Din l-Art Helwa 50th Anniversary
The People – The Thoughts
1965 - 2015
Our Name
Din l-Art Helwa means ‘This Beautiful Land’, a name inspired by the first three words of the Maltese National Anthem.

Our Logo
The symbolic Senglea Gardjola, our logo, stands endlessly in vigil guarding Malta’s remarkable heritage. Join, donate or volunteer and help us look after the places you love.

Detail from the restored ceiling of Our Lady of Victory Church
Photograph - Daniel Cilia
EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT 02
HERITAGE SAVED 04
FOREVER, FOR EVERYONE

GALLERY OF MONUMENTS SAVED 06
1965 - 2015

EVENTS CELEBRATING 17
50 YEARS OF DLH

COMMUNICATION BUILDS 22
UNDERSTANDING - DLH
VOLUNTEERS SEMINAR

VISIT BY PROFESSOR 24
SIMON MOLESWORTH

HERITAGE SAVED MAP 28

RESTORED WORKS OF ART 30
IN OUR LADY OF VICTORY
CHURCH

RESTORATION OF 35
PERIMETER WALLS AND
ALTARS AT OUR LADY OF
VICTORY CHURCH

ALESSIO ERARDI’S CEILING 36
AT OUR LADY OF VICTORY
CHURCH REVEALED

WIGNACOURT TOWER 37
RESTORATION

38 WIED IŻ-ŻURRIEQ TOWER
RESTORATION

40 RESTORATION OF THE
MATTIA PRETI PAINTINGS
AT SARRIA CHURCH

42 DELIMARA LIGHTHOUSE:
HISTORY, RESTORATION
AND NOW DELIGHTFUL
HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

44 TEN YEARS OF DLH
AWARDS FOR
ARCHITECTURAL
HERITAGE

48 DLH VOLUNTEERS

53 MESSAGES FROM OTHER
NGOS

54 DLH ‘SAVE THE
COUNTRYSIDE’
CAMPAIGN

55 A GREAT SIEGE FOR THE
GRAND CARDINAL

60 END OF 50TH ANNIVERSARY
YEAR MESSAGE

61 DLH CORPORATE
SPONSORS

Council 2015 - 2017
The Times They Are a-Changing

Maria Grazia Cassar

Executive President of Din l-Art Ħelwa

In September this year, Din l-Art Ħelwa had the honour and pleasure of welcoming Professor Simon Molesworth, AO, QC, his wife Lindy and daughter Anika, to Malta. During his week here, Prof. Molesworth called on the President of Malta and the Environment Minister, gave a public talk at the Valletta Campus of the University of Malta, participated in a round table debate at the Chamber of Commerce and addressed Din l-Art Ħelwa members and other NGOs at our headquarters.

All this was interspersed with viewing many of Malta’s cultural gems, including areas of natural beauty and, of course, becoming acquainted with the various environmental and planning issues that were discussed as we made our way from one place to the next.

The first thing on which Prof. Molesworth remarked as we drove through Senglea where he was residing, thanks to Martin Scicluna’s generous offer of accommodation, was that he had never seen anything like it. He was referring to the spectacle of wooden balconies hovering above our heads in a kaleidoscope of colours and shapes. This was a unique environment and maybe one that we too often take for granted. He was delighted to see it again in Valletta, even in post-war constructions, and listened enthusiastically when I told him that, some years ago, there had been a scheme in place to help finance the restoration of these gallariji. He remarked that a similar scheme back home in Broken Hill, NSW, Australia, had ensured the protection of the characteristic verandas of its Victorian houses.

Prof. Molesworth was captivated by what he saw, and observed that there was a great deal of restoration and conservation of the historical fortifications, palaces and churches going on. Indeed, he was impressed by the extent of this work and commended the government for leading the way in securing EU funding to carry it out.

The concerted efforts of the Restoration Directorate, the Rehabilitation Committees of Valletta, Mdina and the Three Cities, the Grand Harbour Regeneration Committee, the Malta Tourism Authority and Heritage Malta have resulted in many monuments and spaces being given back to the public. The Mdina Ditch, Fort St Elmo and Fort St Angelo come to mind, and many more are in the pipeline, such as Bighi and, soon, the Malta International Contemporary Art Space in Floriana. So far, so good. Malta, it seems, is moving in the right direction and buzzing with exciting projects that will give new life to historical buildings and return cultural spaces to Maltese and visitors alike. We are preserving what is unique to Malta and making good use of it. This is progress and good development.

However, the other side of the coin shows another reality. We had the opportunity of discussing this at the round table debate held at the Chamber of Commerce on 16 September, chaired by Malta Business Bureau board member and senior strategic adviser to Microsoft Dr John Vassallo. The panel was composed of Din l-Art Ħelwa Council members Dr Petra Caruana Dingli and Professor Alan Deidun, Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association president Tony Zahra, Malta Developers Association president Sandro Chetcuti, architect Ivan Cachia and, of course, Professor Simon Molesworth.

The title of the debate was Business development and environment protection: sustainable bedfellows? In theory, everyone agreed that a balance could be achieved, but in practice the very opposite...
seems to be the case. The full-speed-ahead onslaught of building development that Malta is witnessing is changing our built and natural environment at an unprecedented rate and, unfortunately, without the foresight and knowledge of the effect this will have on our quality of life.

The demolition of traditional dwellings is the order of the day, most of them replaced by blocks of flats that are ruining the character of our towns and villages. Additional floors are obliterating views that could be enjoyed by everyone until not so long ago, and soon churches will no longer dominate our skylines, as we are forced to swallow the pill of high-rise buildings, whether we like it or not. All this is compounded by the persistent eating away at Outside Development Zone boundaries by big and small developers alike.

There are some who argue that it is a necessary evil. I think we all agree that it is evil, and the debating panel also agreed that it is not necessary. For some time now, Din l-Art Ħelwa has been insisting that development must be based on solid, hard facts and figures that show where the needs lie, and what should be allowed in order to fulfil them.

We must have a vision – a master plan for our country – which will go beyond the few years of any one legislature. In his inspiring and challenging talk, Prof. Molesworth warned us that we must not ‘kill the goose that lays the golden egg’. We must identify what is special about our culture and environment and protect it, otherwise we will be opening the doors to the “curse of sameness” that is creeping into every modern urban conglomeration.

Good legislation is the key to good development. We are in the process of changing much of it at the moment, with the new Strategic Plan for Environment and Development, just approved by Parliament, and the Mepa demerger legislation being discussed in the House. Both of these have been strongly criticised by many, including the Church, the Commissioner for Planning and the Environment within the office of the Ombudsman and many eNGOs, including Din l-Art Ħelwa.

The Parliamentary Committee meetings, chaired at the time by Dr Marlene Farrugia, have given civil society a forum in which to air their views and, thankfully, there is very often cross-party consensus. However, there is still much to be done to disassociate the environment and development from partisan politics and the winning of votes. Most importantly, there is much to be done in terms of looking beyond the immediate monetary gain that certain types of development bring, and to quantify the real loss in monetary and other terms that these planning decisions have on health, culture, education, our livelihood and life itself.
Fifty years ago on 9 July 1965, Din l-Art Helwa was founded with the aim of saving our nation’s heritage, our open spaces and natural environment. Today, 50 years later, Din l-Art Helwa’s volunteers are still working tirelessly to uphold these values. Our mission “To protect Malta’s beauty in the towns and villages, in the countryside and by the sea” still stands true, even more vital now than before. Malta’s built and natural legacy have always been used as commodities to stimulate the economy and generate wealth, but today there is much less, as open spaces dwindle and only rare pockets of our traditional architecture remain. There is an increased threat from higher aspirations to wealth, and much haste on the part of the authorities to allow people to attain it, as can be evidenced by the speed with which the government relaxes one development and construction policy after another.

It was volunteers who established Din l-Art Helwa 50 years ago, when conservation was still virtually unheard of. In those 50 years, and with the dedication and power of their example, Din l-Art Helwa volunteers have saved some 40 historic monuments and landmarks from abandonment and neglect such as Comino’s St Mary’s Tower, The Red Tower and Our Lady of Victory Church in Valletta. And it was volunteers who helped to save two areas of outstanding natural beauty such as the Majjistral Park and Foresta 2000 in Mellieha. As long as there are those who love Malta, these examples will have been saved forever, for everyone.

The organisation holds 17 of these historic places in trust and guardianship from the Church and from the State, managing them for the benefit of the nation. Volunteers with Din l-Art Helwa give their time generously to this cause, each year amounting to some 38,000 hours of free work in contribution to the economy. Sponsors and members help to raise precious funds, and some €1.5 million alone has been raised in the last three years for projects to save Delimara Lighthouse, now completed, and Our Lady of Victory Church – which is nearing completion. It has been proved that every euro invested in heritage generates a ratio of 26.1 – a

Our mission:
“To protect Malta’s beauty in the towns and villages, in the countryside and by the sea”

opposite:
Din l-Art Helwa volunteers hard at work

A superb view of uncontaminated nature as seen at the Majjistral Park
return on investment with long-term impact of which no other industry can boast.

*Din l-Art Ħelwa*’s volunteers are hands-on. They each bring different skills to the preservation of heritage and the natural environment, doing what they love best. They may be architects, archaeologists, archivists, artists, bankers and business people, cooks and cake makers, computer experts, conservators, environmentalists, engineers, fund-raisers, historians, keepers of graves, lawyers, lecturers, music-lovers, tourist guides, researchers, odd job people, photographers, scientists, writers – and so much more which may not come to mind. Both brain and brawn are needed to save the places we love.

Volunteers with *Din l-Art Ħelwa* have worked with one successive government after another and whereas politicians change as their fortunes wax and wane, we are constant. Over five decades we have always been there. By working together, we have proved that we can save, protect and find new uses for neglected historic buildings and preserve places of natural beauty for the years to come.

Today, more than ever before, heritage all over the world is under increasing threat from conflict and environmental degradation, but where it is threatened by bad planning, this is a self-inflicted hurt that we can, and must, avoid. When bad planning is intentional, then this is both a tragedy and a crime.

It would be remiss of me, as outgoing president of *Din l-Art Ħelwa*, not to thank you – our public, our sponsors, members and all lovers of Malta – for all the support you have given over these 50 years, while remaining mindful of those heritage lovers and activists who have come before us and those who will certainly come after. And, of course, our volunteers!

Without you, we could not have achieved what we have achieved. It has been a privilege – together with our loyal and hard-working volunteer Council – to lead *Din l-Art Ħelwa* for the last four-and-a-half years as it reached its 50th Anniversary, celebrating its achievements as well as mourning with you the still fresh loss of our beloved founder president, Judge Maurice Caruana Curran. It has been an honour to take *Din l-Art Ħelwa* forward during such a challenging time for the environment, when our work is even more vital.

And now, on with the next 50 years! Making our voices heard is the job of honest citizens. We have much to do and, with your help, we will do it.
Since 1965 Din l-Art Helwa has restored various national sites and holds 17 of them in guardianship or trust from the Government of Malta or from the Church. It has done this entirely with the support of its many generous sponsors, benefactors, members and its own fund raising activities.


1970: The Church of Santa Marija ta’ Bir Miftuh, 1425, Gudja, restored with the support of Malta International Airport plc.
1975: The first restoration of Wignacourt Tower, St Paul’s Bay, 1610, carried out with the support of the National Tourism Organisation.
2014: The second restoration of Wignacourt Tower also carried out with the support of the Malta Tourism Authority.

1980: The Chapel of St Roque, Żebbuġ, restored with the support of Round Table One.
2013: Statue of St Roque restored with the support of Bank of Valletta, HSBV Malta, JMV Quality in Steel Ltd and the Debono Group.

1990: Msida Bastion Garden of Rest, Floriana.
20,000 fragments of shattered stone were put together to recompose its neoclassic memorials. The project took 11 years to complete and was the winner of the Europa Nostra Silver Medal Award in 2001.
1994: First restoration of Mamo Tower, 1642, Marsascala, sponsored by Round Table One. Its second restoration in 2013 was funded by a Good Causes Fund award.

1995: Ghallis Tower, 1658, on the Coast Road. Restoration sponsored by the Mizzi Organisation

1995: The Vedette at St James Bastion, Valletta, restoration sponsored by the Central Bank
1996 and 2003: Restoration of Santa Marija Battery, 1715, on Comino. Sponsored by Comino Hotel, and later by P. Cutajar & Co. Ltd.

1996 and 2015: Restoration of St Paul’s Statue, 1845, St Paul’s Island. Sponsored by Vassallo Builders, and now by the Malta Tourism Authority.

1997: Dwejra Tower, 1652, Gozo. This coastal watchtower was restored with the support of Galdes & Mamo.
1997 Qalet Marku Tower, 1658, Bahar iċ-Ċaghaq. This coastal watchtower was restored with the support of Round Table Malta One.

1998: Mistra Gate, 1607, restored with the help of the Corinthia Group of Companies.

1999/2001: St Agatha’s Tower, (The Red Tower), 1647, Mellieha. This tower was restored with the support of the Demajo Group of Companies, Toly Products Ltd, and Playmobil Malta Ltd.
2000: Ta’Braxia Cemetery, 1857, Pietà, being restored with the support of the Government of Malta.

2002 to 2004: St Mary’s Tower, 1618, Comino. The exterior restoration was possible with the assistance of the Malta Maritime Authority and the interiors by Vodafone Malta.
2002: The exterior walls of Our Lady of Victory Church, 1566, Valletta, restored with the support of PwC Malta.

