

Heritage Malta Update

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Committed to Making a Change

The hot summer months have gripped our island and thousands of tourists will be flocking to the friendly islands of Malta and Gozo in search of sun, sea and sand. Whilst holidaying on this Mediterranean archipelago, the majority of tourists will definitely visit one or more of Heritage Malta sites, particularly the Palace State Rooms in Valletta and one or more of the megalithic temples.

At Heritage Malta, we are committed to making a change in the way cultural heritage is presented to the various publics.

As you will read in the update on the BOV Tarxien Temples project, excavation works have started on the new visitor centre.

The agency is also undertaking other important infrastructural works at various sites including the Inquisitor's Palace in Vittoriosa and the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta.

Heritage Malta is also actively participating in EU funded projects. The write-up on the PROMET project sheds more light on the agency's involvement in one of such projects.

Make it a point to visit the new attraction at the Inquisitor's Palace. Following the resounding success of 'The Art of Pain'

exhibition, Heritage Malta has now mounted a fascinating exhibition on Tarot Cards. Entitled 'The Cards of Destiny: Gambling, Luck and Magic', the exhibition should draw large crowds to the Inquisitor's Palace in the heart of Vittoriosa.

Heritage Malta strongly believes in partnerships with private entities. In this edition you will learn more on the collaboration with RMF which has resulted in the publication of the first ever heritage map highlighting all of the agency's sites and museums in Malta and Gozo.

In the same vein, Heritage Malta and Gasan Mammo Insurance have signed a collaboration agreement for the enhancement of the Palace Armoury.

Meanwhile, visitors at Ġgantija Temples in Gozo can now make use of an audio pod

which provides a six minute narration on the oldest freestanding structure in the world. This additional tool in enhancing visitors' experience was donated to Heritage Malta by Exalta Projects Ltd, one of two companies currently supplying multi-lingual audio guides at Heritage Malta sites.

Our commitment to change is dynamic and on-going. Various training programmes have been conducted for members of staff with a special focus on customer care. A number of volunteers have also been engaged and posted at various sites.

We hope that more citizens will enrol as volunteers in this scheme and that more and more locals will sign up for the Heritage Malta Membership Scheme. Every little bit helps in our strive to protect our priceless heritage for future generations.

Commemorative Silver Salver Donation

Heritage Malta has received the donation of a silver salver presented in 1800 by the people of Malta to Captain, later Admiral of the Fleet, Sir George Martin; Commander of the naval squadron at the blockade of the French in Malta. The silver salver was donated by Dr. Jimmy Farrugia through the Hon. Prime Minister Dr. Lawrence Gonzi and will remain on display at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta.



The circular salver has a raised rim and stands on cast volute supports. The diameter is 43.7cm and its weight is 2259 grams. The assay mark is that of the period of Grand Master Fra Emmanuel de Rohan Polduc (1775-1797), whilst the maker's mark is that of Mario (Maruzzo) Schembri (Date of Licence 1763). The salver is engraved with the crowned escutcheon of Malta in a trophy of arms atop the following inscription in Italian:

Tributo di Riconoscenza del popolo Maltese a S.E. il Sign. Martin Capitano della Nave il Northumberland e Commandante della Squadra nel Blocco di Malta 1800.

In 1798 a French Republican Armada led by General Napoleon Bonaparte invaded and captured the Maltese Islands from the Knights of St John. The Maltese soon rebelled against the French who retreated behind the fortified walls of Valletta and the Three Cities. The insurgents requested Britain's help. There followed a two-year long blockade of the French by sea and land, ending with the capitulations of the French garrison in 1800.

Grateful for the assistance received, the Maltese presented silver salvers appropriately inscribed with a dedication to the British senior

military and naval officers who served in Malta. Four of these testimonial silver salvers are known to have been presented. The salver dedicated to Capt. Alexander John Ball has long been in the national collection and is on display at the National Museum of Fine Arts.

In May 2002 the firm Spirk of London auctioned the salver presented to General Graham. The salver dedicated to Brigadier General Moncrief is in a private collection.

The salver dedicated to Captain George Martin now forms part of the national collection of Malta and Heritage Malta is proud to be the custodian of two important silver salvers that form an integral part of the islands' colonial legacy.





A great Fondness Birthed by Time

I once may have despised the Hypogeum but nowadays I am so fond of this place that I consider any criticism on this UNESCO World Heritage Site personally. With such a comment about his workplace it is crystal clear that Gallery Site Officer Joe Farrugia has the job close to heart.

