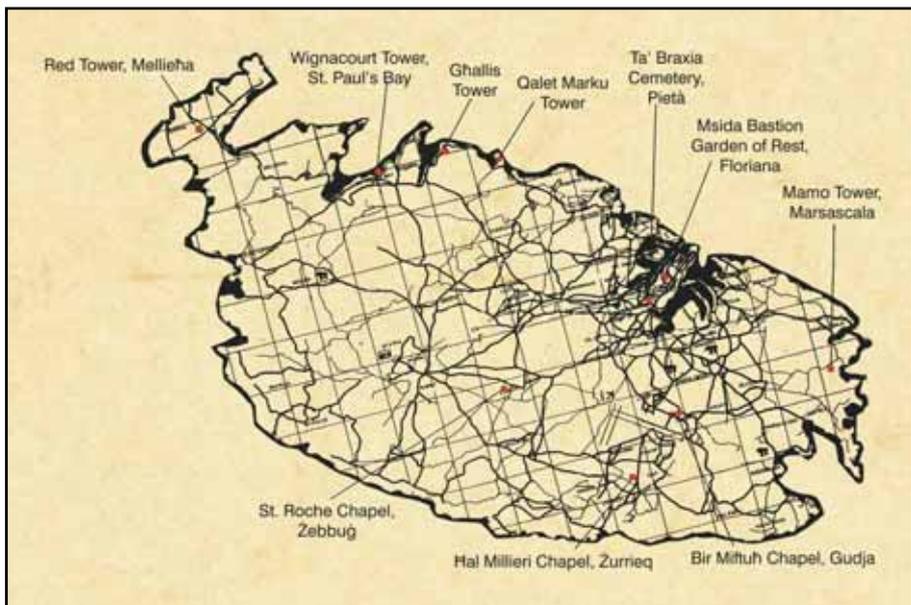
The book is very well-presented and illustrated with many intriguing photographs. De Botton discusses buildings as an art form, and does not go into the practical realities of stonemasons or problems with particular sites – just as art criticism tends to steer away from spilt paints, hardening brushes or annoying clients – although he does relate some entertaining anecdotes about Le Corbusier's relationship with the Savoye family after he built them a house modelled on a futuristic machine, which had a perpetually leaking roof. Among his few ventures into the mundane practice of architecture, de Botton wishes to remind us that a lack of money should not be an excuse for inferior architectural design. For him, bad architecture is "as much a failure of psychology as it is of design."



PROPERTIES



Dín l-Art Helwa



*Msida Bastion Garden of Rest,
Museum of Maltese
Burial Heritage
Floriana*

**Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
& first Sunday of the month
9.30 am to 12.00 noon**

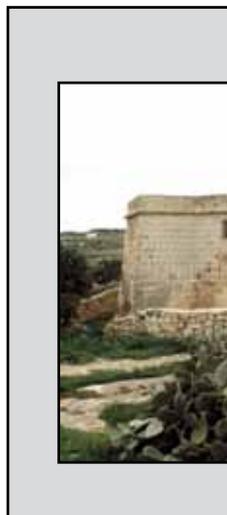
- Mary Aldred – Warden
- Derek Aldred
- Terry Davies
- Geoffrey Dixon
- Bill Hensher
- Irene Jofeh
- Wendy Mudge
- Terry O'Neill
- Elaine O'Reilly
- Peter and Pia Sellers
- Juergen Sixt
- Caroline Waddington
- Margaret Walford
- Marjorie Bonnici



*Wignacourt Tower
St Paul's Bay*

**Monday to Saturday
9.30 am to 12.30 pm**

- Dr Stanley Farrugia Randon – Warden
- Bill Andrews
- William Burrridge
- Joseph Busuttil
- Richard Davies
- John Sare
- Ken Wroe
- Yvonne & Mike Heaton
- Martin & Josette Vella



*Dwejra Tower
(Gozo)*
Monday to Friday
9.00 am to 3.00 pm
Sunday
10.30 am to 2.30 pm

Carolyn Clements – Warden
 Nigel Britain
 Jaynn Clarke
 Sonia Haynes

*

*Chapel of the Annunciation,
Hal Millieri*
First Sunday of the month
9.30 am to 12.00 noon

Anthony Mangion – Warden
 Jonathan McLeish

*Chapel of St Roque
Żebbuġ*
First Sunday of the month
9.30 am to 12.00 noon

Michael Bonnici – Warden

*

*Chapel of Santa Marija ta'
Bir Miġtuħ, Gudja*
First Sunday of the month
9.30 am to 12.00 noon

Charles Gatt – Warden
 Joe Chetcuti

*Entry for members
is free.*

Non-Members pay 50c.