2004: Isopu Tower, 1667, Nadur, Gozo. This restoration was made possible through the legacy of Ms Marjorie de Wolff and was carried out together with Nadur Local Council.

2004: Chape of St John The Evangelist, Hal Millieri. Restoration financed by Din l-Art Ħelwa.

2005/2015: Delimara Lighthouse, 1854. Restoration has just been completed with the support of the Malta Maritime Authority, now Transport Malta, and GasanMamo Insurance Ltd.

2009 ongoing: St Anthony’s Battery, 1732, Qala, made possible by MEPA’s UIPP fund together with Qala Local Council.

2011: The Statue of Queen Victoria, 1891, Valletta, by Giuseppe Valenti, sponsored by the Demajo Group of Companies.

2012: Painting representing St Sebastian, 1677-61679, by Mattia Preti, Sarria Church, Floriana, sponsored by Malta International Airport plc.

2012: ongoing: Our Lady of Victory Church, 1566, Valletta, its Alessio Erardi vault paintings, its altars and niches and art treasures.

Main sponsors:
HSBC Malta Foundation, PwC Malta, the Alfred Mizzi Foundation, Vodafone Foundation, the Farsons Foundation, P. Cutajar & Co., the UIPF Fund of Mepa, the Tanner Trust, the Malta Stock Exchange, GVC Plc., Medserv Plc, the Double Gold Life Members of Din l-Art Helwa and many generous individuals.
2014:
The Immaculate Conception
Titular Painting, 1677 - 1679, by Mattia Preti, Sarria Church, Floriana, sponsored by Shireburn Software Co Ltd.

2014 and ongoing:
Torri ta’Xutu, c. 1647, Wied iż-Żurrieq, sponsored by the Malta International Airport Foundation.

To learn more about Din l-Art Ħelwa and the sites it has restored, go to www.dinlarthelwa.org. Help us by telling your friends about the organisation. Join as a member, donate or volunteer and you too will become a Heritage Guardian. Contact us on tel: 21225952, 21220358 or email: info@dinlarthelwa.org.

Help us Save the Places you Love
www.dinlarthelwa.org
Events Celebrating 50 Years of Din l-Art Helwa

Message from Albert P Mamo
Chairman of the 50th Anniversary Events Committee

The 50th birthday of any organisation is an important and auspicious occasion, and even more so for a volunteer NGO such as Din l-Art Helwa. When, in mid-2013, I was approached by Simone Mizzi, then Executive President, to chair the 50th Anniversary Committee I agreed to do so with pride. A start had been made on the outline planning for the 50th anniversary year and, indeed, there was a rough draft that the proposed committee would take in hand and flesh out.

We started immediately to prepare a list of members who could contribute towards the planned events and initiatives – keeping in mind that there were already a number of members who had enough on their plate in DLĦ-related work that we did not wish to disrupt. We also believed that, eventually, there would be a core group that would be involved to some extent in every event, whilst a number of others would contribute to specific ones.

Once this process began to take shape, attention was turned to the actual programme and the idea was that there would be a whole schedule of events, some of which were already on the DLĦ calendar but for which an effort would be made to enhance them for the occasion, whilst others would be ‘specials’ that would be planned for the anniversary year per se. Obviously, these events would incur expenditure and therefore this would have to be covered as much as possible by other means without impinging on the ‘normal’ DLĦ cash flow required to sustain the conservation work that is the very raison d’être of DLĦ. This would have to be done by having specific fund-raising events together with trying to make any other events as self-funding as possible.

The first official meeting of the committee was held on 16 October 2013 to give enough time for ideas to spawn and germinate and result in a balanced programme that would do justice to the occasion. The programme was divided into eight activity headings under which each particular event was then classified as follows: General, Publications & Media, Public Events, Restoration & Green Projects, DLĦ Premises, Specials, Youths and Gozo. We believed this would give balance to a programme that was initially designed to run for a period of 12 months but which, in fact, would have run for 18 months by the time we got to the end of the current planning, on the 1 April 2016.

The first two events were, indeed, fund-raising events: an al fresco dinner held on 18 September 2014, and an ‘art for sale’ exhibition the following month, after which the full programme started rolling off the calendar.

It is not the purpose of this short article to report each and every event, but a short mention of two of the specials would not be amiss. First, I have to remind us all about the splendid evening in February, when we held an orchestral concert at the Manoel Theatre as an ‘opener’ for the 50th year, which also served as a backdrop for the launching of the updated Heritage Saved publication. Then I also have to mention the recent visit of our guest speaker, Prof. Simon Molesworth who, together with his family, was with us for five days of intense activity which was undoubtedy the most logistically challenging event of the whole programme. We ended the year with a wonderful concert on 3 December at the Tapestry Chamber, the Palace, Valletta, by mezzo soprano Hadar Halevy De Vito, accompanied by Charlene Farrugia at the piano, followed by a reception, and a Te Deum Mass at the resplendent Our Lady of Victory Church on 9 December, celebrated by His Grace the Archbishop Charles Scicluna.”

Finally, I have to thank all the committee members, now ably led by Executive President Maria Grazia Cassar, as well as all those who, in some way or another, contributed to making (and still are making) these celebrations memorable. I feel that naming events or people beyond what I have said would be unfair to all of those not specifically mentioned who also had a hand in this memorable series of events which I can affirm has given me, and all the committee, much satisfaction. DLĦ ad multos annos.

On 9 July, 2015, the 50th anniversary of Din l-Art Helwa, Members of the Council of Din l-Art Helwa had the privilege of presenting the publication Heritage Saved 1965-2015 by Stanley Farrugia Randon, to HE the President of Malta, Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca who is also patron of the Organisation.

From left to right - Joseph Chetcuti, Josie Ellul Mercer, Carolyn Clements, Albert Calleja, Simone Mizzi, outgoing President of Din l-Art Helwa, HE the President of Malta, Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, the author, Stanley Farrugia Randon, Maria Grazia Cassar, incoming President of DLĦ, Philip Mercieca, Secretary General, Prof. Lucio Mule Stagno, Vice President of DLĦ, Martin Scicluna, Treasurer; Cettina Caruana Curran, and Cathy Farrugia.
The inauguration of Din l-Art Helwa’s 50th Anniversary Grove at Xagħra l-Ħamra in Majjistral Park

On 24th January, Din l-Art Helwa officers met the Minister for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change Leo Brincat, Majjistral Park chairman Sammy Vella, Mellieha mayor John Buttigieg and Fernando Docampo from Middlesea Insurance Co. Ltd, among others, for the inauguration of a new grove at Xagħra l-Ħamra, in Majjistral Park.

As if it was an omen for the future, there was a lull in the stormy weather just as everyone stood at the site where the Minister and DLĦ president Simone Mizzi planted two more trees to add to the 200 that had been planted already by volunteers from Middle Sea Insurance Ltd and MSV Life. Olive and carob trees, as well as lentisks, were among the indigenous species planted.

Simone Mizzi said that the event had launched the open-air celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of Din l-Art Helwa – which was created to safeguard both the historical and cultural heritage of Malta and also its natural environment. She said it was a sad fact that open spaces in our countryside are being encroached upon and she appealed to the Minister to do everything within his power to protect these open spaces where biodiversity can thrive. “Trees”, Ms Mizzi pointed out, “stop soil erosion and provide habitats for birds.”

Minister Brincat said that half-a-century of work was a praiseworthy milestone. DLĦ had been created at a time when there was little awareness of the need to protect both the natural and the built environment, and he commended the organisation for its perseverance. He said the government will continue to encourage the Board of Majjistral Park and is appreciative of initiatives by private entities such as Middlesea Insurance plc and MSV Life for supporting environmental activities.

The new chairman of Majjistral Park Sammy Vella expressed his appreciation for Din l-Art Helwa’s untiring work and stressed that the Park is for the enjoyment of the public. He invited people who spend all the week closed up in offices and classrooms to visit the park in their free time and enjoy its fresh air, open spaces and bio-diversity. “This place”, he said, “used to be a rubbish dump. Now it is hoped that more and more people will appreciate it, grow to love and care for it and feel that it belongs to each and every one of us.”

Commemorative stamp and postcard

A commemorative stamp, with a unique frank for the occasion, was issued on 9 July to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Din l-Art Helwa. The stamp was affixed to a ‘first day cover’ envelope featuring a fine shadow of Din l-Art Helwa’s logo, the Senglea gardjola, as well as the printed slogan Heritage is Timeless, Our Countryside is Priceless. Both will run out of time unless they are saved. This was issued, along with a special edition postcard that features four historic sites restored and managed by Din l-Art Helwa: the Red Tower, the Msida Bastion Garden of Rest, Alessio Erardi’s painting of the Assumption of Our Lady on the vaulted ceiling of Our Lady of Victory Church in Valletta and Santa Marija Tower, Comino.

These two items, which were made possible through the support of Lombard Bank, marked a significant milestone in the life of Malta’s first heritage organisation and are of special interest to people interested in philately and collectors of Melitensia, as well as those who wish to support Din l-Art Helwa in its mission to protect our heritage and the natural environment.

The stamp, the first day cover and the postcard are available from Din l-Art Helwa’s offices, Melita Street, Valletta, at the following prices:

- First day cover with commemorative stamp franked 9 July 2015: €2.50
- Postcard with commemorative stamp, franked 9 July 2015: €2.50
- Postcard with commemorative stamp: €1.50

The proceeds from the sale of these collectors’ items will go to Din l-Art Helwa’s restoration and environment fund. For more information, please email info@dinlarthelwa.org.
50th Anniversary Jubilee Concerts at the Bir Miftuh International Music Festival

The 19th Bir Miftuh International Music Festival saw full houses on all four evenings this year – Din l-Art Ħelwa’s 50th anniversary year.

This quality music festival, held in the mediaeval Bir Miftuh Chapel, has become an important event on the Maltese cultural calendar and one not to be missed by music aficionados.

Over the end of May and in early June, these music lovers were treated to music sponsored by the ADRC Trust, the French Embassy and Alliance Francaise de Malte, the Italian Embassy, the Istituto Italiano di Cultura and the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome and within the activities tied to EXPO 2015 in Milan, and HE Oren David, the non-resident Israeli Ambassador.

The Chalmers family, who established the ADRC Trust in memory of their son and brother, Alistair, were the kind sponsors of the first concert which featured ‘The Conrads in Concert’ – Maria and Elizabeth Conrad at the violin and piano with Jose Garcia Gutierrez on the horn.

The French Embassy and Alliance Francaise de Malte delighted the audience with the rediscovering of George Onslow’s music performed by the Ensemble Cincievski.

The Italian ‘serata’ by Musica Nova Duo featured Maestri Massimo de Bonfils and Luca Minervino of the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome, who presented much-loved excerpts from the operas of the great maestro Rossini.

And last, but certainly not least, were Liat Cohen on violin accompanied by Eyal Ein Habar on flute, from Israel. This concert, described as ‘magical’ by one music critic, brought to an end a most successful series of concerts.
**50th Anniversary celebrations in Gozo**

It was a beautiful summer evening, one of the best that Malta and Gozo can put on. On 26 June 2015, the Gozo and Comino team – led by Carolyn Clements – celebrated the 50th anniversary at a most happy event held at the NGO centre in Gozo, on the road to Xagħra. Carolyn Clements was thanked and applauded by all for her sterling work over the years at the helm of the hard-working group of DLĦ volunteers who tend to the historic sites on Gozo and Comino. A most ingenious creation, the 50th Anniversary cake – was cut by Carolyn with outgoing DLĦ president Simone Mizzi, together with incoming president Maria Grazia Cassar and other volunteers. The Gozo and Comino teams were thanked by Maria Grazia on behalf of DLĦ and commended wholeheartedly for their commitment and hard work.

![The 50th Anniversary Cake!](image)

Executive President Ms Maria Grazia Cassar welcomes Mr Mark Watkinson, CEO of HSBC Bank Malta to the unveiling of the Erardi Ceiling on the 19th August 2015.

![Gozo and Comino DLĦ team leader Carolyn Clements presents incoming DLĦ Executive President Maria Grazia Cassar with a bouquet, wishing her every success in her new role. Council Member and DLĦ Properties Division coordinator Josie Ellul Mercer watches on](image)

The DLĦ 50th Anniversary cake is cut soon to be demolished and enjoyed by all!

![Simone Mizzi, Vice President explains the programme of works leading up to the removal of the temporary floor that for nearly 20 years has hidden the Erardi ceiling from public view. From left to right - Mireille Fsadni, Chief Architect Valletta Rehabilitation Projects Office and World Heritage Site Manager, Mark Watkinson, then CEO HSBC Malta, Maria Grazia Cassar, Executive President, DLĦ, Simone Mizzi, Vice President, DLĦ, Monsignor Victor Zammit McKeon, Rector of Our Lady of Victory Church.](image)
50th Anniversary celebrations Dinner at San Anton Palace

This elegant mid-summer event, which took place on 10 July, was held under the distinguished patronage of Her Excellency Dr. Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, who together with Mr. Preca honoured us with their gracious presence. The luxuriant and enchanting gardens, beautifully lit up for the occasion and enhanced by the historic palace built by Grand Master Antoine De Paule as a backdrop, provided a most enthralling setting. The renowned and ever popular violinist George Curmi il-Puse’, together with his colleague, the brilliant Russian accordionist Yuri, entertained guests with melodic tunes throughout the evening.