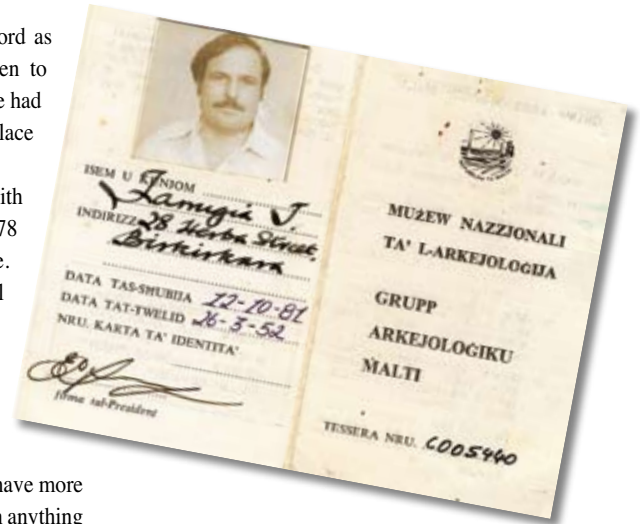
Maybe few might envy working in a windowless site but for Joe, every single moment spent at the Hal Saffieni Hypogeum is unique. It all started in 1993 when Joe was asked to overlook the restoration project at the Hypogeum. Looking back, Joe explains how he remembers the site in shambles and the painstaking process it took to bring this unique site to its present day set-up. Given its sensitive micro-climate, Heritage Malta only allows a maximum of ten people inside the Hypogeum at any one point in time. To this effect, seven tours are held daily and many tourists make it a point to book their attendance weeks and months in advance thanks to a computerised system introduced by Heritage Malta.

Today, the Hal Saffieni Hypogeum is one of the most precious heritage sites that Malta prides itself in. Its conservation and the design of the visitors' centre are of international standards and this is reinforced through the feedback provided by visitors. Celebrities and dignitaries from all over the globe have marvelled at the site of the Hypogeum. Joe chooses to highlight the feedback he received from the Chinese Ambassador to Malta who visited the site in

2004. The Ambassador went on record as saying that even though he had been to countless places all over the world, he had never set foot in a more spectacular place than the Malta's Hypogeum.

Joe Farrugia started his career with the then Museums Department in 1978 when he joined as a Custodian Guide. He worked in a number of sites all over the island. In 1999, his title was changed to a Museum Officer. While he is not at work, Joe Farrugia enjoys spending some of his spare time painting, mostly portraits and still-life. Joe admits that he would like to have more time available to indulge in reading on anything related to art and archaeology. Moreover, Joe enjoys spending quality time with his wife and his three sons.

Asked to reminisce on one of the best moments experienced during the past 13 years at the Hypogeum, Joe finds it too hard to identify just one episode. With a little bit of reflection, Joe did pinpoint one particular event. When he started working at the Hypogeum, Joe conducted some research on the early days of this site and managed to identify the very first custodian at the Hypogeum. On trying to track him down he learnt that unfortunately the person, Mr. Agius, had passed away. However, in his quest to find Mr. Agius, Joe got acquainted with one of his sons who had spent considerable time at the site. On the completion of works at the Hypogeum, Joe arranged for this person, who is now an octogenarian himself, to visit the Hypogeum. The visit was an emotional moment for both Joe and Mr. Agius' son. Joe could only listen in admiration as Mr. Agius recalled the time he used to spend on the site with



his father and he even presented Joe with a design of the Hypogeum that his late father had drawn.

Joe admits that there is never a dull moment at the Hal Saffieni Hypogeum. At times he is disappointed that not all visitors appreciate that they are walking inside a World Heritage Site. He keeps an open mind on the suggestions made by visitors and is quick to communicate any suggestions that can be easily implemented to make the Hypogeum even more accessible to all those who choose to visit it.





The BOV Tarxien Temples Project: Experiencing Prehistory

In mid-April, Heritage Malta initiated excavations at the Hal Tarxien Temples in preparation for the construction of its Visitors' Centre. Unlike those conducted by Sir Temi Zammit in the first decades of the 20th century, these excavations are not aimed at exposing megalithic structures but are being carried out in preparation for the construction of the BOV Tarxien Temples Visitors' Centre, which will eventually house some of the very artefacts discovered during Zammit's excavations.