*Għallis Tower
Qalet Marku Tower
St Mary's Tower Comino
St Mary's Battery Comino*

Opened by appointment



*Torri Mamo
Marsascula*

Thursday to Sunday
9.30 am to 12.00 noon

Vincent Raimondo – Warden
 Beryl Boston
 John Cassar
 John and Emma Pendlebury
 Carmen Sant
 John Wilkinson
 Mary Ballinger

*St Agatha's Tower (Red Tower)
Mellieħa*

Monday to Saturday
10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Sunday
10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Monique Gatt - Warden
 Mary Chapman
 Anne Downing
 James & Jane Evans
 Tessa McQueen
 Kenna Pisani
 Erminiette &
 Joe Zammit Camilleri
 George Attard
 Dott & Bill Hunter
 Maureen & Barry Daughy
 Danielle Johnson
 Jim Laney
 Pat Bowdler
 Maureen Meers
 Elaine Allatt
 Tony Sparks
 Adrian Civil

Important Notice Your Membership 2008!

Please allow us to remind you that your membership for 2008 will be due on January 1st. As, we are sure you are certainly aware, your membership means very much to us. Apart from giving us your financial support, your membership is an act of confidence in our work. As you also know our work is not always easy and knowing that there are people like you who support us is always of great encouragement. So please do take a moment and forward your membership fee to: Why not do this now before the Christmas rush overtakes you!



*The Hon Treasurer
Din l-Art Helwa
133, Melita Street
Valletta*

Thank you for your support!





Din l-Art Helwa

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Be a Guardian of Malta's Heritage. Join Today

Surname: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

e-mail: _____

I wish to apply for:

Annual Membership	Lm7.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Membership:	Lm75.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Annual Membership: (Husband and wife)	Lm10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Life Membership:	Lm100.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Annual Membership:	Lm2.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cheques to be made payable to Hon. Treasurer Din l-Art Helwa

Signature: _____

Date: _____

**Membership Rates
2008**

Individual Annual Membership
Lm7.50 (€17.47)

Individual Life Membership
Lm75 (€ 174.70)

Married Couple
(or long-standing 'Partners')
Annual Membership
(for Two) *Lm10 (€ 23.29)*

Married Couple Life Membership
(for Two) *Lm100 (€ 232.94)*

Students Din l-Art Helwa
Annual membership Lm2 (€ 4.66)
(also covers University Student
membership for members
up to 25 years old)



Din l-Art Helwa

We Need Volunteers

We maintain a Register of Volunteers – members who wish to participate actively in what Din l-Art Helwa does.

These are some activities where we may need assistance:

- Membership Campaigns
- Youth and Environmental Work
- Clerical support or other Office Duties
- Property wardens
- Property 'guides'
- Project management
- Fund raising activities

If you are interested in hands-on participation, please give details below:

You give me knowledge



Freephone 8007 3131



Registered address: 120, The Strand, Gzira GZR03, Malta

‘THE COUNTESS SARKOZY AND THE HUSSAR’

Nonsuch Players are presenting the play ‘The Countess Sarkozy and the Hussar’ at Torri Mamo near St Thomas Bay, Marsascala, on 9, 10, 11 November at 7.30 pm. This is an elegant one-act play by Sue Fletcher, set in a Hungarian castle in the winter of 1848. While battles rage outside in the snow, the Countess becomes involved militarily and morally with both interesting and humorous results. Passion, bravery and tenderness – all are here in this heroic little drama. Tickets are priced at Lm3.50 and can be obtained from Din l-Art Helwa, 133 Melita Street, Valletta, 21 225952 or info@dinlarthelwa.org. All proceeds go towards *Din l-Art Helwa*. Torri Mamo was restored and is managed by *Din l-Art Helwa*.

The Red Tower, Dwejra Tower, Comino Tower and Wignacourt Tower all need volunteers to help out with opening times and other exciting projects. If you are interested in joining in please contact:

**DWEJRA TOWER &
COMINO TOWER:**
Carolyn Clements 2155 9679;
9905 1866;
gozo@dinlarthelwa.org.

RED TOWER:
Monique Gatt 9949 2685

WIGNACOURT TOWER:
Dr Stanley Farrugia Randon