50th Anniversary Vocal Performance and Reception

Din l-Art Helwa’s traditional Autumn Function this year has been a special festive event in celebration of our Golden Jubilee. On 3rd December we were hosted in the historic Tapestry Chamber, at the Grandmasters’ Palace Valletta, by our patron, H.E. Dr. Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta. The highlight of the evening was a vocal performance by the internationally renowned Mezzo Soprano Hadar Halevy De Vito, who, accompanied on the piano by the highly talented Charlene Farrugia, entertained the audience with a passionate rendition of works by Gluck, Rossini, Saint-Saëns, Bizet, Verdi and Gershwin. The performance was followed by a gourmet reception, provided by Osborne Caterers. The event was very well attended by members and friends.

Thanksgiving Mass at Our Lady of Victory Church

On Wednesday 9th December, His Grace the Archbishop of Malta kindly accepted to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving for the 50 years of Din l-Art Helwa’s work for the protection of Malta’s built, artistic and environmental heritage. The mass was concelebrated by Monsignor Victor Zammit McKeon and Monsignor Anton Galea while the Cappella Sanctae Catharinae Choir accompanied the Holy Liturgy. Thankful for the achievements of the organisation and its volunteers, His Grace prayed that the organization may continue in its efforts to protect our heritage and that Maltese people may care for our beautiful city of Valletta. To a gasp of surprise by the congregation, the Archbishop switched on the lights illuminating the Alessio Erardi ceiling auguring that the beauty of the Baroque may instil in us Maltese the awareness of beauty to augur well for a future of tolerance and peace.
Communication Builds Understanding

Martin Scicluna

Hon. Treasurer of Din l-Art Helwa

Din l-Art Helwa is ‘powered’ by a strong and active team of volunteers, consisting of two predominant types of contributor: the volunteers who serve in our managed sites and come into contact with the public and visitors to these Islands, and those who are involved in various areas such as historical research, administrative work, financial matters and communication with the country’s administration etc.

Din l-Art Helwa, therefore, is not unlike an organisation that has “customer facing” and “back office” type staff. It is fair to say that, unless one makes a specific effort, one might not meet any other volunteers – unless it’s at the Christmas party! In this scenario, it is not difficult to have a lack of appreciation of what other parts of the organisation are up to and how limited resources need to be apportioned – and in an NGO, the scarcest resource is probably time itself.

On 1 June, all DLĦ volunteers were invited to a seminar at a hotel in the north of Malta, not least of all to make it easier for the strong Gozo and Comino team to commute for the event. This activity was one of the 50th anniversary events.

A good number of volunteers accepted the invitation – allowing us the opportunity to address the prime objectives of the seminar, which were:

- Giving space to individuals to air their views
- Building on what we are good at
- Identifying possible improvements in our work

The seminar was opened with a welcoming speech by Executive President Simone Mizzi, who gave an outline history of DLĦ and its mission in the early days, showing the participation of many volunteers who are still with the organisation today. The audience appreciated a power-point presentation that included pictures of many of our achievements, including several restored properties. Simone defined the many individual skills volunteers brought to the organisation and, through it, to Malta. She also spoke about the lobbying that is taking place to save rural areas, and mentioned a new initiative – the ‘Save the Countryside’ campaign on Facebook. Everyone is encouraged to “Like” this page and share it with friends.
The attendees were then divided into three groups, to reap the benefits of smaller discussion groups before ideas were exchanged in a plenary session involving all the attendees. The three focus groups were coordinated by Simone Mizzi, Maria Grazia Cassar and Luciano Mulé Stagno.

The audience also had the opportunity of learning how our activities are financed. Historically, DLĦ has mostly been financially supported by fund-raising events, individual members’ subscriptions and sponsorship programmes from small and large companies. Council and Executive Committee members have worked tirelessly over the years to ensure that we have always had access to funds to protect, preserve and restore Malta’s built and environmental heritage. Managed sites such as St Agatha’s Tower, Saint Mary’s Tower, Dwejra Tower, Wignacourt Tower, Mamo Tower and the Garden of Rest have historically been a mainstay of visitor activity and, consequently, also of financial contributions. During the last few years, Our Lady of Victory Church and Delimara Lighthouse have also become an important site financially for DLĦ. The audience were also given some statistics to show how important our presence in social media is and how our “footprint” compares to other local NGOs.

The seminar produced an interesting set of recommendations that will certainly add value to what we do, not only for Din l-Art Helwa but primarily for Malta. Recommendations varied from how volunteers can be identified, to promotional and advertising material, to lighting up properties and to the cross-fertilisation of ideas through the cross-posting of volunteers. Other views on offering incentives for visitors and increasing our income were also discussed. Maybe the highlight was the common theme that pervaded the audience: our volunteers love the work they do, despite the challenges and limitations that we have to face every day.

The seminar came to conclusion with a lovely lunch in the sunshine. Executive President elect Maria Grazia Cassar thanked everyone for coming and distributed a promotional DVD of Our Lady of Victory church as a memento to each volunteer present. She particularly thanked the author and Carolyn Clements for organising the logistics and detail, and Rosanne Zerafa and the office for helping putting it all together.

The Executive Committee of Din l-Art Helwa is committed to assessing all the suggestions made and endeavouring to implement as many ideas as possible over the course of this Council’s tenure.
A Memorable Visit from
Professor Simon Molesworth AO, QC

Simone Mizzi
Vice President of Din l-Art Ħelwa

One of the major highlights on Din l-Art Ħelwa’s 50th Anniversary calendar was undoubtedly the visit to Malta by Professor Simon Molesworth AO., QC., organised as part of this important year’s educational outreach programme. Immediate outgoing President of the International National Trusts Organisation and its Founder President in 2007, Simon is truly one of the world’s greatest champions of heritage and a legal environmental luminary. An Australian, he has been a Queen’s Counsel for 20 years, specialising as a barrister in environmental, planning, heritage, natural resource and climate-change law.

For the five days between 13 and 18 September, we were fortunate enough to share his long experience defending heritage and the environment, and now feel particularly enriched by his inspiration and example. He was accompanied on his visit by his wife, Lindy, herself a keen horticulturalist and environmental geologist consultant, and his daughter Anika, who was recently voted ‘2015 Young Australian Farmer of the Year’.

Simon’s few days in Malta were packed with activity and, apart from a brief escape for a quick swim in the beautiful Kalanka Creek at Delimara, he was kept busy meeting those involved with the management of heritage and the environment, while also visiting Malta’s most important heritage and ecological sites.

On Monday, the day after his arrival, Simon paid a courtesy visit to Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Minister Leo Brincat. Accompanied by DLĦ Executive President Maria Grazia Cassar, Secretary-General Philip Mercieca and I, he had a most useful exchange of views with Mr Brincat about the current international scenario that will influence the imminent climate change talks and Malta’s own position on the global scene. In fact, soon after this visit, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced that he would be addressing the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta on the subject of climate change and Prime Minister Joseph Muscat announced that this would be one of the main topics of the meeting.

On Monday afternoon, after visiting the Malta Experience for a quick but complete immersion into 7,000 years of history with Maria Grazia and Albert Mamo, the Molesworth family showed considerable interest in the unique horticultural legacy that is so beautifully nurtured at the historical Botanical Gardens at Argotti in Floriana. Simon was welcomed to the Garden by its director, Dr Joseph Buhagiar. HE the High Commissioner for Australia, Ms Jane Lambert, was also present.

A field day was organised for the following day, Tuesday 15, so that Simon could learn as much as possible about the island, its urban and natural spaces, and the challenges it faces, before giving his high-level presentation at the University of Malta Valletta Campus. I was particularly...
fortunate to accompany Simon, Lindy and Anika through the old villages of Żebbuġ and Siggiewi, drive them along the scenic route through winding country lanes and the picturesque beaches of Ġnejna and Ghajn Tuffieha up to the Red Tower, where Din l-Art Ħelwa volunteers were waiting to show them around. They were particularly impressed by the magnificent view of Comino’s Santa Marija tower over the straits to Gozo and we promised them we would take them to Gozo on their next visit.

At 1pm of the same day, Prof. Anthony Bonanno and Ann Gingell Littlejohn took over the guide’s baton and met us at the Neolithic temples at Ħaġar qim. It was very fortunate that the Molesworth family could visit the oldest free standing structures in the world with Tony and Ann, and they were particularly grateful for the quality personal interpretation from our two specialised members of Council. All bravely ignored the almost 40 degrees heat outside, and all wore hats. But more about hats later….

Wednesday was a great day in terms of communication of the values of heritage, both built and natural and their huge significance to the world and its future generations. The main highlight of Simon’s programme was the keynote address he was to give at the Valletta University Campus to a high level audience formed of heritage and environment managers, environment NGOs, conservation architects and development planners. He was introduced to the audience by former DLĦ Executive President Martin Scicluna, who had played an important role in establishing the structure of INTO with Professor Molesworth during its early days. He was followed by Professor Simone Borg, Head of the Department of Environment and Resources Law at the UOM and current ambassador for Malta on Climate Change. Professor Borg traced the history of environmental law and spoke of the part Malta had played in the early thinking on Climate Change before Simon began his presentation entitled: Yesterday’s inheritance and today’s responsibility firmly focused on tomorrow’s benefit

Simon’s talk focused on heritage and environmental management and balanced land-use planning, two fundamental pillars underpinning a community’s wellbeing and future, particularly in a densely populated area such as Malta. In particular, he dwelt with the possible loss to communities of their individual cultural identities brought about by climate change. His notion of ‘inter-generational equality’, ie the right of tomorrow’s people to enjoy the same rights to both our built and natural heritage as we ourselves enjoy today, drove home the responsibility of us all involved in planning and conservation to protect the patrimony inherited from those who preceded us.

The discussion continued on Wednesday afternoon at a round table debate DLĦ had organised with the support of the Chamber of Commerce between environmentalists and business developers entitled: Business Development and the Environment: Compatible Bedfellows?, a thought-provoking debate that set the stage for future discussions. It was hosted most beautifully by the Chamber of Commerce at their elegant headquarters in The Exchange Buildings in Republic Street, Valletta.

Talking pro development were architect Ivan Cachia, Malta Developers Association head Sandro Chetcuti and Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association president Tony...
Thursday, 17 September was another day spent visiting major sites – this time starting in Valletta. It began in the early morning, all the stakeholders declaring their good intentions to meet again and continue the discussion with a wider audience!

There is a need for a strategic vision for Malta in terms of balancing today’s development needs with environmental protection, with Europe, former Ambassador of Malta to the EU and current board member of the Malta Business Bureau. The debate made it very clear that there is a need for a strategic vision for Malta in terms of balancing today’s development needs with environmental protection, with all the stakeholders declaring their good intentions to meet again and continue the discussion with a wider audience!

We then continued with memorable visits to St John’s co-Cathedral and its two paintings by Caravaggio, and then to the Hypogeum where we were fortunate enough to obtain tickets. Both Cynthia de Giorgio, CEO of the St John’s Foundation, and Sharon Sultana, Senior Curator, National Museum of Archaeology, Heritage Malta, were instrumental in allowing us excellent guides and facilities, for which we are most grateful. These three sacred burial grounds each vary as much in character as they do in date, yet each fix their social and artistic significance firmly in our joint collective memory. We also stopped at Our Lady of Victory Church in Valletta, held in guardianship by DLĦ, and showed Simon the restoration work we have been carrying out over the last few years. Fortunately, the magnificent Alessio Erardi ceiling was already in full view and could be admired by everyone. The Molesworths were most impressed by the magnitude of the project for a voluntary national trust such as Din l-Art Ħelwa.

On Thursday evening, together with many other NGOs and Din l-Art Helwa members, we were truly privileged to hear Simon talk about his personal experiences in the field of heritage and nature protection. Gathered together at our headquarters in Melita Street, Valletta, Simon spoke to us about his very first activity when, at the age of 17, he was involved in protecting a row of ancient eucalyptus trees from being chopped down in his home town. By teaming up with his neighbours and friends he discovered the meaning of joint voluntary defensive action and succeeded in preventing this desecration.

Asked how climate change impacted personally on his community, Simon simply said, donning his Australian outback hat:

“...well, in the past we did not have to slip on a shirt, slop on some cream and slap on a hat. Now we wouldn’t dream of going out without doing so and, similarly, neither do we allow our children to go to school without the same preventive measures. Gone are the days when one ran unprotected on beaches and trekked along nature’s trails in total freedom, and the same is also true here in Malta.”

Describing those measures, he said, was taking the significance of climate change to a most personal and simplified level. He pointed out the potential impact on business and employment – when summer temperatures just a few degrees higher could reduce our inflow of tourists, causing considerable loss of business. He also pointed out that our heritage sites would need more protection against extremes of climate, and our fauna and flora would also suffer.

Friday was the last day of Simon’s visit. Accompanied by DLĦ Executive President Maria Grazia Cassar, the Molesworths paid a courtesy visit to HE the President of Malta, Dr Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, Patron of DLĦ, who graciously started her day as early as 8.15 am in order to meet them at the beautiful Palace of San Anton. This was a wonderful way of bringing Simon’s visit to a meaningful conclusion as discussions inevitably focussed on the responsibility of today’s generation to protect the world, nature and the environment for the generations that follow, a belief that the President shares with Din l-Art Helwa and is so keen to promote.