The excavation of the site of the Visitors' Centre, to the north of the Tarxien Temples, is aimed at ensuring that no archaeological remains are endangered by the construction of the centre. The exercise was conducted under the supervision of the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, which has in fact confirmed that the area does not hold any archaeological material. The next step in this preparatory exercise will entail the manual cleaning of several areas of the site to ensure that no features possibly found on the bedrock will be damaged during the construction of the Visitors' Centre. This will again be carried out by Heritage Malta in collaboration with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage.

In addition to this preparatory exercise, considerable progress has also been made in planning the permanent exhibition that will be housed within the Visitors' Centre. At an early stage in the planning of this exhibition it became apparent that the vast collection of artefacts excavated from the Tarxien Temples needs to be recorded and analysed, so as to help in our better understanding of this

prehistoric monument and the activities that originally took place inside it. The compilation of this catalogue will commence in July and this will be the first time ever that these artefacts will be studied in such detail.

The exhibition will present aspects of Maltese prehistory which are particularly evident at the Tarxien Temples. It will make use of a variety of media to communicate this information to visitors in a fresh and interactive manner. The audio-visual facilities within the centre will present the natural environment and prehistoric landscape of the harbour area, whilst part of the exhibition will focus on the work carried out at the site by Sir Temi Zammit and the methods he used in recording his excavations. The interactive presentation of techniques used in the prehistoric production of sculpture and pottery will give the opportunity to visitors to try out both crafts using tools similar to those utilised during the Temple Period. This will allow visitors to experience a small part of prehistory at first hand.

For updates on the BOV Tarxien Temples Project please visit our website at:

www.heritagemalta.org





Audio-Information Pod installed at Ġgantija Temples

Heritage Malta has installed an audio-information pod at its Gozo's Ġgantija Temples, making this UNESCO World Heritage Site the first of the agency's sites to feature this electronic gadget that provides information at the touch of a button.

The audio-information pod, installed in April 2006, offers a six-minute narration about the temples of Ġgantija and their relevance with regards to the history of Maltese archaeology. Visitors can

choose to listen to the narration in six different language, including Maltese. The audio-information pod was donated to Heritage Malta by Exalta Projects, one of the two companies involved in the pilot project of the installation of audio guides in Heritage Malta's sites and museums. The Ġgantija Temples top the list of Heritage Malta's most popular sites with last year's number of visitors reaching over 165,000.

Academic Exchanges within ICMCH

During academic year 2005-2006 Heritage Malta's Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage (ICMCH) welcomed two visiting contributors of stature to its Bachelor in Conservation and Restoration Studies (Honours) programme.

These gave theoretical and practical sessions in the field of glass and ceramic conservation, restoration and analysis. The sessions were also open to former graduates of the B.Cons.(Hons).

The first visiting contributor was Sandra Davison, a well-known restorer and conservator specialised in glass who has worked for museums in various parts of the world and who has lectured and published widely. Her vast experience in this area led to an intensive and enriching set of lab and lecture sessions. Students could appreciate the different methods and materials used in the conservation and restoration of glass, together with the technical examination of glass and its deterioration. They learnt how to clean and consolidate deteriorated glass and to use the resins to reconstruct broken

parts. Furthermore, the practical sessions included the preparation of different materials, like pigments for coloured glass and testing the efficiency of each resin used for the filling of lacunae, the preparation of moulds using various kinds of waxes, as well as the practicing of polishing techniques.

Norman Tennent was the other visiting contributor. He is a conservation scientist who specialized in chemistry and later directed his interest to aspects of the deterioration and conservation of cultural heritage. Like Sandra Davison he is a professional of repute who has researched, lectured and published extensively, particularly in the fields of ceramics and glass conservation.

His contribution to the B.Cons.(Hons) programme consisted of sessions of analysis of constituent materials and the evaluation of conservation treatments of ceramics and glass. The lectures focused on different methods of analysis for glass and ceramics, with practical sessions conducted in the Diagnostic Science Labs of Heritage Malta's Conservation Division.

This July ICMCH will be offering the Introductory Course to Conservation Studies, which helps prepare students interested in the B.Cons.(Hons) course. This introductory course provides students with a foretaste of the B.Cons.(Hons) through theoretical and practical sessions. Amongst the studied subjects are conservation science and chemistry for conservation, history of art, history of architecture and archaeology for conservation. Practical sessions focus on line-drawing technique, chemistry and the four main areas of study offered in the B.Cons. (Hons), namely: Area A - Paintings and Polychrome Sculpture; Area B - Ceramics, Glass, Metals and Stone; Area C - Textiles; Area D - Books and Paper.