During his meeting with NGOs, Professor Molesworth was given a personalised signed copy of the Heritage Saved 50th Anniversary publication by Council Member Stanley Farrugia Randon, and was made an Honorary Life Member of the organisation. The tightly packed programme was coordinated by the DLĦ 50th Anniversary team led by Albert Mamo, who kept us all in check, organised all the logistics and ensured all timings were adhered to.

The Molesworths left taking with them precious memories of Malta and knowing that they had made a whole new bunch of friends at DLĦ, Malta’s National Trust. We in turn know that in Melbourne, and in a lovely place called Broken Hill, we have a wonderful group of friends with whom we share the same love of – and commitment to – cultural heritage and the natural environment.

Stanley Farrugia Randon presents a copy of Heritage Saved to Professor Simon Molesworth
Professor Simon Molesworth and the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO)

This is directed to those of our members who did not have the fortune to meet up with Professor Molesworth during his visit to Malta between the 13th and 18th September.

Professor Simon Molesworth, an Australian, has been a Queen’s Counsel for 20 years, specialising as a barrister in environmental planning, heritage, natural resources and climate change legislation. He has been a Professorial Fellow with Monash University since 2013 and, prior to that, was a Professor with La Trobe University’s Institute of Social & Environmental Sustainability. He is a Certified Environmental Practitioner and a fellow of five professional institutes covering diverse disciplines including law, environmental management and planning.

He is the author of The Victoria Declaration on the Implications for Cultural Sustainability of Climate Change and regularly speaks at international and national fora on topics such as climate change, sustainability, renewable energy, environmental policy and law and heritage. In 1985, Prof. Molesworth became a founder of the then Environment Institute of Australia, an inter-disciplinary professional institute of practitioners whose core discipline is environmental management, becoming its public officer upon incorporation and remaining in that office for 15 years. Overseeing its expansion into New Zealand, he was EIANZ president for 10 years.

In 1978, in his home state of Victoria, the professor founded the first environmental law organisation in Australia and subsequently, in 1983, a founder and inaugural president of the National Environmental Law Association of Australia (NELA). In 1990, he founded and for eight years served as the inaugural chairman of the Environment Defenders Office, a specialist environmental public interest legal centre in Victoria, which led to similar environmental legal centres being established in all the states and territories of Australia.

Prof. Molesworth has now provided leadership to the National Trust movement for 37 years. In the heritage field, he was chairman and then president for almost 20 years of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria); for five years chairman of the Australian Council of National Trusts; a commissioner on the Australian government’s Australian Heritage Commission for five years and, for 14 years, a member of the Australian government’s National Cultural Heritage Committee, responsible for the coming into force of the Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act.

He has been the Executive Chairman and President of the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) since its foundation and has now been succeeded by Dame Fiona Reynolds, former Director-General of the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. INTO brings together National Trusts and similar non-governmental organisations that are globally diverse but united in a shared commitment to work through cooperation, coordination and comradeship. It endeavours to develop and promote best conservation practices, increase the capacity of individual organisations, establish Trusts where they do not exist and advocate in the interests of heritage conservation.

INTO campaigns for global action to protect and promote tangible and intangible heritage, especially within the least economically-developed nations. It works to raise awareness of the threats to heritage brought about by climate change especially through the displacement of communities and from the negative impact of alteration in environments brought about by natural causes. It also promotes responsible and sustainable tourism, an industry that thrives on the good conservation of both the built and natural heritage around the world.

Din l-Art Ħelwa was a founder member of INTO and Nature Trust Malta is an associate member. Martin Scicluna, former Executive President of Din l-Art Ħelwa, contributed to INTO’s foundation and structure as a member of its Board. Former DLĦ President Simone Mizzi now sits on its board.

Prof. Molesworth is the recipient of many awards, including the Australian Environmental Law Award for being a person who has “made an outstanding contribution to the development and understanding of environmental law in Australia”. In 1994 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia, primarily for his services to the National Trusts in Australia. In 2012 he was elevated to an Officer of the Order of Australia for “distinguished service to conservation and the environment, to heritage preservation at national and international levels, to the professions and natural resource sectors”.

Martin Scicluna, former Executive President of Din l-Art Ħelwa, contributed to INTO’s foundation and structure as a member of its Board. Former DLĦ President Simone Mizzi now sits on its board.
Heritage Saved Map
Restored Works of Art in Our Lady of Victory Church

Simone Mizzi
Vice President of Din l-Art Helwa

Portrait of Pope Innocent XII

One of the first items to be restored by Din l-Art Helwa after it was awarded guardianship of the Church of Our Lady of Victory in 2011 was this important 18th century painting of Antonio Pignatelli, Pope Innocent XII, who had been the Grand Inquisitor in Malta between 1646 and 1649 before becoming pope. The painting was found to be in very poor condition, exposed on a high wall in the entrance corridor of the sacristy. It now hangs in the room in the Sacristy Museum dedicated to the period of the Order of St John, its restoration having been made possible by PwC Malta.

Pinto vestments

A set of magnificent vestments bearing the coat of arms of Grand Master Pinto de Fonseca (1741-1773) were restored in 2013 with the support of PwC Malta and the showcases within which they are displayed were built with funds from the Vodafone Malta Foundation and the ERDF Malta Tourism Grant.

Volunteers Neville Cassar and Jonathan Grech assist DLĦ handyman John Gafà to finish the showcase built to house the set of vestments.
Painting of St Anthony the Abbot, Protector of Animals

This charming, naive votive painting of St Anthony Abbot dates to the early 18th century and was restored this year, with the support of PwC Malta. It is to be displayed in the church museum, in a corner dedicated to St Anthony Abbot, the protector of animals. Seen here with his traditional iconography of fire, a bell and a piglet, St Anthony Abbot was born in Middle Egypt in AD 251 and was much revered by the Knights of St John, who held him in high esteem for his strength and power over the devil.

His feast day is celebrated on January 17 and Din l-Art Ħelwa hopes to reinstate the annual tradition of the blessing of the animals which would take place from the church on this day each year. This saint has a particular connection with the Church of Our Lady of Victory, as this was dedicated to St Anthony Abbot when the Church was made Parish of the Order on 16 July 1617.

The inscription V.F.G.A. on the lower left-hand side of the painting is the acronym for ‘Votum Fecit, Gratiam Accepit’: ‘I made a vow and received a grace’. This means that the painting was executed in thanksgiving after a blessing from the Saint had been received.

The painting of the Holy Virgin and Child, bearing the Guttenberg coat of arms

This painting was found at the foot of the titular painting of St Philip Neri, on the first altar on the right-hand side and is currently displayed in a showcase in the church.

It is a copy of an original painting by Carlo Maratta (1625-1713) which is in the Pinacoteca Vaticana (the art gallery of the Vatican Museums). An interesting feature of the painting that hangs in Our Lady of Victory Church is the coat of arms of Fra Wolfgang Philippus von Guttenberg (1647-1733), depicted below the image of the Virgin and Child. In all probability this means that von Guttenberg was the donor of the painting and that it dates from the late 17th century and early 18th century. Fra Wolfgang Philippus von Guttenberg was Bailiff of Brandenburg and a notable dignitary of the Order of St John who lived in Malta for 63 years and contributed to several landmarks in Malta. In fact, a small mezzo busto portrait of this great benefactor of the Order still hangs in the sacristy of the church, over its dedicatory plaque. The Holy Virgin and Child painting was restored in 2013 with the support of PwC Malta.
The painting of Our Lady of Good Counsel

Commissioned by Giovanni Ignazio Fenech, a chaplain of the Order of St John, this painting was executed by Antoine Favray (1706-1798) in 1759. Originally venerated in the Grand Hospital of the Order, the painting was transferred to Rome by Giovanni Fenech, who petitioned Pope Clement XIII to enhance it with plenary indulgences after which it was returned to the hospital in Malta in 1767. The great devotional fervour aroused by the painting caused much disturbance to the hospital’s patients, as a result of which – by magisterial decree – it was permanently transferred to the Church of Our Lady of Victory – the parish church of the Order – on 27 April 1770. To confirm its authenticity, 11 wax seals were placed on its strainer that are still present, amongst them the seals of Grand Master Emanuel Pinto de Fonseca and Prior Fra Bartolomeo Rull.

The painting was restored in 2014 by Amy Sciberras, restorer and former curator of Our Lady of Victory Church.

Painting of The Good Shepherd – Il Buon Pastore

This charming painting of the Good Shepherd, signed ‘AF 1864’, is by the Maltese purist artist Antonio Falzon (1805-1865). It is one of the latest artefacts to have been restored by Din l-Art Ħelwa – again with the support of PwC Malta. Antonio Falzon studied in both Malta, under Giuseppe Hyzler (1793-1858) and in Rome under Tommaso Minardi (1787-1871) and his artistic output is quite esteemed.

It was following the foundation of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd by the Reverend Gavino Mamo in 1859 that the painting was commissioned. The mission of this congregation was that of teaching catechism to young children. Four churches in Valletta were dedicated to this mission and Victory Church was used for the instruction of under-privileged boys. The Ordine del Buon Pastore, as the congregation was known, left a multitude of items at Victory Church all of which are identified by the initials OBP, or Opera del Buon Pastore.

As evidenced by 20th century photographs discovered in the church annexe, the painting of the Good Shepherd, now on display in the sacristy used to be hung over the main altar during ceremonies and feast days, highly decorated and festooned. Din l-Art Ħelwa hopes to dedicate a room in the Church annexe museum to the Opera del Buon Pastore and to the period between 1859 and 1920 when the teaching of Christian doctrine to children took place in the church.
Terracotta statue of the Infant Jesus

This delightful, mid-19th century terracotta Infant Jesus – *Il-Bambin* – was restored in 2014 with funds received from the ERDF Malta Tourism Authority Grant for restored visitors’ venues. It was found in the Sacristy cupboards of Victory Church, broken in several places. Its elaborate fine silk dress has also been restored, as has its *ganutill* base – which is not shown in the photograph.

The statue depicts the Child Jesus aged about 18 months, with his arm raised in blessing. It is thought that such statuettes of *Il-Bambin* were displayed at Easter time as a visual image of rebirth and resurrection.

Icon of Our Lady of Victory

One of the most important artifacts in Our Lady of Victory Church has to be the icon of the same name. It is composed of 18 elements in four different materials: the stars, a crown (including some imitation stones), a necklace and the *riza*, all of which are in silver; the portrait of The Virgin Mary on a copper sheet, the brocaded fabric background and the wooden case. All these elements required specific work, which was carried out using a wide range of techniques.

The restoration was entrusted to Prevarti Co. Ltd under the direction of Pierre Bugeja and was made possible through the generosity of PwC Malta. The new silk damask was kindly donated by Messrs. Camilleri Paris Mode.
Painting of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

An oval painting of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is a modest copy of the work of Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787) in the Church of the Gesù in Rome, was restored by Amy Sciberras, former curator of Our Lady of Victory Church.

The painting is neither signed nor dated, but a detailed examination of the painting technique – carried out both before and during the conservation work – revealed that the painting probably dates from the late 18th century. The restoration was made possible through the generous sponsorship of PwC Malta.

Main altar

Although at first it seemed that the altar required little more than a superficial cleaning, a detailed inspection revealed that there were more deeply-rooted problems. The altar was washed with a conservation-grade detergent, followed by more specific cleaning to remove any stains or thick deposits. Various missing pieces of marble were replaced with similar pieces cut to shape to obtain a uniform surface.

Hidden gaps in the structure of the altar, discovered through light tapping on the marble, were filled by injecting them with a conservation-grade liquid adhesive and the same material was used to seal cracks and loosened pieces. Open mortar joints were filled with a conservation-grade mortar and, finally, protective coatings were applied. Two corbels, which at some point had been removed from the altar and relocated on the wall close to the sacristy entrance for use as a shelf, were reinstated in their original position.

The restoration was entrusted to Heritage Resco and was generously sponsored by the Alfred Mizzi Foundation.

Silver gilt wooden statues of the apostles

A set of six 19th century silver gilt wooden statues of the apostles was used on the high altar during special celebrations in Our Lady of Victory Church. These are being restored by Silvia Orsi of the firm Giuseppe Mantella Restauri.

They will eventually be displayed in the new Treasures of the Sacristy Museum which is being set up with funds obtained through the ERDF Grant for Sustainable Tourism and from various sponsors. The restoration of these artworks is being made possible by PwC Malta’s sponsorship.
Restoration of Perimeter Walls and Altars at Our Lady of Victory Church

Simone Mizzi
Vice President of Din l-Art Helwa

*Din l-Art Helwa* is glad to announce that two-thirds of the perimeter walls at Our Lady of Victory Church and three of its five altars are now restored. Our thanks go to our sponsors, the Alfred Mizzi Foundation and PwC Malta, for making this work possible. Without their generosity and belief in our mission this delicate and assiduous work would not have been completed.

Fabulous gilding is revealed on the festoons and elaborate carvings that form the stone moulding around the Our Lady of Victory silver icon and the mannerist painting of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, said to be the original titular painting of the church. This restoration work was completed in 2015 and was made possible with the support of PwC Malta.

Detail from the altar dedicated to St John of God

*In 2015 Din l-Art Helwa completed the delicate restoration of the St John of God altar and that of St Philip Neri and their elaborate carved niches, with the support of the Alfred Mizzi Foundation.*
Alessio Erardi's Ceiling at Our Lady of Victory Church Revealed

After 25 years hidden by a temporary wooden floor, Alessio Erardi’s painted ceiling (which dates back to 1716-1718) in the Church of Our Lady of Victory in Valletta has finally been revealed in all its glory. The conservation was carried out by Lisa Shekede and Stephen Rickerby, senior conservators from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London.

The delicate operation to remove the intermediary floor was carried out between 27 and 30 July. The floor was a temporary structure, built in 1996 to allow conservation work on the ceiling by conservators from the Courtauld Institute of Art. The dismantling work was carried out by Karmnu, Vince and David, provided by the Valletta Rehabilitation Project office, under the supervision of Valletta World Heritage Site manager, architect Mireille Fsadni, and with the coordination of Din l-Art Ħelwa council member Josie Ellul Mercer and the church custodian and visitors’ manager Mario Sciberras. Each plank and iron beam was taken down with extreme care to avoid any chance of damaging the ceiling or the carved stonework below and the work was completed in time for the 450th anniversary celebrations of the Great Siege on 8 September.

The conservation treatment was commissioned by the VRP to the Courtauld Institute conservators, who carried out initial studies in 2004 and was continued by DLĦ when it was entrusted with the guardianship of Victory Church in 2011. This crucial part of the whole restoration project was made possible with the generous support of the HSBC Malta Foundation. The Alessio Erardi ceiling had suffered from neglect, pollution and water infiltration and the paintings were almost lost. Thanks to the hard work and support of so many, it can now be enjoyed after having been hidden for almost 20 years. DLĦ hopes to complete the illumination of the ceiling before the end of the year.
Wignacourt Tower Restoration

Stanley Farrugia Randon

Council Member of Din l-Art Helwa

It all started when the then Tourism, Environment and Culture Minister, Dr Mario de Marco visited Wignacourt Tower (also known as St Paul’s Tower) on 9 February 2012 before inaugurating the new embellishments to St Paul’s Bay. The then Din l-Art Helwa Executive President Simone Mizzi and I were invited to the inauguration and, in his speech, Dr de Marco expressed the hope that the tower could be restored. From then onwards, the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), in collaboration with DLĦ, began the process to obtain the support of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funds for Sustainable Tourism.

The restoration project involved a number of preliminary studies and documentation before an application for funding could be made. We are grateful to architect Kevin Fsadni (Project Development Director) and Francelle Azzopardi (Project Executive for the MTA) for their encouragement. Preliminary studies and the tendering process itself took some time, after which AX Holdings were entrusted with the restoration project. We are grateful to them, in particular their conservator consultant Fabio Billi, for carrying out such a thorough and professional restoration for which Amanda De Giovanni was the Project Architect.

Restoration work started in October 2014 and the MTA appointed architect Simon Darmanin as Project Manager. The old pointing was removed and redone using hydraulic lime-based material. Due to an advanced state of deterioration, a number of stones had to be changed; the façade of the tower, which gets the most sunlight and pollution from the road, was most in need of attention.

The stones that supported the wooden bridge before the staircase was removed in the early 1960s had to be changed and a gallery-like platform created. While cleaning the stones above the main door of the upper floor, the original metal pulleys that were used to raise the wooden bridge were discovered.

The external doors and windows, which were in urgent need of restoration, were stripped off their numerous successive layers of paint and given a new undercoat and paint layer. It was interesting to be able to see the original 405-year-old door on the upper floor of the tower after the paint was removed to reveal that it was made of red deal.

Some of the flagstones on the roof needed changing as they had deteriorated badly and were causing pools of water to accumulate on the roof after it rained. The parapet wall also required extensive pointing and the changing of some stones.

Before the unveiling day, the tower had to be cleaned and a great deal of painting work was required. We are grateful to staff from the Eden Leisure Group for helping us with this.

The restoration work was unveiled on 6 April of this year by Tourism Minister Dr Edward Zammit Lewis but this did not mean that the tower was ready to receive visitors and Martin Vella and I began working on a number of ancillary jobs. These included the opening of the well shaft and installation of a laminated glass cover to make it safe for visitors who can now look down the bell-shaped well; the installation of an information board and four benches on the roof; the sandblasting of the cannon, which dates to the time of the Knights, and the construction of a new carriage for it in iroko wood; the provision of a protective metal grid for the and a parapet railing to comply with insurance policies. This work was financed by the MTA.

Martin Vella, who for the past few years has been an enthusiastic volunteer, together with his wife Josette, took over as warden of the Tower from this summer. I have served as warden for the past 16 years but I now need to concentrate my efforts on other properties that are being restored.

The external walls of the tower were restored by Din l-Art Helwa 40 years ago and so this restoration was urgently needed. It is very appropriate that it all happened during our 50th anniversary year and we are very grateful to the Malta Tourism Authority for making this possible.
In July 2012, Din l-Art Helwa advised the government of its intention to apply for guardianship of Wied iż-Żurrieq Tower in Qrendi, a heritage site that had been totally abandoned for the previous 10 years and, as a result, was in urgent need of restoration. The tower is known as Ta’ Xutu and the British called it ‘Sciuto Tower’. Ascuito is a Sicilian surname that is also found in Malta and could be derived from ‘sciutu’ meaning ‘uscita’ – a way out, exit.

Over the following three months, the documentation required to support the application was prepared, including a business case study, historical notes, a report on the condition of the site and photographic surveys, a preliminary method statement for restoration and the Din l-Art Helwa statute.

The application was accepted the following year and DLĦ was given guardianship of the tower. Without wasting any time, we commissioned an architect to prepare a condition survey and method statement to apply to Mepa for its restoration. A generous sponsorship from the Malta Airport Foundation gave us the courage and determination to start work. A Mepa permit was issued at the end of September 2014 and it was decided to wait for spring before erecting scaffolding around the tower and to concentrate immediately on the roof, in anticipation of bad weather. This decision proved to be the right one as we had a windy and rainy winter.

The pointing of the parapet and roof flagstones, as well as the replacement of some badly deteriorated stones, successfully prevented further rain damage to the tower. The roof of the small British-period room behind the tower was also restored and some stones were changed.

The lower half of the tower had been plastered in cement that was not allowing the stone to breathe. As this part of the stonework was accessible without the need for scaffolding, its cement layer was removed manually and the pointing cleaned away. This cleaning...
process led to the fortuitous discovery of a badge – in globigerina limestone – of the King’s Own Malta Regiment (KOMR). A similar badge, also in stone, can be seen on the terrace of the Main Guard in Valletta, which was executed by Frank Cassar Torregiani in 1932. He was later the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion KOMR after WWII. A painted badge can also be seen on the wall of the Main Guard. We are grateful to Adrian Strickland for confirming this.

Cleaning of the interior of the tower started in March of this year. Most of the interior walls were covered over with a thin layer of cement which was falling off in most places. It was removed manually and pointing of the stones was carried out. This process uncovered some graffiti. The small room behind the tower, which had been constructed by the British for use as a kitchen, was also cleaned. The cement plastering on the walls was also removed – to reveal the stone cooking range, *fuklar* in Maltese.

Providing access to the upper floor, currently only reached by a wooden ladder, will prove to be a hard challenge. A designer and architect has been engaged to come up with some solutions to make access to visitors easier and safer. The layers of rust on the roof cannon since the time of the Knights were removed and the cannon was subsequently painted. The missing carriage will be replaced using original sketches from old documents. Scaffolding to enable work on the external walls was erected in September and the pointing should be completed by the end of the year. The missing doors and windows will be replaced.

The tower lies within a Natura 2000 site, part of which – in the late 1970s and early 1980s, was used for clay-pigeon shooting in the late 70s and early 80s. The site is now designated as a Special Area of Conservation.

After its restoration, Din l-Art Ħelwa hopes to turn it into a visitor information centre, focusing on the history of the tower itself, the heritage trail that includes the nearby Neolithic temples of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra, the immense biodiversity of its cliff-top flora and fauna and its marine life, and the spectacular geological features of the location.
To mark the 400th anniversary of the birth of Mattia Preti in 1613, Din l-Art Helwa took it upon itself to restore the paintings by this great artist that adorn Sarria Church in Floriana. The work is being carried out by Giuseppe Mantella Restauri, who have studied Preti’s works extensively, having worked on the restoration of many of his paintings in Malta and in Italy.

The church is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. It was built in Floriana as a sign of devotion to the Virgin and the saints who were called upon to intercede to stop the plague which had spread across the island in 1675, and had claimed thousands of victims.

Mattia Preti was commissioned with the design of the church and its decoration, and it is the only known architectural project by the artist. The 17th-century building was erected on the site of another church, also dedicated to the Virgin, a little chapel built outside the walls of the city in the second half of the 16th century by the Knight Fra’ Martin Sarria, whose name it still bears. Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner (1663-1680) completely rebuilt and enlarged the church in 1676. Preti designed it on a centralised plan, creating a large circular space articulated with pairs of pilasters and surmounted by a large hemispherical dome.

The internal decoration consists of a series of paintings that were executed by Preti between 1677 and 1679. They were inspired by what he had painted in Naples 20 years earlier when,
during the outbreak of the plague in that city in 1656, he was asked to paint the Immaculate Conception and the plague saints on the seven gates of the city.

Above the main altar is the monumental altarpiece of *The Immaculate Conception in Glory*, flanked by two angels who are sheathing their swords, signifying the end of the epidemic, which is well-represented in the lower part of the painting. This painting was in a perilous state and its restoration was sponsored by Shireburn Software Ltd.

The restoration of *St Roque* was sponsored by Mr David Curmi and MSV Life plc. The saint is represented with the pilgrim’s staff and cape and showing the plague wound on his leg, obtained by his unceasing assistance to the sick. The restoration of *St Sebastian*, whose arrow-pierced body resembles that of a plague sufferer, was sponsored by Malta International Airport plc, and the restoration was carried out in the departure lounge of Malta International Airport.

The restoration of *St Rosalia*, who was particularly venerated in Naples and Sicily and was called upon to fight the pestilence, is being sponsored by the Malta Rotary Clubs and District Clubs of Palermo.

*St Nicholas of Bari* was associated with the saving of dying children, but is also the namesake of the Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner who commissioned the new church. This painting is still awaiting a sponsor, as are the two large lunettes representing the victory of good over evil: *St Michael overcoming the Devil* and the *Allegory of the Order of St John*, with the Baptist blessing the symbolic personification of the Military Order, ready to unsheathe her sword and embark on a sea voyage on one of the galleys in defence of the Faith.

Once the plague had passed, a solemn procession was instituted as a sign of gratitude on 8 December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, starting from the Co-Cathedral of St John in Valletta and ending up at Sarria Church, with the icon of Our Lady carried in procession. This tradition survived up until a few years ago.
Delimara Lighthouse: History, Restoration and now Delightful Holiday Accommodation

Simone Mizzi

Vice President of Din l-Art Ħelwa

A short 15-minute drive from Malta International Airport towards Delimara Point, the extreme southern tip of the Maltese archipelago, is a landmark building that is an important testimony of Malta’s maritime industrial history: Delimara Lighthouse. The road to the lighthouse skirts the picturesque fishing village of Marsaxlokk and the many beautiful swimming bays and creeks that adorn the southern coast of the island can be found along the way.

Delimara Lighthouse was built between 1852 and 1854 during the British period and is the last remaining free-standing lighthouse on Malta, the only other one in the country being the Ta’ Giordan lighthouse on Gozo. It was commissioned by Governor Richard More O’Ferrall in 1850. He was governor of Malta between 1847 and 1851 and is remembered for having granted a partly-elected Council of Government in 1849. He also encouraged trade and helped the mercantile community to form the Chamber of Commerce.

It is thought that the name ‘Delimara’ could be attributed to a corruption of the Arabic term dejr l-imnara, meaning ‘the house of the lantern’. The lighthouse stands at a height of 24 metres, dominating the cliff over Marsaxlokk Bay, and was an important reference for ships coming from the Barbary Coast and Egypt. With the construction of the Suez Canal, which stimulated maritime traffic between Asia and Europe, increased numbers of naval vessels had to be guided safely to Valletta’s harbours.

The signalling system for each lighthouse was designed so that it could be recognised by its own individual series of flashes. Those of Delimara were alternate red and white with a radius of visibility that spread out up to 15 nautical miles. Erected for the security of Her Majesty’s navy and commercial shipping, both lighthouses, together with other beacons along the coast of the Maltese Islands, bolstered the commercial treaties that Britain had established with France and China in 1860, Belgium in 1862 and Italy in 1863.

The lighthouse was decommissioned in 1985, its role superseded by the new AFM tower built nearby. It was entrusted to Din l-Art Ħelwa by its owner, the Malta Maritime Authority (MMA), today Transport Malta. To commemorate its 50th anniversary, Din l-Art Ħelwa took the initiative to restore this landmark monument with the financial support of the MMA and GasanMamo Insurance Co. Ltd – a project that has now been completed.

The restoration was planned by Din l-Art Ħelwa in three phases, with the final aim of offering visitor accommodation in a historic site. First of all, the masonry was secured together with apertures and external paintwork, which was followed by the refurbishment of the interiors. The third phase was the most complex: the restoration of the Fresnel lens, the beacon mechanism and its intricate system of hand-cut concentric glass prisms that is unique to the lighthouse and the only one of its type in Malta. The lantern’s neoclassic, solid bronze pedestal holding the copper fuel tank was also restored. The lack of services to the area was a constant challenge, while the lighthouse’s inaccessibility – and inclement weather – often held up work.