The B.Cons.(Hons) is one of ICMCH's course offerings. Other courses that are scheduled to open in October 2006 are the Masonry Heritage Skills Certificate offered in collaboration with MCAST and the MA in Cultural Heritage Management.

For further information please visit

www.heritagemalta.org

or write to courses@heritagemalta.org.



Sponsorship for Palace Armoury Upgrading

Heritage Malta has recently benefited from a generous donation of Lm15,000 from GasanMamo Insurance Ltd through a collaboration agreement signed between the insurance company and national agency. The sum will be donated over a period of three years and will be used exclusively for the ongoing refurbishment of the Palace Armoury.

A Heritage Road Map of the Maltese Islands

Heritage Malta and car-breakdown assistance company RMF have published a heritage map aimed primarily at guiding tourists to Malta's and Gozo's historical and archaeological sites. Heritage Malta described this innovative map as yet another initiative to raise awareness of our historical and cultural treasures amongst tourists.

The colourful and detailed heritage road map carries information in English as well as in French and German. Besides highlighting the routes that lead to Heritage Malta's sites and museums, and a list of bus routes for those who opt for the public transport, the map also gives a brief description in the three languages on each one of the sites. Opening hours and a contact numbers are also included.

The map also zooms in on five zones in Malta and Gozo that have a large heritage sites and museums density. The close-up maps feature Valletta and The Three Cities, home to the largest number of Heritage Malta sites; Rabat and Mdina; Tarxien, Fgura and Paola; Victoria and Xaghra in Gozo. Street names are easily identifiable on these five close-up maps, and for the sake of clarity, routes are listed as being arterial or secondary to facilitate navigation for those who prefer to discover Malta and Gozo by self-drive cars.

As is customary with maps, this heritage map also lists schools, churches, police stations, hotels, pumping stations and other helpful information that usually feature on road maps.

This heritage road map sells from Heritage Malta's Head Office in Valletta, and from all of its sites and museums.

While thanking the insurance company for their commitment towards our national heritage, Heritage Malta's chairman

Dr. Mario Tabone explained how the donation will most definitely speed up the Armoury's upgrading project. With its impressive works of art the Armoury deserves special attention and, as Dr. Tabone said, Heritage Malta has bigger ambitions for this site that ranks amongst the most valuable historical monuments of European culture. The agency's chairman expressed Heritage Malta's vision to return the Armoury to its original location in the Grand Master's Palace – which currently houses the House of Representatives – and away from the humidity of its current location on the ground floor of the palace.

On top of the to-do list is the installation of large information panels that will provide further details on the artefacts. The money will also be used to buy display stands specifically designed to hold arms and armoury. The Armoury has already been organised chronologically and equipped with audio guides in six different languages. Part of the funding will also go towards educational programmes, which have

been a priority on Heritage Malta's agenda since its establishment. Speaking at the signing of the sponsorship agreement at the Armoury, GasanMamo's Managing Director Albert Mamo said that the donation confirmed the company's corporate social responsibility and its commitment towards Heritage Malta's mission and towards the preservation of our heritage. As he explained, Malta's heritage is extremely rich and so demands the support of the private sector.

Opened in 1860 as Malta's first public museum, the Palace Armoury is one of the world's greatest arms collections housed in their original building. It comprises a large variety of armour and weapons dating from the 15th century when the Knights still occupied Rhodes and covering some 300 years of armour development until the Order left Malta in the late 18th century. The Armoury prides itself on its military material of Italian, French, German and Spanish origin. By far, the most grandiose with regards to richness of ornament is the magnificent gilded parade armour of Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt.

Like most of Heritage Malta's sites and museums, the Palace Armoury is open from Monday to Sunday from 09:00 to 17:00. Last Admission is at 16:30.



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PROMET

Innovative conservation approaches for monitoring and protecting ancient and historic metals collections from the Mediterranean Basin

Heritage Malta, through its Conservation Division is participating in PROMET, a three-year European Union funded project under the auspices of the Sixth Framework Programme, priority INCO (Specific Measures in support of International Cooperation).

The project aims to establish and promote a conservation strategy designed for the Mediterranean region by developing an approach to monitor and protect metal artefact collections using state-of-the-art portable analytical techniques and new corrosion inhibitors and/or coatings that are safe and effective to use. PROMET is an ambitious project as it brings together 23 partners from 13 different countries in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin.

The collection studied consists of the steel armour elements of the Palace Armoury. This unique collection is suffering highly from the environmental parameters and needs to be correctly protected. The first task was to establish the problems and the needs of these artefacts. Commonly applied analytical techniques have been

used for quickly surveying a selection of artefacts representative of the collection and new prototype portable techniques developed within the project, such as micro X-Ray Fluorescence (μ XRF), will be used as a complementary analytical tool for metal characterisation (contribution from Demokritos Institute, Greece planned for October).

Heritage Malta's team working on this project is leading the work-package dedicated to the development of safe corrosion inhibitors and barrier films. Before testing them on artefacts, the performance of these protection systems has to be assessed on artificially and naturally aged metal coupons. The most effective products that meet conservation standards will be tested on a selection of artefacts specifically subjected

to the environmental conditions of Malta.

PROMET is certainly one of the most promising EU projects of these last years dedicated to the conservation of metal artefacts. In addition to the work carried out, the partners want to disseminate the outcomes of the project on a large scale through workshops such as the one organised in November 2005. This project is also an occasion to exchange ideas and knowledge between countries that are strongly active in the field of metal conservation and others that have huge collections, but no expertise to conserve them.

Heritage Malta participates actively in a number of EU funded projects as the national agency strongly believes in collaborating ???





More Thematic Heritage Trails by Heritage Malta

One of Heritage Malta's educational initiatives for 2006 was the launching of its heritage trails. Targeting small audiences, these trails have been thematic in nature and have tackled subjects ranging from BirĊebbuġa's archaeological sites to the history of The Citadel in Gozo.

Following the first two-part trail 'In the Footsteps of St. Paul' featured in the March newsletter, the Italian Baroque era painter Mattia Preti was the subject Heritage Malta chose for its second trail, which took place in March. The trail started with a visit to the Ċurrieq Parish Church which houses a Preti painting. A stop at St. John's Co-Cathedral followed, allowing participants to admire the vaulted ceiling depicting the life of St. John and created by Preti himself. The trail ended at the National Museum of Fine Arts which prides itself on various Preti paintings it has on display.

In April, Heritage Malta focused on BirĊebbuġa and its heritage sites taking participants to Ghar Dalam and Borġ In-Nadur, a site usually closed to the public. Different from its previous trails, Heritage Malta gave the opportunity to children to join in this trail by

participating in an excavation of animal bones and pottery shards that were buried in two sand pits outside Ghar Dalam. These sand pits are also being used as part of an educational programme for school children at Ghar Dalam.

The Romans in Malta was May's heritage trail with visits to the Roman Domus in Rabat and the archaeological site of Tas-Silġ. The latter site is not open to the public and this was one of the very few opportunities people had to visit it. Tas-Silġ was referred to by Ancient Greek and Roman geographers and writers as having served as an active cultural, political and commercial centre of the ancient world. The Roman Domus' relevance to this trail was that it seems to have been originally built during the beginning of the first century B.C., which is when the Romans took over Malta.

June brought with it two heritage trails, one focusing on the Summer Solstice and the first Gozo trail in this series of thematic trails. After

witnessing the solstice phenomenon in relation to the construction of the Haġar Qim and Mnajdra temples, participants were driven to Ta' Haġrat and Skorba temples. These four temples are all UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The Gozo trail was named the 'Gran Castello Experience' and focused solely on The Citadel and its history. On this trail participants were taken around The Citadel's fortifications. An innovative feature was the participation of three actors who enacted the legend of the finding of a golden calf on the hills of Ta' Gelmus, the story of Bernardo D'Opuo and the 1551 siege, and the story of the imprisonment of La Vallette in Gozo. Prior to the trail, Heritage Malta inaugurated an exhibition of recently acquired traditional objects, all obtained from Gozo and therefore evidential of the island's rural history.

The series of Heritage Malta heritage trails will continue in October with an event focusing exclusively on the painter Giuzeppa Cali.



Training & Recruitment

Training

Heritage Malta strongly believes in the ongoing development of its members of staff. Through its Human Resources Unit, the agency regularly organises training modules for its employees.