The lighthouse provided accommodation for the lighthouse-keeper and had space for two families. Today, it is divided into two apartments that can accommodate up to ten people, either separately or together. These are available for rent to the discerning visitor.
wishing to have a total escape holiday. All proceeds from rentals will go towards the upkeep of the 17 heritage sites held in trust by Din l-Art Ħelwa.

The simplicity of the keeper’s apartments has been retained, with special touches, such as the hanging mosquito nets over each bed, the original stone elements in the kitchen and the colourful lime wash colour-scheme originally used. The views from every room, including the toilets and bathrooms, are spectacular, and one feels in touch with nature looking at the sea and the lighthouse’s wonderful surroundings.

The commercial port – far across the bay – provides viewers with a different distraction: watching the incoming and outgoing mercantile traffic. The proximity of St Peter’s Pool, the beautiful Kalanka Creek with its turquoise water only three minutes away, and other “out of the way” swimming places, is an added bonus to holiday makers, as are the lovely walking trails and the Xrobb L-Għaġin Nature Park. It is a place to go to and relax, leaving everything behind and yet being close enough to the vibrant restaurants and atmosphere of Marsaxlokk.

Din l-Art Ħelwa hopes that the restoration of Delimara Lighthouse will lead to the formation of a heritage coastal trail and the regeneration of the whole Delimara promontory which is important for the many remains of wartime defence systems and for its largely unspoilt rural and coastal landscape.

Heritage Accommodation Information

The two lighthouse-keeper apartments have different layouts and can be rented individually or together. Each apartment sleeps five.

Apartment A is the smaller of the two, consisting of a spacious entrance/sitting and dining area combined with a sofa bed that sleeps two, a kitchen and a guest toilet. There is a traditional internal Maltese stone staircase leading to the first floor which comprises a bedroom with three single beds and a bathroom and shower combined.

Apartment B is larger, with its ground floor consisting of a spacious entrance/sitting room with a sofa bed that sleeps two, a large kitchen/dining area combined and one single bedroom, shower and toilet.

A traditional stone staircase leads to the first floor, which consists of one twin bedroom, a bathroom and dressing room.

For further information regarding bookings and tariffs, please email info@dinlarthelwa.org
Ten Years of *Din l-Art Helwa*

Awards for Architectural Heritage

Maria Grazia Cassar

Executive President of Din l-Art Helwa

The *Din l-Art Helwa* Award for Architectural Heritage was initiated in 2005 by former Executive President Martin Scicluna, together with the Chamber of Architects who, each year, nominates one of its members to be on the panel of judges. The competition takes place in the last quarter of the year, when submissions are scrutinised and judged according to their category. These are: Category A – Major Regeneration Project – projects that have had a significant impact on improving the quality of the urban environment. It is intended for medium to large-scale projects that have influenced the urban fabric of an old town or city in a positive way and have added tangible benefits to the local community. Category B – Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings – projects that have sought to rehabilitate historic buildings and also re-define their use. These are projects that emphasise the adaptation and re-utilisation of buildings to the needs of contemporary society, while respecting the history of the particular building or structure. Such projects go beyond a strict definition of restoration to the building's original form and use, and seek a positive synergy between the historic fabric and modern intervention. The last category is C – Restoration and Conservation Projects – projects that are intended to achieve comprehensive restoration and conservation as far as possible in conformity with the original physical state of the building and carried out in accordance with scientific restoration methodology.

The Silver Medal Award is presented to the project that distinguishes itself above the others in terms of excellence.

*Lombard Bank Annexe to Palazzo Spinola, Valletta - Silver Medal for all categories in the Award Scheme and also Prix d'Honneur in the category for the Conservation and Re-use of old buildings 2010*

*Valletta Waterfront - Silver Medal for Architectural Heritage 2005*

*Palazzo Falsom, Mdina - Silver Medal 2007*
The criteria for judging the *Din l-Art Helwa Award for Architectural Heritage* are based on the quality of the work executed, its historical, cultural, educational and social relevance, the preliminary research conducted and the aesthetic and visual merit of the project. The overriding consideration is the significance of the project in a Maltese context and its contribution to Malta’s cultural heritage.

Each year the suspense and expectation that builds up to the submission date is justified when the quality and variety of projects entered for this competition is seen. The judging is extremely interesting, but not without its difficulties, as it is understandably hard to sift through the equally worthy projects to single out those that will receive an award. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking past and present judges who have given their time and expertise towards maintaining the high standards of this competition.

To celebrate *Din l-Art Helwa*’s 50th anniversary, it is planned to hold a retrospective exhibition of all the major award-winners since 2005 up to this year’s edition. This will no doubt prove to be very interesting, serving not only as a record of the Awards themselves, but also of the achievements in the field of restoration, conservation and regeneration witnessed in Malta over the past 10 years.
WINNERS OF DLĦ ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AWARDS 2005-2015

2005

- Silver Medal – Valletta Waterfront, Pinto Wharf (David Drago, Architecture Project)
- Diploma – Casa Perellos, Żejtun (Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Architecture Project)

2006

- Silver Medal – Old Treasury Building, Cottonera Waterfront (Edwin Mintoff, AOM Architects)
- Diploma – Sta Lucija church, Mtarfa; St James church, Luqa; St Roque church, Mdina (Norbert Gatt & Hermann Bonnici, Works Division, Ministry of Resources and Infrastructure)
- Diploma – Casa Buonamici, Valletta (Dr Antoine Cachia)

2007

- Silver Medal – Palazzo Falsom, Mdina (Maurice de Giorgio)
- Diploma – 2-22 Restaurant, Valletta (Chris Briffa)
- Diploma – Sarria church, Floriana (Hermann Bonnici, Restoration Unit)
- Letter of Commendation – Chapels of St Basil & St Michael, Mqabba (Amanda de Giovanni, Restoration Unit)

2008

- Silver Medal – Conservation and restoration of the old Siġġiewi parish church (Norbert Gatt, Restoration Unit)
- Prix d’Honneur Conservation and Re-use – Villa Cagliares, Żejtun (Joanna Spiteri Staines, Architecture Project)

2009

- Silver Medal – Carmelite Priory, Mdina (Paul Muscat, Restoration & Conservation Co-op)
- Prix d’Honneur - Carmelite Priory, Mdina (Paul Muscat, Restoration & Conservation Co-op)
- Diploma Rehabilitation & Re-use – Dar Europa, Valletta (Martin Farrugia, MF Architecture)
- Diploma Restoration & Conservation – Villa Francia, Lija (Claude Borg)

2010

- Silver Medal – Lombard Bank Annexe, Palazzo Spinola, Valletta (Paul Camilleri & Associates)
- Prix d’Honneur Conservation & Re-use of Old Buildings – Lombard Bank Annexe, Palazzo Spinola, Valletta (Paul Camilleri & Associates)
- Special Diploma Conservation & Re-use of Old Buildings – P&O Verandah & Boathouse, Pieta (Karl Camilleri Burlō)
- Special Diploma Restoration and Conservation – Victoria Gate, Valletta (Claude Borg)

2011

- Diploma Rehabilitation & Re-use of a Building – Villa Aspinal, Tarxien (Aaron Abela)
- Diploma Rehabilitation & Re-use of a Building – Public Convenience, Strait Sr, Valletta (Chris Briffa)

2012

- Silver Medal – Fortifications Interpretation Centre, Valletta (Norbert Gatt obo The Restoration Directorate)
- Prix d’Honneur Category A Major Regeneration Project – Fortifications Interpretations Centre, Valletta (Norbert Gatt obo The Restoration Directorate)
- Prix d’Honneur Category B - Rehabilitation & Re-use of Old Buildings – Palazzo Vittoriosa (Gilbert Buttigieg)
- Diploma Category B - Rehabilitation & Re-use of Old Buildings – Vernacular building, Siġġiewi (Matthew James Mercieca)

2013

- Diploma Category B - Rehabilitation & Re-use of Old Buildings – Malta Enterprise Offices, Gwardamangia (Reuben Lautier & Mark Pace)
- Prix d’Honneur Category C - Restoration & Conservation – Santa Cecilia chapel, Gozo (Wirt Għawdex)
- Diploma Category C - Restoration & Conservation – Malta at War museum & underground shelters, Couvre Porte, Vittoriosa (Paul Camilleri)
- Diploma Category C - Restoration & Conservation – Villa Siġġiewi, Siġġiewi (VCFS Architects)

2014

- Silver Medal – Enhancement of Visitor Experience at the Ġgantija Heritage Park, Gozo (Design & Technical Resources DTR)
- Prix d’Honneur Category A – A Major Regeneration Project - Enhancement of Visitor Experience at the Ġgantija Heritage Park, Gozo (Design & Technical Resources DTR)
- Diploma Category A – A Major Regeneration Project - The Barrakka Lift, Valletta (Architecture Project)
- Prix d’Honneur Category B – Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings - Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation of Wignacourt Museum, Rabat (Wignacourt Museum)
- Diploma Category B – Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings - PBS Creativity Hub (David Xuereb o.b.o. QP Management)
- Diploma Category B – The Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings - Lombard Bank , Tower Road Sliema (Patrick Calleja)
- Prix d’Honneur Category C – Restoration and Conservation Project - The Nymphea & Gate at Villa Bologna (Architecture Project)
• Diploma Category C – Restoration and Conservation Project - Restoration of Three Farmhouses in Buskett (Jean Frendo o.b.o. The Restoration Directorate)

• Special Mention - Il-Gallarija Miftuħa (Chris Briffa)

2014

• Silver Medal – The Harbour Club (Chris Briffa Architects)

• Prix d’Honneur Category A – A Major Regeneration Project - The Harbour Club (Chris Briffa Architects)

• Diploma Category B – Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings - Dar Kenn għal Sahhtik (JB Architects for Malta Community Chest Fund)

• Prix d’Honneur Category B – Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings - Casa Ellul (Chris Briffa Architects)

• Diploma Category B – Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings – Ursulino Valletta (CVC Architecture Studio)

2015

• Silver Medal – Dock No. 1 Regeneration (Architecture Project)

• Prix d’Honneur Category A – A Major Regeneration Project – Dock No. 1 Regeneration (Architecture Project)

• Diploma Category A – St. Elmo Regeneration (DeMicoli & Associates)

• Prix d’Honneur Category B – Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings – Casa Ellul (Chris Briffa Architects)

• Diploma Category B – Rehabilitation and Re-use of Buildings – Ursulino Valletta (CVC Architecture Studio)

• Prix d’Honneur Category C – A Restoration and Conservation Project – Ex RAF Hangar, Luqa (Air Stream Architecture Team)

• Diploma Category C – A Restoration and Conservation Project – Villa Gourgion – (Mrs. Alessandra Radmilli)

Dock No. 1 Regeneration, Cospicua - Silver Medal and Prix d’Honneur Category A 2015

Front row- left to right:
Carmel Spiteri, William Lewis, Andrea Vassallo Cesareo, Ian Critien, Simone Vella Leniker, Richard England, Andrew Ellul, Maria Grazia Cassar

Back Row - left to right:
Paul Borg, Chris Briffa, Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Mr. De Micoli, Alessandra Radmilli, Marielouise Caruana Galea

This list was researched by
Dr Petra Caruana Dingli
and Prof George Camilleri
Din l-Art Helwa Volunteers

Msida Bastion Garden of Rest
Mary Aldred, Jenny Boffey, Petra Bonello, Marjorie Bonnici, Judith Buttigieg, Albert Calleja, Terry Davies, Channer De Renzy, Hugh Ronald, Bill Hensher, Stephanie Jones, Monica Jonsson, Malcolm & Sheila Lockwood, Josephine McDermott, Caroline Waddington, Allison Bigden, Tanya Vella, Steve Clark, Claire Muller, Elaine O’Reilly, Joe Azzopardi

In the photo are some of the volunteers

Red Tower

*Din l-Art Helwa* congratulates the many intrepid volunteers who tend to the Red Tower in Mellieha for winning a great certification from Trip Advisor in our 50th Anniversary Year, and for ensuring the Red Tower is the most photographed Maltese fort on Google Earth. Here are some of the valiant stalwarts who got together to immortalize most of the 2015 team:

Standing from left to right: Bill Clarke, Janice Sly, Joseph Galea Debono, Steve Jessel, Susan Mompalao de Piro

Sitting from left to right: James Evans, Brian Sly, Mary Field, David Hill

Chapel of Bir Miftuh

Lt. Col. George Attard Manche’
Wignacourt Tower
from left to right:

Our Lady of Victory Church
from left to right:
Alex Mizzi, Mario Sciberras (Custodian)
Philip Taylor-East, Charles Azzopardi

Chapel of the Annunciation
at Hal Millieri
Anthony Mangion

Torri Mamo
Warden Joe Azzopardi,
Volunteers Vincent Raimondo and Henry Grima
Comino Revisited… and more
Carolyn Clements Gozo and Comino representative

This is such a significant year for Din l-Art Ħelwa, prestigious and sad, national and regional – but a very special one for all of us. During this 50th anniversary year we so sadly acknowledge the passing of our ‘immortal’ Founding President, Judge Maurice Caruana Curran, when the moments of recognition and appreciation were felt so deeply by all of us connected with DLĦ. Thank you, MCC, for your foresight, leadership and legacy. To have your daughter, Simone, as our guiding light Executive President at this significant stage in our progress with the protection of our natural and man-made heritage is, indeed, a historic and personal moment in our present and our future.

As a Council member and representative for Gozo and Comino, I would like to record that this year is also significantly special for us, being another DLĦ anniversary – a 10th anniversary! Ten years ago, the restoration of the Santa Marija Tower in Comino was completed, thanks to the generous main sponsorship from the Malta Maritime Authority and the Vodafone Foundation, with the restoration being project-managed by volunteer Hans Nie, an Indonesia-born engineer of Dutch nationality. Together with the support of Alan Jones, our magnificent Santa Marija Tower has been restored to an impeccable standard, with attention to the historic details, and has now been open to the public since 2006.

Following his recent visit to the Tower, an anniversary visit, Hans Nie wrote:

“Recently I revisited the Santa Marija Tower in Comino and met there Carolyn Clements and Joe Attard. The Tower is very much like it was when we completed the restoration project 10 years ago. It looked wonderful. It takes a lot to keep such a building in such a good state and Carolyn and her volunteers have done a top job.

Talking to Carolyn and Joe Attard I could sense the love they have for the Santa Maria Tower. I suppose that you need that as well. I have shown the DVD about the Tower to many friends in the Netherlands and Belgium and it has been enticing people to visit Malta.”

Little did I know, when Hans approached me in 2005 to take on the challenge of Warden (how I dislike that name!) of Comino Tower, the journey I would be embarking on, an evolving road of ups and downs – with a few pot-holes en route! But 10 years have passed and DLĦ has achieved a vibrant, active and acclaimed scenario for Comino Tower and Battery, not forgetting Dwejra Tower in Gozo, as well as our joint management of Isopu Tower in Nadur. We are now anticipating the long-awaited progress with the restoration of Xlendi Tower, the oldest surviving tower of the Knights in Gozo and another joint project, this one with Munxar local council.

During these 10 years we have achieved and experienced a great diversification of activities, most of which have only been possible through the enthusiasm and support of the Team-Gozo Volunteers. International appreciation for Comino Tower has burgeoned with visitors from as far afield as Burundi and Brazil, Venezuela and Vietnam, from throughout Europe as well as from Australia, North and South America and increasingly from Malta & Gozo. We have produced a heritage DVD, arranged an art exhibition, held a concert, produced ‘Besieged’ and have hosted team-building events, overnight stays, Scout and Guide activities, a programme of school and family visits and receptions, with a highlight being the visit last year of HE The President of Malta. Volunteers have restored the bridge, dealt with the plant invasion, maintained the internal structure and carried out countless other tasks. We are proud to offer information in 23 different languages – with two more in the pipeline – which impresses, and is greatly appreciated by, our visitors.

We have achieved a lot but the road ahead is challenging, especially on the broader front, in order to retain a worthy heritage for future generations: less erosion of our open spaces and less development into our beautiful countryside where, in addition, walkers do not feel safe to explore our wonderful landscapes for fear of threats or blocked access by self-acclaimed ‘landowners’.

Onwards!
Nigel Brittain retired from his position as Warden of Dwejra Tower at the end of September. A farewell reception was held at Il-Wileġ in Qala.

A handrail has been installed on the staircase leading to Comino Tower. The sterling work was carried out by volunteer Joe Attard whom we thank very much.
The sad news of the passing of Judith Vella Bonavita must not go unnoticed by Din l-Art Helwa, which is duty-bound to pay her tribute for the pivotal part she played in the establishment of the youth section of the association and its early history.

I was introduced to Judith (then Miss Judith Wood) by George Serracino-Inglott in the late 1960s when we were in the process of setting up a youth heritage movement under the aegis of Din l-Art Helwa, which we decided to call ‘Teenagers Din l-Art Helwa’. George and I both taught history in schools for boys and were acutely aware of the need to widen the circle to include girls. George, then a young Jesuit, had a connection with the Sacred Heart Convent School and he immediately thought of Judith, who warmed to the idea and suggested that her fiancé, Roger Vella Bonavita, might help with advice and expertise in history and heritage-related matters.

That is how Teenagers Din l-Art Helwa came about, buttressed by the active support and characteristic enthusiasm of Maurice Caruana Curran. Other directors joined us later on, but we were the founding nucleus. There were regular meetings and Judith was of invaluable help in the drafting of the statute. She was on the interviewing board for the selection of teenagers wishing to join and assigned them heritage-related duties.

The first major undertaking was the restoration of Hal Millieri mediaeval Church of the Annunciation, with Judith on site most Sundays for about a year, supervising the clearing of the church and its precincts of the accumulated debris of many years of neglect. This was followed by the camp at the hundred-ton gun battery at Fort Rinella. Here, Judith supervised the provision of meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) for the approximately three-score participants. She and Roger, by this time husband and wife, were very much in charge of the organisation and smooth-running of the camp.

Judith combined affable, motherly care with leadership skills and Teenagers Din l-Art Helwa owes her a great debt of gratitude. It was a sad loss when unfortunate political developments at the University led to her and Roger leaving the island for Australia. I used to get occasional news of her from our mutual friend, Anthony Luttrell, with whom she and Roger kept regular contact.

Her two-decade association with Malta was cut short but the role Judith played in moulding a now aging generation of heritage-minded young people has resulted in a legacy from which Maltese heritage in general, and Din l-Art Helwa in particular, benefitted.

May she rest in peace.

Farewell John Gafà

After 15 years of working with Din l-Art Helwa, John Gafà, our most loyal handyman has left us for a well deserved retirement. Over the years John has proved himself irreplaceable and will be sorely missed.
Messages from other NGOs to Din l-Art Helwa

Today, as you celebrate the 50th anniversary of Din l-Art Helwa, I wanted to add my personal congratulations to an organisation which embodies so completely the spirit of the National Trust movement.

As a voluntary heritage trust, Din l-Art Helwa plays a vital role in engaging people with their environment – both built and natural. It is sometimes tempting to think that the safeguarding of heritage is someone else’s job. National Trusts like Din l-Art Helwa show that the opposite is true and that by working together we can save, protect and find new uses for neglected historic buildings and preserve places of natural beauty for ever, for everyone.

Din l-Art Helwa is a hands-on organisation. Members get involved in fund-raising, buildings are opened to the public by volunteers, young people learn new skills and everyone puts a shoulder to the wheel as far as public advocacy campaigns go. This was very much the ethos of the National Trust established in our country 120 years ago.

Your restoration efforts at over 40 sites and landmarks, of which more than a third you now manage, have been exemplary and the hard-won funds have been well spent in preserving important parts of your rich history.

Today, however, heritage all over the world is under increasing threat from neglect, conflict, poor planning and environmental decay. We strongly support your advocacy efforts calling for better decision-making and commend your campaigns to save areas of outstanding natural beauty from the relentless march of development.

For the past five decades, Din l-Art Helwa has worked tirelessly to safeguard and protect Malta’s heritage. I congratulate you all for your efforts and encourage you to keep going amid sometimes difficult circumstances. I am honoured and humbled that you drew your inspiration from our Trust and that you consider yourselves as Malta’s National Trust. Here’s to 50 more years!

Dame Helen Ghosh
Director General
National Trust England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Dear Colleagues of Din l-Art Helwa,
On behalf of REMPART board members and members, I would like to wish Din l-Art Helwa a great 50th birthday!

Your commitment to the safeguarding and popularisation of Malta’s heritage is essential and we hope that your actions will last for another 50 years at least.

Next year, REMPART will also be celebrating its 50 years of activity. We will let you know our programme of our events and would be very pleased to welcome you at our annual congress.

I take the opportunity of this message to send my congratulations to the incoming Executive President Maria Grazia Cassar and to thank Simone Mizzi, Executive President, for having made possible the Din l-Art Helwa/REMPART cooperation that has been very active these last few years.

We are proud to be your partners!

With best wishes,

Fabrice Duffaud
Head of International Relations
Union REMPART

GlobeGround Malta Ltd donate €10,000 to Din l-Art Helwa

GlobeGround Malta Ltd which was set up in 2005 has recently celebrated its 10th year anniversary. As part of these celebrations the company has also updated its corporate identity and started operating under the new name Aviaserve. It has also changed its international affiliation and became a member of Aviance International.

During their anniversary party and the launch of the new brand which was held at the Casino Maltese, the Board of Directors as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility presented a cheque of €10,000 to Din l-Art Helwa representing their 10 years of service within the aviation industry.
The little that is left of Malta’s countryside is beautiful and precious and is under threat from the conversion of natural areas for other uses such as housing, roads, industry and the expansion of urban areas.

*Vigilo* - *Din l-Art Helwa*’s *Save the Countryside* campaign was launched, in November 2014, with the aim of raising public awareness of the threats to biodiversity through the over-development of the countryside and the destruction of habitats and ecological corridors. The loss of biodiversity is a growing problem.

The campaign has been conducted mainly through social media, and the *Save the Countryside* Facebook page already has over 14,000 followers, with numbers constantly increasing. Regular news and updates on issues related to the Maltese countryside are provided on the Facebook page, which enjoys a high level of engagement from the public.

As part of this campaign, *Din l-Art Helwa* also organised a public debate on 28 October at the Valletta Campus, University of Malta, entitled ‘Il-Futur tal-ODZ: għall-Maltin kollha jew għall-ispekulaturi biss?’ (The Future of ODZ: just for speculators or for everyone?).

The debating panel was chaired by *Times of Malta* senior journalist Caroline Muscat and the participants were the Hon. Michael Falzon, Parliamentary Secretary for Planning; the Hon. Marthese Portelli, Shadow Minister for the Environment; the Hon. Marlene Farrugia, at the time chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Environment and Development Planning; the president of the Malta Developers’ Association Sandro Chetcuti and *Din l-Art Helwa* Council member Prof Alan Deidun.

The campaign has been promoted through beautiful images of Maltese flora and fauna generously provided by nature photographer Guido Bonett, and through hundreds of photos of the Maltese landscape sent in by followers and readers. The *Save the Countryside* team also created video clips of the Maltese countryside, reaching thousands of viewers on the internet. In March, a public survey was carried out by MISCO for the campaign.

*Save the Countryside* highlights the importance of the countryside – and the biodiversity that it sustains – to the daily lives of the community and for future generations. The campaign aims to inspire people to take action to conserve the countryside. Our natural heritage includes many plants and animals and their diverse habitats which depend on the countryside in order to survive. The countryside also provides scenic beauty and educational benefits to Maltese society.

A policy discussion paper on Nature Parks in Malta is currently in preparation, in conjunction with the Today Public Policy Institute, and should be finalised shortly. Future plans include a photographic competition, to be launched early next year. This project is part-financed by the EEA Grants NGO Malta Programme 2009-2014.
A Great Siege for the Grand Cardinal
Sante Guido and Giuseppe Mantella

On the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the Siege of Malta, 1565

Translation by Patricia Salomone

About eleven years after the fateful, torrid and bloody summer of 1565 – the summer of the Great Siege of Malta by the Ottoman troops – the artist Mattia Perez d’Aleccio arrived on the island. It was the year 1576.

Much progress had already been made in the 11 years since the victory over the infidels with the building of the città nuovissima, as Valletta was called until the last century, since its foundation by Fra’ Jean Parisot de Valette and his successor, Fra’ Pietro del Monte. The first building to be erected was the Church of Our Lady of Victory, built in thanksgiving for the great victory achieved in September 1565. This small but significant church is now free of the scaffolding that has enabled its restoration, that included its splendid 18th century vaulted ceiling paintings.

Fra Jean de la Cassière, 51st Grand Master of the Order of St John (1572-1581), entrusted the Italian artist Matteo Perez d’Aleccio with the decoration of the Grand Council Hall in the Grandmaster’s Palace with the famous cycle of frescos depicting allegorical figures as well as the 12 paintings that faithfully illustrate and perpetuate the memory of events during the Great Siege. This extraordinary series of paintings is an example of the Mannerist style which, thanks to the art of Michelangelo, Raffaello and the Italian High Renaissance, became the common idiom amongst artists in the second half of the 16th century. It must be remembered that, as a very young man, Mateo Pérez de Alesi (his name as recorded in ancient chronicles) had been Michelangelo’s collaborator and assistant on the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel.

But, while Matteo Perez d’Aleccio’s paintings are renowned beyond Malta’s shores, the first depiction of the Great Siege is almost completely unknown (fig. 1). Yet it is of great historical and artistic importance within the context of the event, of the diplomatic activities and the history of Malta and the furore that this event created across Europe.
This work of art dates back to 1567, only a very brief 18 months after that terrible summer, and it is found in a place that is central to the diplomatic history of the capital of Christendom. It is a fresco to be found in the atrium of the Palazzo Farnese di Caprarola, one of the most majestic residences in the countryside outside, on the Via Cassia about 62 km north of Rome (fig. 2). In order to comprehend the importance of this Roman fresco depicting the Great Siege, it is necessary to place it within the right context.

The Palazzo in Caprarola was built by Alessandro Farnese. The family name derives from Castrum Ferneti, a small town on the border between Lazio and Tuscany. Alessandro Farnese, who was created Cardinal towards the end of the 15th century, was a personality of fundamental importance in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in the early years of that century. He was elected to the throne of St. Peter in the year 1534, taking the name of Paul III (1534-1549) (fig. 3). Among his numerous initiatives was the convening of the Council of Trent for the reformation of the Roman Church as well as the calling to Rome of Michelangelo, whom he commissioned to paint the Last Judgment for the Sistine Chapel.