Over the past few weeks, a large number of Heritage Malta employees had the opportunity to follow one of various training modules. While some of these sessions are held at the agency's Head Office in Valletta or at the area office in Gozo, the majority of such seminars and lectures are held away from an office environment.

Gallery Site Offices and Front Office Attendants followed a tailor-made module in Customer Care. These personnel are often the first point of contact with the thousands of visitors who turn up at museums and sites every year.



Heritage Malta Heads and Managers are also following an intensive module in management skills. The aim of this course is twofold. It provides a platform for all the management team to interact together whilst strengthening the skills of the agency's management team.

Recently Heritage Malta also organised a number of short modules on basic awareness on fire-fighting. The course included a practical session and members of staff from all grades attended these courses.

Recruitment

Since its foundation in 2003, Heritage Malta has embarked on an ambitious strategy to enhance the sites and museums entrusted to its care. To fulfil this objective, the agency has to employ more people, particularly in the conservation area, to ensure that there are adequate personnel to cater for the pressing needs of the agency.

Over the past few months, the Human Resource Section was actively processing applications for numerous new positions at Heritage Malta.

In all, around 50 new employees will be enrolled by the agency in various areas of specialisation. Whilst recruitment is an

ongoing process, it is envisaged that the majority of the vacancies will be filled by the end of the year.

Volunteers

The Volunteers Scheme introduced by Heritage Malta at the end of 2005 was a tremendous success. The agency is still receiving applications from individuals who are keen to dedicate some of their free time for a good cause.

The first group of volunteers was assigned duties at the beginning of May. Initially, volunteers will be providing custodial services at the Palace Armoury, the National Museum of Archaeology and the National Museum of Fine Arts in Valletta and at the St. Paul's Catacombs and the National Museum of Natural History in Mdina/Rabat.

The need for volunteers is ongoing. Interested individuals are to send an e-mail to: info@heritagemalta.org if they wish to obtain further information on this scheme.



A Heritage Malta Employee Honoured in Spain

On Wednesday 10th May 2006 the Mayor of Tocina-Los Rosales Don Juan de Dios Munoz invested, on behalf of the Council and Citizens of Tocina, Antonio Espinosa Rodriguez with the Gold Insignia of the City of Tocina. The ceremony took place in the Salon de Pleno of the Ayuntamiento of Tocina in the presence of the Lieutenant Mayor, Councillors, Mrs Mary Rose Espinosa Rodriguez and Ms Anna Maria Espinosa Rodriguez, Mr. Angel Navia Mayor Emeritus of Tocina, guests and friends. The award was accorded in appreciation of Mr. Antonio Espinosa Rodriguez's contribution in the cultural fields, in fomenting the historic links existing between Tocina and Malta as well as a sign of respect and friendship.

Tocina is a town in the Province of Seville, in Andalucia, Spain. It is located some 37 km from Seville and has a surface area of 14.05



sq. km. It is located on a fertile plain flanking the River Guadalquivir. Its economy is the growing of agricultural products and their processing. Tocina has very close historical links with Malta. From the 14th century to the first half of the 19th century Tocina was

a Commandery of the Order of St John and as such was governed by the Knights of St John. It was one of the richest Comanderias the Order had in Castille producing in 1798, a revenue of 40,000 ducats.

The parish church of Tocina is dedicated to St Vincent Martyr and was built between 1703 and 1711 by the Knight Commander Fra Jose de la Plata y Ovando according to plans sent from Malta. The architecture of the church reflects Maltese Baroque rather than Andalusian Baroque and its plan has been ascribed to Lorenzo Gafa. The church is richly decorated with fine works of arts in the tradition of the Order of St John and prominently features the Maltese Cross. In the sacristy one finds a small but important historic archive concerning the administration of Tocina by the Knights of St John and containing, amongst other documents, letters and bulls signed in Malta by various Grand Masters.

The Maltese Cross features prominently in the coat of arms of Tocina. In 2004 Tocina and Zejtun signed a twinning agreement.

The Game of Tarots Demystified

Heritage Malta has just inaugurated an exhibition on tarot cards and their mystical explanations of life and destiny at the Inquisitor's Palace. Laden with controversy, this theme is bound to lure a large crowd of those curious to learn more about this mysterious and religiously-tabooed practice.