Farnese’s intention was to build a palace in Caprarola that would be the political and administrative centre of his family’s possessions in order to consolidate their vast feudal properties in the Tuscia, the territories north of Rome, within the so called ‘Patrimony of St Peter’, namely the Papal State. In 1504, as a result of Francesco Maria Riario della Rovere’s renunciation of the Vicariate of Caprarola, Cardinal Alessandro came into possession of Caprarola and its strategic territory. He therefore conceived the project of a great palace and called the famous architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger to plan the project for the majestic palace as well as the urban reorganisation of the town of Caprarola. Antonio da Sangallo was the Farnese family’s trusted architect as he had already proven his ability with the building of the marvellous family palazzo in the centre of Rome that today serves as the French Embassy.

The imposing Palazzo at Caprarola is built in the pure military style of the late 15th century, on a pentagonal plan (fig. 4,) with towers at the corners and a circular grand court. Construction began in the second decade of the 16th century but was interrupted for several years as, once Alessandro became Pope in 1534, he lost interest in the palazzo – his time being taken up with more complex matters.

The work was resumed some decades later by the Cardinal grandson of Paul III Farnese, also named Alessandro (1520-1589) who had been elevated to Cardinal by his grandfather the Pope when he was only 15 years old. Although so young, he was successively nominated Papal Vice-Chancellor which meant he was in charge of the more delicate matters relating to the papacy. Alessandro Farnese was one of the most fascinating figures of the political and diplomatic history of the 16th Century and his portraits, painted by Titian in Venice (fig. 5), are well-known. Throughout his long life, his fame and his diplomatic ability, coupled with his culture and his patronage of the most important artists living in Rome, was such that he was nominated Grand Cardinal, a unique event in the history of the Catholic Church.
It was not until the middle of the 16th century, however, that Alessandro Farnese renewed his efforts to conclude work on the palazzo at Caprarola by entrusting the task to architect Jacopo Barozzi, better known as ‘il Vignola’ (after the town of his birth). Vignola is the architect who, years later, was commissioned by the same Grand Cardinal to design his masterpiece – the Chiesa del Gesù, for the Jesuit General House, in the centre of Rome. Here, where we find the burial place of St Ignatius of Loyola – Pope Paul III having officially sanctioned the establishment of the Company of Jesus in 1540 – Vignola set in motion the new style of architecture based on the rules of the Counter-Reformation indicated by the Council of Trent and by St Charles Borromeo.

Much had happened between the first phase of construction of the palazzo and the renewed work: Pope Paul III had died in 1549 and the Farnese family had fallen into disgrace. Following his insubordination to the new Pope Julius III, Cardinal Alessandro had to flee to Paris, where he took refuge with the King of France. All the goods inside Palazzo Farnese, including his art collections, were confiscated and auctioned to replenish the state finances that had been emptied by long wars and also by the building of churches – especially the Basilica of St Peter, Piazza del Campidoglio and the Pauline Chapel.

The Grand Cardinal only returned to Rome in 1554 and at this point in his life he decided to complete his palazzo in Caprarola in order to retire there, away from the dangers of the Roman Curia. Although based on the Sangallo project, the fortress-palace was transformed by Vignola into a magnificent and luxurious holiday residence, surrounded by a large park and garden within the urban context (fig. 6), a place in which to receive dignitaries and ambassadors in the surroundings of the splendid countryside and away from the strain of Papal Rome, centre of European politics. The palazzo was also to be a centre for creating new ambitious political and diplomatic ventures.

The palazzo is divided into four floors (fig. 2). The first, which dates back to Sangallo’s plan, is the Prelates’ Floor, then comes the Piano Nobile, followed by the Knights’ Floor and finally the Grooms’ Floor. The first and second floors contain numerous rooms divided into two apartments, one to be used in the summer, facing north, and the other, facing south, for the winter months.

The decoration of the walls of the Prelates’ Floor (fig. 4), in pure Mannerist style, began immediately. The Grand Cardinal summoned to Caprarola the most renowned ‘fashionable’ artists in Rome at the time. The first of these was Taddeo Zuccari who, in 1560, immediately began working at the palazzo until his death in 1566, when he made place for his brother Jacopo Zuccari who was a more capable and imaginative artist. Other artists and artisan decorators worked alongside these two. Worthy of mention are Jacopo Zanguidi, known as ‘Bertoja’, together with Antonio Tempesta and Giovanni del Vecchi. At Palazzo Caprarola, these artists created one of the masterpieces of Italian Mannerist painting with a grottesche decorations that included mythological and allegorical scenes from ancient Rome. The intention was to create such beauty that it would inspire pleasure and serenity but also, as we shall see later, included precise historic and political innuendos. The first hall of the Palazzo Farnese di Caprarola is of particular interest in this regard.
The main door to the palazzo opens onto the grand Hall of the Guards or Grooms (fig. 4-A in the drawing). The internal walls are frescoed with images of the small towns and villages of the surrounding area in order to portray the various properties that made up the great fiefdom of the princely Farnese family. On the vaulted ceiling are three grand coats of arms belonging to the Farneses. These are in stucco relief and depict six heraldic lilies in blue over a gold background in the centre of which is the emblem of Cardinal Alessandro the Younger, who thus stamps his ownership of the entire edifice. On the side of the great vault are two scenes that had been commissioned by the Grand Cardinal, showing Caprarola as it appeared before Vignola’s urban transformation, executed in order to record the previous state of the small town before its re-modelling.

But the scenes that first draw the eye – and are still the most striking to the visitor – are two great scenes painted on the front wall of the hall. One of these depicts a View of the city of Messina as seen from the heights of Reggio Calabria (fig.7) and the other a View of Malta during the Great Siege, both painted by Federico Zuccari (1539-1609). They were painted in 1567, as can be deduced from some dated designs that can be found in the same room. This depiction of the Great Siege (fig.1) is therefore the oldest painting that describes the historical events that took place in Malta and the port of departure of the Soccorso, the relief force.

Federico Zuccari was one of the most famous painters of his time (fig.8). He was active at St Peter’s in the Vatican, and completed the frescos which had been begun by Michelangelo in the Pauline Chapel. He worked in the cathedral of Orvieto and painted the grand cupola of Brunelleschi’s dome in Florence. He was court painter to Emperor Philip II of Spain, for whom he decorated the new Escorial and by whom he was ennobled. Convened to the English Court, he painted a portrait of Elizabeth I, among others. During his long life he was elected an honorary citizen of Rome and a member of the Design Academy of Florence. In addition, he was Life Regent of the Company of St Joseph of the Holy Land (today known as the Pontificia Accademia dei Virtuosi del Pantheon). He was one of the founders, and subsequently the first head, of the Accademia di San Luca.

The Great Siege scene, painted by this famous Mannerist artist, depicts specific details of the event. There are rich details of the Ottoman fleet at sea, facing Grand Harbour, scenes of the troops besieging Mount Sciberras and bombarding the city of Birgu and the cities close by, locked within their fortifications. There is a detail of the city of Mdina in the centre of the island, while on the other side of the island can be seen the approaching Spanish ships coming to the aid of the Knights of St John and the local inhabitants of the island.

The reason why Alessandro Farnese chose to give such prominence, in the hall of his palace, to the two scenes of Messina and, even more so, to the precise historical moment when the Great Siege took place in Malta, is not altogether clear.

Academics have never given this historic representation sufficient importance, but it is of great importance, given its location in the palace hall. One possible theory, which we hereby wish to promulgate, is that the Great Siege was a determining event in European history that would certainly have been well known to the important and highly cultured guests of the Grand Cardinal. It would, therefore, indicate the exact date of the whole building in much the same way as the coats of arms on the ceiling would determine that the Palazzo was owned by Alessandro Farnese. In other words, the heraldic symbols and historical events illustrated are a sophisticated and eloquent way of informing visitors of the family claim to the property, which is thus dated in a more elegant manner than by the use of the traditional engraved plaque.

However, other possibilities may be considered. At least two incidents in the life of the Grand Cardinal may allow us to hypothesise a particular interest on the part of Alessandro in events in Malta and in the defeat of the Turkish advance through Sicily into Mediterranean Europe. The first of these possibilities is certainly the close relationship between Alessandro Farnese and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which followed the Catholic Rite and of which Farnese was Pontifical Administrator for 50 years – from 1539 until his death in 1589 – and for
which he also held the seat of Patriarch from 1539 to 1550. The Patriarchate followed the fate of the Knights Hospitaller in the alternating conquests and defeats of the territories of the Holy Land and island possessions such as Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, Chios, Lesbos and Naxos. It is therefore not surprising that the Grand Cardinal, who was a shrewd diplomat, was well aware of the last dramatic, defining, political and bellicose events between the Sultanate and the Knights of St John.

The second possible connection between Farnese and the Great Siege can also be seen through his holding of a highly prestigious ecclesiastical position for 37 years. From 1536 to 1568, the Grand Cardinal was the Administrator of the rich and prestigious Diocese of Monreale (close to Palermo, in Sicily). He was also Archbishop of the same diocese from 1568 to 1573 when he resigned and was replaced by Ludovico I de Torres (1573-1583). So here too it is possible to detect Farnese’s ‘Mediterranean’ interest in relation to the military and political happenings in Malta. The interest would have not only been of a personal nature but would also have been linked to institutional matters between the Order and the Diocese of Monreale, (an area of forthcoming research).

It was not by chance that the Archbishop of Monreale, Ludovico I de Torres, was appointed by Pope Gregory XIII Boncompagni (1572-1585) to consecrate the main Church of the Conventual Order of St John the Baptist, on 5 February 1578, as the highest testimony, at the very centre of the Mediterranean, to the victory of the Roman Catholic Church through the sacrifice of the Knights, as recorded on the inscription on a plaque on the façade of the church.

All photographs courtesy of Luciano Passini whom we thank

Fig. 6:
Giuseppe Vasi,
plan of Palazzo Farnese and the gardens of Caprarola, 1746

Fig. 7:
Federico Zuccari,
View of the city of Messina as seen from the heights of Reggio Calabria
End of Year Message

As we come to the end of 2015, which has been a truly special and memorable year for DLĦ, being our 50th Anniversary year, I would like to extend, on behalf of all DLĦ Council, our sincere thanks and profound gratitude to all who have worked so hard during the year and contributed and assisted DLĦ in its efforts to fulfill its mission in the protection of our heritage and the environment.

We must thank, in particular, our dedicated and untiring volunteers and office staff, as well as our ever increasing members for their continued support and of course, our loyal and generous sponsors who, over the years, have made our work possible. To you all, we extend our very best wishes.

Philip Mercieca  
Hon. Secretary General

Our Lady of Good Counsel  
by Antoine Favray,  
Our Lady of Victory Church, Valletta
Din l-Art Ħelwa Corporate Members & Sponsors

**2014 – 2015**

ADRC Trust  
Alfred Mizzi Foundation  
APS Bank Ltd  
Avantech Ltd  
AX Holdings plc  
Bank of Valletta plc  
Best Print Co Ltd  
Central Bank of Malta  
Charles Darmanin and Co Ltd  
Curmi and Partners  
Cyberspace Ltd  
Deutsche Bank (Malta) Ltd  
Dingli and Dingli  
Farsons Foundation  
Fimbank plc  
Finance Malta  
Forestals Ltd  
GasanMamo Insurance Malta  
GlobeGround Malta  
GO plc  
GVC  
HSBC Malta Foundation  
Island Hotels Group Holdings plc  
KPMG Malta  
Malta Environment and Planning Authority  
Malta Financial Services Authority  
Malta International Airport Foundation  
Malta Stock Exchange  
Malta Tourism Authority  
Medserv plc  
Middlesea Insurance plc  
Ministry of Education  
MSV Life plc  
P Cutajar and Co Ltd  
PWC Malta  
Rotary Club Malta  
Round Table Malta  
Shireburn Software Ltd  
Sparkasse Bank Malta plc  
Strickland Foundation  
The Francis Miller Foundation  
The Tanner Trust  
Tug Malta Ltd  
VJ Salomone Marketing Ltd  
Vodafone Malta Foundation

**PRE 2014**

Air Malta plc  
Allied Newspapers Ltd  
Arriva Malta Ltd  
Atlas Insurance PCC Ltd  
Auto Sales Ltd  
Avantech Limited  
Body Shop Malta  
Central Cigarette Company Ltd  
Computime Ltd  
Corinthia Group of Companies  
De la Rue Currency & Security Ltd  
Eden Leisure Group  
Enemalta Corporation  
Environmental Landscapes Consortium  
Exalta Projects  
General Workers Union  
Gozo Channel Company Ltd  
Grecch & Co Ltd  
Ignazio Anastasi Limited  
Infinitely Xara  
Joinwell Ltd  
Kemmuna Ltd  
Lombard Bank Malta Plc  
M Demajo Group  
Malta Maritime Authority  
Malta Union of Teachers  
Marsovin Ltd  
Megabyte Ltd  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Rural Affairs & Environment  
Mizzi Holdings  
Multi Packaging Ltd  
P. Toledo Limited  
Pisciculture Marine de Malte Ltd  
Playmobil Malta Ltd  
Salvo Grima Group Limited  
Simonds Farsons Cisk Limited  
Toly Products Ltd  
Transport Malta  
Union Ħaddiema Magħqudin  
Vassallo Builders Group Ltd

**BENEFactors AND LEGACIES**

Karmen Micallef Buhagiar  
Marjorie de Wolf  
Anne Crosthwait  
Major Nesto Jacono – The Agape Trust