Titled 'The Cards of Destiny: Gambling, Luck and Magic', the display delves into the meaning and the history of tarot cards, which goes as far back as the 14th century. The exhibition is divided into six sections: Playing Cards, Tarots, The Allegories of the Tarots, The Game of Tarots, The Book of Thot and Cartomancy. Besides exhibiting a wide variety of playing cards, incisions of famous artists, rare books on the subject and other material related to card games, Heritage Malta has also put together illustrations on the history of this mysterious and intriguing ritual.

The game of tarots is based on 56 numeral cards, said to be Italian but which are in fact Arabic in origin (*coppe, danari, bastoni* and *spade*) and 22 cards known as Triumphs, which were introduced in Italy at the beginning of the 15th century. This game derives from the *Triumphs* of Petrarch (hence 'trump') where he described the principal forces which govern Man and assigned a hierarchical value to each of them. First comes Love (Instinct), which is won over by Modesty (Reason); next comes Death which is defeated by Fame, which in turn is defeated by Time, Eternity or God, who stands over and above all.

The oldest references to tarot cards in Europe date back to the 14th century and refer to the taxes imposed on card players. By the 15th century these came under attack and were denounced as the works of the devil. Since the game of tarots was regarded as a gambling game, from the 16th century onwards the Church

did its utmost to repress it. At the end of the 18th century, after the birth of occultism, a vast production of fortune-telling games started to develop. These developed even further during the 19th century and by the 20th century their success led cards manufacturers to turn to famous painters and illustrators for images to be printed on new packs.

The display of these rare and history-laden artefacts is being organised in collaboration with the Italian Associazione Culturale 'Le Tarot' under the patronage of the Ministry for Tourism and Culture of Malta and the Ministry of Culture and the Environment of Italy, with the cooperation of the Biblioteca Classense of Ravenna. All displayed material forms part of an immense collection that the Associazione Culturale 'Le Tarot' collected throughout the last 25 years. This is not the first risqué theme to be exposed in an exhibition by the agency. In 2004, Heritage Malta displayed torture instruments ranging from stretching wheels to chastity belts and starvation masks in its 'The Art of Pain' exhibition. In a year and a half this rather gruelling display registered a huge success with around 60,000 visitors.

The exhibition will remain open until October 29th between 09:00 and 17:00 at the Inquisitor's Palace in Vittoriosa. Last admission is at 16:30. Tickets cost Lm2 for adults, Lm1 for students and senior citizens and 50c for children aged between 6 and 11 years. For further information call the Inquisitor's Palace on 2182 7006 or Heritage Malta's Head Office on 2295 4000.



Malta and China Agree on Scientific & Cultural Exchanges

In its continuous effort to promote our national heritage worldwide, Heritage Malta has embarked on an agreement with the China National Institute of Cultural Property (CNICP) which will pave the way for beneficial exchanges in the fields of science and culture between the two countries.

The agreement was signed during a recent visit to China by Heritage Malta's Chairman Dr. Mario Tabone and Chief Executive Ms. Antoinette Caruana. Both Dr. Tabone and Ms. Caruana attended a number of important meetings in a bid to explore further ways of enhancing cultural cooperation between the two countries.

On top of the agreement's agenda are a number of cultural heritage conservation research projects which Heritage Malta and CNICP will be jointly undertaking. The scope of these projects ranges from the surface-cleaning of stone and ceramic objects by laser to the preserving of fortifications and of materials on ancient outdoor iron objects as well as stone conservation projects. This agreement will also make possible the exchange of personnel visits, academic communication and personnel training. Both sides have also committed to publish reports on joint research projects and share reference materials and data.

Following the absorption of the former Malta Centre for Restoration, Heritage Malta is now the national agency responsible for conservation. This agreement is particularly beneficial as it will help local academics, conservators and researchers to discuss work



practices and technical data with their Chinese counterparts.

During the visit to China, Heritage Malta also concluded preliminary agreements to host an exhibition on Terracotta Soldiers. This will be a once in a lifetime opportunity for locals and tourists alike to admire these magnificent archaeological gems. This exhibition is being planned for the second trimester of 2007 and should be one of the greatest attractions ever at the National Museum of Archaeology in Valletta. Heritage Malta is also planning to host an exhibition on photographs and models relating to city fortifications of Malta and

the Chinese province of Shaanxi. In the past months Heritage Malta has hosted exhibitions on Chinese monetary coins and bronze replicas as well as an exhibition on the characters of the Beijing opera.

On the diplomacy front, Malta's already good ties with China are being strengthened with this agreement that follows an agreement signed between the countries' Ministries of Tourism and Culture. Heritage Malta's Chairman Dr. Mario Tabone claims that besides all the benefits that the exchange projects hold, this agreement also aims to bring further understanding of each other's cultures.

FORTHCOMING HERITAGE MALTA EVENTS

CURRENT EVENTS

Until July 16 at the Grand Salon of the National Museum of Archaeology

World Heritage Sites 360 – an exhibition organised by Miranda Publications in collaboration with Heritage Malta and supported by HSBC. Exhibition is open from Monday to Sunday between 09.00am and 5.00pm. Normal admission fees apply.

Until July 23 at the Wignacourt Museum, Rabat

St.Paul's Grotto 1600-1624 and its transition to the Order of the Knights of St John – an exhibition organised by the Wignacourt Museum and the Chapter of St. Paul's Collegiate Church in Rabat, in collaboration with Heritage Malta.

Until October 29 at the Inquisitor's Palace in Vittoriosa

The Cards of Destiny: Gambling, Luck and Magic - an exhibition organised by the 'Associazione Culturale Le Tarot' and Heritage Malta in collaboration with the 'Biblioteca Classense

of Ravenna' under the patronage of the 'Ministero per I Beni Culturali e Ambientali' of Italy and the 'Ministry for Tourism and Culture' of Malta. Exhibition is open from Monday to Sunday between 09:00am and 05:00pm. Normal admission fees apply.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

7 July 2006 – 11 July 2006

Educating for the Protection of Cultural Heritage – A three-day in-service course aimed primarily for educators, organised by Heritage Malta, at the Heritage Malta Conservation Division, Bighi.

10 July 2006 – 28 July 2006

Introductory Course to Conservation Studies – a public course that can also serve as a preparatory course for the B.Cons. (Hons). Organised by Heritage Malta at the Heritage Malta Conservation Division in Bighi.

July 11 at the Front Courtyard of the National Museum of Natural History, Mdina

A concert by The Band of The Hampshire Constabulary – a fund-raising activity by this British Police Band in aid of Heritage Malta. Organised by Heritage Malta. Pre-booking is essential. For more information, call 22954312. Event starts at 8pm.

21 July 2006 – 20 August 2006

Medics in Art – an exhibition of conservation project work carried out by B.Cons. (Hons) students attending the ‘Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage’ at Heritage Malta, Bighi. Organised by Heritage Malta at the ‘Loggia’, National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta.

21 July 2006 – 13 August 2006

UNESCO World Heritage Sites Paintings Exhibition – an exhibition of paintings from a school competition to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of UNESCO, organised by UNESCO Malta in collaboration with Heritage Malta, at Heritage Malta Head Office, Valletta.

28 July 2006

The Temple Builders; Ceremony – a prize-giving ceremony of the winning essays and paintings competition organised by Heritage Malta and UNESCO to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of UNESCO’s listings of Malta’s megalithic temples as World Heritage Sites, organised by Heritage Malta and UNESCO at the Inner Courtyard of the National Museum of Natural History, Mdina.

28 July 2006 – 13 August 2006

The Temple Builders – an exhibition of the submissions for the competition organised by Heritage Malta and UNESCO

to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of UNESCO’s listings of Malta’s megalithic temples as World Heritage Sites, organised by Heritage Malta and UNESCO, at the Inner Courtyard of the National Museum of Natural History, Mdina.

21 August 2006 – 30 September 2006

Contemporary Art – an exhibition of paintings by Joseph L. Mallia at ‘Heritage Malta Head Office, Valletta.

7 September 2006 – 1 October 2006

Contemporary Art – an exhibition of engravings by Hanneke Wessels, at the Contemporary Hall at the National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta.

15 September 2006 – 19 September 2006

Educating on Identity through Local Heritage – a three-day in-service course aimed primarily at educators and organised by Heritage Malta, at the Heritage Malta Conservation Division in Bighi.

16 September 2006

Xarapalace Drinks at the Inner Courtyard at the Vilhena Palace, Mdina.

22 September 2006

Autumn Equinox – a special opportunity to witness the Autumn Equinox Temple Phenomenon at the Mnajdra Temples, Qrendi. The event includes guided tours. This is being organised by Heritage Malta.

27 September 2006

World Tourism Day – extended opening hours at selected Heritage Malta museum.